

# Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings

Proceedings of the  
Society of Architectural Historians,  
Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ)

Volume 39, June 2023

Edited by Julia Gatley and Elizabeth Aitken Rose



**CREATIVE ARTS  
AND INDUSTRIES**  
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
AND PLANNING

SAHANZ

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**Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) 39**

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Edited by Julia Gatley and Elizabeth Aitken Rose

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The papers in this volume were presented at Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings, a joint conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) and the Australasian Urban History Planning History Group (AUHPH), from 25-27 November 2022. The 39<sup>th</sup> annual SAHANZ conference and the 16<sup>th</sup> AUHPH conference, it was convened by Julia Gatley and Elizabeth Aitken Rose, and held at Te Pare School of Architectural and Planning, University of Auckland / Waipapa Taumata Rau, New Zealand.

The 115 abstracts received were subject to peer review by the Conference Academic Committee, from which the 73 papers presented at the conference were accepted following double-blind peer review. Of these, 40 papers are published here, along with the abstracts for the 33 oral paper presentations.

Electronic versions of the 40 published papers are available for free download at: <https://www.sahanz.net/>.

Publication of the research documented in this volume underscores the Society's commitment to academic freedom and academic integrity. Conclusions drawn from this research have been tested through appropriate formal academic review processes. The Society upholds the principle of a member's ability to express a view or form an opinion based on these conclusions. However, the conclusions and views expressed in the Proceedings do not necessarily reflect the views of the Society.

Cover image by Amber Anahera Ruckes.

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## **Credits**

Many thanks to the conference keynote speaker Dr Ben Schrader; the members of the Academic Committee, who reviewed all 115 abstracts; the members of the Organising Committee for their various contributions; and the 88 referees who provided the double-blind review of each of the papers that were submitted. Your time, expertise and generosity in providing constructive comments for authors are all much appreciated. Many thanks, too, to Te Pare School of Architecture and Planning and the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland, Waipapa Taumata Rau, for financial support for this conference.

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## Conference Theme

With long-shared disciplinary interests in the design of cities and urban areas, architects and planners have an intersecting (crossing) lineage through numerous historical figures, movements and events. Historically, many individuals practised as both architects and town/city planners. As the discipline of planning evolved, the two professions diverged, yet remained entwined in a relationship of confluence and convergence. In various places, tensions emerged. Some cast planning as bureaucratic regulation while others saw architecture as overly concerned with aesthetics. The term “urban design” was increasingly used to describe the form of practice that architects had originally understood town planning to be, and planners also, but as the public realm dimension of a broader policy mandate. The heritage discipline, too, matured – with the retention of heritage value becoming an enticement for some built environment professionals and a burden for others. Class, ethnicity, gender, migration and inequality have all compounded the diversity of experience, even as common challenges have emerged, from the hegemony of private property rights and the functional dominance of engineering, to the imperatives of environmental sustainability and reconciliation of socio-cultural injustices.

Aptly hosted by a School of Architecture and Planning, this first joint conference of SAHANZ and the Australasian UHPH Group explored matters of common interest.

We sought papers that examine historical moments demonstrating overlap, collaboration, tension or dispute between built environment disciplines, including architecture, planning, urban design, landscape architecture and heritage conservation. We imagined scrutiny of:

- Figures, movements and/or events that have a place within both architectural history and urban/planning history;
- Groups and individuals who have interacted across two or more built environment disciplines;
- Large-scale visions or policies and individual projects built under them;
- Planning processes that have enabled some projects to be realised and ensured the curtailment of others;
- Projects that have challenged planning policies and processes;
- Projects led by architects and/or planners working as developers; and
- Relationships between the disciplines of architecture and planning in tertiary institutions that have taught programmes in both.

We welcomed papers from, and beyond, the Asia-Pacific region; papers that explore Indigenous, alternative or marginalised experiences and practices; and papers that extend to infrastructure and community projects.

# Keynote Address – Dr Ben Schrader

## **Fabricating Identities: A Short History of Historic Preservation in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1890-1990**

Scholars have linked the evolution of historic preservation with the rise of nineteenth-century nation states, where nation builders used historic places to invent traditions that rooted people in (national) soils. This was harder to do in settler colonies like New Zealand, where Pākehā had no historical links to Aotearoa. Most settlers accepted Māori heritage as fixed in the land but looked back to Britain as the source for their own.

The 1890s saw tentative recognition of Pākehā-produced heritage. Select historic places came to represent, first, regional, and later, national invented traditions and identities. These include Old Government House (Auckland), Canterbury Provincial Chambers, and the Waitangi Treaty House. This process led to the creation of the Historic Places Trust in 1955 to promote Aotearoa's Māori and Pākehā heritage. Growing activism among preservationists led to community efforts that saved structures like Wellington's Old St Paul's Cathedral and Rongopai Marae near Waituhi but couldn't save other structures like Nelson's Provincial Building and Auckland's St James Theatre and Arcade. Why were some places retained and others lost?

The paper is situated in the fields of Critical Heritage Studies and public history and follows the premise that heritage is socially constructed and instrumental in the shaping of identities in a variety of ways. The above case studies reveal how communities formed strong affective bonds with their built heritage and these activated preservation efforts; that ideas of what constituted heritage was often contested and mutable; and that heritage has played a pivotal role in shaping and reshaping many New Zealanders' identities and attachments to place.

*Dr Ben Schrader is an independent public historian based in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2022, he was the J. D. Stout Fellow at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. For the fellowship and in 2023, he is writing, with Michael Kelly, a history of historic preservation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ben's previous books include We Call it Home: A History of State Housing in New Zealand (Auckland: Reed, 2005), shortlisted for the New Zealand book awards, and The Big Smoke: New Zealand Cities, 1840-1920 (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), again shortlisted for the New Zealand book awards, while also winning the 2017 W. H. Oliver Prize and the 2017 NZ Heritage Book Award for Non-fiction.*

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# Reconsideration of Urban Design from a Perspective of Coordinative Mechanism in Local Administration: A Case Study of Yokohama's Urban Design Section

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Toshio Taguchi  
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## **Abstract**

*This study is a combined scientific and subjective analysis of the history of the Urban Design Office (UDO) of the Yokohama city administration. The UDO celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022. It is a rare example of a governmental organisation that has survived with the vague institutional objective of doing something for urban design. The UDO began in 1971 as part of the Planning and Coordination Department (PCD) led by Akira Tamura, an eminent urban planner. The goal of the PCD was to introduce new values into city management and development through collaboration with institutions inside and outside local government. In accordance with PCD policies, the UDO achieved several outcomes, such as pedestrian space improvements in the 1970s and the preservation of historical buildings in the 1980s. However, since the 1990s, the role of the UDO has shifted from practitioner to advisor because of policy changes enacted by new mayors. It may be that the UDO has gradually lost the basis for its existence in this process. Today, new urban issues, such as population, environment and gender, are emerging. In these times, if local governments uncritically accept the logic of capital and majority values, they cannot create better cities. The implication of this case study is to re-evaluate urban design in the contemporary context as a practitioner of coordinative mechanisms by local governments as it used to be.*

## **Reconsidering “Urban Design” at Present**

As people acknowledge, classical urban design was represented by three eminent figures: Kevin Lynch (1918-1984), Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) and Gordon Cullen (1914-1994). In 1960, Lynch published *The Image of the City*, and Jacobs published

*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961.<sup>1</sup> Gordon Cullen, in the book *Townscape*, kept a slight distance from these two American scholars, showing an English style of sequential vistas in town and countryside.<sup>2</sup> Cullen's townscape is always composed of a walking person and their perceived sense of place and identity.<sup>3</sup> These three supported such minor values as those esteemed by vulnerable pedestrians or old communities to enjoy the urban environment of an ordinary city. This is why classical urban design started as a new planning and design tool for pedestrian spaces and community improvements. However, we assume that urban design should have a broader prospect, such as enhancing interactions between people and urban culture.

People have argued that globalisation and gentrification would lead to losing local authenticity. This discussion is not limited to the physical environment but rather to various human relationships. As stated, we believe that classical urban design has been created by defending minor values at the initial stage. In this context, we focus on the interactions between urban design and its values. From the viewpoint of urban sociology, the question is, who will coordinate these various values? As Ray Pahl asked in his book *Whose City?*, it is important to examine how values are visioned and coordinated.<sup>4</sup>

While scholars have studied this topic in the theory of urban managers, Pahl's notion has come to be regarded as more important in recent years.<sup>5</sup> Because diverse actors are involved in forming contemporary urban space, it has become unclear "who decides how urban space should be." We see local governments as mediators of diversified actors who contribute to creating contemporary urban spaces. It must be noted that the concept of urban design is difficult to define unambiguously, as it may involve a variety of interpretations. Therefore, it is important for this research that the critical role of urban design lies in how local governments, as mediators, can take advantage of this multiplicity.

Since we have these assumptions, we have chosen the city of Yokohama and its Urban Design Section (UDS) as a model case to examine our ideas. Yokohama's UDS was set up in 1971 as part of the Planning and Coordination Office (PCO) in the city administration and has maintained its mediator's status for the last 50 years until now. Although Yokohama's urban design started as a mediator of concerned bodies within

and outside the city, it has gradually become a classical urban design with limited prospects influenced by the policies of successive mayors.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Inception of Mayor Ichio Asukata’s Municipal Reform**

As previously stated, after the war, a democratic governmental system, which was free from interference from army generals, was born for the first time in Japan. The administrative structure is three-tiered: the national government (state or central government), the 47 prefectures (regional governments) and the 1,741 municipalities (local governments) as of 31 December 2020. Each municipality has an executive head and a legislature. The head of the municipality is directly elected by the citizens, and the citizens also elect the councillors of the legislature.

However, as time passed, conservative politicians and bureaucrats of the pre-war era gradually returned to the forefront and promoted sharp economic growth at an annual rate of over 10% by establishing a highly centralised governmental system. Local governments were relegated to subordinate positions under national ministries and agencies and were required to abide by legislation and subsidisation systems. This structure, which was referred to as “vertically-divided local governments,” was almost beyond the local mayor’s chain of command. The municipality’s primary sources of revenue were and are the citizens’ tax (both resident and corporate) and property tax, though more than half of the revenue was subsidised by the national government as it was impossible to provide local services with these taxes alone.



**Figure 1.** Yokohama in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region  
(Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

Given this social background, Yokohama emerged as the nucleus of a paradigm shift in the socio-political field of the 1960s. Yokohama is now the second largest city in

Japan, with a population of 3.78 million and 437 square kilometres in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region. It is a port city that was first opened to foreign countries in 1859 at the end of the feudal Samurai era. Since then, Yokohama has developed as an industrial and housing city, neighbouring the bustling national centre of Tokyo. Among the cities in the Tokyo Region, Yokohama possesses a cosmopolitan character, transmitted from its early era, while conserving its natural and urban landscapes.



**Figure 2.** Early Yokohama in 1866  
(Courtesy of the Yokohama Archives of History).



**Figure 3.** Skyview of Yokohama 2021  
(Courtesy of Yokohama Harbour Bureau).

In 1963, Ichio Asukata (1915-90; mayoralty term 1963-78), an attorney and member of the National Parliament of the Japanese Socialist Party, narrowly won the election against his conservative counterparts to become the mayor of the Yokohama City Government.<sup>7</sup> He proclaimed the idea of direct democracy by citizens and was determined to create a citizen-centred local administration, later named the Liberal

Local Governmental Movement. Asukata intended to hinder the central government from interfering with local administration without consent. The challenges initiated by Yokohama, followed by other liberal local governments, would ultimately reform the centralised governmental system due to their initiatives.<sup>8</sup> The first term of the Asukata Administration was an era of sprawl from Tokyo caused by population expansion (1.5 million in 1963 and 2.7 million in 1978), with an annual population increase of 100,000 yearly due to high economic growth. Exhaust fumes from factories and cars polluted the air, and the water was contaminated by factory effluent and domestic sewage. The huge population expansion demanded new municipal schools, which required a big investment in terms of building costs and site acquisition. The previous city administrations did not respond to these effectively. Citizens' participation and local government involvement were seen as indispensable in tackling these issues. Therefore, in addition to the political slogans, Asukata needed to establish a system to make the city administration move forward.

### **Reform of Municipal Administration**

The vertically divided system of public administration is a common phenomenon globally. A centralised power structure of national agencies is found in a relatively large number of countries. Both vertically divided systems and centralisation were seen as inevitable when ensuring administrative organisations' efficient and fair functioning aligned with policymakers. However, from around the 1960s in Japan, regional values gradually emerged, mainly in local governments, opposing the national values that formed the background to centralisation. This study hypothesises that cross-organisational coordination is necessary as the engine to eliminate conflicts within municipal administrative structures and to respect regional values. It is also assumed that the vision of the independent and proactive management of the local government, which consists of the mayor's administration and councillors' assembly, for the welfare of citizens, is imperative.

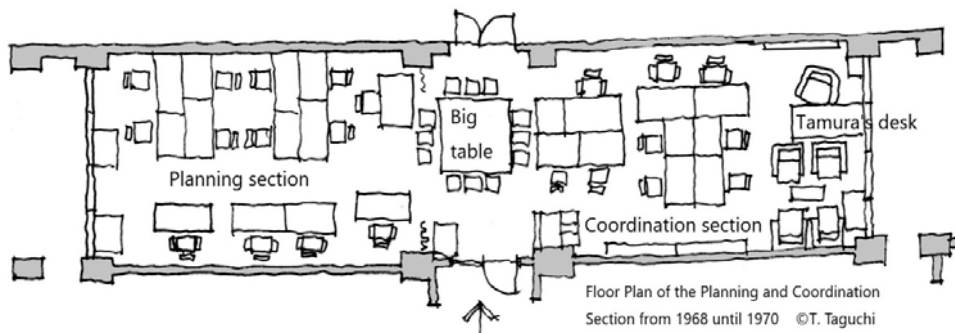
Local administrative systems are expected to address regional issues efficiently and fairly. Regional issues occur locally and often require immediate action. Increasingly, these issues arise in the boundary areas of fixed national ministerial structures owing to changes in the social and global environment. This demands coordination beyond the framework of existing national administrative organisations. As national ministries represent the interests of industries and act in their interests first and foremost, the responses to regional issues are either ignored or significantly delayed. As a result,

municipal organisations are likely to fail to act in line with the mayor’s policies. We presume the “coordinative mechanism (municipal planning and coordination function)” to be a solution to the above-mentioned organisational problems in its system.

### **Akira Tamura’s Concept of Urban Design as Planning and Coordination Function**

Yokohama’s urban design was initiated by Akira Tamura (1926-2010), a renowned urban planner who became the Director of the PCO in 1968. Tamura studied architecture at the University of Tokyo under the architect Kenzo Tange and worked for government ministries and the real estate division of a life insurance company. In 1963, he moved to the Environmental Development Centre established by Takashi Asada, an urban planning visionary in post-war Japan. In preparation for moving to the Centre, Tamura wrote a paper, “The Management of Regional Planning Institutions,” that summarised the structure of the institution and the direction of business development for the strong regional planning board visioned by Asada. Tamura describes the need to hire urban designers.<sup>9</sup>

At that time, urban design in Japan was generally accepted, such as superstructures envisaged by the Metabolism Group formed at the World Design Conference held in Tokyo in 1960. Cutting-edge Japanese architects, such as Kiyonori Kikutake and Kisho Kurokawa and their advisor Tange, who had just published the “Tokyo Bay Plan, 1961,” attended.<sup>10</sup> Contrarily, new urban space movements for a minority of urban dwellers and pedestrians started in the US. Fumihiko Maki, Tange’s old student, became an associate professor at Harvard University in 1962 and taught urban design at graduate school. In his book, *Investigation in Collective Form* (1964), Maki described his new theory of group form with the sense of place formulated by diversified builders over time. Maki’s urban design differed significantly from that of the Metabolism Group. Maki’s theory resonated with Tamura’s urban design philosophy: different entities compose a harmonious urban space over a long period. However, Maki’s practice of urban design ended with this book, and he became known worldwide exclusively as an architect.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 4.** The small unit of the PCO in a small room in 1968  
(Drawing by Atsuhiko Aoki and Toshio Taguchi).

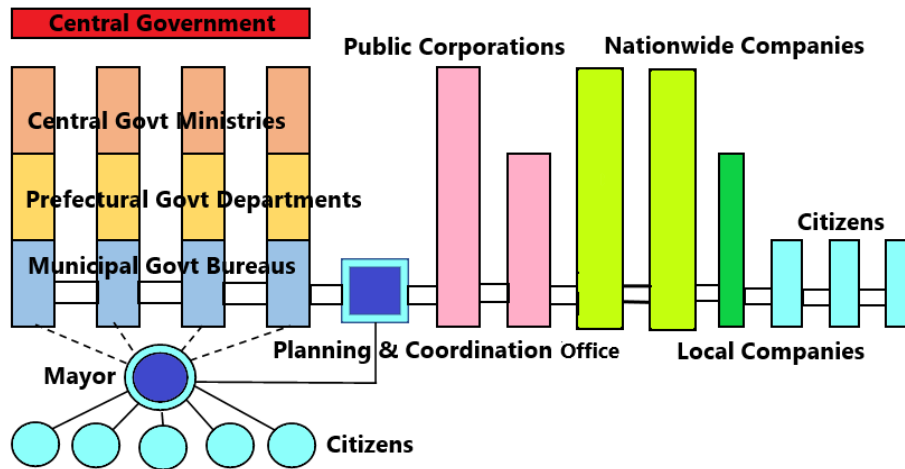
Using Maki, who had returned from the US and opened a design firm in Tokyo, Tamura began his urban design activities in Yokohama.<sup>12</sup> However, experts outside the city office could not be expected to respond promptly and flexibly to the city's needs. Urban design is a “coordinative mechanism” and cannot be done without being on-site. Tamura began to feel the limitations of relying on external experts. Therefore, he began searching for an in-house urban designer. Shunsuke Iwasaki, who had finished the urban design course at Harvard Graduate School, returned to Japan to meet Asukata and Tamura in December 1970. In the 1960s, young people were hungry for “something new,” as was the case with the student movement. Like Iwasaki, the PCO attracted young people from all over the country and abroad. In 1971, Naoyuki Kuniyoshi, who had completed his postgraduate course, joined PCO. Both Iwasaki and Kuniyoshi worked part-time initially. A little later, in 1976, Toshio Nishiwaki, with an architect's career, was seconded from an architect's office to draw up an urban design development plan for Kohoku New Town as a counterproposal to the New Town Corporation. At that time, he saw the cosy pedestrian square being completed beside the city hall.<sup>13</sup> Iwasaki and his colleagues designed it, and Nishiwaki felt that the public sector could do this by designing it independently. Due to the economic recession, urban designers were not recruited the following year. However, a young graduate from the University of Tokyo was specially recruited. It was Takeru Kitazawa, who later moved to the University of Tokyo as an associate professor and returned as a special advisor to Mayor Hiroshi Nakata (mayoralty term 2002-09), and started the reform of the urban design movement in Yokohama. Another young man, Toshio Taguchi, was offered the job by Tamura but turned it down. Taguchi had just returned from studying urban design in the UK. In 1978, he passed the examination and entered city administration.



**Figure 5.** Kusunoki Plaza on the corner of the city hall  
(Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).

The PCO assisted the mayor in setting goals for the city management and worked to achieve these goals by integrating all the concerned bodies inside and outside the administration. The UDS was within the PCO. Tamura believed urban design should be integral to planning and coordination rather than a stand-alone entity. The PCO did not have fixed administrative duties, and all the staff were expected to become able mediators in projects and issues assigned to them. Urban designers were special mediators with design abilities, and they had to coordinate projects based on their outstanding design proposals.<sup>14</sup> At that time, and even today, planning departments in Japanese municipalities were mainly composed of clerical staff. It is rare to find a case like Yokohama City, where the majority of the staff are architects, engineers and urban designers. These staff members would use their expertise and experience to examine and respond to issues. As we have seen, Tamura's ethos of planning and coordination was built around human resources, not organisational structures. His style was intended to galvanise human resources into action.





**Figure 6.** The concept of the PCO by Akira Tamura (Redrawn by Toshio Taguchi, based on Tamura's PhD dissertation).

### Urban Design Section Toward Conservation of Historic Landscapes

Asukata was succeeded in 1978 by Michikazu Saigo as a new mayor who had served as the vice-minister of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The MHA was in a leading position to assess public subsidies from the national budget to the local governments. Therefore, Saigo sceptically viewed Asukata's budgetary management since Asukata was a socialist. In reality, Yokohama's budget had been tightly and well managed without a public deficit. However, Saigo introduced a fiscal-led management system in which local administration was to be conducted within a restriction of a predetermined fiscal framework. This system was recommended by the MHA and followed by other local governments for decades, except Yokohama, where they found a wide range of financial resources for private and public bodies. In July 1978, Tamura relinquished his post as the Director General of the PCO and was due to leave the city in 1981.

In 1982, when the PCO was abolished, the UDS was transferred to the City Planning Bureau. The UDS inherited the secretariat of the Urban Beautification Council (established in 1965 by city by-law) from another section. As Tamura mentioned, the PCO never accepted any formal council to become a secretariat. Nevertheless, the UDS became a position using such a formality in city administration as the Urban Beautification Council. It was required to respond at the mayor's request and issue the necessary deliberations with regard to specific matters of urban landscapes. However, its deliberation was and still is not binding for the mayor to execute. The existence of the Council is highly respected but can be easily ignored. As all urban issues are

related to the mayor's politics, the use of the Council is often political. It implies the need for a robust coordinative mechanism on the side of the secretariat.

The Minato Mirai Project is a redevelopment of Yokohama's central waterfront area, which aims to create an integrated central business district (CBD) spanning a total area of 186 hectares (110 hectares of existing land and 76 hectares of reclaimed land). This new CBD was designed to connect two existing CBDs: the old Kannai District and the new Yokohama Station District. Originally, a major part of the project site was a shipyard (20 hectares) founded in 1891 and owned by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. Planner Tamura proposed this project to Mayor Asukata in 1964 as part of the Six Spine Projects. On-site project implementation began in 1983. In February 1988, the UDS set up a special committee chaired by Professor Teijiro Muramatsu, a renowned architectural historian, to hastily investigate the shipyard's former dock regarding its historical values. The unused old dock owned by Mitsubishi Estate, bought from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, was to be demolished because of a super high-rise tower construction on the site. After a chain of negotiations at the committee and outside it, Mitsubishi Estate agreed to preserve the dock on the site by utilising it as an event space<sup>15</sup>.

The person who initiated this action was Kitazawa, an urban city designer who Tamura assigned to research work on city development history in 1977. In 1988, Kitazawa forged a new public method named "Guidelines for Community Development that Embraces History" to promote the conservation of historical landscapes. This method was, in due course, authorised by the mayor and laid under the jurisdiction of the urban design section. The urban design section now possesses two tools authorised by the mayor and acknowledged as part of local administration with a legal background.<sup>16</sup>

The Cultural Properties Preservation Law 1950 rigidly requires a kind of frozen preservation. Still, the guidelines emphasise the active use of interior and exterior preservation according to the street townscape or surrounding communities. Kitazawa was supported by Takeyoshi Hori, an able colleague in the Yokohama Archives of History, which opened in 1981. Hori was a member of the University Laboratory of Professor Muramatsu. Hori recognised all the historical assets important for urban design activities in Yokohama. They functioned as the nuclei of the coordinative mechanism in terms of historical movements.

### **Urban Design to “Creative Experimental City”**

The conservation of historical landscapes has developed mainly in the old Kannai district. In contrast, at the end of the 1980s, the Minato Mirai district had the potential to develop into a variety of new urban forms.<sup>17</sup> The Minato Mirai district was acknowledged as the leading project for the new mayor, Saigo. Therefore, it was to be understood among people concerned with its redevelopment project to become the “Creative Experimental City” and was to be positioned as a place to exhibit new roles in urban design activities. It seemed at this point that classical urban design would transform itself into a new type of urban design. The “Yokohama Design City Declaration, 1988,” formulated by the UDS and endorsed by Mayor Saigo, refers to the Minato Mirai district as follows:

In order to enhance the attractiveness of Yokohama, we have practiced urban design that coordinates the various actors that make up the city and creates spaces that are identical to Yokohama. We believe that it is essential that in the future Yokohama apply the cumulative effects of its urban design activities to create design as lifestyle and culture that responds to and leads the times. It should be promoted through exchanges between a wide range of design and related fields, together with interior design and fashion, with the city and architecture at the core. Now Yokohama, as a city of creative experimentation, takes “Minato Mirai” as the new urban center of the 21st century and hopes to gather the wisdom of designers from around the world to create a place where comprehensive design for lifestyle and culture can be proposed, discussed, and studied<sup>18</sup>.

Following this declaration, a series of avant-garde activities were to be planned and executed in the district of Minato Mirai to show the new roles of urban design to the public. It is true that this declaration intended to expand the meaning of urban design activities and position Minato Mirai as a place where “collaborative design as lifestyle and culture” could be realised. This could become an evolution of classical urban design by opening up to the lifestyle and culture as a whole and, consequently, would induce lifestyle and cultural industries to come to Minato Mirai.<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 7.** High-rise buildings in Minato Mirai  
(Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).

As the first leading project based on this declaration, the Barcelona and Yokohama City Creation (BAY'90) was held in Minato Mirai in 1990. It was intended to show the public a model design city by providing comprehensive information on Barcelona, Spain, which had an integrated design network among urban engineering, architecture, industrial design, fashion and comics. It was positioned as a prelude to the Yokohama Urban Design Forum, to be held in 1992. After this exhibition, a new mayor, Hidenobu Takahide (mayoralty term 1990-2002), was elected.

Following BAY'90, the Yokohama Urban Design Forum was held in 1992. At this time, an international competition was held for a development proposal in Minato Mirai for the future urban vision of the central area of Yokohama City. In this forum, several topics were discussed regarding the future of Yokohama as a design city. Regrettably, no specific details for implementation were presented, nor was there any mention of the prospects of realising proposals in Minato Mirai. The lack of a new urban design vision led to various expectations and gratuitous opinions among discussants. These discussions were limited to proposals and did not have practical meaning. Although Minato Mirai, with a slogan of the “creative experimental city,” was to provide the possibility of expanding urban design, in the end, no new elements were added to the urban design, and it stayed in a limited field of the preservation of historic landscapes.<sup>20</sup>

During the mayoralty term of Takahide in the 1990s, Minato Mira progressed smoothly in terms of urban development. Mayor Takahide, although once a top bureaucrat in the Ministry of Construction, supported urban design activities and citizen participation. However, at this time, the UDS could not encourage all actors concerned with the Minato Mirai to start a new movement as part of the Creative Experimental City. Instead, these actors seemed busy with their short-sighted business activities. Gradually, the term “Creative Experimental City” was no longer used to describe Minato Mirai.

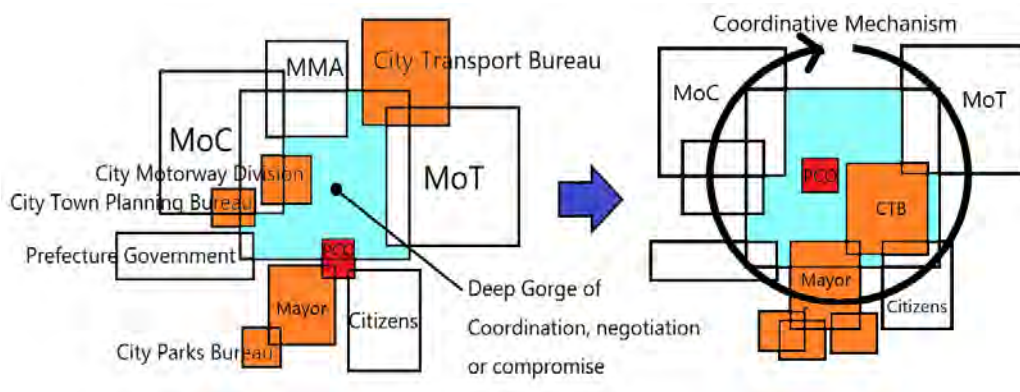
### **Conclusion**

Since the UDS in the 1970s was characterised by its atypical fluidity, it coordinated the various actors concerned when planning pedestrian spaces. Although the UDS survived as part of the administration, it gradually resorted to preserving historical buildings and landscapes amid institutional modifications created by the conservative mayors.

Concentrating on preserving historic landscapes and operating the Urban Beautification Council was one possible choice to strengthen the urban design section as part of its administration. The various events held in the Minato Mirai district between the end of the 1980s and the 1990s provided possibilities for the UDS to transform itself from its old style to a new one. The district was named “Creative Experimental City” and positioned as a place to propose and practice new roles for urban design. Unfortunately, such proposals were never implemented.

The implication of this case study is to re-evaluate urban design in the contemporary context as a practitioner of coordinative mechanisms by local governments. An overview diagram of the planning and coordination functions of local government is shown in Figure 8. In order to coordinate policies that have been divided among different ministries and agencies, it is essential to have human resources capable of making comprehensive decisions and a top management organisation to coordinate such human resources. Urban design is thought to have meant gathering unique human resources to flexibly absorb the opinions of diverse urban actors and actively propose urban policies. In the past, the City of Yokohama’s Urban Design Office did not necessarily hold only the majority viewpoint but also put forward many radical proposals ahead of their time, as seen in the development of pedestrian spaces that

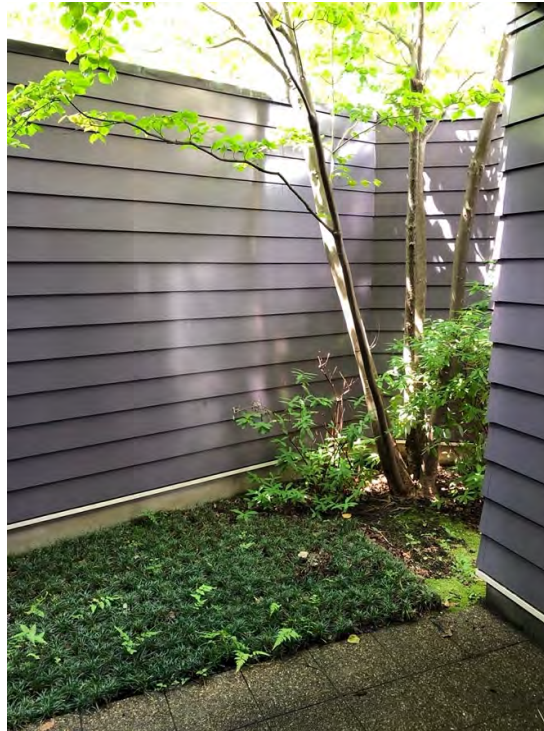
went against economic rationality. Today, urban problems of a kind never seen before are emerging. When considering urban design in these times, it is essential to have a perspective that goes back and forth between multiple departments to conceive of a comprehensive urban space. The planning and coordination functions may play a significant role in this regard, but there has not yet been a sufficient accumulation of research on this function. Further study on this function is an issue to be addressed.



**Figure 8.** Urban Design is part of the Coordinative Mechanism (Diagram by Atsuhiko Aoki and Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 9.** A thanks letter from Elementary School pupils in Yokohama for a lecture given by an old urban designer. Urban design exists for future generations (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 10.** Planting a tree in a tiny garden can produce a cool breeze during heat waves. Environmentally conscious house design is part of urban design that starts from a small consideration (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).

## Endnotes

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# Learning with Lutyens: Noel Bamford and the Design of Ngahere, Auckland (1907)

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## Abstract

*Architects F. Noel Bamford (1881-1952) and A.P. Hector Pierce (1879-1918) both worked in Edwin Lutyens' London office before establishing their Auckland partnership in 1907. Just prior to the formation of the partnership, Bamford designed a house called Ngahere in the Auckland suburb of Epsom.*

*Ngahere is known as an early and important example of Arts and Crafts architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a novel application of the butterfly plan, with a dominant central section and two articulated wings. Although built in timber on a foundation of basalt, like some larger villas in surrounding Mount Eden, in its plan and form it was unlike any other house in Auckland.*

*This paper explores the design of Ngahere considering Bamford's knowledge and experience of Arts and Crafts architecture, including that gained during his time in Lutyens' office. It asks whether this house is true to the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement as conceived in England, using pre-industrial forms, traditional construction methods and hand-crafting, or shows evidence of other geographical paths of the Arts and Crafts movement such as the United States and Australia. Additionally, it asks whether aspects of the house relative to planning (including relationship to the site), built form, materials and detailing are reflected in later Bamford and Pierce houses, or more widely in Arts and Crafts houses in the Auckland region.*

*The paper shows that while Bamford's time in Lutyens' office apparently provided him with a repertoire of design skills and ideas, it did not render him an acolyte. Rather, Ngahere included clear references to the broader architectural lineage and direction of the Arts and Crafts movement in*

*England and beyond, apparent in the ways the house responds to its site and context, including the visual and physical relationships between indoor and outdoor spaces.*

## Introduction

This paper is part of a larger project exploring the contribution made to the Arts and Crafts movement in domestic architecture in Auckland by Bamford & Pierce. The firm operated from 1907 until 1916. There is no centralised collection of drawings or records available, and few Council records. Information available is fragmented, which makes research difficult, but captivating. The role each architect in the firm played in each project is unknown because the drawings are not signed. This paper presents a house designed by Frederick Noel Bamford (1881-1952) prior to the formation of the partnership with Arthur Frederick Hector Pierce (1879-1918) in 1907,<sup>1</sup> so the design can be attributed to Noel Bamford alone. This house is known as Ngahere (Figure 1). It is the earliest of his known houses that has survived and demonstrates the application of ideas learned from working with Edwin Lutyens in London, lectures attended, reading material available and travel within England. It is situated close to the volcanic cone traditionally known as Maungawhau, and adapted for the local context in terms of the character of the site and the prevailing light timber frame construction industry in New Zealand.



**Figure 1.** Ngahere in its original form as viewed from Maungawhau c1915-20 (Photograph by Frederick George Radcliffe. Part of Image ID 264\_1 supplied by Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections).

Bamford continued alone in private practice after the dissolution of the partnership, still practising from the same premises. The lack of tender notices, except for the redraining of a house in Epsom,<sup>2</sup> and construction of three tram shelters for the Takapuna Borough Council,<sup>3</sup> suggests that his workload in late 1916 was meagre. In early 1917, on the recommendation of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, Bamford was appointed as director and lecturer for the new School of Architecture at Auckland University College, lecturing on the 'art side'. He was to be assisted by an older architect and engineer Ashley John Barsley Hunter (1854-1932), appointed to lecture on the 'mechanical side'.<sup>4</sup> Both Bamford and Hunter resigned from their positions in 1919.<sup>5</sup> Bamford did not advertise for tenders for further construction projects until 1922,<sup>6</sup> raising questions about his reasons for resignation from the School of Architecture.

### **The Range of Domestic Designs of Bamford, and Bamford & Pierce**

There was considerable diversity in the houses of Bamford & Pierce. Almost ubiquitous was the use of steep roofs and symmetrical gables and hips generally clad in Marseilles terracotta tiles, but form, planning and materiality varied considerably. The extensive use of shingle was far ahead of most houses of the time, which only used small areas of shingles on gable ends or window hoods, although greater areas were used from about 1912 in transitional villas and early bungalows. Bamford & Pierce also used shingle cladding over extensive areas of wall as in the American Shingle Style, frequently with weatherboards cladding the ground floor and shingles cladding the upper floor and gable ends. The practice also designed in brick. A roughcast house was advertised for tender in 1915 in the emerging coastal suburb of St Heliers, but remains unidentified.<sup>7</sup>

Each Bamford & Pierce house identified had originality in its design, although certain elements and details were repeated. Looking at their entire known design portfolio, it is evident that some of the houses of the practice were a local interpretation of the Arts and Crafts movement, others carried some influence of the movement, and some largely departed from it in the latter years of the practice. Some were a single storey, others mostly a single storey with some attic rooms, while others again were two full storeys. One unusual example was a split-level bungalow.

Ngahere stands alone as a butterfly plan known to be entirely designed by Bamford. It was an adaptation to the Arts and Crafts movement to the local context.

### **The Richmond Family, its Houses and its Architects**

In June 1907, tenders were invited for the construction of Ngahere.<sup>8</sup> It was to be built on the Rockwood Estate for Mrs Jeannie Stirling Richmond (1845-1917), as a gift to her daughter Margaret Gillies Aitken Richmond (1882-1972) and her new husband Donald Francis MacCormick (1870-1945). Jeannie Richmond had been living at another house on the Rockwood estate with her three daughters and her uncle William Aitken (1826-1901). When he died, she inherited the estate.

Bamford had returned to Auckland from London in 1906, after achieving Associate Membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects while working for Edwin Lutyens, for three to four years. This had built on his experience while articulated to leading architect Edward Bartley (1839-1912) in Auckland from 1899 to 1903.<sup>9</sup> Before moving to England, Bamford would have become knowledgeable about New Zealand construction practices, especially construction using light timber framing.

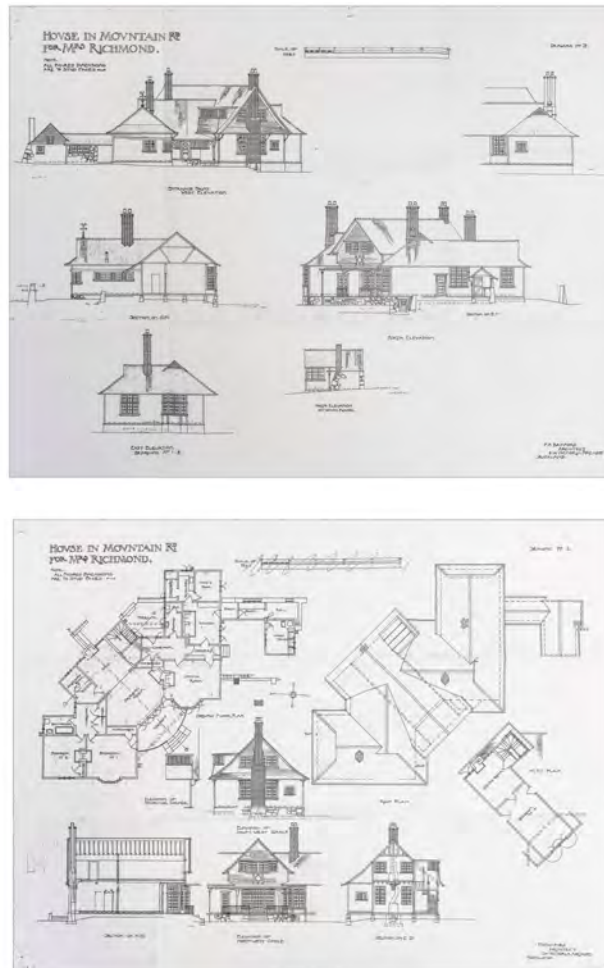
Bamford's introduction to the Richmond family is likely to have come from his brother Harry Dean Bamford (1878-1922), who married Jean Aitken Richmond (1882-1973). Their own house Woodend was designed on land in the estate by Bamford in 1914.<sup>10</sup> While Ngahere was under construction in 1907, Bamford formed a partnership with Hector Pierce, who had worked in Lutyens' office during Bamford's later years with Lutyens, but Pierce had delayed his return from London due to a further work opportunity.<sup>11</sup>

The known tender drawings that remain for Ngahere include two sheets of plans, sections and elevations. As with the few remaining and known drawings by Bamford & Pierce, or Bamford alone, there is no date on the drawings for Ngahere, nor any indication of a draftsman. The third drawing available is a copy of the drainage blank by Bamford & Pierce, held in Auckland Council records.

### **Architectural Description**

Ngahere is the earliest identified house known to be attributed to Bamford, and indicates his design interests prior to the partnership with Pierce. It is based on the concept of the butterfly plan, also known as the suntrap plan, associated with some English Arts and Crafts houses. The central portion included two upper rooms under the main gable, accessed by stairs from the entrance foyer. In all other respects the

house was a single storey. The plan created a single suntrap with a garden front on the north-east side of the house, providing an outdoor area sheltered from Auckland's prevailing wind from the south-west (Figures 2 and 3).

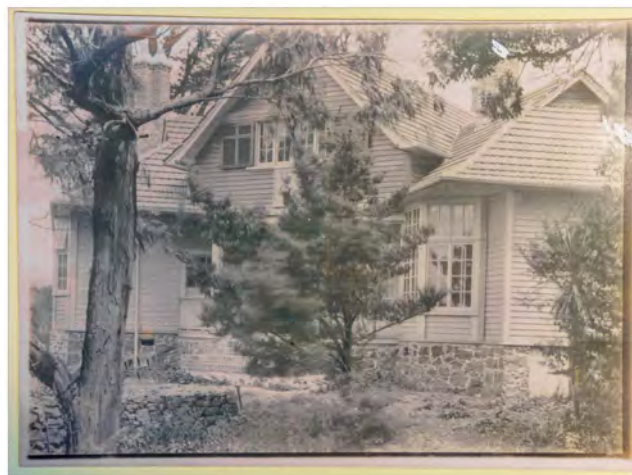


**Figures 2 and 3.** Plans, sections and elevations of Ngahere (Original drawings with Auckland War Memorial Museum; copies with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, reproduced courtesy of Dorothy MacKinnon).

Ngahere has two wings attached to a higher gabled element at the centre of the house (referred to in this paper as the living wing), which has the form and proportions of a pre-industrial English house. Although now expanded into other attic spaces and reconfigured, the upper level originally included a sewing room and bedroom. The hall below retains a wide opening to the drawing room which originally had double doors to achieve open planning, but these doors have now been removed, leaving the opening. The hall gives a discrete access to the bedroom wing.

The living wing is set at 45 degrees to Mountain Road facing south-west. A wing on each side splays out at a 45 degree angle to the living wing, each with the ridge of the roof set significantly lower than the ridge of the living wing. Each side wing has a subsidiary roof folding back at a 90 degree angle to meet the living wing, with the ridge set slightly lower again. This conveys a sense of repose, further emphasized by the eaves bell casts in the roof forms. To the north of the living wing is the entrance porch, facing Mountain Road, and to the east of the living hall there is another porch with a door accessing the bedroom wing. The entrance door leads to a generous corridor which connects the private spaces of the house (now altered), the dining room, the stairs, and the hall.

The three wings of the house converge at the private garden front. The upper level, now with a wider window, extends forward above the drawing room, reminiscent of a jettied roof but with some support at each end (Figure 4). Abutting this to the east is the dining room with access to the entrance corridor, but no access to the drawing room was originally intended. The original kitchen design includes a service passage between the kitchen and dining room in the American manner<sup>12</sup> (but now removed). The dining room has a large bay window entirely covered by a deep roof overhang.



**Figure 4.** Garden front (Photograph possibly taken by Arthur Heather Aitken, killed in action in 1917. Original image previously owned by Margaret MacCormick; now with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, reproduced courtesy of Dorothy MacKinnon)

The bedroom wing contains two bedrooms and a bathroom, as well as a changing area. The larger bedroom has a shallow bay window under the eaves. The bedroom area has its own entrance from an external porch.

The original plans and an early photographic image (Figure 5) show the outdoor utilities wing, which extended from a porch on the service wing along the Mountain Road frontage and was built in stone with a novel crooked chimney on the end wall. It housed boot and fuel storage, and a laundry.



**Figure 5.** Utilities wing (Photograph possibly taken by Arthur Heather Aitken, killed in action in 1917. Original image previously owned by Margaret MacCormick; now with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, reproduced courtesy of Dorothy MacKinnon).

As designed, Ngahere had its main entrance directly facing Mountain Road, beneath a flat roof. A gabled roof has been added, as well as a lychgate. Apart from the entrance porch, which was originally designed in an unobtrusive form typical of Arts and Crafts houses, the house largely turns its back on Mountain Road, although there was a servants and trade entrance between the utilities wing and the north end of the house, accessed through a gap in the boundary wall.

An early photographic image shows Ngahere was largely built with light timber construction and a foundation wall of basalt, except for the outdoor utilities wing, accessed through a porch and constructed with basalt, but now destroyed. The roof of the house was originally clad in terracotta tiles, but these tiles have now been replaced with concrete tiles.

### **Noel Bamford's Commitment to the Arts and Crafts Movement**

Bamford had a particular interest in the Arts and Crafts movement. At the first Annual Meeting of Auckland's Arts and Crafts Club in December 1912, Bamford was elected President. At this meeting there was a discussion about the possibility of bringing together all the disciplines involved in creating Arts and Crafts buildings, mirroring similar discussions that led to similar Arts and Crafts associations in England some 30 years before. Bamford's availability for office on 20 December 1912 shows a remarkable commitment to the Arts and Crafts movement, given his new family home in Remuera, completed in 1911-12, had been destroyed by fire, while it was unoccupied, only six weeks prior to the meeting.<sup>13</sup> In 1928, as Bamford's very modest private practice in Auckland was coming to an end, he was appointed to the Board of Maori Arts and Crafts chaired by Minister of Internal Affairs, Sir Maui Pomare, suggesting a competence in this subject.<sup>14</sup>

A clue to Bamford's early application of Arts and Crafts thought in New Zealand is found in the only project by Bamford for which drawings are held in the Architecture Archive of the University of Auckland. It is a house based on a mature example of the villa but it has a large attic storey, with steep roof forms in a Gothic manner. The location given is Ranfurly Road. Aerial photographs of this road taken as early as 1940 do not reveal this house. It may relate to a project for which Bamford called for tenders in 1907.<sup>15</sup> In the sketch plan the house turns its back on the street and has its entrance door on one side, and a garden front entrance in the place that the front door would normally be present in a villa, but in this instance is facing the garden to the rear. It suggests an attempt to meld English Gothic design with the New Zealand villa, on a site divided into outdoor courts, including an open garden court, a secluded garden court with seating, a service court and an entrance court to the road. This is found in some of the work of Bamford & Pierce.

### **Key Identities in the Development of the Arts and Crafts House**

The Arts and Crafts movement in domestic design arose in England. It was subject to change as it spread to the rest of Britain, Europe and the New World, especially North America, Australia and New Zealand.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) defined the close relationship that could exist between nature and architecture from the early Victorian era, believing that landscapes were a



divine creation that arose from a co-operative order, in the manner of a design.<sup>16</sup> This led to his view that good architecture should have organic qualities and relate to its physical and cultural context.<sup>17</sup>

Ruskin's belief that English architectural design should relate to English history and landscape was given form in the architecture of George Devey (1820-1886), who used historical precedent found in early cottages in his work from about 1848.<sup>18</sup> Notable amongst his pupils was Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941).<sup>19</sup>

Ruskin was also influential in the work of Phillip Webb (1831-1915), beginning with the Red House (built 1858-59) for William and Jane Morris. Webb designed it in collaboration with Morris, who became an important advocate for the Arts and Crafts movement. Morris designed the interior of the Red House.<sup>20</sup> While for Ruskin good building was fully expressed in the Gothic, Webb took a broader view, without reliance on historical revival styles.<sup>21</sup> Morris was an avid promotor of many of Ruskin's ideals, translating them into a new approach to furniture, furnishings and stained glass.

In England, it was not until the early 1880s that a younger generation of architects, including some that trained under Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), established associations to procure buildings using the way of thinking and design envisaged by Ruskin, then Morris, and reflected in the Red House.<sup>22</sup>

Under the Arts and Crafts movement, traditional brick and stone buildings referencing the local and historic contexts became common, but not universal. A finish of roughcast known in medieval buildings was widely used by Voysey.<sup>23</sup> Cladding using a heavy timber frame and infill also featured in Voysey's work, but generally to limited areas such as the gable ends, as at Walnut Tree Farm in 1890.<sup>24</sup> In some later examples he used a roughcast alone, but with a more articulated surface that created dramatic shadowing, as in Perrycroft at Lake Windermere (1893-84).<sup>25</sup>

Luytens' picturesque houses in Surrey, clad in weatherboard, were built during the early phase of his career, based on his expertise in the vernacular building methods of Surrey, which he had obtained working in a carpenter's workshop prior to commencing his architectural studies.<sup>26</sup> From 1898 to 1900 Lutyens continued in a similar vein, using increasingly symmetrical plans, followed by a greater variety of style and design early in the new century, and the use of an increasingly classical approach.<sup>27</sup>

During the Arts and Crafts movement in domestic design, particular attention was paid to admission of sunlight to the interior. There was also a move towards more open planning, and visual and physical connections to the exterior, achieved by using narrow and diffuse plans. To an extent this was trialled in Webb's house for Morris, which has an L-shaped plan and wings composed of a single row of rooms off one side of a corridor. It also had application in houses with more complex plans.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Origins and Development of the Butterfly Plan**

Shaw designed a precursor to the butterfly plan in his use of three wings in the additions to Chesters, to create a curved entrance façade with an Ionic colonnade in a Baroque style.<sup>29</sup> The butterfly plan also formed the basis for the development of the suntrap plan when it was refined as two wings extending from a central element including a hall, as shown in a house designed by Edward Prior known as the Barn in Exmouth, built in 1895-96. In this case Prior shaped the hall as an extended hexagon to efficiently use the triangular spaces inherent in the use of a butterfly plan. At Home Place at Norfolk (1903-04), Prior used a side entrance through an outer hall which led to a corridor between the garden front and central hall.<sup>30</sup> In 1903 Lutyens was commissioned to undertake modifications to Papillon Hall in Leicestershire, immediately before Bamford entered his office. Luytens had been impressed when he visited Chesters in 1901.<sup>31</sup> Lutyens' Papillon Hall also involved the addition of three wings to an existing building, with the third wing adjoining the part of the additions which incorporated an entrance vestibule within a colonnade leading into the circular 'basin court', through an outer hall, into the main hall.<sup>32</sup> It was Prior's butterfly plans, based on a central section with two wings and on the scale of a cottage, which began the association between the butterfly plan type and the Arts and Crafts movement.<sup>33</sup>

Australian architects experimented with the butterfly plan. Some incipient examples are very early, including the Purchas homestead in Gippsland, Victoria (1892).<sup>34</sup> The Alexander Troup house at Strathfield is a single-level house which had two angled rooms in a largely orthogonal plan designed by George Sydney Jones (1865-1927) in 1894. Another butterfly plan was used by Kent and Budden in the Weeden House at Hunters Hill in 1904, in which two bedrooms occupied the centre section of the ground floor, the drawing room was in one wing and the dining room (and kitchen) in the other wing. Harriet Edquist concludes that these Australian examples do not demonstrate a

direct relationship with the prominent English examples of the time and appear to be the result of original thinking.<sup>35</sup>

### **Shaw's Impact in the United States and Subsequent Developments**

During the 1870s and 1880s Shaw's Old English style had a particular impact in North America. A change in materiality to suit the predominant timber construction in North America formed a basis for the Shingle Style, which came from interpretations of Shaw's work by Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886). This was further developed by younger architects in his office and other architects, all in parallel with published plan books used by builders.<sup>36</sup> On the East Coast of the United States many of the initial Arts and Crafts houses developed within the Shingle Style, such as Frank Lloyd Wright's initial house in Oak Park, Illinois (1886). Such houses had more American inflexions because the Shingle Style referenced post-medieval American Colonial houses from New England, using simple colonial interiors reminiscent of the pioneers, or intense demonstrations of the excesses of the Gilded Age. The arrival of the Arts and Crafts movement resulted in more diverse expressions than those of England, which became more varied over time as the movement spread. Shingle Style houses developed formal and stylistic American inflexions from the mid-1870s due to growing interest in post-medieval American Colonial houses from New England, through celebrations of nationhood during the centenary of the Declaration of Independence of 1776.<sup>37</sup>

On the West Coast of the United States, a subsequent version of the Shingle Style appeared in about 1890, and continued into the new century. The California Shingle Style was closely aligned with the Arts and Crafts movement and Craftsman houses. It featured finely crafted structures expressed internally, as well as cladding of redwood shingles and redwood boards, often fixed directly over the intricate structure. The main exponent of the style was Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957). His work reflected his Northern European heritage and the American Craftsman style.<sup>38</sup>

### **Assessment of Ngahere based on the Original Plans**

Bamford's butterfly plan using two folded wings (each roofed by a main hip and a lower perpendicular roof with a gable vent in each wing) is an innovation. In its planning, it draws on aspects of Prior's design for the Barn, especially in the use of an extended hexagonal shape for the drawing room, although Prior used this for the hall.

The house adopts English preindustrial design in its forms, in the tradition established by Devey. Bamford's design also reflected Prior's entry to Home Place in Norfolk (1903-05) by providing an entrance through a wing so that the central portion could include a hall and drawing room, as well as the staircase which is walled off outside the hall and internally appears more as part of the entrance corridor. Home Place included a double-height hall with a gallery that was promptly enclosed because the hall became very cold.<sup>39</sup> This may have been known to Bamford when he designed an attic storey over the hall and drawing room at Ngahere.

The entrance foyer is generous for its purpose, giving direct access to the dining room, stairway and hall. It serves a similar purpose to the outer hall use by Lutyens at Papillon Hall. Although it does not have a fireplace, its size and proportions allow it to be more than a transitional space; it could also accommodate people during large gatherings, but its utility for this purpose is reduced by a relatively narrow doorway with a sliding door to the hall, limited in width by the presence of the stairway.

Due to its design as a complex clustering of forms, Ngahere presents itself very differently from various viewing points, a quality which recurred in subsequent Bamford & Pierce houses. An early image from within the Rockwood Estate shows that the bedroom wing, with its lower roof heights and gabled forms, approximates a Georgian form. In this sense Bamford's design reflects Lutyens' move towards the use of classical proportions and elements in the early twentieth century. The house at Rockwood dating from c1870 was altered by engineer and architect Ashley Hunter from 1902.<sup>40</sup> Hunter added a central wing with a gable, large bay windows and a new roof of terracotta tiles. This may have influenced aspects of the form of Ngahere through client preference or Bamford's consideration of the design and appearance of the other buildings on the Rockwood Estate as part of the context for the new house. The stable below had a central one-and-a-half storey portion with a steep roof and perpendicular wings at a lower level. Aspects of commonality of design elements of both these buildings appear on Ngahere, although the composition differs.

Bamford's design results in a very complex roof, which could be regarded as unnecessary in that it could have been simplified to a single roof over each wing with only minor plan adjustments. As viewed from the street, it creates a strong impression of repose, and a level of complexity commensurate with a larger house with four wings. This artifice is aided and abetted by intrusion of some of the spaces largely

under the roofs of the wings into the volume of the living hall and drawing room. The exterior of the house reflects the complexity of the plan more than the nature of internal spaces, and externally also mimics, through its complexity and clustering, the rock outcrops which previously dominated the immediate area.

Bamford used primarily light timber frame construction at Ngahere, largely clad with weatherboards but with some features clad with timber shingles. He would have been highly familiar with this construction method after working for Edward Bartley for some four years before leaving for England. The carpenters constructing this house must have been very skilled artisans to achieve the complex angles in the roof framing, even though the construction methods were typical of domestic construction in Auckland at the time, but excessive complexity would have come at a cost. Bamford seems to have learned a lesson through the construction of Ngahere. In 1913, in judging student work in the First Annual Exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Club, he praised the winning entry: "The house sits well under the roof, which is not unduly cut about."<sup>41</sup>

The basalt foundation wall provides an organic connection with the site and the area. The utilities wing, which seems to have masqueraded as an earlier cottage and was in a sense an attached folly, referencing early Auckland buildings that had a better quality of stonework. The use of stone on the foundation wall and garden walls provides an additional sense of crafting to the house. Dense basalt is an almost intractable stone in terms of shaping, so the use of rough stone in the foundation wall is a rational decision.

Internally, the house includes an emphasis on its public spaces. Movement from the Gothic front door through the public rooms of the house is carefully choreographed so that each room is appreciated in sequence. The guests enter through the front door into the large transverse corridor with the door to the dining room to the left. To the right are the stairs to the upper level, and beyond this is a narrow opening to the hall, with a single sliding door. The hall fireplace has been replaced. The hall connects with the drawing room through a wide opening that previously included sliding double doors. The drawing room has its own fireplace, placed in a corner location at the end of the room. This ensures that there is the traditional warm welcome in the hall but also the amenity of a second fireplace in the adjoining room. There is a vista from the hall through the drawing room to the garden front.

Bamford's sequence of spaces is composed of rooms which are not easy to furnish, but it achieves a more open plan than Shaw's Early English houses which have additional ancillary spaces around the hall. The dining room is separate allowing a more intimate space. The plans show a single door between the drawing room and dining room but this is not present, and it is unclear if it was ever installed. The original fireplace in the hall (now removed), reflects some of the Lutyens' fireplace designs in a generic way, as shown in Figure 6. The interior decoration and some detailing has changed due to successive alterations, but a beamed ceiling survives in the dining room and another in the hall, each with decorative carpenter's joints in the beam across the chimney breast. The stairway, with newel posts in various designs in a manner reminiscent of Lutyens, also survives, as do the stained-glass windows around the entry door, which reference Frank Lloyd Wright and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Most of the exposed internal timber is clear finished rimu, although the ceiling beams in the dining room and hall have a dark stain reminiscent of medieval buildings. Except for the use of carpenter's joints attaching the beam across the chimney breast in the two beamed ceilings, there is no attempt to suggest a crafted finish in interior timbers.



**Figure 6.** View from the drawing room to the hall, corridor and stairs in Ngahere. The original hall fireplace, which references Lutyens' work, can be seen (Photograph possibly taken by Arthur Heather Aitken, killed in action in 1917. Original image previously owned by Margaret MacCormick. Now with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, reproduced courtesy of Dorothy MacKinnon).

The strongest connections between the house and its curtilage occur at the garden front, which has windows and/or doors to the main bedroom, the drawing room below

and a bedroom projecting above, and the dining room with its large bay windows. Externally the importance of the spaces, from the point of view of a guest, is largely reflected in the stepping down of the roof.

An unusual aspect in the design, possibly related to the desire to use a butterfly plan, is that there were only two bedrooms grouped together with a bathroom. The third bedroom, at the other end of the house, was for the maid, and the fourth upstairs and accessed through the sewing room without proximity to a bathroom. It is tempting to regard the upper floor as a woman's retreat rather than an available bedroom. It was unsuitable as a family home if there were many children.

### **Conclusion**

The early work of Noel Bamford demonstrates the application of design strategies learned in England, while working under Edwin (later Sir Edwin) Lutyens, to the New Zealand context. In this instance Bamford created a beautiful house, but at the scale of even a large Auckland home it seems to have compromised some aspects of domestic living, especially in relation to the placing of bedrooms, to achieve his goals in regard to plan and form.

The interior spaces are reflected in a coherent exterior expression which, with a form that related to pre-industrial English design, inspired a number of the leading Arts and Crafts architects in England. The construction methods accord with the practices of the building industry in New Zealand at the time, largely received from North America but modified locally.

Strengths of the house include its ability to accommodate large numbers of guests and a variety of strongly connected spaces to enjoy, each with its own qualities in terms of orientation, sunlight access and interior design, including Arts and Crafts details and stained glass in the walls at the front entry. It also has a strong connection between the living areas and the garden through the garden front, which includes the main bedroom, which has beautiful views to the garden expanded by a bay window.

In Ngahere, Bamford achieved a design that has some dominance, especially over the living wing, but also a quiet repose. It uses aspects of the architectural tradition beginning with Devey, followed by Shaw, and notable Arts and Crafts architects such as Voysey and Lutyens. Bamford added his own ideas and adapted the design for

local building practices using light timber construction. The materiality is local and related to the nature of the site, which is spatially connected to the interior by openings and transitional spaces.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Papers Past: "Partnership Notice," *New Zealand Herald*, 11 October 1907, 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *Auckland Star*, 6 June 1916, 7.
- <sup>3</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *Auckland Star*, 15 July 1916, 4.
- <sup>4</sup> Papers Past: "School of Architecture," *Auckland Star*, 9 March 1917, 4.
- <sup>5</sup> Papers Past: "University College," *New Zealand Herald*, 19 August 1919, 9.
- <sup>6</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *Auckland Star*, 21 September 1922, 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 September 1915, 12.
- <sup>8</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *New Zealand Herald*, 6 June 1907, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Peter Macky and Paul Waite, *Coolangatta: A Homage* (Auckland: Lividia Publishers, 2010), 77.
- <sup>10</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *New Zealand Herald*, 19 June 1914, 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Papers Past: Personal Items From London, *New Zealand Herald*, 12 March 1907, 6.
- <sup>12</sup> Harry Newbold Bryant, *House and Cottage Construction*, 3 vols. (London: Caxton, c1917), I, 62.
- <sup>13</sup> Papers Past: "Fire at Remuera," *New Zealand Herald*, 12 November 1912, 8.
- <sup>14</sup> Papers Past: "Maori Arts and Crafts," *Poverty Bay Herald*, 22 September 1928, 17.
- <sup>15</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *Auckland Star*, 4 February 1907, 8.
- <sup>16</sup> Joke Brouwer, Mulder Arden and Lars Spuybroek, "Vital Beauty," in *Vital Beauty: Reclaiming Aesthetics in the Tangle of Technology and Nature*, ed. Joke Brouwer, Mulder Arden and Lars Spuybroek (Rotterdam: V2 Publishing, 2011), 8.
- <sup>17</sup> Mark Frost, "Entering the 'Circles of Vitality': Beauty, Sympathy and Fellowship," in *Vital Beauty*, ed. Brouwer, Arden and Spuybroek, 141.
- <sup>18</sup> Jill Alibone, *George Devey: Architect 1820-1886* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1991), 29.
- <sup>19</sup> Alibone, *George Devey*, 136.
- <sup>20</sup> Sheila Kirk, *Phillip Webb: Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 20.
- <sup>21</sup> Kirk, *Phillip Webb*, 102.
- <sup>22</sup> Kirk, *Phillip Webb*, 100.
- <sup>23</sup> Peter Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture* (London: Phaidon, 1995), 92.
- <sup>24</sup> Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 92.
- <sup>25</sup> Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 92-93.
- <sup>26</sup> Hayward Arts Gallery, *Lutyens: The Works of the English Architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944)* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1981), 58.
- <sup>27</sup> Gavin Stamp, *Sir Edwin Lutyens: The Arts and Crafts Houses* (Mulgrave Victoria: Images Publishing, 2017), 165.
- <sup>28</sup> Jill Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan: 1840-1947* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan and Paul Ltd, 1981), 235.
- <sup>29</sup> Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan*, 233.
- <sup>30</sup> Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 82-83.
- <sup>31</sup> Gavin Stamp, *Edwin Lutyens: Country Houses* (London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2001), 124.
- <sup>32</sup> Jill Franklin, "Edwardian Butterfly Houses," *Architectural Review*, No.938 (April 1975): 220-22.
- <sup>33</sup> Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House and its Plan*, 233.
- <sup>34</sup> Harriet Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 35.
- <sup>35</sup> Edquist, *Pioneers of Modernism*, 26.
- <sup>36</sup> Roger Hale Newton, *Town and Davis Architects: Pioneers in American Revivalist Architecture 1812-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 13.



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<sup>37</sup> Vincent Scully Jr., *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright* (New Haven: Yale Publications in the History of Art, 1971), 19-22.

<sup>38</sup> Davey, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 201-02.

<sup>39</sup> Franklin, *The Gentleman's Country House and Its Plan*, 235.

<sup>40</sup> Papers Past: Tenders, *Auckland Star*, 4 September 1902, Column 8, Page 8.

<sup>41</sup> Papers Past: "Auckland Arts & Crafts Club: First Annual Exhibition," *Progress*, VIII, No. 5 (19 January 1913): 239.

# Women, Care, and the Settler Nation: The Victorian Country Women's Association, 1928

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## **Abstract**

*Care has long been a gendered attribute, frequently associated with women but rarely, until very recently, understood as an ethic and action shaping the built environment. This paper proposes using the lens of care to uncover women's material culture contributions to the built environment. Histories that focus on the formal intersection of architecture and town planning and their professional identities can exclude women makers who, historically had to find other ways to shape built material culture. Under the rubric of care, this paper examines how women makers worked in applied art media across a range of "care" sites through the post-suffrage organisation, the Victorian branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA). This philanthropic organisation was established in 1928 to advance the rights and care of women, children, and families in regional areas. Through exhibitions, media, touring lecturers and an affiliation with the Victorian Arts and Crafts Society, the CWA Victoria used craft and domestic material culture to democratise craft ideals and ameliorate poor environments in rural homes and towns. It fostered public health, welfare and the comfort and repair of self and communities. Through these means the organisation also provided support for the influx of new arrivals generated from the post-war rural reconstruction schemes of soldier settlement and mass migration from Britain. These larger projects allied the CWA Victoria organisation to a post-war settler identity which reanimated settler myths of land. In early twentieth-century Australia, care of the settler, built environment was gendered and racialised, an event that prompts an intersectional reassessment of the feminist model of care.*

## **Introduction**

The Country Women's Association of Victoria was founded in 1928. Urban Melbournians are familiar with its fine baked goods, preserves and crafts and its annual displays at the Royal Melbourne Show. In this paper I want to shift the popular

image of the CWA Victoria beyond the scone and argue that the early CWA Victoria fostered women as rural spatial agents of care, repair, and maintenance. These agencies were also propagated within the CWA Victoria's contribution to nation building and a post-World War I settler identity. Examining care in this context requires an intersectional understanding of care, of how gender and race intersect to shape care strategies within the settler nation.

The foundation, leadership and early years of the Victorian CWA can be placed in the context of settler Australia's post-war rural migration schemes and post-war reconstruction. Planning for the post-war future began during the war, with plans for a Soldier Settlement scheme devised to give rural land grants to returned service personnel. Plans also began for assisted post-war immigration from Britain to the settler colonies of South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.<sup>1</sup> Under the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 Australia agreed to take 450,000 UK migrants over the next decade and "to encourage them to go on the land."<sup>2</sup> Australia would absorb Britain's surplus labour and surplus unmarried women. Australia was imagined (once more) in settler colonial terms as an under-populated nation with vast under-developed resources. Promotional material urged incoming settlers and supporters to migrate and declared, "The world will not tolerate an empty and idle Australia."<sup>3</sup> Historians have argued that the Soldier Settlement scheme revived the white colonial dream of the establishment "of a sturdy yeomanry on the Australian land."<sup>4</sup>

This large story narrated here in a small paper, is focused through the activism of three women, two of them CWA members and one not. Biography is a central form of feminist methodology. The excavation of women's everyday lives is part of a feminist concern for documenting women's invisible labour. In part, the analytic concept of "care" has been developed from a feminist concern with 'devalued labors.'<sup>5</sup> Three women spatial agents focus the narrative of this paper around women's material labour designing care and repair: Lady Eliza Fraser Mitchell, the first state President of the CWA Victoria; the CWA's craft demonstrator Henrietta Walker, a designer, maker, journalist, entrepreneur and taste maker, whose practice of making from bark drew symbolically from First Nations practice; and Jemima Burns Wandin Dunolly, Wurundjeri designer, maker and activist of the material conditions of her own and her family's everyday life. These women are not spatial agents in ways that are legible to architectural history, yet they were engaged with care and concern for material environments.<sup>6</sup> Mitchell did this through organising, philanthropy and access to elite

networks; Walker through journalism, making, teaching demonstrations and exhibitions; and Dunolly, through design, making, care and activism.

### **Context**

The nexus between the founding of the CWA Victoria and the link to post-war immigration and soldier settler schemes is made visible in the figure of Lady Eliza Fraser Mitchell (1864-1948), the first President of the CWA Victoria.<sup>7</sup> Mitchell focalises the links between various local and transnational organisations and nation building projects. As first State President of the CWA Victoria she brought considerable leadership experience in health, immigration and settler voluntary organisations.<sup>8</sup> After war broke out, she became a foundation member of the Red Cross in Victoria and chair of its home hospitals scheme. In 1915 she accompanied her husband to England where she resumed her Red Cross work. In 1918 she became an Assistant Commissioner of the Red Cross as well as a founding member of the Women's branch of the Overseas Settlement Committee, the body established to forward plan post-war immigration to the empire. She returned to Australia in 1919, and in 1921 she became a founding member of the New Settler's League, which is described as "a voluntary auxiliary to the Federal Government's Immigration Department." She was also chair of the League's "Women's Standing Committee" which greeted new arrivals at the Immigration Bureau. In early 1927 the New Settler's League was renamed the "Country Care Committee" to better reflect its activities.<sup>9</sup> This was the context in which the CWA Victoria was founded the following year in 1928.

The influx of rural migrants produced a larger rural population to whom the CWA would devote some of its care. One of its stated goals was to "arrest the drift to the city." An increased rural population was driven by the imperial immigration and post-war soldier settlement schemes. The numbers were considerable. Through the provisions of the Discharged Soldier Settlement Acts passed in 1916 and 1917, nearly 40,000 returned soldier settlers were placed on the land in Australia, with over 100,000 men, women and children involved in this experiment. In Victoria over 11,000 returned service people, or their relatives, were distributed across the land in all parts of the state.<sup>10</sup> As already noted, the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 committed 450,000 UK migrants to Australia with a preference for migrants to be diverted to rural occupations.<sup>11</sup> The migration scheme, as historian Ken Fry observes, activated an "agrarian myth" which "embodied the idea that Australia's vast land resources could best be utilised by small farmers who would produce a surplus for export to the United Kingdom (UK) and

would also provide a market for British manufactured goods.”<sup>12</sup> Australia wide, the soldier settler scheme displaced Indigenous Australians as some Aboriginal mission sites or reserves were allocated to white returning soldiers and inhabitants moved off. Moreover, soldier settlement blocks were overwhelmingly made available to white ex-service personnel. Few Indigenous returning soldiers were successful in their applications for the scheme with only a very few exceptions.<sup>13</sup> In parallel the rural settlement of “new settlers” reterritorialised the land with White settlers. The Victorian division of the New Settlers League published a pamphlet in 1925 titled, “Keep Australia White: the menace of an empty continent.”<sup>14</sup>

Although the rural locations of most branches of the CWA might stamp it as a local organisation, when the Victorian CWA was established in March 1928, in part, it drew on the transnational imperial model of Women’s Institutes,<sup>15</sup> which were first founded in Canada in 1897 and then spread to the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. Women’s Institutes had been established in Melbourne in 1926<sup>16</sup> and they were quickly absorbed into the CWA. In 1930 the Victorian CWA journal urged readers to “Remember our association is part of a worldwide movement” with over one million women members “spread all over the Empire.”<sup>17</sup> Women’s Institutes had a strong emphasis on handicraft and home industries, inspired by the British Home Arts and Industries Association, established in 1884. The Homes Arts and Industries Association was a women-dominated charitable and philanthropic movement that was part of the English Arts and Crafts formation. The early leadership of the CWA also allied itself to international summits, attending in 1929 and 1930 the International Conferences of Rural Women held in London and Vienna. Lady Mitchell later wrote that her philanthropic work was “work well worth doing to strengthen and maintain the ties that bind us to the Empire.”<sup>18</sup> The first line of the motto of the Victorian branch was “Loyalty to The Throne and Empire.”<sup>19</sup> In April 1931 the organisation’s journal recorded a letter of thanks from the Overseas’ Settlement Department in London, “appreciating all that the Association has done for settlers.”<sup>20</sup>

In country Victoria the experiment of moving a new demographic to the regions was assailed by problems, notably in the Soldier Settlement scheme. Many failures were built into the project such as participant indebtedness and the lack of surplus capital to invest in stock, machinery, feed and labour. Some soldier settlers arrived on their selections without any prior farming experience. By 1925 the failure of the Soldier Settlement scheme was being publicly discussed and a Royal Commission was

established by the Victorian Parliament to inquire into the settlement project. Its published report was damning.<sup>21</sup>

The provision of welfare and welcome for new rural migrants gave a nation building framework for the foundation of the Victorian CWA. Feminist theorists have argued that care and concern are “intimately entangled in the ongoing material remaking of the world.”<sup>22</sup> Shannon Mattern’s 2018 essay “Maintenance and Care” explores maintenance as a category for repairing the broken structures of the world. Care is crucial for “the everyday sustainability of life.”<sup>23</sup> The CWA’s published aims in 1930 demonstrated concern for domestic material environments, as they advocated for “better living conditions for women and children” and aspired as well, “to encourage women and children to interest themselves in town improvement and town-planning schemes and in the beautifying of their homes and general surroundings.”<sup>24</sup> The CWA Victoria’s members dealt with material needs that were intensified by the depression and drought but also by the expansion of rural migration and the difficulties new migrants faced.

Domestic living conditions were a key concern for the Victorian CWA. By the end of 1924 in Victoria, 4,442 houses had been made available for the Soldier Settlement Scheme: 2,527 of these were new, others were relocated or renovated or were still under construction. Under the War Service Homes Act houses were built by contractors on behalf of the Housing Commissioner. Some families living on soldier settlements blocks endured very poor housing. Whilst the homeowners of the house at Weerimull South, Mildura (1928) built a neat timber home from local Mallee timber, others lived in hessian sack and corrugated sheet humpies.<sup>25</sup> Reports from the CWA branches in the early 1930s record the provision of material welfare for drought relief or economic distress, with the CWA Victoria making financial and material donations, for example by giving bedding to a family.<sup>26</sup> In undertaking this kind of work the CWA were engaging in care for families and individuals.

This concern for material environments was part of a larger interest in aesthetics and material culture. Craft activities had been an integral activity of the Home Industries committees that had been part of the Women’s Institutes, the group that had been absorbed by the Victorian CWA. The CWA established a craft library in Melbourne in 1928, followed by craft exhibitions. It instituted the “Handicrafts and Home Industries Committee” and promoted its activities and craft ideals through the association’s

magazine *Country Crafts* (founded in 1930). Interest in making was multifarious. The organisation recognised that making and maker activities were key mechanisms for attracting new members, noting in 1931 that craft was, “one of the strongest reasons for many members joining who would not associate themselves with a purely welfare organisation.”<sup>27</sup> The organisation used craft to promote recreational, financial and aesthetic ideals, including the repair and improvement of environments. Craft also shaped the identity of the organisation and its members.<sup>28</sup> By using craft to promote recreational, financial and aesthetic ideals, the association was also building the community identity of the CWA and rural women. Metropolitan exhibitions and demonstrations promoted these rural and communal identities to city audiences. The CWA Victoria was shrewd in its choice of urban headquarters and exhibition venues, choosing spaces – as Julie Willis noted in response to the spoken version of this paper – aligned with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Victorian branch.

The organisation’s serious commitment to craft was bolstered in 1930 when the CWA Victoria appointed Henrietta Walker as its first craft demonstrator. Walker was a high-profile maker and authoritative commentator on craft, who had been exhibiting with the Arts and Crafts Society of Victoria since 1921. She was a Council Member of the Arts and Crafts Society through the 1920s and as an exhibitor displayed mainly basketry but also needlework and weaving.<sup>29</sup> She convened a section of the Society’s 1922 Exhibition but held her own exhibitions in the early 1930s in a family residence in inner city Melbourne (South Yarra), where in December 1933 she exhibited “Hooked Work, and Reed, Rush and Bark Baskets.”<sup>30</sup> She was a long-time advocate of craft as a means for enabling women’s economic independence. Her feminist commitment that reconfigured the Arts and Crafts ideal of the autonomous craftsman who would be liberated from industrial wage dependency. Women craft workers would be liberated from economic indebtedness to husbands, brothers and fathers.

In choosing Henrietta Walker the CWA supported Walker’s view of craft as an economic activity. The CWA understood that rural women carried the double burden of both rural property work and household work. The first issue of *Country Crafts* contained Walker’s essay “A Profitable Home Industry Hooked Rug-Making” in which she promoted the economic benefits of rug making as a family enterprise.<sup>31</sup> Mindful of the impoverished circumstances of some of its members, the journal also promoted textile craft as a recycling activity, reminding homemakers that they could produce rugs from clean “waste woollens.”<sup>32</sup>

Walker toured country towns to provide demonstrations to CWA members. For example, she judged a local “Women’s Work” exhibition in April 1931 at Wangaratta in St Patrick’s Hall,<sup>33</sup> and on the same tour visited numerous towns, including Colac, Cobains Estate, Orbost and Bairnsdale, then Terang, Mortlake and Hamilton<sup>34</sup> She wrote up these experiences for CWA readers in her essay “The Way of a Demonstrator.”<sup>35</sup>

It was a mutually beneficial relationship. Through the CWA organisation and journal pages, Walker’s books and products were introduced to a broader, non-metropolitan audience. Her business enterprises found new consumers. Each edition of *Country Crafts* journal carried an advertisement for her shop in Regent’s Place, Melbourne. An advertisement advised readers that they could also request a mail order delivery of Walker’s hook-rug book with an accompanying hook starter kit. Through these demonstrations, maker kits and her essays, Walker helped the CWA propagate an Arts and Crafts interwar taste culture. In the next section, I explore how she introduced members to an increasingly transnational craft discourse that fostered regional identity, in which the material practices of craft could be mobilised to create an affective settler relationship to landscape and a mythic settler past. The work of maintaining material environments by enhancing them with craft, could also be a way of cultivating and maintaining settler identity.

### **Bark: An Everyday Medium for National and Transnational Taste Making**

In one of its early issues, *Country Crafts* (March 1931) published an essay by Eva Butchart, a member of the Melbourne-based Arts and Crafts Society.<sup>36</sup> Butchart was a prominent weaver who had studied at the centre of Arts and Crafts weaving in Haslemere, Surrey, just before the war.<sup>37</sup> Her essay introduced CWA readers to familiar Arts and Crafts concepts, notably the binary of handcraft and industry, driven by the spectre of endangered craft traditions. She noted that handloom weavers were “endeavoring to create an interest in the old hand crafts, which were in danger of being blotted out of existence by the overwhelming force of modern industry.” However, she also encouraged CWA readers to arrest this decline by introducing them to a history of weaving whereby craft traditions could be preserved by the everyday practices of women. Tracing the transmission of weaving she declared that immigrants from Europe to North American were “bringing with them the arts and customs of old civilisations to be grafted on a new life in a new world. The dust of their bodies has



passed into the making of a nation, their names are forgotten, but in nearly every American home there is an heirloom, a hand woven coverlet.”<sup>38</sup> She encouraged readers to think of their craft practice as an embodied knowledge and the role of ordinary women’s bodies in migration and memory. Craft could be a means for enacting an affective relationship to the past, that is, knowing history through structures of feeling.

Walker’s own practice revealed how craft might be a lens for constructing settler identity. Across the pages of *Country Crafts*, Walker promoted working with bark which was one of her specialisations. In 1921 she had founded the Bungalook Basketry Guild, aiming to provide employment for returned disabled service people. Although Walker had originally established herself as a raffia maker, war conditions had curtailed supplies of imported raffia, and she had turned to bark as a basket making material. Walker helped popularise bark work as a material craft that could be practised at home. For Walker the material medium, the bark and its working carried settler identity affiliations. In 1922 Walker urged readers of the *Woman’s World* magazine to imagine the symbolic connotations of bark, to “think of the old bark roofs of our ancestors.”<sup>39</sup> This connection back to colonial origins recoded bark to give it a white Australian history and establish bark products as a white material culture tradition. In her book *Profitable Hobbies* (1920s), Walker explained and illustrated the practices of bark collection from particular tree species and described the preparation of raw bark. She included photographs of specific tree species and images of how to work the material. She informed readers that the Aboriginal word for bark was “Bungalook”, although this is not quite accurate, since bungalook is a Wurundjeri word for stringybark.

Walker’s endorsement of natural materials that were hand gathered and fashioned with Australian and regional motifs endorsed ideologies of the Arts and Crafts Society. Her first publication in the *Country Crafts* journal on hooked rug making promoted US and Anatolian sources for rug making. Her work can be situated within an interwar craft discourse that was increasingly transnational in its networks and stylistic sources, but nationalistic in its local articulation.<sup>40</sup> Anatolian, North American First Nations Navaho and Māori examples were prominent in this period and although books could provide access to these craft practices, we do not know what particular sources Walker used as the basis for her own work.<sup>41</sup> In her research work on the Australian, Sydney-based artist Margaret Preston, Catriona Moore noted how Preston participated

in the interwar fashion for ethnic and Indigenous chic.<sup>42</sup> Preston used mat hooking to explore the formal vocabulary of “modernist primitivism” and “regional symbolism.”<sup>43</sup>

Walker’s bark work and bark promotion is an under-recognised part of settler Australia’s increasingly appropriative relationship to First Nations craft practice. The larger settler turn to Indigenous art practice is often associated with Preston, whose 1925 essay in *Australian Home Beautiful* had urged readers to visit museums in search of Indigenous design motifs to “try and apply in your homes.”<sup>44</sup> Moore includes Walker’s bark basket making in her research work on Preston but this investigation could be further developed by understanding how craft could forge a transnational settler identity.<sup>45</sup>

Walker’s appropriation of a Wurundjeri word for stringy bark is the only surviving clue to a formal link between her own work and First Nations’ craft practice. However, Walker’s Ringwood home was not too far from the Coranderrk mission station where basket makers such as Jemima Burns Wandin Dunolly continued Woi Wurrung cultural traditions of gathering reeds and making coiled baskets, which were then sold to tourists in the opening decades of the twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> One of Dunolly’s fine spherical baskets is held in the Museum Victoria collection.<sup>47</sup>

Coranderrk had a long history as a centre of strong activism and in some instances, Dunolly used care to shape the terms of her activism. In 1912, in her exchanges with the Aborigines Protection Board, Dunolly appropriated the terms of care that the Board claimed as its motive force. Dunolly demanded that the Board live up to its promise of care (by giving her a home) at the same time she asserted her own sovereignty and independence: “I am of the opinion now that I would like a home of my own with the help of the Board for Protection of Aborigines for which I think I am now justly entitled.... p.s. I would like 50 acres to make a living as well.”<sup>48</sup> She also went into advocacy with the Board over her son’s military service pay during the First World War. The government claimed that her residence under the protection of the Board of Aborigines meant that she should forfeit her enlisted son’s military allotment. Here she again asserted her capacity to care for her son and her careful management of the money to provide care parcels for her son, to support an enlisted serviceman who was fighting for the nation.<sup>49</sup> These episodes from Dunolly’s biography highlight how care was racialised and institutionalised. Although Dunolly asserted her sovereign independence and ability to care for house, family and land, the Board operated within

a racialised paternalist model of care, one that established a welfare institution as the arbiter of the meaning, value and operation of care within the lives of First Nations' subjects.

Recent feminist scholarship that underpins this paper has recuperated care as a positive attribute: as an analytic category that can reformulate women's invisible but important labours of repair and maintenance of the built environment. However, this conceptual paradigm will need to develop an intersectional notion of care, a theoretical project that can only be invoked here but whose full realisation lies beyond this paper. In early twentieth-century Victoria care was feminised and racialised. A racialised welfare state enacted "care" through institutions which legalised intervention at microscopic level into the lives of Indigenous Australians, including the forced removal of children from Indigenous families, now known as the "Stolen Generations."<sup>50</sup>

Care, repair and maintenance of home, interiors, furnishings and families have frequently been the work of women. The reinvigoration of care as an analytic category of history has been useful in conceptually expanding design environments to include processes of maintenance and repair. Focusing on the CWA Victoria has unearthed a surprising and little publicly known aspect of the CWA's foundation: its alignment through key personnel and care work with key post-war reconstruction projects. These activities sought not only to provide homes fit for heroes but to also strengthen imperial bonds through migration schemes that promoted white settlement of the interior. Further research is needed to examine these entanglements.

Investigating the centrality of craft to the CWA also reveals an unknown history of the organisation's alignment with the Arts and Crafts Society and the promotion of interwar craft as a widespread and varied sphere of production.<sup>51</sup> Craft too was bound up with settler identity. The CWA demonstrator Henrietta Walker is a key node for connecting members to an increasingly transnational craft practice and the increasing appropriation of Australia's First Nations craft practice in interwar settler identity. Although the inclusion of Walker and her bark baskets seems to take this paper far from the sphere of built environment production, Walker was teaching her readers to re-value the bark buildings of settler ancestors and to encode this history within a naturalised tradition of making. Under the auspices of the CWA Victoria the domestic sphere of craft production circulated through the media of magazines, newspapers and metropolitan and rural exhibitions. Through its early leadership the organisation was

allied to larger nation building projects that staked out rural territory as an important sphere of post-war reconstruction. Care was part of the building of the post-war nation.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ken Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth after the First World War," *Labour History*, no. 48 (May 1985): 30.
- <sup>2</sup> Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth," 31.
- <sup>3</sup> New Settlers League of Australia Victoria Division, *New Settlers Handbook to Victoria* (Melbourne: The League, 1924), 11-12.
- <sup>4</sup> Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth," 32.
- <sup>5</sup> Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, "Matters of Care in Technoscience: Assembling Neglected Things", *Social Studies of Science*, 41, no.1 (2011): 100, quoted in Shannon Mattern, "Maintenance and Care," *Places Journal*, November 2018, <https://doi.org/10.22269/181120>, accessed 14 July 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> See "On Margins: Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration," a dossier directed by Rachel Lee and Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, in *ABE Journal Architecture Beyond Europe*, no. 16 (2019), [journals.openedition.org/abe/7126](https://journals.openedition.org/abe/7126), accessed 10 July 2022.
- <sup>7</sup> Shurlee Swain, "Mitchell, Eliza, Lady," in *The Encyclopedia of Women & Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*, ed. Judith Smart and Shurlee Swain, 2014, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0155b.htm>, accessed 14 June 2022.
- <sup>8</sup> Brenda Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix: The REAL Story of the Country Women's Association of Victoria 1928-1908* (Toorak, Vic: Country Women's Association of Victoria, 2008), 5.
- <sup>9</sup> Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix*, 6.
- <sup>10</sup> Marilyn Lake, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlements in Victoria, 1915-1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), xviii.
- <sup>11</sup> Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth," 31.
- <sup>12</sup> Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth," 29.
- <sup>13</sup> Tim Lee, "'They were Back to being Black': The Land Withheld from Returning Indigenous Soldiers," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 14 April 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-14/land-withheld-from-indigenous-anzacs/10993680>, accessed 21 February 2020.
- <sup>14</sup> *Keep Australia White: The Menace of an Empty Continent/The New Settlers League of Australia* (Victorian Division) (Melbourne: New Settlers League Victorian Division, 1925). State Library of Victoria.
- <sup>15</sup> Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix*, 13.
- <sup>16</sup> Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix*, 13.
- <sup>17</sup> "Editorial," *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 1 (December 1930): 2.
- <sup>18</sup> Swain, "Mitchell, Eliza, Lady."
- <sup>19</sup> Included on the front page of the *Country Crafts* journal.
- <sup>20</sup> "News from the Handicraft and Home Industries Committee," *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 5 (April 1931): 48.
- <sup>21</sup> Fry, "Soldier Settlement and the Australian Agrarian Myth," 32.
- <sup>22</sup> Bellacasa, "Matters of Care," 86.
- <sup>23</sup> Bellacasa, "Matters of Care," 94.
- <sup>24</sup> "Aims", *Country Crafts*, 1, no.,3 (February 1931): 1.
- <sup>25</sup> See Frank March, "A house being built on a soldier settlement block in the Mallee, Werrimull South, west of Mildura, 1928", black and white photograph, Museum Victoria, <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/773785> and "Photograph of a soldier settler's 'bag humpy' at Nandayly in 1921", Public Record Office Victoria, "Family Life on settlement blocks", 3 December 2015, <https://prov.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-blog/family-life-settlement-blocks>
- <sup>26</sup> "Notes from Head Office, The Mallee Relief", *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 7 (June 1931): 71.
- <sup>27</sup> Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix*, 195.

<sup>28</sup> Janice Helland, Beverly Lemire and Alena Buis, "Introduction," in *Craft, Community and the Material Culture of Place and Politics, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. Janice Helland, Beverly Lemire and Alena Buis (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Caroline Miley, *The Arts Among the Handicrafts: the arts and crafts movement in Victoria* (Banyule, Victoria; St Lawrence Press, 2001), 178.

<sup>30</sup> Australian Arts & Artists Collection (AAA) Artists File, "Henrietta Walker", State Library of Victoria.

<sup>31</sup> Henrietta Walker, "A Profitable Home Industry Hooked Rug-Making", *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 1 (December 1930): 4.

<sup>32</sup> Henrietta Walker, *Profitable Hobbies: Hooked Rugs, Bark, Flax and Rafia Work* (Melbourne: Lloyd Jones Printing, 192?), 4.

<sup>33</sup> "Forthcoming Events", *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 3 (February 1931): 29.

<sup>34</sup> "News from the Handicraft and Home Industries Committee", *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 4 (March 1931): 36.

<sup>35</sup> "Henrietta Walker, The Way of a Demonstrator", *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 4 (April 1931): 63.

<sup>36</sup> Miley, *The Arts Among the Handicrafts*, 167.

<sup>37</sup> Miley, *The Arts Among the Handicrafts*, 167.

<sup>38</sup> Eva Butchart, "Hand Weaving," *Country Crafts*, 1, no. 4 (March 1931): 38.

<sup>39</sup> Diana Kaye, "Bungalook Basketry," *Woman's World*, 1 July 1922, 15-17, quoted by Miley, *The Arts Among the Handicrafts*, 128. Issue subsequently missing from State Library of Victoria.

<sup>40</sup> Examples of the Anatolian influenced work are found in Henrietta Walker, "How to Make Tufted Rugs in Cotton, Silk and Wool," *The Australian Home Beautiful*, September 1926, and a later design similar to Preston's Māori inspired work is found in her design published in *Australian Home Beautiful*, 1 July 1933. See Catriona Moore, "Craftwork: Margaret Preston, Emily Carr and the Welfare Frontier," *The Journal of the History of Culture in Australia* (2006): 68.

<sup>41</sup> The State Library of Victoria has numerous holdings from this period that would have been useful sources such as Augustus Hamilton, *The Art Workmanship of the Maori Race* (1896) and George Wharton James, *Indian Basketry* (1902), as well as S. Humphries, *Oriental Carpets* (1910) and F. Sarre, *Old Oriental Carpets* (1926) amongst numerous works on carpet production.

<sup>42</sup> Moore, "Craftwork," 63.

<sup>43</sup> Moore, "Craftwork," 59.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Preston, "The Indigenous Art of Australia," *The Australian Home Beautiful*, 1 March 1925, 52.

<sup>45</sup> Moore, "Craftwork," 63.

<sup>46</sup> For tourism and craft at Coranderrk see Ian Clark, *"A Peep at the Blacks": A History of Tourism at Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, 1863-1924* (Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> The Museum Victoria catalogue entry is: Jemima Wandin, Item X72537, Basket, Coranderrk, Port Phillip, Victoria, Australia, c.1910,

<https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/221220>.

<sup>48</sup> Jemima Dunolly to Secretary of BPA, January 1912, in *Letters from Aboriginal Women of Victoria, 1867-1926*, ed. Elizabeth Nelson, Sandra Smith and Patricia Grimshaw (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2002), 136; PROV, VPRS 1694/P0, unit 3, quoted in Patricia Grimshaw and Hannah Loney, "'Doing their Bit Helping Making Australia Free': Mothers of Aboriginal Diggers and the Assertion of Indigenous Rights," *Journal of the Public Records Office of Victoria*, no. 14 (2015), para. 15, <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/provenance-journal/provenance-2015/doing-their-bit-helping-make-australia-free>.

<sup>49</sup> Grimshaw and Loney, "Doing their Bit," para.17.

<sup>50</sup> For the Victorian history see "The Archived History of Stolen Generations in Victoria", from "The Stolen Generations Reparations Steering Committee Report", 18 June 2021, [www.vic.gov.au/stolen-generations-reparations-steering-committee-report/chapter-2-victorian-stolen-generations-0](http://www.vic.gov.au/stolen-generations-reparations-steering-committee-report/chapter-2-victorian-stolen-generations-0).

<sup>51</sup> See Helland, Lemire and Buis, *Craft, Community and the Material Culture of Place*.

# The Great Debate: Campaigns and Conflicts in London in the 1980s

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## Abstract

*In 1984 HM King Charles III, then HRH The Prince of Wales, gave the infamous speech to the RIBA in which he was critical of a proposed new extension to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. The fervour unleashed in the press signified a unique moment when architecture, conservation, planning and development became a much – and still – talked about part of the public discourse in Britain. Conservation theory had dictated since its early guidelines of practice that new additions to historic works should be clearly distinguished from their original host or the existing environment. Historicism, imitating the existing architecture within an urban setting was taboo, a notion that went back to Ruskin and the anti-scrape lobby of Morris. Unravelling the events of the 1980s, however, reveals that the desire to copy past forms as a means of retaining the past maintained an ongoing and strong legacy. It had become a method of seeking refuge from the failures of modernism and the divergence between traditional and modern forms, language and techniques. Openly acknowledged that modernism was anti-historic and anti-urban, classicism and medieval towns and forms offered the example of outdoor rooms and a predominance of solids over voids. For the then Prince and his many followers, including vast members of the public, the use of a traditional architectural style as infill in a classically inspired building setting was “good” design practice. At this point, ironically, the retreat to historicism also comprised not only mimicking traditional details but also their playful reinterpretation through an esoteric postmodernism. But the topic of new into old had become confused: the critical issue was one of urban design and not the language of infill architecture. Three case studies within the historic core of the City of London, the basis of criticism in Charles’ speeches of 1984 and 1987, will be explored through the popular press in order to understand their lessons and relevance to the complexity of current contemporary conflicts in historic urban areas.*

## Introduction

In conjunction with an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington, the so-called “Great Debate on British Architecture” was held on Thursday 2 November 1989. The exhibition disseminated the views of HM King Charles III, then HRH The Prince of Wales, whose “A Vision of Britain”, a documentary commissioned by the BBC, had aired to audiences of over 6 million people in October the previous year. The purpose of the evening event was to debate the merits of the Prince’s attacks on modern architecture and the principles he had put forward to encourage more traditional building. Although Prince Charles did not attend, the debate was sold out. Charles Jencks, the well-known American advocate for postmodernism in the 1980s, acted as moderator, with the most sparring words exchanged between the arch classicist, Léon Krier, and Martin Pawley, architectural critic for *The Guardian*.

The event was part of a much wider discussion about British architecture in the decade of the 1980s. Questions concerning urban development were focused on what seemed the irreconcilability of traditionalism and modernism. The controversy widened from a professional arena to the press and populace at large. Government endorsement and imposition of a local brand of British Brutalism in the majority of post-war public and social housing schemes of the 1950s and 1960s had exacerbated the scale of the public’s reaction. Conservation theory, internationally endorsed in the Venice Charter of 1964, had dictated that new additions into historic works should be clearly distinguished from their original host or the existing environment. Historicism, imitating the existing architecture within an urban setting was taboo, a notion that went back to Ruskin and the anti-scrape lobby of Morris.

HM King Charles III, then HRH The Prince of Wales, was at the centre of the debate. Two royal speeches, given in 1984 to the RIBA and in 1987 to the City of London planning group, contained one-line derogatory descriptions in relation to three particular proposed developments in the historic core of the city. For the then Prince and his many followers, including vast members of the public, the use of a traditional architectural style as infill in a classically inspired building setting was “good” design practice. Classicism and medieval towns and forms had offered the example of outdoor rooms and a predominance of solids over voids. At this point ironically, the retreat to historicism also comprised not only mimicking traditional details but also their playful reinterpretation through an esoteric postmodernism. But the topic of new into old had become confused: the issue was one of urban design and not the language of infill architecture. This paper

examines these events in more detail to better understand their implications for the issue of new into old in the context of urban development and its relevance in planning and design today.

### **Context**

Margaret Thatcher began as Britain's first female prime minister in 1979 and remained as leader of the Conservative Party until 1990. Dubbed the "Iron Lady", she brought about a revolution in the British economy, embracing tactics such as the abandonment of onerous exchange controls and the creation of a low waged, flexible and decreasingly unionised workforce. The Corporation of London, the City's historic government, encouraged a huge boom in office building in response to the new enterprise economy. In the mid-1980s, New York had two times the office space and Tokyo two and a half times the office space of London. By 1987 London had increased its square metreage by twenty times that of 1982, and office rents had soared from £35/£40 per square metre in 1985 to £60 per square metre in 1988. Foreign multi-nationals were attracted to invest in the British economy and increasingly financed this development boom, altering the local landscape.<sup>1</sup>

The then Prince of Wales was 31 in 1979 and his position on architecture overlapped with his wider environmental and social interests. A belief in environmental stewardship covered a range of convictions, including the need to reconnect with nature, the adoption of sustainable farming and agricultural practices, as well as environmental conservation. Committed to the maintenance of a sense of community, the Prince believed that the best human environments would evolve through social engineering, a human-scaled city and the active participation of a community in urban regeneration projects. Alongside these, classicism as a style guaranteed harmony and he upheld an equal commitment to building conservation and respect for the vernacular, the local and the historic.

### **29 May 1984 Speech**

Seeking the architectural advice of both Rodney Hackney and Quinlan Terry prior to writing his address, Charles delivered his infamous speech to the RIBA on 29 May 1984. The occasion marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RIBA and was held at Hampton Court in Sir Christopher Wren's Fountain Court. The dinner formed part of the Institute's Festival of Architecture, a larger promotional exercise designed to arouse enthusiasm for contemporary architecture which was perceived to be deeply unpopular. A copy of the speech had been released to Fleet Street 24 hours prior to the event, and, despite



being aware of its contents, there was little that the then President, Michael Manser, could do to change it.

In addition to his disparaging remarks about the status of the architectural profession and its neglect of the wishes of “ordinary” people, and reiterating his commitment to community architecture, Charles singled out two contemporary projects in London for criticism. The first was the Mansion House Square project and the second, the extension to the National Gallery London at Trafalgar Square. Of the former he said, “It would be a tragedy if the character of our skyline and capital city were to be further ruined and St Paul’s dwarfed by yet another glass stump, better suited to downtown Chicago than the City of London.”<sup>2</sup> His comments about the National Gallery extension were equally blunt:

Instead of designing an extension to the elegant façade... it looks as if we may be presented with a kind of municipal fire station, complete with the sort of tower that contains the siren.... what is proposed is like a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much loved and elegant friend.<sup>3</sup>

Both projects were at the public enquiry stage of the planning process at the time. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Patrick Jenkin, was in the audience and reportedly quipped after the speech, “Well, that’s two decisions I don’t have to make.”<sup>4</sup> Charles’ words would be cited *ad nauseam* in the press for the next decade and continue to hold an allure to the present day.

The public debate sharpened after the speech, casting the Prince as the David of traditionalism, versus the Goliaths of modernism. The American press commented, “the Prince was applauded by the press and by many ordinary Britons who have come to hate the bleak housing projects and the wind swept open spaces built here by modern architects since World War II.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Mansion House Square Campaign**

The Mansion House Square project began with a dream of the British aristocratic developer, Peter Palumbo. Educated at Eton and Oxford, Palumbo was also a trustee of the Tate Gallery, London. In 1962 he commissioned Mies van der Rohe to design a skyscraper at Mansion House Square. He was a keen admirer of Mies’ work and had purchased and restored the Farnsworth House, south west of Chicago, designed and constructed from 1945 to 1951.



**Figure 1.** Mansion House in Mansion House Street at the junction of Queen Victoria Street and Poultry, City of London 1930 (© London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, record no. 47771, London County Council Collection).

At the historic heart of London's mercantile elite, Mansion House Square was in the middle of the City of London, the ancient square mile that constituted its financial district. The Square received its name from the grand classical building, designed by George Dance the Elder in the mid-eighteenth century, which was home to the City's Lord Mayor. Wren's St Stephen Walbrook (1672-79) sat directly behind. Other historic buildings that fronted the Square included Sir John Soane's Bank of England. The last street frontage completed in Threadneedle Street continued the pattern of high windowless stonewalls in a syncretic Greco-Roman style, a visual and physical defence against fire and attack. Directly opposite was the Royal Exchange building by Sir William Tite built in the 1840s, while Edwin Lutyens' headquarters for the Midland Bank, designed in 1924, fronted Poultry.



**Figure 2.** Mies van der Rohe's Mansion House Square tower proposal (RIBA 28878, John Donat / RIBA Collections).

Mies van der Rohe designed a 290 feet, 21 storey tower that offered underground shopping and its own public space, in addition to offices. The building was given conditional approval in 1969 that was subject to Palumbo being able to consolidate the title of the 6-acre site. A complex and drawn out process of title acquisition delayed the submission of a second planning application until 1982. Between 1969 and 1982, however, a significant shift had occurred in the public assessment of the historic value of the City's financial core. Eight of the buildings originally proposed for demolition had been listed, and the site had become part of the Bank conservation area in 1981. Prominent on the corner was the former headquarters of the jewellers, Mappin & Webb, then recognised as an elaborate high Victorian building. The second application was refused, following which Palumbo lodged an appeal in 1984.



**Figure 3.** Mappin & Webb at the corner of Poultry and Queen Victoria Street, City of London, 1985 (© London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, record no. 48857, London County Council Collection).

The appeal, a two-month public enquiry, gathered all manner of architectural experts to argue both for and against the proposal. Interestingly the pro-Mies camp included Berthold Lubetkin and Sir John Summerson, while H. R. Hitchcock, a former colleague of Mies from New York, argued against Mies' proposed design. It was reported that Mies' former archive curator was promptly sent from New York to try and persuade Hitchcock to change his mind. Somewhat confused, the press pointed out that both sides in the proceedings had quoted the evidence of Philip Johnson. Taking a proactive advocacy initiative, the British group, SAVE, commissioned Terry Farrell to prepare an alternative scheme for the site. Shortly afterwards the press observed that:

Conservationists, led by the Greater London Council, the Victorian Society and Save Britain's Heritage, argued not so much that the listed buildings were superb, but that the tower would be out of character with its setting, and that it was already dated, having been designed in 1962.<sup>6</sup>

The inspector's report found against the proposal, a decision that just needed the endorsement of the Secretary of State for the Environment: this was supplied after hearing the Prince's speech at the RIBA's anniversary dinner.



In 1986 Palumbo presented two new plans for the triangular site fronting Mansion House Square by the architect, Sir James Stirling. Stirling's distinct postmodernist design roused particular criticism from Martin Pawley:

Stirling's honey-coloured stone facades, enormous masonry arches, quixotic windows, immense curved cornices and open corners are all applied architectural "features" legitimized by the curious mixture of conservationist squeamishness about technology and dogged architectural hubris that is the essence of Post-Modernism. [T]hey are faddish emblems destined to look out of date before one tenth of the planned life of the building has expired.<sup>7</sup>

It led to a second public enquiry for the site in 1988 initiated by the conservation lobby: SAVE Britain, English Heritage and the City of London Corporation maintained their opposition to the proposal, as it would entail the demolition of eight listed buildings.



**Figure 4.** James Stirling, No.1 Poultry, designed 1985, completed 1997 (Photograph by Robyn Christie, 2022).

A final scheme to replace the Victorian buildings was submitted by James Stirling, together with Michael Wilford and Associates. Now identified as No. 1 Poultry, the application was given official approval in June 1989 by the then Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, following the praises of the Inspector, Brian Bagot. Bagot's report on

the design was submitted prior to the Prince's derogatory description of Stirling's design as "an old 1930s wireless" that featured in the 1988 BBC television programme. And, despite the wide currency given to the Prince's metaphor, Ridley chose not to override the approval.

### **Trafalgar Square Campaign**

The competition for an addition to the National Gallery in London at Trafalgar Square began in 1981 when Lord Annan, a trustee, proposed a combination of offices and galleries as a means of financing the extension. Costing £18 million, a 51,000 square foot office block over three floors, with seventeen top-lit galleries above, would house the gallery's coveted collection of Early Renaissance art and provide new public facilities. With a government set on privatisation, the developers were Trafalgar House, a property and construction and shipping conglomerate: *The Observer's* architecture critic stormed that "[t]he proposed combination of art and commerce is frankly disgusting."<sup>8</sup>

The site, at the north-west corner of Trafalgar Square, had been vacant for 44 years. Originally a furniture store that had been bombed during the Second World War, it abutted the original neoclassical gallery building by William Wilkins, constructed in 1838. Although the diminished size of the dome in Wilkins' classical composition had come under criticism, the Square contained other important classical buildings. On the western side Canada House, the High Commission from 1924, was a Greek Revival structure originally designed by Sir Robert Smirke 100 earlier. At the eastern, far end of the Square was St Martin-in-the-Field, the work of James Gibbs in 1726, and renowned as a neoclassical church due to the addition of a steeple.



**Figure 5.** St Martin in the Fields and The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, Westminster, 1896. A Victorian building demolished in World War II is evident on the left-hand side (© London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, record no. 141174, London County Council Collection).

The competition drew 79 entries, including one submitted by Richard Rogers. Interestingly when a public referendum was held, the press commentary noted that it was Rogers' "wildly modernist design" that had captured the most public votes as first choice, but also the most votes for the least favourable. Rogers' entry was reputedly eliminated after Owen Luder, then RIBA president, referred to it as "a fine piece of 'sod you' architecture,"<sup>9</sup> but Rogers maintained that he was asked to resign from the competition.

Peter Ahrends submitted the winning entry from a young architectural practice, Ahrends, Burton and Koralek (now ABK) based in London. At the behest of the gallery trustees he subsequently added the offending tower that had sparked the special quip in the Prince's 1984 speech. In support of the royal position, *The Observer* commented:

There is no clearer illustration of this failure to maintain this vital thread of continuity (between the past and present) than that demonstrated by the design of the extension to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, both inside and outside....

... the new building's position in life, although important is of a humbler status than that of the National Gallery, and this should be recognised in the design....

... the line of argument which arises from [the Prince's] remarkable and well informed speech is not about styles, is not about whether architects should be copying the past; it is about good and bad design, and the influence of both on society.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 6.** Model of the final revised ABK design for the National Gallery Extension, 1983 (RIBA 3839, RIBA Collections).

In October 1984 Patrick Jenkin turned down the proposal, despite the Inspector deciding in favour of Ahrends' design at the enquiry.

The National Gallery trustees announced a new competition in April 1985, noting "the new building should relate sympathetically to the present building and be complementary to Trafalgar Square".<sup>11</sup> A generous gift of £25 million from the supermarket magnates, Sir John, Timothy and Simon Sainsbury, rendered the provision of office space required to finance the scheme redundant. The extension now had to house only the National Gallery's galleries and new public areas.



In January the following year Lord Rothschild, Chairman of the Trustees, announced the winner to be the postmodern American architect, Robert Venturi. Five other architects had been invited to submit entries, including Henry Cobb from I. M. Pei, Sir James Stirling and Michael Wilford & Associates. Paul Goldberger, the architectural critic for the *New York Times*, waxed lyrical about the success of the American design:

The architectural dilemma... was to create a building that would be many things at once. It would have to have sufficient presence to be an element of its own in Trafalgar Square, yet it would also have to contribute something toward pulling the mix of buildings on the Square together. And it would have to relate comfortably to the original National Gallery building without dominating it or being dominated by it.

The Venturi design appears to succeed at striking this difficult and tremendously subtle balance. It is different on all of its sides, to inflect toward the different buildings that surround it, yet it is also a coherent whole. The building is a case of classicism transformed, a design that is clearly of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and not of any other period. But this is the late 20<sup>th</sup> century trying not so much to abandon classicism as seeking to make its own comment on it.<sup>12</sup>

Understandably Venturi had his own interpretation of good neighbourliness. Invited to present the Thomas Cubitt lecture to the Royal Society of Arts in 1987, he observed in the question session that followed:

Our extension, complementary in position but not in form with the church [St Martin-in-the-Fields], becomes truly an extension of the National Gallery, at once a continuation of it and, in its rhythmic configuration, an ending to it, at once a kind of coda and a diminuendo, we hope.

I think you should always try to be a good neighbour in a city or a town, although sometimes being a good neighbour is not necessarily being analogous to your neighbour. Sometimes you really need to be different, if still a good, neighbour....<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 7.** View of National Gallery and the Robert Venturi & Denise Scott Brown-designed Sainsbury Wing (designed 1987) from across Trafalgar Square (Photograph by Robyn Christie, 2022).

Alongside the American praise, Elizabeth Farrelly, a then relatively recent graduate of the University of Auckland, contributed a damning critique to the *Architectural Review*. She described the style of Venturi’s addition as a “1930s Parking Garage Mannerist Modern.” Whilst working with classicism, Venturi had not worked within its rules. Classicism might be an evolving canon, but it was not “an open basket of goodies to be plundered at will in the service of me-ist self-expression.”<sup>14</sup>

Such columns and pilasters as do appear on the new façade deliberately ignore any suggestion of rhythm and, openly declaring their structural incapacity, hang irregularly bunched in one corner like a derelict curtain half-drawn.<sup>15</sup>

... this extended Mannerist conceit is oddly ineffectual, and the building itself acutely disappointing, a nervous, fumbling small-spirited creature, plain but not ugly, ill-composed and awkwardly planned, overcome by self-regard and undermined at every turn by its own immense perversity.<sup>16</sup>

Farrelly's review was not alone in its sentiment: another described it as, "A dull, cowardly edifice designed not by an architect but by an exterior decorator."<sup>17</sup> The issue surrounding what constituted appropriate infill within an historic setting was focused on style, the superficial adoption of the language of the existing historic buildings did not resolve the issue.

### **1 December 1987 HRH Speech**

On 1 December 1987 Charles was invited to give a speech to the annual dinner of the Corporation of London's Planning and Communications Committee at Mansion House. By now the then Prince had surrounded himself with a group of architectural advisors led by Jules Lubbock, professor of art history at the University of Essex, who would head the Prince of Wales Summer School in Civil Architecture in the early 1990s. Also in the group were Colin Amery, architectural correspondent for the *Financial Times*, who had published the *Rape of Britain* with Dan Cruickshank in 1975, and Christopher Martin, a BBC television producer, renowned for his documentary with Christopher Booker, "City of Towers".

The address focused on the redevelopment of Paternoster Square, the area immediately surrounding St Paul's Cathedral: in essence it was a campaign to save the curtilage of the Cathedral that had significantly survived war damage, adding to its primary symbolism as a religious building. Surrounding development in the 1950s and 1960s had destroyed the church's skyline, and the Prince had been invited to comment on the seven finalists in a private competition for a proposed new development that offered a second chance to correct the mistakes of the earlier buildings in Paternoster Square. He had been "deeply depressed" by the responses and chose his evocative words carefully, noting the "great dome" would be lost "in a jostling scrum of office buildings, so mediocre that the only way that you ever remember them is by the frustration they induce – like a basketball team standing shoulder to shoulder between you and the Mona Lisa." Later he added, "You have... to give this much to the Luftwaffe; when it knocked down our buildings, it didn't replace them with anything more offensive than rubble. We did that."<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 8.** Paternoster Square - view of south side looking towards St Paul's Cathedral, 1940 (© London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, record no. 35558, Cross and Tibbs Collection).

Well aware that the crux of the problem lay in the challenge of providing commercial architecture within an historic setting, he acknowledged that the error lay primarily with the brief, in its “overriding commercial consideration[s]” and the request for a “bold concept for retailing.” He made reference to the Mansion House Square development that was, at the time, awaiting a final decision and sought an opportunity to ply his earlier mission for public involvement in the nature of the city.

To resolve the dearth of suitable design submissions he called for the public’s input into the planning decision, and proposed three longer-term planning solutions that would circumvent future instances of the problem. He did not hesitate to offer his own vision for the area: one that was human in scale; returned to the medieval street plan, knitting the remaining fragments together; allowed for the dome of St Paul’s to dominate the skyline; and used traditional materials aligned with those on cathedral. He questioned why buildings had to look like machines, and why beauty could not be based on the observance of rules that would encourage “the right kind of creative freedom rather than inhibiting it.”

### **Paternoster Square Campaign**

The Paternoster Square competition was hopefully deemed “the final burial ground of the 1980s style wars.”<sup>19</sup> The site became central to the argument between modernist and traditional architecture. Charles Jencks pre-empted the campaign: “This is where modernism did its best to put up a fight with Wren and failed so fantastically that nothing remains except grimed-up cladding and an atmosphere of humiliation.”<sup>20</sup>

The site takes its name from the prayers, or paternosters, said by former monks. It consisted of 7.5 acres alongside the Cathedral, with Paternoster Row forming the heart of the publishing industry from medieval times. Suffering heavy bomb damage in the war, the area contained modern office blocks built in the 1960s which had become the target of public criticism as typical, infamously grim “blocky glass and stone office buildings” with “windswept geometric plazas” of the period.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 9.** St Paul's Churchyard, between the Cathedral and Chapter House, looking west, 1977 (© London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, record no. 48990, London County Council Collection).

Together with the Church Commissioners, the developer Stuart Lipton drew up a short list of seven architects to produce a master plan for the site in 1987 – Arup Associates, led by Sir Philip Dowson, Norman Foster, Arata Isozaki, Richard MacCormac, Richard Rogers, Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM), and the partnership of James Stirling and Michael Wilford. Arup Associates won the international competition with a scheme that was an effective privatisation of the public domain.

The official assessors of the competition, who included Colin Amery, Charles Jencks and William Whitfield, had originally voted in favour of Richard Rogers and Arup Associates as the joint winners. Rogers was said to have promptly resigned when it was clear that there was opposition to an interventionist scheme. Architect Peter Buchanan commented disparagingly in a special feature in *The Architects' Journal*:

... is it possible to create a contemporary architectural language capable of addressing a major historical monument, let alone of providing continuity or harmonious contrast with older surroundings and a genuine sense of place?  
.... do we have any option except to ape the past, or are there other approaches to architecture and planning better suited to the present day, and indeed to St Paul's and its surroundings?<sup>22</sup>

John Simpson, a young classicist architect, had attended the event at Mansion House in December 1987. After the speech he was said to have gone for a drink at a nearby pub, where perchance he met up with some like-minded traditionally orientated journalists, including Dan Cruickshank. Mira Bar-Hillel, a reporter with the *Evening Standard*, who was also in the party, later convinced her editor to finance the cost of an alternate traditional design to be worked up by Simpson. Informal meetings were then said to have taken place between Charles, Leon Krier, Cruickshank and Simpson, with Simpson undertaking responsibility for preparing a surrogate classical revival scheme.

By the middle of 1988 both Arup's and Simpson's unauthorised proposals went on public display in the Cathedral crypt. The exhibition had been organised by Lord St John of Fawley, Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, in a bid to supplant Arup at Paternoster. Financial support from the *Evening Standard* enabled Simpson to prepare a model and two paintings of his design, although, as Martin Pawley commented, it was unfair to compare the two proposals as Dowson's plan for Arup was not a detailed solution but a master plan for the site.





**Figure 10.** John Simpson's master plan for Paternoster Square. Painting by Carl Laubin, 1988 (John Simpson Architects Ltd).

In October 1988 Prince Charles broadcast his views on the Paternoster schemes to the public at large. His television programme “A Vision of Britain” offered a segment that defended John Simpson's plan, clarifying that a traditional style did not imply the notion of pastiche or fake, and that classical architecture was equally equipped to supply contemporary office requirements. He concluded, “Paternoster Square has become central to the argument between Modernist and traditional architecture, or, as I'd rather put it, it's the argument between the inhuman and the human.”<sup>23</sup>

Its failure to be realised immediately and the onset of a recession in the 1990s added to the financial stress of the Paternoster venture. By 1989 the site was in the hands of Greycoat, together with the Park Tower Group of New York, who were joined by the Mitsubishi Estate Company of Tokyo in 1991. Although Simpson's scheme was now the favoured one, responsibility for the design was extended to Allan Greenberg and Quinlan Terry, Terry Farrell and Thomas Beeby, with Robert Adam, Demetri Porphyrios and Sidell Gibson. While Simpson's initial design had respected the original London streetscape, redeveloping the area with the grain and character of the pre-war street pattern, the new proposal was compromised. The Americans were held to have a dominating interest in the project and were insisting on a subterranean shopping mall: the “series of individual buildings ended up as a single megastructure which spoke the exuberant language of American commercial Classical architects.”<sup>24</sup>

Peter Rees, director of planning at the Corporation of the City of London, was cited several times in the press: “It is a sad reflection on architecture that we’ve reached a stage where we have to cover commercial developments with classical wallpaper in order to gain credibility.” Rees was responsible for the preparation of a 60-page document, outlining 20 grounds on which the proposal was unacceptable. Described as “groundscrapers rather than skyscrapers,” the blocks “loom, rather than soar... a simplified medieval street-plan that accentuates rather than reduces the scale of the buildings... the proposed development is still much bigger than what is there at present.”<sup>25</sup>

In February 1992 the City relinquished its decision-making power to the Department of the Environment, where Michael Heseltine was the current Environment Secretary. The developers were obliged to trim the scheme and reinstate Simpson’s central square, with the amended classicist scheme being granted planning permission in 1993.

By the mid-1990s, however, Mitsubishi remained the only partner from the consortium of property developers. A change in mood was reported: “City firms want imposing office blocks with large open-plan floors, which they felt were not catered for in the prince’s scheme.”<sup>26</sup> The press, however, misrepresented the Prince’s support for the later scheme. He had not endorsed the strong commercial stance that the design eventually accommodated and he had become, at this point, a *persona non grata*.

Sir William Whitfield was appointed to review the controversial redevelopment plans at Paternoster Square and devise a final master plan in February 1996. Being a Royal Fine Art Commissioner and former surveyor to the Fabric of St Paul’s, Whitfield was an established and secure choice of architect to undertake a re-evaluation of the project. *The Independent* quoted him as confident for the task:

The war paved the way, understandably in many ways, for a generation of iconoclasts. We have had to live with the results for the past 50 years. It has not been very satisfactory....

What is most important in the development of city centres is not the style we choose to build in but how individual buildings relate to one another. I see my job as helping to patch the City together elegantly and well. We neither



need extreme modern buildings at St Paul's nor what I call 'costume' architecture. I hope we can find a middle way.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 11.** View across Paternoster Square with St Paul's Cathedral behind. Whitfield Partners, Architects – final master plan, 1996 (Photograph by Robyn Christie, 2022).

Whitfield was also one of the Prince's favoured architects. At 75, "he was the subject of an adulatory feature in a recent issue of *Perspectives*, the Prince's architectural magazine," and there was certainty that his ideas would "be relayed to the prince." He had, however, been handed "the thorniest design challenge of modern London: creating a new Paternoster Square next to St Paul's Cathedral."<sup>28</sup>

The new Whitfield master plan dispensed with the underground shopping mall and the massive mega structure. Views of St Paul's and the Chapter House were improved, and the square opened up with the reestablishment of a traditional street pattern. Differentiation between the buildings was achieved, each block being self-contained, allowing for the possibility of a phased development and for individual sale. The master plan provided for separate designs by MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, Michael Hopkins, Allies & Morrison, John Simpson, as well as Sir William Whitfield.

Prince Charles gave his personal approval of the Whitfield plan in November 1997 and, following submission to the City of London Corporation, the scheme was approved in July the following year.

### **The Great Debate**

The Great Debate event at the V&A had formally voted on three questions that were simultaneously offered to attendees and the public visiting the exhibition. The first asked whether it was good that the Prince had focused public opinion on architectural and planning issues; the second question, whether his solutions to the problems had been correct; and the final question was whether his influence upon architectural and planning decisions was right. The majority of both the exhibition audience and debating attendees thought it positive that public opinion had been awakened, but simultaneously did not think it was right for the Prince to interfere in planning decisions. The two audiences differed, however, on the question as to whether the royal solutions were correct.

There was no doubt that at the time of his first speech in 1984 the Prince expressed a feeling that was shared by the general public that much of modern architecture was unloved. Simon Jenkins had written in *The Sunday Times*: “The Modern movement was not just a phase, it was a mistake. It was architecture torn loose from style, invading politics and posing as social engineering.”<sup>29</sup> He reported that there had been a rise in interest in conservation as a result; both the number of listed buildings had increased, as well as membership of conservation bodies.

Opinion polls and agreement on the issue were reflected in the Prince’s rising popularity and gave credence to his authority on architectural matters. By the time of the second speech, the *Financial Times* had recorded that the Prince was “rapidly emerging as the nation’s Architect-in-Chief” and, though not necessarily agreeing with the sentiment, the American architectural correspondent, Paul Goldberger, acknowledged that he had “done wonders in getting architecture onto the front page of newspapers around the world, and this is no small achievement.”<sup>30</sup>

As might be expected the debate was of equal concern to the architectural profession. Michael Manser, president of the RIBA in 1984, did not agree with the public stance against modernism. Already he foresaw that the controversy over new and old had become focused on the wrong issue, the issue for him was whether the architecture was good or bad, not new or old in style. Seven days after Jenkins’ article, he wrote in *The Sunday Times*:

The Prince’s view that unusual new buildings should not be set down amongst older buildings disputes our entire architectural history. Even the

Wren extension to Hampton court, where he made his pronouncement, was a startlingly new design in its time, and foreign to boot, which Wren added in a visually brutal manner to Wolsey's softer medieval palace.

Our whole urban inheritance is one of contrasts of succeeding styles and no generation was more disregarding of previous periods than the Victorians.<sup>31</sup>

But the architectural profession was not united; there were those who supported the royal approach. In a private letter to Prince Charles, Terry Farrell expressed his despair with Manser's view and wrote: "Unfortunately the strength of support among the architectural establishment and many powerful and influential clients and critics for anti-historic, non-contextual architecture is a peculiar characteristic of Britain today."<sup>32</sup>

Rodney Hackney's appointment as President of the RIBA in 1987 reversed the modernist position within the Institute, and resulted from his efforts to restore inner cities and promote community architecture. Needless to say, his campaign also had the strong support of the Prince. In 1988 Léon Kier published an extended article in *Modern Painters*. "God Save the Prince!", however, was more than an offer of support or a eulogy to his royal patron: it was a careful consideration of the planning metrics to disentangle the economics of high-rise building.

Maxwell Hutchinson, an outspoken opponent of the royal opinion, then became President of the RIBA in 1989. He gave a controversial speech as his inaugural address, which was published in *The Prince of Wales: Right or Wrong? An Architect Replies* the same year. He reiterated, "the morphology of our urban landscape cannot fail to be influenced by the need for new forms in a new scientific age. We simply cannot go to the Millennium Ball wearing the threadbare rags of post-modernism and neo-classicism."<sup>33</sup> Christopher Martin disclosed in *Architectural Design* that the organisation was "torn by its own internal politics, bedevilled by chronic financial pressures, split over issues like regionalism and what to do with its library and drawings collection." Far from being a "fountainhead of inspiration," it had become a "block house of Modernism."<sup>34</sup> Regarding the question of royal privilege, Charles Jencks had published *The Prince, The Architects and New Wave Monarchy* in 1988 as a guarded offer of support. It was an attempt to balance the genuine achievements and value of Prince Charles' crusade into architecture, and included as an appendix a selection of both royal speeches and architect responses. A year later in a special issue of *Architectural Design*, which ran a

“Profile on the Architectural Debate”, however, Jencks took a stronger ethical stance against the Prince.

It is not fair to intervene from a privileged position in public inquiries while the inspector is writing his report; it is not fair to damn architects in such a way that their practice collapses... it doesn't appeal to our sense of a match between equal contestants.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

Prince Charles' strong preference for classicism and a return to traditional details should not obscure the importance of looking back at the decade of the 1980s in Britain. Exploring through the contemporary press the three case studies within the historic core of the City of London, has highlighted their relevance to understanding the issue of infill in historic urban areas. It is easy to foreground the accusation of fakery and mimic, which somewhat ironically was followed by an irreverent eclecticism in the postmodern solutions at both Mansion House and Trafalgar Square. The topic of new into old was clearly confused: the critical issue was one of urban design and not the language of infill architecture. Inadvertently the then Prince had highlighted the importance of context and urban design in the design of contemporary architecture in historic settings. In support of the Prince, Giles Worsley later concluded that for Paternoster:

... the real issue is not a battle of columns against glass and steel, but of planning and respect for the setting of St Paul's. The columns and pilasters may have gone, but the principles for which the Prince argued would appear to have survived in Whitfield's master plan.<sup>36</sup>

Although the majority had not agreed in Charles' stylistic proscription, a pathway to reassessing important urban design principles had been opened.

## Endnotes

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# Jet Crossings: Flying Hybrid Machines Over Rose Bay Seaplane Airport (1938)

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## **Abstract**

*The invention of flying boats in the early twentieth century prompted architects and urbanists to adapt to a new hybrid transport technology. Flying boats' ability to take off and land on the water made the water an endless runway with airport terminals positioned on coastlines. The miracle of flying boats and, more broadly, aeroplanes in the air struck a chord in the popular imagination of ordinary tourists, avant-garde architects and urban designers. The Art Deco style expressed their excitement for the new modern transport technology, with smooth, streamlined aesthetics based on the curved, aerodynamic surface of aeroplane bodies. Design professionals internalised aerial themes when shaping places where the sea meets the sky.*

*Taking full advantage of aircraft technology with the ability to take off from the water, Qantas built Australia's first international airport and maintenance facilities at Rose Bay in 1938 for easy access to the waters of Sydney Harbour. To serve further increases in the popularity of international air travel, a second international airport was proposed for the waters at Newport in Sydney's Pittwater. The airport buildings at Rose Bay and Newport are examples of airport architecture at a local level, their stories providing tangible and material insights into the broader history of Australian aviation heritage. This paper's archaeology of Rose Bay's and Newport's terminal buildings as obsolescent objects will uncover glimpses into how architects networked innovative transport technologies into the modern cities of the past.*

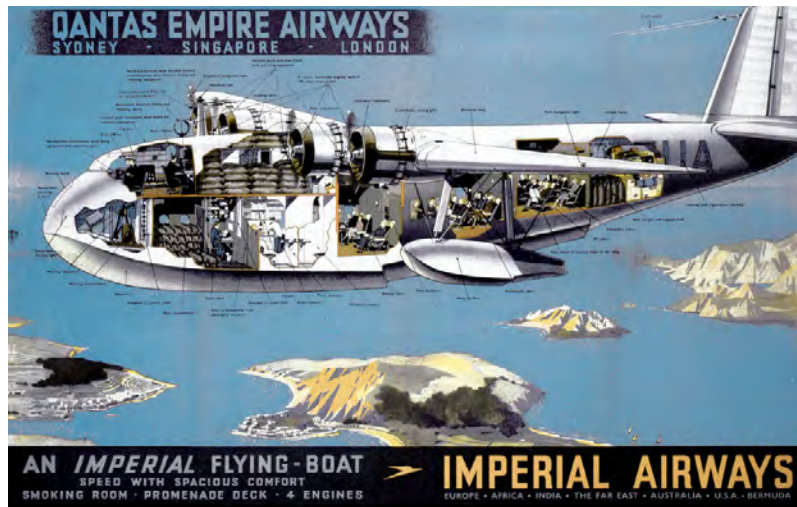


Figure 1. Flying boat cutaway brochure from the late 1930s (Qantas Heritage Collection).

## Introduction

A Qantas Empire Airways brochure from the late 1930s advertises an Imperial Airways flying boat gliding above blue waters. The flying boat, drawn as a cross-sectional view, reveals a collection of neatly assembled cabins expanding out to the hull's exterior.<sup>1</sup> Flying boat cabins recreated the comfortable experience of travelling inside an ocean liner, where the compartments were designed as adaptations of sailing boat chambers. Passengers were expected to get to know one another well while on board, spending at least nine days together inside the compartments. The 'C Class' planes provided passengers with ample amounts of space, the interior being large enough for people to move around and play a round of quoits to pass the time.<sup>2</sup> Flying boats attempted to recreate the luxurious experience of sailing in the skies by fusing the comfort of cruising in an ocean liner with the speed and convenience of flying in an aeroplane. Qantas Empire Airways flew fifteen passengers and five crew to international destinations in serious style inside their fleet of six flying boats. The company's investment to fly passengers in an aquatic fleet of aircraft expanded the Empire Air Mail scheme and added Qantas to the list of international aircraft operators, beginning a new era in Australia's aviation history.<sup>3</sup>

Flying Boats existing as a cross between a plane and a boat, with machinery capable of flying in the sky and landing on the water, required a unique set of equipment to guide them for take-off from the water. In a video by *Film Australia* released in the 1970s entitled *The Ships that Flew*, a pilot describes the take-off process.<sup>4</sup> First, aviators sought a clearing of water free from ferries, vessels and other boats with the potential of



intercepting the runway. With the propellers whizzing and the plane lurching forward, the pilot used the floats on the underside of either wing to stabilise the nose and prevent drag. The pilot pulled back on the controls, and the air moving around the curved metal aerodynamic wings gradually lifted the plane upwards from the water. The waters of Rose Bay in Sydney were sufficiently flat and calm for the length of the runway, warranting a safe take-off and landing.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of flying boats in the early twentieth century prompted architects to design places where a new hybrid transport technology could take off and land.



**Figure 2.** Image of the entrance into the Rose Bay Flying Boat Base. The sign to the right of the photograph reads, “Commonwealth of Australia Department of Civil Aviation, Rose Bay Flying Boat Base, No Admittance...” (“Rose Bay 1940s,” Qantas Heritage Collection).

For many Australians in the 1930s, international air travel was becoming a viable option, increasing the need for aircraft companies to build tarmac capable of landing large, long-range aircraft. Flying boats did not need to land on tarmac runways, taking off from calm stretches of water.<sup>6</sup> Taking full advantage of aircraft technology with the ability to take off from the water, Qantas built Australia’s first international airport and maintenance facilities at Rose Bay for easy access to the waters of Sydney Harbour.<sup>7</sup> To serve further increases in the popularity of international air travel, a second international airport was proposed for the waters at Newport in Sydney’s Pittwater. The *Airport of Tomorrow* scheme was drawn at a monumental scale and was envisioned to house the largest flying boats in the world.<sup>8</sup> The project sought to dramatically reshape the existing landscape of Newport, uprooting the small instances of utilitarian architecture serving the local surf lifesaving community and Royal Motor Yacht Club. The airport at Newport

project would have transformed the local Australian community of Pittwater by overlaying an entirely new aviation suburb.<sup>9</sup> The airport buildings at Rose Bay and Newport are examples of airport architecture at a local level, their stories providing tangible and material insights into the broader history of Australian aviation heritage.<sup>10</sup>

### **Designing for Hybrid Typologies**

Rose Bay Flying Boat Base was designed by the Government Architect and opened to a crowd of 2000 people with an existing fleet of flying boats on 4 August 1938.<sup>11</sup> The base on the edge of Lyne Park faced the water, prompting a design that merged a bayside pavilion with an airport. Images collected from the Qantas Heritage Archives reveal the front of the airport building in elevation and the unique treatment for the façade. The design mimics a European standard for airports that fused a control tower and passenger terminal into the same location.<sup>12</sup> Tying both typologies together and tailoring the airport to its setting were the architectural tectonics of a beachfront colonnade and recreational amenities building. Inside the airport facilities were the passenger terminal, waiting area, cargo storage and refuelling tanks. On the top deck overlooking the water was a curved control tower with glass windows and a curved balcony. The balcony and colonnade levels of the airport connected passengers to the water through glass windows, framing the view to the outside.<sup>13</sup> The viewing areas brought the animated activities of boats floating on the water to the interior, entertaining the flow of people that sat and waited for their flights.

The first airports constructed in Australia were basic, utilitarian buildings consisting of industrial hangars and small administration pavilions. Their appearance reassured passengers with a familiar aesthetic until the early 1930s when architects realised the potential for aviation architecture.<sup>14</sup> In 1938, the Government Architect designed Rose Bay's airport in an avant-garde Art Deco style, expressing the excitement surrounding the new modern transport technology.<sup>15</sup> The curved aerodynamic surface of aeroplanes' bodies inspired a smooth, streamlined aesthetic on the façade. Art Deco themes were slowly overlayed onto the red brick administration building, reflecting the lines and forms within aircraft.<sup>16</sup> The beautiful long lines of ships and the convex, graceful lines of wings were taken from the designs of transport vehicles and tied into the aesthetics of Rose Bay. The first floor was lined with long horizontal strips along the top and outlined with thin round balustrades above and below. The control tower and viewing deck are curved, mimicking the front of an aeroplane or the front of a ship on the bay's waters. The Base's curved corners and long lines are visibly an interpretation of an Art Deco style. Rose

Bay conformed to modernist ideas of purity and vitality of form,<sup>17</sup> turning aeroplane technology into the airport's aesthetic.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 3.** Image of the airport's front façade facing the water  
("Rose Bay 1930s," Qantas Heritage Collection).

The jetty in front of the Rose Bay airport bridged sailors with their craft docked on the water besides. The boardwalk was continuously upgraded and extended to accommodate new mobile aircraft technologies and immobile technologies like control towers and airports, permitting an approach from floating vessels of all types. In addition to anchoring an assortment of ships, it functioned as a jet bridge connecting passengers to the flying boats that docked beside it. The jetty's design was carefully crafted to protect passengers from unpredictable wind and wave conditions.<sup>19</sup> After checking in, passengers walked along the deck, past the ships anchored along the edge, and through the flying boat's cabin doors. On the airport's opening day, the popularity of the jet bridge showed the jetty was more significant to the people of Rose Bay than simply mooring boats and docking flying boats. People were gripped by the enthusiasm for aviation that swept the world. Many design professionals had become air-minded and strove to take advantage of the opportunities the new technologies offered, upgrading existing infrastructure for landing flying boats on the shoreline.



**Figure 4.** Image of the enormous industrial hangars that took over a large portion of Lyne Park. The hangars were large enough to house flying boats while they were under repair (“Rose Bay 1940s,” Qantas Heritage Collection).

The establishment of the maintenance facilities to support the airport at Rose Bay was slow, forcing flying boats to be repaired on their moorings until a purpose-built hangar was constructed.<sup>20</sup> Work on the main hangar began in 1938 and was completed in 1939, a considerable time after the airport terminal building had been opened.<sup>21</sup> Once the hangar was opened, the airport was considered a base, with a cluster of buildings, including a hangar, large enough to cover flying boats, workshops, fabrication facilities and staff amenities.<sup>22</sup> Employees at the base were swamped with work as the daily pressures and requirements for maintaining their new fleet of flying boats increased.<sup>23</sup> Under cover of immense warehouses, a flow of maintenance equipment and mechanics moved around the machines under repair on the inside.<sup>24</sup> Employees were tasked with maintaining the six Empire Class flying boats given to Rose Bay by the Short Brothers in the United Kingdom.<sup>25</sup> Flying boats would be launched into the hangars on a slipway that led from the shoreline to the water. The ramp was made from iron frames and wooden slats that formed an inclined ramp. A second hangar was planned to help with the increased workload but was never completed due to the end of the war and decreased demand for new flying boats.<sup>26</sup> The steelwork meant for building the hangar was sold and reassembled at Mascot airfields, where it later housed Qantas’ land planes. The remains of the main hangar were eventually disassembled in the 1970s when the land was returned to civilian hands and turned into a sporting field once again.<sup>27</sup>

### Designing for Hybrid Urban Activities

An aerial image of Rose Bay shows the bay's waters heaving with civilian activity. Combining swimming, cricket and other sporting activities at the park meant the public grew accustomed to having seaplane activity at the bay. Sailors could easily hire a boat from the sheds at Lyne Park and spend the day floating around the bay, and swimmers participated in water activities at the baths. Following increased activity on the water, sporting events emerged on the grass, drawing crowds of young people to the park. Ocean baths, boating activities and sporting games were jammed within a small section of the bay, making it difficult for flying boat pilots to find a clear stretch of water for take-off.<sup>28</sup> Fuel from flying boats and sailing boats poured into the water, polluting the bay's ecosystem and causing the fresh water to fill with seaweed. With seaweed littering the surface, swimming activity soon decreased, causing seaplanes and boats to take over the remainder of the bay.



**Figure 5.** Aerial image of the first international airport in Australia on opening day. A crowd of people line the shoreline, and two flying boats float along the water ("Rose Bay 1938," Qantas Heritage Collection).

Locating airports on the periphery of cities and parklands had the detrimental effect of introducing potentially hazardous and unwanted pollution. Rose Bay had become known as a dirty and smelly place with copious amounts of seaweed littering the shoreline.<sup>29</sup> Meeting minutes from gatherings of Woollahra City councillors detail the task of removing pollution from the water.<sup>30</sup> They proposed to reclaim part of the water and construct a seawall, the wall doubling as a buffer from seaweed plaguing the beach and a retaining wall for the newly infilled parkland. The councillors resolved the urban

threshold between the water and Lyne Park through a delicate combination of ecosystem management and precise incision of infrastructure.

The provision of large open spaces located inside the city was hard to find. Existing parks, parade grounds and military training spaces were turned into airports and became settings for the first aviators. Double Bay, an inlet just above Rose Bay, became the runway for Lebbeus Hordern's famous flight. An image taken at the event shows crowds of people standing on the sand at Double Bay to watch Hordern's seaplane take off in 1914, indicating just how important the water events were to the people of Woollahra.<sup>31</sup> Next to sailing and swimming, seaplanes were a preferred source of entertainment, and residents didn't miss the chance to catch the spectacle of new technology with their own eyes. The promise of innovation captured the imagination of residents, pilots and designers, who imagined where this new technology could take them.



**Figure 6.** Crowds lined the shoreline to catch a glimpse of this famous flight. The crowds' attendance highlighted the popularity of aviators' first flights ("Maurice Farman Hydro-Aeroplane (Hydroplane) imported by Lebbeus Hordern, flown by Guillaux, 1914," State Library of New South Wales, reproduced from the State Archives & Records Authority of NSW, 9 May 1914).

### **Scheme for a Hybrid Airport**

Operating from Rose Bay to Palm Beach, Aquatic Airways flew seaplanes along the NSW coastline, continuing the legacy of flying boats through the 1970s. Tourists wishing to view Sydney from the air and businesspeople travelling to Gosford preferred flying the seaplane route from Rose Bay to Palm Beach and their destination in Gosford.<sup>32</sup> Aquatic Airways leased Barrenjoey Boathouse to land seaplanes along the coast and connect Palm Beach to the route of seaplane destinations. Constructed in 1947, the

boatshed was typical of small utilitarian marine buildings and wasn't large enough to cover seaplanes from the weather on the inside. Damaged seaplanes were dragged onto the sand beside the boatshed for repairs, including the Cessna 185 floatplane and De Havilland Beaver. Cessnas could carry three or five passengers, depending on the model, while the Beavers were larger, more reliable and could carry eight passengers. Beavers, the preferred seaplanes, were installed with windows designed to provide better aerial views. These seaplanes were a familiar sight at Rose Bay and Palm Beach, ferrying groups of tourists regularly. Seeing the harbour from the air made these tourist flights popular experiences and allowed passengers to soak in the full beauty of the coastline.<sup>33</sup>

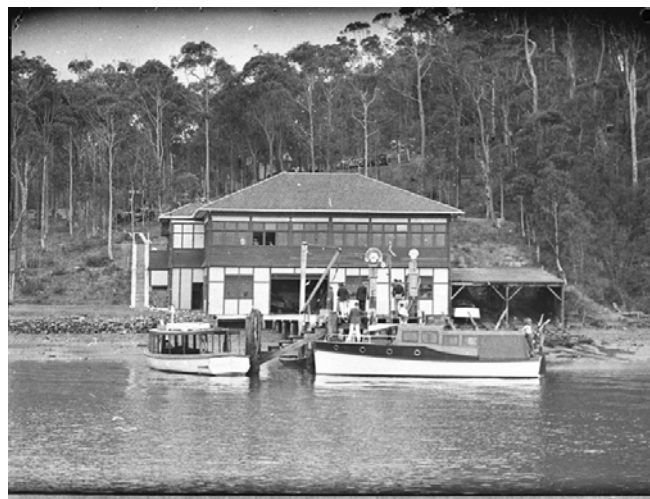


**Figure 7.** Seaplane docked beside the boatshed at Palm Beach (Photograph by Russell Walton, “Barrenjoey Boat House,” *Pittwater Online News*, [www.pittwateronlinenews.com/barrenjoey-boat-house.php](http://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/barrenjoey-boat-house.php), accessed 6 January 2023).

The marine port of Newport is located to the south of Palm Beach and bound by the waters of Pittwater to the west and the Tasman Sea to the east.<sup>34</sup> Identified by a unique deep-water channel that passes alongside the shoreline, Newport is accessed by large steamers and vessels that travel close to the bay.<sup>35</sup> Surrounded by water, residents considered the bay their favourite fishing destination and a treasured place for yachting and sailing. The Pittwater Regatta held at Newport Beach attracted thousands of spectators making Newport the central location for marine activities. Competitors raced between the Royal Motor Yacht Club and the finishing line near the Newport Hotel.<sup>36</sup> Rowboats, sailing yachts of various sizes and motorboats covered the water, the event continuing to be the largest of the sailing calendar for many years. Spectators would

travel down from Mossman, and ferries would transport revellers from other northern destinations. Busses would pull up near the Newport Hotel, and ferries would wait to taxi passengers who had just arrived.<sup>37</sup> Ferries were the usual form of transport to Newport until the introduction of public transportation.

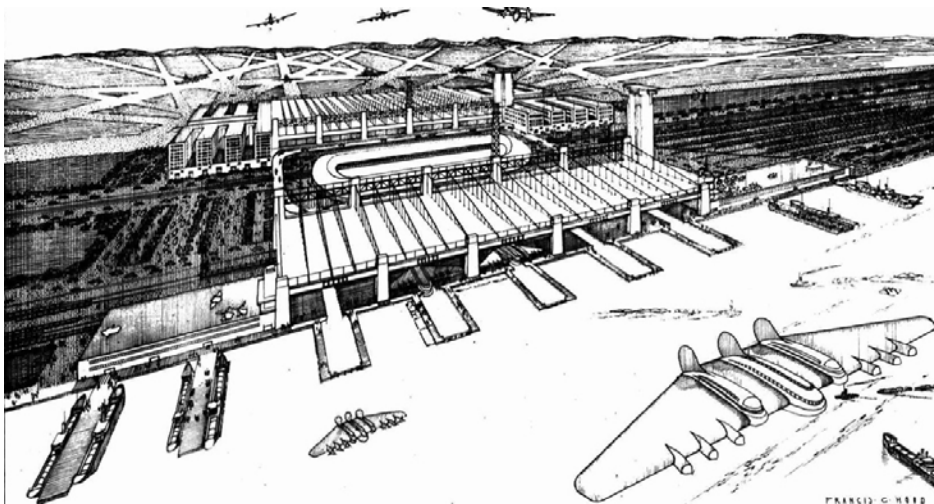
Newport's Surf Life Saving Club, built in 1933, and the Royal Motor Yacht Club, first opened in 1928, are two examples of structures present at Newport Beach.<sup>38</sup> The RMYC was an imposing building by the water that included a club room, dressing rooms, showers, a reading room, a veranda, a basement boat shed, a swimming pool and a marina.<sup>39</sup> A photo from the State Library shows its appearance on the water. The sailing community hosted ocean races from the yacht club, including the Pittwater Regatta, speed boat championships and carnivals.<sup>40</sup> The neighbouring Surf Lifesaving Club served to protect swimmers at the beach and rockpools. The surf club's hall, which seated just under 300 guests, was the most important social venue for the Newport Community.<sup>41</sup> The remainder of the beach was dotted with small dressing sheds and rock pools made of concrete and smaller rocks.<sup>42</sup> Newport's popularity as a social destination, and beach for swimming and motor boating, made the area the terminal point for an extensive line of river traffic and people movement. Growing into an established marine location, Newport became the perfect fit for developing a new vision for a seaplane airport.



**Figure 8.** Image of Newport's Royal Motor Yacht club with two boats docked on the jetty (Photograph by Sam Hood, "Pittwater Regatta," 26 November 1936, Home and Away Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales [13593]).



Early airport landscapes were chosen for being naturally suited for landing aircraft and their location close to urban areas. Airport engineers sought large open terrain with level ground and an environment free from foggy and gusty winds.<sup>43</sup> With the gradual urbanisation of cities, competition quickly arose between the space needed for stable tarmac runways and suitable landscape conditions. Land runways needed to stretch long distances, wide enough to enable aeroplanes to take off. They were reliable and predictable, yet the cost of laying pavement capable of carrying enormous loads was expensive.<sup>44</sup> Water runways offered an alternative. However, long stretches of calm and sheltered water were rare and dependent upon the existing natural landscape. The orientation, length and width of runways were determined by the direction of prevailing winds.<sup>45</sup>



**Figure 9.** Aerial view of the scheme for Newport's new seaplane airport (Drawn by Francis Hood, "The Airport of Tomorrow, Aerial View," *Construction*, 7 February 1945. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

The *Airport of Tomorrow* proposal of 1944 by Francis Hood, Charles Harrison and Florence Taylor sought to take advantage of Newport's existing landscape, dramatically reshaping the beach into a new airport. Initially published in *Construction* magazine, the scheme conformed to twentieth-century modernist idealism with a monumental project of gigantic proportions.<sup>46</sup> The proposal was multi-purpose, with an airport, seaplane base, railway terminal and dock for small vessels. Two parallel airport buildings rose high in elevation, with the seaplane airport located along the edge of Pittwater Bay and the land plane airport, drawn in elevation as a mirrored duplicate of the seaplane terminal and separated by a land traffic zone in between.<sup>47</sup> The seaplane airport was proposed as five consecutive hangars lined up along the water's edge and large enough to contain

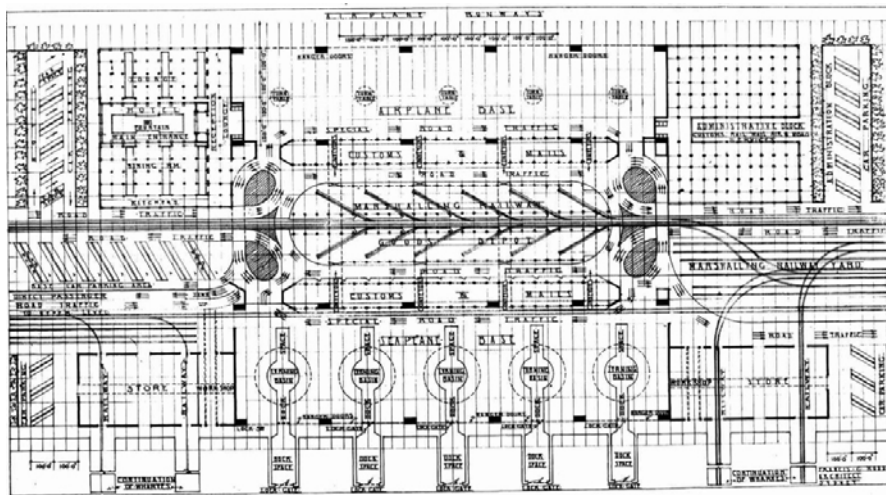
the largest flying boats of the future. The land plane airport included turntables that rotated aircraft to face onto land runways and directed aeroplanes out from the terminal on a trajectory that suggested all flights would rise over the Pacific Ocean.<sup>48</sup> Above each hanger spanned large steel skillion roofs, capable of reaching long distances with the support of colossal steel trusses underneath.<sup>49</sup> The architects of the scheme considered the *Airport of Tomorrow* Australia's second international airport, after the first and significantly smaller international airport at Rose Bay.

### **Integrating Hybrid Urbanism**

Hood, Harrison and Taylor's drawings were an overly optimistic view for Newport, yet the scheme was based on the sound purpose of reducing travel time for residents.<sup>50</sup> The airport's positioning promised shorter transit routes, being located close to Sydney's central business district and the opportunity to connect to existing transportation networks.<sup>51</sup> The land traffic zone between the two airport buildings delivered passengers to and from the terminal. The railway platforms were arrayed one after the other, with tracks directed towards the city and roadways stacked underneath them. However, the cost of the tunnel wide enough to cover the four railway lines from Newport to the city would have been enormous and have claimed a vast portion of Pittwater's land.<sup>52</sup> A similar plan for a railway to Pittwater, originally put forward with the Tramway and Railway Act of 1888, followed along the same lines, yet that scheme also ceased operations in 1939. A large portion of land required for transport avenues along the North Shore was in private hands, requiring an unobtainable expense to buy land that would eventually be turned into a road.<sup>53</sup> The provision of aviation infrastructure often demanded extensive urban redevelopment, frequently causing conflict with residents. Newport's scheme was no exception. The advantages to the economy the airport proposed were far outweighed by mismatched urban planning and a misaligned vision for the future of aviation.<sup>54</sup>

Newport airport would have required a complex administration system that evolved to accommodate new technologies, urban situations and the flow of people around the airport.<sup>55</sup> Concrete structures designed in a Soviet Era style rose ten storeys in the air, containing an international hotel, mail, customs and transport administration responsible for controlling the flow of movement on the ground.<sup>56</sup> On the tarmac below, subways moved people and cargo along fast conveyor belts from building to building. Passengers were led across the tarmac upon a labyrinth of roads, pathways, pedestrian crossings and markings for the seaplanes and the land planes. Planes would weave in and out of

the dotted lines and road indicators along the tarmac, their wheels rolling along the tangle of routes and avenues. Maintenance workers would rush between workshops and maintenance buildings with helipad markings painted on their roofs. In the airport, travellers would walk by lobby areas, reception and through gates at customs to the arrival and departure areas. Combined, the proposed airport experience was a controlled dance of people, planes, water and jet crossings, their movement requiring the processing of vast amounts of knowledge and state-of-the-art administration technologies.<sup>57</sup>



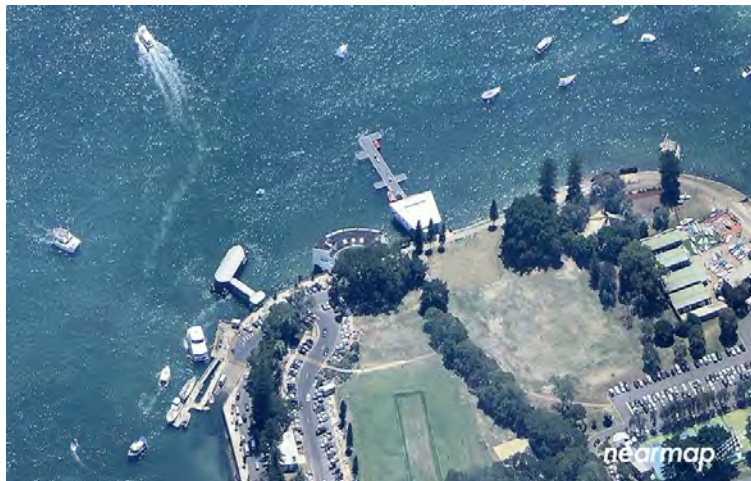
**Figure 10.** Detailed plan view showing seaplane turntables, roads, hangars and airport buildings (Drawn by Francis Hood, "The Airport of Tomorrow, Plan View," *Construction*, 7 February 1945. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

The authors proposed tidal lock technology to overcome changes in sea level and warp flying boats inside the aircraft hangars.<sup>58</sup> The rotating locks would turn the aeroplanes around within each hangar to facilitate loading and unloading. The giant aircraft would be loaded onto turntables and slowly raised from level to level while passengers, mail and cargo embarked and disembarked. The performance of a mechanism twirling a seaplane while a flow of people and objects moved to and from would have been a spectacular event. The seaplanes warped through a tidal lock to sit on top of the turning deck, and as the planes were hoisted upwards, circular basins underneath the hangars adjusted the water level. The lock technology doubled as a dry dock, and dry turntables were used to turn planes inside the airport opposite.<sup>59</sup> Hood, Harrison and Taylor envisioned seaplanes having a permanent presence on the water, taking the opportunity to invent unique marine solutions. However, the majestic seaplane of the future never eventuated, and seaplanes were eventually subsumed by jet planes. In the end, the

*Airport of Tomorrow* was never realised, and the pristine beaches, bay and humble buildings at Newport were protected.

### **Landing Gear**

Pioneering journeys in flying boats were fraught with frequent crashes and dangerous accidents, earning them a treacherous reputation, made infamous by newspapers.<sup>60</sup> Stable land airfields were established during the war, removing the need for unpredictable water landings.<sup>61</sup> Water-based flying boats were no longer trusted with ferrying mail, finding a new purpose thrilling tourists on joy flights above the coastline. Upon the same location as the first airport at Rose Bay, Sydney Seaplanes are flying passengers around the Sydney Harbour, the current terminal building still functioning as a seaplane airport.<sup>62</sup> Seaplane rides provide intimate joy flights for small groups of people, continuing the legacy pioneered by Qantas, Imperial Airways, Ansett and Aquatic Airways before them. The introduction of the 747-jet airliner inspired the majority of Australians to take to the air for their holidays overseas. With many Australians flying in 747s, the government returned the south portion of the park to the public, and the local Sailing Club re-occupied part of the Flying-Boat Base in 1959, returning Lyne Park to civilian hands.<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 11.** Aerial view of the current seaplane airport building, ferry terminal and Lyne Park (Nearmap Images).

Currently gracing the skies of Rose Bay are the Cessna Caravan Amphibian and the Classic Beaver seaplane models. Caravan seaplanes are reliable and safe to fly, with their amphibious floats able to land on almost any runway or suitable body of water within flying distance of Sydney Harbour. The Beaver, first built in 1947, is a reliable

single-engine monoplane whose floats can be replaced by wheels or skis depending on the terrain and runway. These historical aircraft have been refurbished and fitted with the latest technology making them sky worthy by modern standards.<sup>64</sup> The use of historical flying boats lasted a little over a decade. Yet, they represent the romance and wonder of the machine age, a legacy that continues with the Cessna and Beaver seaplanes currently in the air. To see a flying boat float amongst the clouds today is a rare and beautiful sight.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup> Montagnana-Wallace, *The Flying Kangaroo*, 82.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Ships That Flew* (Film Australia, 1974).
- <sup>5</sup> Matthew Holle, "Flying Boats: Sydney's Golden Age of Aviation." Sydney Living Museums, May 19, 2014. <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/flying-boats-sydneys-golden-age-aviation>.
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- <sup>7</sup> Montagnana-Wallace, *The Flying Kangaroo*, 79.
- <sup>8</sup> *Construction* magazine was edited by architect and urbanist Florence Taylor. She published the scheme in collaboration with Hood and Harrison. Francis Hood was responsible for the drawings published in the issue. Francis G. Hood, Florence M. Taylor and Charles O. Harrison, "The Airport of To-Morrow," *Construction*, 7 February 1945, 10-14, 10.
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- <sup>14</sup> Terry Moyle and Rosie Louise, *Art Deco Airports: Dream Designs of the 1920s & 1930s* (London, Sydney and Auckland: New Holland Publishers, 2015), 8.
- <sup>15</sup> Smith, "I Can Still Remember the Roar of the Engines,'" 67.
- <sup>16</sup> Moyle, *Art Deco Airports*, 35.
- <sup>17</sup> Ashton, *Connecting the Nation*.
- <sup>18</sup> Curated as a series of images of airplane parts with dramatic captions, Le Corbusier imagined a new modern aesthetic based on the forms and curves flying machines. Le Corbusier, *Aircraft* (London: Trefoil Publications Ltd, 1935).
- <sup>19</sup> Smith, "I Can Still Remember the Roar of the Engines,'" 67.
- <sup>20</sup> John Gunn, *The Defeat of Distance: Qantas 1919-1939* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1988), 315.
- <sup>21</sup> John Gunn, *Challenging Horizons: Qantas 1939-1954* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1987), 4.

- <sup>22</sup> Smith, “‘I Can Still Remember the Roar of the Engines’,” 67.
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- <sup>43</sup> Sonja Dümpelmann, *Flights of Imagination: Aviation, Landscape, Design* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 19.
- <sup>44</sup> Hood, “The Airport of To-Morrow,” 10.
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- <sup>47</sup> Morcombe, “Secret Plan for Airport at Newport,” 14.
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- <sup>49</sup> Hood, “The Airport of To-Morrow,” 13.
- <sup>50</sup> We cannot expect these days to have our flying fields close to the city. In the city of the future the airport will be the logical civic centre. “What’s Wrong With Rose Bay,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 July 1938, 6.
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# **“The Moral of these Pictures”: New Zealand’s Early Urban Reform Movements in Lantern Lectures**

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## **Abstract**

*One of the threads linking together the early twentieth-century urban reform movements of city beautifying, garden city/suburb and town planning is the use of lantern slides and their ubiquitous projection device, the magic lantern. Along with newspapers, pamphlets and posters, lantern slides were an essential tool across each of these movements, presenting and framing the objectives promoted by their enthusiastic leaders and enabling the broad dissemination of their ideas via images projected to audiences in public lectures. Yet our understanding of how lantern media operated in these contexts has been restricted by the lack of extant lantern slide collections and a long-standing view of the medium’s redundancy compared to newer forms of projection media. Histories of how these campaigns were promoted in New Zealand are dominated by personalities such as Charles C. Reade, William R. Davidge and Samuel Hurst Seager, who are known to have frequently employed lantern slides for public lectures. However, the lantern lecture was utilised by a number of other figures and groups with common interests in these interrelated attempts to improve New Zealand’s urban landscape. Lantern lectures engendered, and were evidence of, the intersections of ideas, meanings and relationships between audiences, politicians, architects, planners and other advocates from beyond these professions, such as Reade, who held sway over the Australasian town planning movement for many years. Looking at three lantern lectures between 1913 and 1923, this paper traces the effectiveness of the magic lantern medium and its traditions in facilitating the translation and adaptation of progressive ideas in New Zealand’s urban landscape.*

## **Introduction**

One of the recurring features of New Zealand’s early twentieth-century urban reform movements was the lantern lecture in which ideas about changing the built environment

were aired and consumed. Numerous public lectures making use of lantern slides and the magic lantern were delivered in connection with three interrelated movements seeking to improve the state of New Zealand towns and cities: the city beautifying, garden city (or suburb) and town planning movements. Histories of these movements often mention lectures as a common method for dispersing their fundamental ideas and enlisting widespread public support, a necessity if they were to achieve their goals of comprehensive urban transformation.<sup>1</sup> However, the inner-workings of these lectures and how lantern slides were used to illustrate them have escaped scholarly attention. The lantern lecture tours of town planning advocates Charles C. Reade (1911), Reade with architect William R. Davidge (1914) and architect Samuel Hurst Seager have been discussed elsewhere. Yet many others who were interested in the ideas of these movements were also inspired to give public lectures using the magic lantern medium. This paper looks closely at three lectures that took place between 1913 and 1923 as manifestations of these campaigns to locate the lantern lecture's significance in the history of urban transformation in New Zealand. It examines how lecturers utilised the magic lantern format and its array of audio-visual traditions to interpret the central principles of these movements for local audiences, and how they presented their own proposals for enhancing New Zealand's urban landscape. Centred on the magic lantern medium, these practices were important vehicles for the circulation of lecturers' proposed solutions, derived from international examples and applied to local issues they had identified as having potential for improvement.

Generally made in this period using photographic processes, lantern slides were glass objects holding positive images that could be projected and narrated to audiences. The medium had flourished for more than two centuries, playing important roles in both entertainment and educational activities. In the Australasian colonies, the lantern, illustrated, illuminated or limelight lecture became a staple of the urban cultural landscape from the 1870s. Lantern lectures were an exercise in self-improvement enjoyed predominantly by middle-class society, a form of rational recreation that also served to lessen the perceived cultural separation from the civilising centre of Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> The magic lantern format was well-suited to the broad diffusion of knowledge with its combination of persuasive audio-visual techniques that borrowed elements shared with its prolific entertainment traditions, and the ability to communicate information to audiences instantaneously, uniformly and repeatedly. Lantern lectures relied on the performance and narrative ability of their lecturers, the enthusiasm or interest of their audience, a minimum of attendance, the quality of the screened lantern



slide images and the strength of the illuminant. Lecturers simply had to repeat the event in order to increase the support they sought, a practice frequently deployed by figures such as Reade, Davidge and Seager on their lecture tours.

How the public lantern lecture operated in the context of calls to adopt the ideas of the city beautiful, garden city and town planning movements is the object of this paper. Given the overseas origins of these campaigns, I adopt Caroline Miller's description of a transition of their concepts within New Zealand from receiving knowledge uncritically from international sources, to a state where such ideas served as influences to discourses surrounding urban transformation, and were then adapted to fit local conditions.<sup>3</sup> Arguing that public lantern lectures provided an important venue for the nourishment and acceptance of these concepts, the three lantern lectures appraised here are useful case studies for tracing the absorption, modification and attempts to implement their ideas at a local level.

### **Civic Water at Play in Christchurch**

Charles Chilton (1860-1929) was professor of biology at Canterbury College, Christchurch, and one of the Christchurch Beautifying Association's more active members, having given several lectures on various city beautifying subjects and later serving as chairman.<sup>4</sup> He became editor of its short-lived *The City Beautiful* publication, where he also wrote a history of the Association in 1924.<sup>5</sup> Chilton's lecture on "The Evolution of the Fountain" was held with free admission under the auspices of the Association at 8 o'clock following its evening meeting on 10 April 1913, at the Alexandra Hall in Christchurch. In an article advertising the upcoming lecture, the *Star* noted that although its usual work amounted to the planting of trees, laying new lawns and cleaning up waste deposits, "some of its members have much more ambitious projects in mind, and one of these, put forward by Dr Charles Chilton some time ago, is the beautification of the city, and of the [Botanic] Gardens especially, by water displays."<sup>6</sup>

Beginning the lecture with a history of the water fountain, Chilton showed lantern slides of European examples to illustrate its evolution from utilitarian to purely ornamental uses. Many of these slides were likely made from his own photographs as he had recently travelled through southern Europe and had given an "abundantly illustrated" lecture about the trip a month earlier.<sup>7</sup> Based on the concept of armchair travel, the travel lecture was another common use of the magic lantern apparatus. With improved access to equipment and innovations in photography from the 1880s, tourists could produce

lantern slides from their own photographs and become eyewitness lecturers. While narrating a sequence of slides displaying fountains in France, Switzerland and Italy, Chilton evoked the process of travel itself in a way that was both an enjoyable and educational pastime.<sup>8</sup> This connection with the magic lantern's recreational life continues with the location of the lecture within the grand Canterbury Hall complex, which contained a theatre and two hall venues. The Alexandra Hall was regularly used as a substitute town hall for various events including public meetings, sport matches, sales, socials and religious services.<sup>9</sup> The lecture's setting in a familiar performance space, coupled with fascinating views explained by their authoritative lecturer, resulted in an agreeable and intimate atmosphere where the audience became predisposed to Chilton's message.<sup>10</sup>

This was explained visually by several distinctions Chilton supplied with his slides. Ending his views of European fountains, he singled out the fountains of Versailles as the most exemplary for their captivating upward water jets that did not require an elaborate structure.<sup>11</sup> Another comparison was made between archetypal fountains of continental Europe and urban fountains in New Zealand, with Chilton stating the country had "not made very great progress... in applying the lessons of older countries." The fountains in Auckland's Albert Park, the Dunedin Triangle and the Wanganui racecourse were part of a pattern exhibiting "some pretence of utility," and more often than not languished without active water.<sup>12</sup> As lantern slides of New Zealand's waterfalls and still water features were shown, Chilton stated that active water was preferred in fountains, holding greater charm than motionless water. Here, the lantern slides exhibited the differences between successful fountains and those that failed, emphasising the instructiveness of Chilton's message. The writer of the lecture's report in the *Star* linked it with yet another popular magic lantern tradition practised by a wide range of religious and social organisations seeking to evangelise: "the moral of these pictures was that the erection or fountain proper was inappropriate without water playing from it."<sup>13</sup>

A slide of the Peacock fountain in the Christchurch Botanical Garden in an active state was then shown. This Chilton found wanting as it "pretended to play... [and] it was absolutely ineffective as a water display" since the surrounding basin wall prevented a clear view of the water at play.<sup>14</sup> His criticism of this fountain is not without precedent. It was at Chilton's suggestion in 1908 that a civic fountain be erected using the bequest of businessman and politician John T. Peacock. In 1910, after the Beautifying Association committee returned to their first choice of an iron fountain designed by British artist John

Bell and prefabricated at the Coalbrookdale Iron Works, Shropshire, Chilton and fellow Association member Samuel Hurst Seager decried the option as inartistic. They claimed the available water for the Botanical Gardens site would produce spurts no higher than 6 feet. Its annual running cost, based on a proposed operation for three afternoons per week, would surpass that of the project. A more suitable alternative was a system of jets springing from a rockery near the Hagley Park footbridge; the water would rise to over 10 feet and run at a significantly lower cost. Their concerns were dismissed and the Coalbrookdale design was constructed in 1911 just west of the Canterbury Museum.<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 1.** The J. T. Peacock Fountain and basin in its original position west of Canterbury Museum, c.191-?, Christchurch Botanic Gardens (Christchurch City Libraries, File Reference CCL PhotoCD 4, IMG0031).

Referring again to the fountains at Versailles in his final lantern slide, Chilton claimed that “in Christchurch we could do something of the same kind of thing as in France at practically no expense,” although it would not be “as great or imposing.”<sup>16</sup> This, he explained, was because the city’s flat landscape and artesian well system provided ample water at little cost. Likewise, the defunct fire-fighting reservoirs in Cathedral Square, Cashel and High Streets, and High and Manchester Streets could be simply modified to become “artistic and interesting” by installing a single jet and lowering their walls.<sup>17</sup> This proposal of small alterations reflects the extent of city beautifying associations’ activities in New Zealand: upgrading extant features was preferable to creating new complex and expensive structures.<sup>18</sup> Chilton concluded the lecture by reiterating how water displays could help accentuate Christchurch’s urban landscape in a way “which none of the other towns in New Zealand have,” to which the audience

applauded.<sup>19</sup> His project embodies the notion of civic water, expressing a nationalistic and commemorative impulse that asserted narratives of settler and civic progress with a city's ability to supply and control water.<sup>20</sup> Chilton's preference for active water points to a desire to harness natural and urban beauty to "inspire civic pride" and economic prosperity.<sup>21</sup>

Regardless of Christchurch's supposed plentiful water supply, his attempts to set a standard for civic water fountains could not always be met. In February 1913, the Botanic Gardens' curator James Young reported the Peacock fountain was not attached to the high-pressure system and ran three days a week only if there was water to spare. As a connection to the city supply would undoubtedly be expensive, the Beautifying Association appears to have been content to let the matter rest.<sup>22</sup> No action appears to have been taken until January 1915 when, as part of wider upgrades, Young proposed shifting the fountain further southwest to make it more prominent from the entrances to the Gardens. Citing complaints about its location and the high basin wall, he suggested the fountain form the centrepiece of an artificial lake, which would also contain several rockeries with small water jets.<sup>23</sup> It was this removal (executed a month later) that stirred minor public backlash in a few letters to the editors of Christchurch newspapers.<sup>24</sup> Although Chilton's campaign was further interrupted by the First World War, his lecture did succeed in drawing attention to a perceived need for beautification by water at play.

### **Artisans' Cottages for Ponsonby**

Architect and quantities surveyor Thomas G. Price (ca 1865-1942) emigrated to New Zealand from Great Britain in ca 1912, and ran a small office with work generally confined to the Auckland region.<sup>25</sup> He was among several architects elected to the general committee of the newly established Auckland Town-Planning League in June 1914 and would later become League secretary.<sup>26</sup> That he was aware of town planning ideas is evidenced by his presence on a subcommittee to determine the League's rules, based on those of the Town Planning Association of New South Wales, and the *New Zealand Herald's* comment that he "had considerable Home and Continental experience of the subject." His lecture on "Workers' Homes" was given on 2 October 1916, as part of the Auckland Civic League's annual public lecture programme at the League's rooms in Hallenstein's Buildings on Queen Street.<sup>27</sup>

Price's lecture was concerned with the shortage of workers' accommodation in New Zealand, introducing an economic model for their construction and rent, and the specific

types of dwellings that would work best in Auckland's situation. In his introduction, which appears to have preceded the projection of lantern slides, Price said the New Zealand government's construction programme of workers' homes did not go far enough in resolving the housing shortage in rapidly-growing cities like Auckland. It fell to the city council to secure land for new homes which could be found in Auckland's "congested areas." He said that although slums were considerably fewer in the city compared to those in Britain, there were "many wooden houses that should be pulled down."<sup>28</sup> This version differs from the impression of slum rife as promoted by advocates such as Reade and slum discourse found in newspapers during the 1910s. Slum rhetoric dominated the 1913-1915 campaign of C. J. Parr, former mayor and president of the Town-Planning League, to replace the dilapidated homes of Grey St Gully (now Greys Ave) and open Myers Park in their place.<sup>29</sup> As others have shown, slum propaganda during this time in New Zealand was an exaggeration of the run-down state of some residential buildings.<sup>30</sup>

Bending his theme to ponder "what kind of house would best meet the needs of the artisans," Price's remedy comprised three housing types that could be built on cleared land and let at prices according to tenants' incomes. Lantern slides were then screened of a large hostel block for unmarried workers, another for married couples and the "dual cottage" model, presumably of designs as rendered by Price, who drew attention to their economy of space, reduction of housework and minimum cost. Next came slides of six two-storey houses in Clarence Street, Ponsonby, exhibiting "desirable attributes" for workers' homes. These recently completed brick and roughcast cottages at numbers 87-91 and 92-96 were Price's winning scheme for a design competition of three-bedroom workers' dwellings held by the Auckland City Council in 1915.<sup>31</sup> Facing each other on both sides of the street, four were built in two semi-detached pairs, with one detached cottage each at their left. After detailing how they offered "every modern convenience," including slides of a combination range that could provide heat for multiple parts of the home, Price screened views of other British cottages (including examples at Letchworth) and spoke of their economical yet attractive construction materials. This part of the lecture was probably directed more at the large number of women present in the audience, who were more likely to approve of designs that took cost and the minimisation of labour into consideration.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 2.** Numbers 91 and 89 (adjoining at right) Clarence Street, Ponsonby, Auckland (Photograph by Geoff Dunham, 2022).

Price concluded the lecture by reiterating the need to devote more attention to “artisan’s dwellings.”<sup>33</sup> Coupled with his repeated use of this phrase evoking the “artisans’ quarter” of Letchworth, as promoted by British architect Raymond Unwin, his intention was to cast his designs, clearly inspired by British examples themselves, as a similar model for New Zealand workers in manual labour. Price’s lantern slides were likely to have included photographs of the completed buildings, advertising to the audience their success in being carried out, rather than as mere proposals. Further, the inference was these actualised workers’ cottages could themselves be visited and admired in person, perhaps taking observers’ interest to the point where they supported a continuation of this model in future municipal housing construction projects.<sup>34</sup> Yet Price also exhibited views of multi-storey blocks of flats, a type not generally promoted by the broader garden city movement. Although tenement buildings had appeared in some garden cities, including Letchworth, the detached house persisted in New Zealand as an ideal that could almost guarantee decent sanitary, moral and aesthetic conditions, as opposed to the slum tenements that multiple-household buildings fostered.<sup>35</sup> Detached and, at the most, semi-detached, homes precipitated the single-family occupants local authorities desired for their workers’ dwellings; a situation stipulated by the council for Clarence St.<sup>36</sup> Price repeated his solution for housing reform in the press when the housing shortage came under intense scrutiny during the influenza epidemic in November 1918, and again in May 1919, reflecting on the pressure the return of soldiers would produce.<sup>37</sup>

The cottages are also emblematic of the Auckland City Council’s experimentation with progressive garden suburb ideas in its efforts to increase supply of workers’ houses.<sup>38</sup>

Its use of a design competition and exhibition of the 33 entries at the Art Gallery exemplify a wider trend of municipal bodies publicising their progressive intentions and attracting innovative designs, although here it seemed to fall solely to the architect himself to promote the cottages' completion.<sup>39</sup> The council's wider intentions for this part of Ponsonby remain unclear. Questions from the audience indicate how they connected Price's message with the realities of housing affordability in central Auckland. Along with being asked whether he thought the rent of 17 shillings and 6 pence a week was within the means of a working man, some commented that the rent of council-built homes was too high and their layout unpractical.<sup>40</sup> Engaging directly with the audience in this way highlights how lantern lectures also served as public forums for the exchange of ideas. Linking his successful competition designs to international trends was not simply a publicity stunt for Price's role as an architect. He was inserting his completed work into the narrative of local town planning solutions with his designs, newly available in a form audiences could visit in person, another model to inspire future housing developments in Auckland.

### **Dunedin's Northern Foreshore Garden Suburb**

Edmund Anscombe (1874-1948) was a leading New Zealand architect with a keen interest in city beautifying and town planning ideas. His early career in America (1902-1906) as a builder at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Fair and as a draughtsman for McKim, Mead & White exposed him to city beautiful principles, Beaux-Arts design and the phenomenon of world exhibitions. Anscombe gave a paper in 1915 on the economic basis of town planning schemes and systematic methods to be used in conjunction with city beautiful ambitions.<sup>41</sup> On the evening of 7 August 1923, he delivered a lecture held by the Women Citizens' Association at the Dunedin YMCA to a mixed audience of 50 people.<sup>42</sup>

Entitled "New Houses are Needed to Replace Old Ones: How to Do It," Anscombe's lecture continued his long-held view that a scientific approach for town planning was necessary. It was the fifth and final lecture he would give on the subject. Like Price, he does not appear to have shown his lantern slides until after he had delivered his main address. During this initial stage, Anscombe outlined the successful town planning measures implemented by American cities and the Port Sunlight and Bourneville model villages. In his view, systematic surveys of houses "in the more congested areas" could guide efforts to ensure that every home had access to "a minimum of fresh air and sunlight." The results, he urged, would improve "social and civic life" and immediately

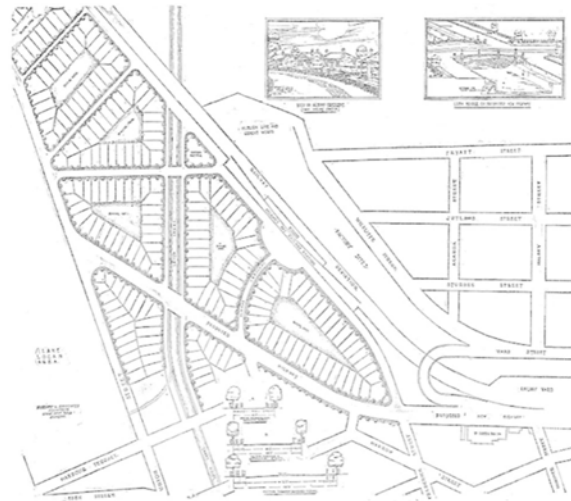
reduce hospital admittances – to which the audience applauded. Anscombe's experience of the American city beautiful movement informed his opinion that despite being a young city, Dunedin may eventually exceed the number of slum "black spots" that currently existed.<sup>43</sup>

Anscombe's 1922 visit to the United States and Canada would have enabled him to obtain more photographs and lantern slides of built examples he wished to visually record. Following the example of lecturers such as Reade and Seager, among the many lantern slides screened were views of congested housing in Dunedin, Wellington and Auckland, "many of them by no means pleasant," according to the *Evening Star*. Far more "delightful" to look upon were the slides they were contrasted with: scenes of garden cities in America and England and their "beautiful workers' homes, with refreshing and restful environments."<sup>44</sup> Returning to the idea of the civic design, plans of cities that had been reconstructed, and places where such plans had only been considered, were screened. The *Evening Star* noted how effective they were in telling "a story of the great expenditure that can be avoided through a right beginning." As an "appealing picture" for Dunedin, Anscombe drew attention to lantern slides of avenues planted with trees in the United States, which linked recreation sites by a system of avenues. Touching on the need for government regulation, he called on the audience to contact the mayor in support of his opinion on housing, which they applauded. Anscombe referred to a recent decision by the Auckland City Council to build 50 new homes, and said the government should be asked to supplement such efforts, receiving further applause.<sup>45</sup>

These images formed the introduction to his scheme for a residential area "laid out on garden city lines" in Dunedin. A month earlier the *Evening Star* published this plan, which appears to have been initiated by the re-routing of the railway line in progress across the city's northern foreshore. The work was to leave open a 45-acre area on (the to-be reclaimed) Lake Logan that Anscombe envisioned as the key to solving the shortage of workers' homes by constructing over 200 houses. Accompanying the editorial supporting the scheme, the plan and two small perspective views of the development's features, he devoted several columns to explain his motivations in a way that mirrors the structure of his lecture. Homes were to be built on blocks of sections that encircled several park reserves. This residential area would be linked to the inner city by a new highway, while a railway station to the south would separate it from the industrial area.<sup>46</sup> Lantern slide images of the plans were screened, prompting questions from audience



members concerned at what would be demolished to make way for the highway. Another question led Anscombe to suggest that the Women Citizens' Association work alongside the Otago Expansion League to take up the cause of housing and town planning on a united front.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 3.** “Plan for Suggested Housing Scheme on Northern Foreshore:” Anscombe’s plan as reproduced in the *Evening Star* on 7 July 1923, 8 (Allied Press Ltd, CC BY-NC-SA, illustration detail; Creative Commons Licence).

His lecture had some eventual effects. It was referred to in an *Otago Daily Times* editorial appearing two days after the lecture, in which his efforts to explain the importance of decent housing were praised, delivered with a note of caution that whatever homes resulted from such schemes, they should be affordable for the occupants.<sup>48</sup> Anscombe’s appointment as architect of the 1925-26 Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition, which he had also instigated, soon dominated the housing scheme, with the plans for the highway to Logan Park given greater priority to feed construction of the Exhibition. This would eventuate as the Anzac Rd development and was later applauded as “not only responsible for the elimination of certain slum areas, but is in itself one of the biggest and most important civic improvements in the City.”<sup>49</sup> On 28 June 1924, Anscombe’s scheme was again published by the *Evening Star*. In his updated commentary, he welcomed the start of construction on the exhibition and the highway, but deplored the lack of progress in providing new homes, and repeated the extensive benefits the scheme would provide Dunedin. A series of public meetings to discuss the growing urgency of the city’s housing shortage followed in August and suggest that the greatest

success of Anscombe's advocacy lay not only in mooted a solution,<sup>50</sup> but in encouraging public support and further actions that would attempt to bring about such schemes.

### Conclusion

As a platform for spreading progressive ideas about the built environment, public lantern lectures provided an important forum for their reception and discussion. Reflecting Miller's model of transition, they were yet another instrument of mediation between external influences and local adoption. After personalities such as Reade, Davidge and Seager were out of the limelight, figures such as Chilton, Price and Anscombe sought to continue the cause, supplementing the central message with other ideas and solutions. The three lecturers explained key concepts of major international movements for their audiences, and demonstrated their usefulness in their respective proposals, applying them to situations immediately facing their communities. In these lectures, audiences were persuaded to envision how such ideas could directly benefit their surroundings. This was a more relatable version compared to Reade and Davidge's 1914 lectures, which ended with a pamphlet of standardised town planning recommendations distributed to New Zealand and Australian audiences.<sup>51</sup>

As an assemblage comprising the venue, audience, lecturer, a raft of multi-sensory techniques and the magic lantern device itself, these public lantern lectures played a decisive role in casting images of the built environment in either a positive, epitomising light or in a negative, precautionary light. The magic lantern's use in these contexts reveals how the boundaries between entertainment and instruction were blurred in the service of imparting a sense of rightness and wrongness in pursuing transformation in New Zealand's urban built environment. While the effectiveness of these lantern lectures varied and was influenced by other media and circumstances, they were successful in broaching city beautifying, garden city and town planning concepts at the least, putting in train ideas for their audiences to digest and potentially act upon. The lantern lectures of Chilton, Price and Anscombe should not be seen as isolated incidents, but rather as an enhanced communication strategy for the intersections of ideas between those that were produced overseas and those that emerged locally.

### Endnotes

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# **Rosia Montana, Romania: An Analysis of its Heritage Conservation from an Architectural and Planning Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

*Rosia Montana is a village located in the Apuseni Mountains, in the historical region of Transylvania in Romania. Its unique built environment has resulted from a series of contextual factors: the existence and exploitation of gold mines, the political and economic system that allowed private and state exploitation in different historical periods, the steep terrain and the spectacular landscape. From an architectural and planning point of view, the village is a traditional mining village frozen in time at the starting point of the urbanisation process.*

*After state mining had been interrupted at the end of the 1990s, a new mining project that requires the use of cyanide has been proposed. The heritage buildings, concentrated within and around the centre of the village, were used in the discourse of both those supporting the project and those who opposed it. On one hand, the heritage was employed to strengthen the discourse on development by selecting individual valuable buildings to be saved and renovated. On the other hand, the heritage was part of a discourse where the whole existing built fabric is valuable and needs to be protected. These two attitudes are complicated by political tactics meant to curtail small interventions into the existing fabric in order to discourage an alternative development of the area.*

*Through an analysis of visual material collected during fieldwork and of documents, maps and media publications, this paper navigates the complexities around heritage buildings and planning regulations that are supposed to protect valuable built environment while at the same time allow for development. In this case, tensions between heritage conservation and mining development supported by planning regulations become apparent.*

This paper analyses the role of heritage buildings and demonstrates how they can be used with the intention to manipulate public opinion. Due to rapid and ample public protests against a proposed mining project which threatened buildings, churches, Roman mining galleries and four surrounding mountains, the mining company created a discourse focused on development, but tightly connected with tradition. Those opposing the project had the heritage buildings and the value of the cultural landscape at its core. Thus, it became a dichotomy and tradition was employed as the continuity of the process by one party and as the continuity of the product by the other. This became apparent over two fieldwork trips in Roşia Montana, Romania in 2014 and 2017. As one walked through the village, signage, plaques, banners, full-sized canvas over facades and other written messages were visible on the buildings' facades. The presence of the mining company is overwhelming and this study is focusing on their messages and the meaning of the signage. The strong connection of the village with mining over millennia and the often used word of tradition made an analysis of tradition necessary. The employed methodology made use of visual material collected during fieldwork, theoretical concepts of tradition as well as official documents, maps, news from the media and legislation to understand the history of the village, its current situation and the role of the built environment.

Photographs were taken during the first and second field trips, which captured the state of the built environment, but also the discourse of the two main parties, those opposing and those supporting the proposed mining project. Maps and planning documents were sourced from the council and other organisations, while sketches and observations completed the fieldwork. These bring up an inherent conflict within the idea of heritage, requiring a theoretical framework able to entangle the discourse on heritage, tradition and continuity.

Part of the theoretical concepts emphasised by this case study is in relation to 'invented tradition', a concept that entered the academic discourse in the past few decades.<sup>1</sup> Hobsbawm and Ranger argue that continuity is the element defining authentic tradition. The moment a tradition has to be revived, it becomes an invented tradition. Anderson also uses the term 'invented tradition' as that which allows for social dynamics, as parts of tradition that are not suitable anymore will be replaced and modelled for current needs. Upton argues that "in many cases, it is frustrating and possibly counterproductive even to try to make the distinction" between the two types of tradition.<sup>2</sup> Although this

may be true, not having a clear distinction can create confusion and be used as a means of manipulation. The case study of Rosia Montana attempts to ascertain the conflict within heritage (that is if the continuity of the mining activity prevails, the heritage which this activity created over millennia will be destroyed), then discuss invented tradition and continuity as problematic.

Cultural heritage also needs to be defined in order to articulate the interests and approaches of different invested parties in what the outcome will be: preservation of the built heritage or the continuity of the mining tradition. Cultural heritage represents either monuments, groups of buildings or sites “of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.”<sup>3</sup> In addition to this global perspective, countries often attempt to protect their cultural heritage with national legislation. For example, Romanian law regulates the preservation of cultural heritage, which is categorised in a manner similar to that described by UNESCO.<sup>4</sup> The List for Historical Monuments is the official document that registers archaeological, architectural and public monuments, and memorial and funeral monuments. It is managed by the Cultural and National Identity Minister. The monuments cover different historical periods, from prehistory to the twentieth century and have either global or national significance.

The next section of the paper will detail the history of the village which became essential to understand when analysing present debates in relation to the mining project. Then, the cultural significance of the village is demonstrated through its presence in literature and the film industry. The mining project will detail what it means for the area and how it developed so far, bringing to surface the dichotomy between continuity as a process and as a product explained in the following sections. We will then look in more detail at the mining company’s discourse before drawing conclusions.

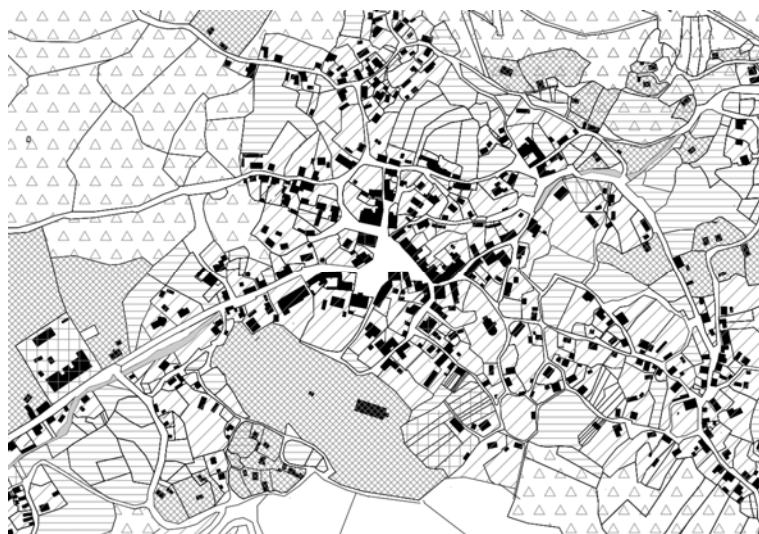
### **The History of the Mining Village, Rosia Montana**

The first known document to attest the settlement at Roşia dates from 131 BC and it is a ‘wax-tablet’ (*tăbliţă cerată*) discovered in the galleries of the mine. The tablet was used for writing down transactions between the individuals of the mining community, such as contracts of purchase and sale, mine rental and receipts for loans repaid. Wax-tablets were found in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries inside the ancient mines and range in date from 131 to 167 BC. This evidence makes Roşia the oldest attested settlement in Romania.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the settlement is approximately 4500 years old, and mining activities have likely been undertaken throughout its history.<sup>5</sup> During Roman occupation (106-175 AD), the settlement was called Alburnus Maior and was built as a colony close to the mines. In medieval times the valley was called Verespatak in Hungarian, or Valea Roşie in Romanian, and there were two settlements from antiquity until the nineteenth century when the semi-urban centre of Roşia started to take shape.

Roşia Montană is one of the sixteen villages that make up the commune with the same name in Alba County, central-west Romania. It is situated on the north-west side of the Carpathian Meridionali in the Apuseni Mountains, 10 km from the town of Abrud and 15 km from Câmpeni.<sup>6</sup>

From an administrative point of view, Roşia Montană is a village and the commune's main locality. From an architectural and planning point of view, it is a "traditional mining village frozen in time at the starting point of the urbanisation process."<sup>7</sup> There is a large square at the centre of the village, which once hosted a weekly market (Figure 1). Public facilities such as the casino open into the square. The buildings are influenced by urban architectural styles such as baroque and eclectic. A numerous population strengthened the urban character of Roşia in the nineteenth century. But early in the twentieth century the population started to decline, and by 2002 it had reached 1,450 inhabitants, approximately one-third of the population registered in 1880.



**Figure 1.** The built fabric of the village in proximity to the main square, continuous frontages flanking the main square (Drawing by Alexandra Florea).



Previous ethnic studies of the area focused on the methods of gold extraction and processing, with little reference to the built environment.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, mining has played an important role in shaping the village, for example, the houses are positioned according to the entrance in the mine where the family worked and the source of water.<sup>9</sup> Changes in extraction techniques have affected the built and natural environment of Roşia over time. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century, artificial lakes (*tăuri*) were created to ensure ore exploitation in cases of draught, some of which are still visible today.

Until 1948, the mines were managed privately by the inhabitants, usually organised in *cuxe*, a type of economic association between the owners of the mines.<sup>10</sup> When there was much work to be done, miners were employed by the owners and usually paid in produce: grain or gold. However, between the world wars, the situation in Roşia was no different from other villages in the mountains, characterised by poverty, lack of maintenance to the existent buildings and a lack of public buildings (i.e. cultural centres, libraries, communal baths).<sup>11</sup>

The urban influences such as continuous street frontage and the architectural elements of the buildings are attributed to the so-called freeholders (mine owners) mentioned above. These freeholders worked the mines until they were confiscated by the state during communism. The economic and social changes brought about by nationalisation contributed to outmigration to construction sites or coal mines and eight years later, in 1956, the population in Roşia dropped by 345 inhabitants.<sup>12</sup> During the 1970s, the open cast mining conducted by the state interrupted private exploitation, rendering the previous installations obsolete. Therefore, the former mechanism that used water to separate the gold from the rest of the minerals was destroyed, and the only one left in the village is a reconstruction.

### **Cultural and Architectural Value**

Roşia Montană was the site for acclaimed films: *Stone Wedding*, directed by Mircea Veroiu and Dan Pita in 1973, and *Flames on Treasures*, directed by Nicolae Mărgineanu in 1987. The films were adaptations of stories written by Ion Agârbiceanu in the first half of the twentieth century and present psychological analysis of the human spirit. They are based on Agârbiceanu's period as a priest in the nearby village of Bucium, where he served for four years and witnessed the challenges experienced by the miners.<sup>13</sup> His depictions contrast with the typical idealised rural life.

These films, besides their importance for the cinematic industry, are considered testimonies of the valuable culture and architecture of the area. They also inspired contemporary documentaries of Roşia. The aim of these documentaries (*Roşia Montană: Town on the Brink*, *New El Dorado*, *Gold Futures*) and the campaign raised by Maia Morgenstern, an internationally acclaimed Romanian actress, was to draw awareness to the consequences of the mining project. Conversely, Roşia Montană Gold Corporation (RMGC) financed the *Mine Your Own Business* documentary to support the views of the mining industry. The site of Rosia has been put forward for UNESCO's consideration as a protected site and after several attempts, it was accepted as a World Heritage site in July 2021.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Mining Project**

Mining activities had been interrupted at the end of the 1990s in Roşia due to inefficiency of extraction technologies and the state's incapacity to update those technologies. Since then, a new mining project has been proposed. The intent is to build a modern mine with four open pits and a factory for gold and silver. The proposed open pits are located on the ancient mine galleries and the existing open pit started in 1970 at Cetate. They are scheduled to be exploited in two phases, each phase with two pits (Cetatea, Cârnic and Orlea, Jig), so at no given time will the four pits be exploited together. The project plan outlines two years of construction, sixteen years of operation and four to ten years of closure and rehabilitation.<sup>15</sup>

The advantages of the mining project promoted by RMGC include: creation of jobs (1200 during construction and 650 during exploitation); 2 billion US dollars to the Romanian state; collection and management of acid water waste and pollution from previous extraction processes; restoration and conservation of existing historical and archaeological sites; and assurance that the areas affected by the project will be rehabilitated. A recurrent theme in the discourse of the pro-mining group is the current pollution in the hydrographic system of Roşia, environmental issues that will apparently be addressed by the company in their effort to reduce pollution in the area. The impact of using cyanide for the extraction of gold is predicted to comply with the limits imposed by the International Code of Cyanide Management. Conversely, there is some information that the documents regarding the stability of the soil beneath the proposed lake (in the territory of the nearby village of Corna) are false, and therefore risk cyanide spills into the waterways. A report by Robert Moran requested by Alburnus Maior, the

non-governmental organisation formed to protect the village, underlines data that were not available to the public, raising suspicions about the mining company, for example, regarding the pollution of the rivers.

In 2002, RMGC started acquiring properties in the area, and by 2008 had purchased 78% of the residential properties in the impact zone. It is argued that this occurred through negotiation with land owners on free market principles.<sup>16</sup> Inside the historical centre of the village Roşia Montană, most of the properties are owned by RMGC. It is unusual for properties in rural areas to be owned by companies, especially in such high percentages, and this has caused disruption within the community. Company ownership means that the buildings are not inhabited or used, which in the context of community life equals abandonment. The only exceptions are some properties in the main square that are used as offices by the mining company. These central properties can be used to display development promises and media advertising their own message.

To maintain existing ties within the community, the company proposed two places for relocation: a new village nearby, and a new neighbourhood on the outskirts of Alba Iulia, Alba County. The new village, Recea, will comprise in addition to the residential part, a centre with facilities such as a hall, school, police and churches. Further, RMGC has stated that they will facilitate the construction of infrastructure required for tourism, funds that are hard to obtain in remote areas. In fact, the area was categorised as mono-industrial in GUP documents, posing greater difficulties in developing formal tourist accommodation and leaving no alternatives for locals to develop businesses outside mining.<sup>17</sup> However, in peak season, many locals host tourists, offering accommodation, meals and local products. In 2011, during the musical festival FânFest in Roşia, all available accommodation in informal facilities (such as individual houses) was booked out. In 2015, news media advertised that the GUP document was annulled due to conflicts of interest.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of any proposed benefits, the arguments opposing the mining project are convincing:

... the relocation of 910 households, displacement of about 2000 persons from 740 houses and 138 flats, demolition of four mountains, a lake of cyanide and toxic waste covering over 1800 hectares of land, demolished houses and buildings (many of them being of cultural patrimony such as the

famous Roman Galleries) and, last but not least, the exhumation of ancestors through the destruction of nine cemeteries and eight churches.<sup>19</sup>

Arhitectură. Restaurare. Arheologie (ARA) is an important organisation that investigated and published architectural studies, as well as restored buildings in the village. They emphasise the built and natural environment as a cultural landscape and thus the need to protect the village. The present study reveals several ways in which the different players employ tradition and the built environment to argue their cause in the case of the Roşia Montană mining proposal, analysing the role architecture has in a contemporary context. It is a paradox that the same concept can be used by opposing sides, therefore the relationship between authority, power and tradition must be deconstructed for a deeper understanding of the built environment in Roşia. Key buildings (such as the museum in the main square) have been restored or hung with real-size façades printed on canvas. Conversely, NGOs have actively restored houses, proposing their inclusion as UNESCO heritage sites, which would see the demise of mining claims.

Tradition can be distinguished as a process and as an object, the difference underlined by Rapoport in 1969.<sup>20</sup> Processes of tradition are understood to be transmission of culture from generation to generation, whereas objects are the products of this process. The continuity of the process (that is, of mining tradition, as claimed by the mining company) and the continuity of the objects and the built environment (as claimed by the preservationists) cannot be reconciled in this particular case.

### **The Continuity of Tradition as a Process – Mining**

As detailed previously, the history of Roşia is intertwined with gold extraction. Although the landscape includes forests and agriculture, for example, from the total area of the commune (4161 ha), only 225 ha (or 5.4% of the total area) are used for agriculture. It has been argued that the integrity of the settlement as a whole is of great significance due to the particularities of the village resulting from working with the site and adapting the built and natural environment to centuries of mining activities.<sup>21</sup> Underground mines from as far back as the Roman occupation are open to the public as a museum.<sup>22</sup>

The impacts of mining on the surrounding natural landscape are clearly visible. Cârnic and Văidoaia peaks still bear traces of the traditional techniques of exploitation, with entrances to the mine and little or no vegetation. Cetate is a volcanic dacite massif

located south of the village, where spectacular Roman (and probably pre-Roman) open cast mining was visible until the 1970s.<sup>23</sup> Other human interventions in the landscape include seven artificial lakes constructed for mining activities: Tăul Mare, Țarina, Brazi, Anghel, Corna, Tapului and Găuri. They present examples of industrial technology characteristic of the eighteenth century and nineteenth centuries.<sup>24</sup> Piatra Corbului (Raven's Rock) and Piatra Despicață (Split Rock) are natural reserves acknowledged to have patrimony values of national interest.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Continuity of Tradition as a Product – Built Environment**

Roșia's unique built environment has resulted from a series of contextual factors: the existence and exploitation of gold mines, the political and economic system that allowed private and state exploitation in different historical periods, the steep terrain and the spectacular landscape. For example, human negotiation of the difficult and steep natural environment has created terraces for buildings, constructions adapted to the slope and dry-stone walls used as fences or to retain terraces.

The built environment has many layers comprising the houses of the miners, the houses of the owners of the mines and other business people, in addition to blocks of apartments from the communist era. A variety of facilities have been developed in different historical periods to service the number of inhabitants and their activities. For example, the casino, currently closed, also had a summer garden, which now functions as a park for children. There was still a pharmacy and shops on the ground floor of the buildings around the main square in the twentieth century. Currently, there are only two grocery shops in proximity to the square.

The current state of the built environment varies according to its status. The mining company renovated or reinforced the structure of some buildings labelled as historical monuments to prevent collapse and demolished others that did not have heritage classification. Conversely, some historical monuments and traditional houses have been left in disrepair.<sup>26</sup> Some of the buildings have been rehabilitated and reconverted by the ARA association, for example, the former parish house, where various community events were hosted. The association held summer workshops with architecture students who helped at restoring different buildings with traditional technologies. Music festivals were also organised to attract tourists in the area. The focus of different NGOs and associations is to create viable economic opportunities for locals and help maintain valuable buildings in the village. They hoped for the entire site of Roșia to be included

in the UNESCO list of heritage buildings, as a unique landscape produced by the tradition of mining.

The built or cultural landscape of Roşia is currently being put in jeopardy by the mining project, which would require buildings, natural monuments and cemeteries to be relocated. In the case of relocation, these objects become museum pieces, as they are extracted from the culture that produced them. Further, pressure to start the mining project has led to rapid depopulation including the outmigration of doctors and other professionals.

### **The Discourse of the Mining Company**

The mining company has rehabilitated some buildings and structures around the village of Roşia and demolished others, but they have also promised more investment into the existing heritage once the project commences. Part of the rehabilitated buildings are not being used, but they become part of the discourse advocating for the commencement of the project through plaques that show a before and after photo (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Examples of buildings restored by RMGC  
(Photographs by Alexandra Florea).

Partial intervention of derelict structures and plaques with short descriptions of promised rehabilitation works and the symbol of the mining company are also used to garner support for the mining project. In one example (Figure 3), part of the message reads: “Between 1940 and 1980, the house suffered interventions at the facade level, leading to a loss of the original style. Currently, RMGC assures maintenance work and emergency interventions for this building, the rehabilitation following once the mining project starts.” Traditionally the house would have been painted with a mixture of lime,

technique which is important to maintain the integrity of the structure. Several years later, it received a full-size printed canvas on the façade facing the road.



**Figure 3.** House no. 301. The roof is covered for protection and timber posts support the exterior wall. The finish that has degraded over time is visible around the windows and the base. Top image: 2014, Bottom image: 2017  
(Photographs by Alexandra Florea).

Other selected buildings around the village received full-size printed canvas, presenting the future image of the building (Figure 4). Their role is to create the vision of what the village could look like once the mining project starts. The selection of buildings is based on its own historical significance and visibility within the village and thus they are typically on the main road. Other messages supporting the commencement of the mining project (such as written texts on key buildings or structures) endorse the legitimacy of mining activities in the area.





**Figure 4.** Top image: The message reads: “Rehabilitation by Roșia Montană Town Hall partnered with Roșia Montană Gold Corporation” (tense of the message suggests the rehabilitation has been completed, however in 2017 there was still a canvas to the main façade). Bottom image: “Rosia Montana exists because of MINING! Help us keep a valuable tradition of Apuseni mountains, MINING!” (Photographs by Alexandra Florea).

RMGC appealed to the potential value people see in the continuity of tradition as a process to support the new project. In doing so, it appropriated the existing built environment charged with tradition. Is this a process through which tradition is invented?

A different stance on invented tradition is that one must not be deceived by the importance of the past in understanding the present.<sup>27</sup> Although there have been cases in which tradition was invented purely for ideological causes, invented tradition does not reflect people’s creativity in responding to the environment, but it depends on the



reasons behind the created tradition. When the reasons are dubious, the result is an invented tradition, as it does not correspond to reality, but manipulates the masses for private interests, what Khan describes as the “setting up of rituals and modes of behaviour in pursuance of arbitrary social, political or economic agendas,” or manufactured tradition.<sup>28</sup>

There are subtler visual connections with the proposed mining project through plaques with the RMGC symbol. These plaques explain succinctly the historical significance of the building and then briefly mention that it will benefit when the mining project starts as it will be rehabilitated. Several examples are presented below, where the derelict state of the existing buildings is noticeable (Figure 5). Whether this strategy was put in place from the start or it evolved along the process, the mining company’s discourse has made use of the heritage. After RMGC bought hundreds of properties and the project faced opposition and delays, the purchased abandoned houses became a tool to convince an audience that is sensitive to heritage that mining is a way to save these unique buildings.





**Figure 5.** Examples of derelict buildings that have been labelled as proposed for restoration once the mining project starts (Photographs by Alexandra Florea).

## Conclusions

The village of Roșia Montană has experienced a struggle between its history or tradition of mining and the present-day requirements and growth of the mining industry. Conflictingly, the mining company argues for further development in Roșia emphasising the continuity of the mining tradition, while being engaged in projects that protect existing heritage. However, huge excavations will also destroy many historic buildings located between the four mountains comprising the open pit. Each building is individually valuable, but the value lies in the village as a whole, with the underground mines and surrounding landscape.

What is the discourse of the individual or group holding the power in order to facilitate change in society and how are such discourses constructed that “represent true or false pictures of reality”?<sup>29</sup>

The discourse of the two sides (those supporting the mining project and those against) seems paradoxical at first glance, as they use the same concept: tradition. The company’s argument rests on the fact that Roșia Montană’s existence relied on mining and it should continue, in a proper manner, with technological efficiency. The other side argues that cyanide technology should be banned and tradition be kept by protecting the natural landscape and the architecture as a cultural landscape. Furthermore, they support the idea of tradition as the background for development, especially for cultural tourism, an industry that continues to grow in the twenty-first century.

In this particular case, having the heritage erased is not a desirable outcome. And although one might argue that through prioritising the integrity of the heritage over continuing a millennia old activity, the village is subject to invented tradition. It is in fact the mining company engaging in construing invented tradition. One way it does that is through its tactic of renovating key buildings to create the illusion of protecting the heritage, and thus aiming to manipulate the masses for an economic agenda. The mining company did not deploy a well thought plan sensitive to the specific area, working with the local community to achieve common goals, which is necessary to successfully develop a project that will erase a significant part of history.

Roşia Montană rejects the theory of well-defined terminology and brings to surface the complexities around tradition and modernity in the context of the built environment, which only emphasise the importance in interpreting concepts within the specific details of a project. Both views are politicised which makes a dialogue between the parties difficult.

The mining company employed the heritage in order to emphasise the importance of continuing the mining tradition, although if commenced, the proposed project brings destruction to the heritage and most likely provides little benefit to the local people. Their discourse represented a false picture of reality and the protests around the country and overseas in 2013 against the project are evidence of the misleading discourse of the company.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Dell Upton, "Authentic Anxieties," in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, ed. AlSayyad, 298-306.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, World Heritage Convention, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>.

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<sup>5</sup> Horia Ciugudean, "Ancient Gold Mining in Transylvania: The Roşia Montană – Bucium Area," *Caiete ARA*, no. 3 (2012): 219-232.

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- <sup>15</sup> *Planul Strategic*.
- <sup>16</sup> Whether the process of buying and selling happened with or without restriction has been investigated by Irina Velicu, "The Aesthetic Post-communist Subject and the Differend of Roșia Montană," *Studies in Social Justice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 125-41.
- <sup>17</sup> Velicu, "The Aesthetic Post-communist Subject," 125-41.
- <sup>18</sup> "Tribunalul Cluj a Anulat Planul Urbanistic de la Rosia Montana" [Cluj Court Annulled the Urban Plan of Rosia Montana], [www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie-locala-20628450-tribunalul-cluj-anulat-planul-urbanistic-Roșia-Montană-zona-putea-construite-pensiuni.htm](http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie-locala-20628450-tribunalul-cluj-anulat-planul-urbanistic-Roșia-Montană-zona-putea-construite-pensiuni.htm), accessed 20 May 2018.
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- <sup>20</sup> Amos Rapoport, *House, Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969).
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[www.simpara.ro/PUZ-Roșia-Montană-175.htm](http://www.simpara.ro/PUZ-Roșia-Montană-175.htm). Accessed 15 April 2014.
- <sup>22</sup> Ioan Abrudan and David Turnock, "A Rural Development Strategy for the Apuseni Mountains, Romania," *GeoJournal* 46, (1999): 319-36.
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# Modernist and Heritage Conservationist: Karl Langer's Contribution to the Heritage Movement in Queensland

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## **Abstract**

*Karl Langer (1903-1969), architect, town planner, landscape architect and academic fled Austria for Australia, settling in Brisbane in 1939. Required to spend the Second World War as a draftsman with Queensland Railways Department and denied a planning position with the Brisbane City Council, Langer commenced private practice (1946-1969). His significant influence on Queensland's built environment is now belatedly being recognised and has resulted in the recent publication of Karl Langer: Modern Architect and Migrant in the Australian Tropics.*

*This paper explores Langer's contribution to the establishment of the heritage movement, as an early member of the National Trust of Queensland. Like many of his contemporaries, in Australia and overseas, he was both a modernist and a conservationist. Langer joined the Trust in 1964, its first year of operation, and was deeply involved when it acquired its first property in 1965. The property Wolston House is an 1852 stone farmhouse on the suburban fringes of Brisbane. He gave architectural advice on the physical condition of the building and prepared landscape plans for the grounds. He was a member of the restoration and appeal committees and prepared the artwork for the fundraising brochure. Before the term 'adaptive reuse' had currency, Langer advised the Trust on converting the 1870s bedroom annex into a caretaker's residence and coffee shop. The annex was unceremoniously demolished, but Langer, the sophisticated European modernist, was at the heart of an early debate about conservation. Langer represented Queensland on the Australian Council of National Trusts committee which deliberated on classifications and criteria by which the heritage value of buildings would be determined. He contributed to the establishment of the early lists of historic Queensland buildings and wrote a paper on the conservation of landscape in urban areas. Langer's unexpected death in 1969 meant that his influence on the nascent heritage movement in*

*Queensland was foundational but is largely forgotten or misinterpreted. His legacy remains in his surviving buildings, eight of which are now heritage listed.*

### **Karl Langer (1903-1969)**

Karl Langer, Viennese trained architect, town planner, landscape architect and academic fled Austria for Australia, settling in Brisbane on the eve of the Second World War. Langer's significant influence on Queensland's cultural and built environment, as a proponent of international modernism, is now belatedly being recognised. Langer's prominence in the 2014 exhibition and the book *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture: 1945-1975*<sup>1</sup> has led to the recent publication of *Karl Langer: Modern Architect and Migrant in the Australian Tropics*.<sup>2</sup> Langer's career in the Australian tropics was not without its disappointments. Despite being the most academically qualified architect in the state he was never offered a tenured position at the University of Queensland. An appointment as assistant to the Brisbane City planner in 1944 was blocked by political interference and public protest, questioning the appointment of a foreigner in preference to a returned soldier.<sup>3</sup>

Like many of his contemporaries, in Australia and overseas, Langer was both a modernist and a conservationist. This paper explores his role as the honorary architect for the National Trust of Queensland, where he was at the heart of the early debates about the philosophy and practice of heritage conservation. It also corrects the record with regard to his part in the substantial demolition at Wolston House, where he argued for its retention.



**Figure 1.** Karl Langer, Vienna, 1938 (Photographer unknown. Gertrude Langer Collection, UQFL157, Series K, Album 2, item 8. Courtesy of the University of Queensland Fryer Library).

### **Formation of the National Trust**

Queensland, the most northern state on the eastern seaboard of Australia, has the reputation of being pro-development and was slow to embrace environmental conservation, including heritage conservation of the built environment.<sup>4</sup> Modelled on the English National Trust, the Trust movement began in Australia after the Second World War. New South Wales was the first to establish a branch in 1945, South Australia in 1955, Victoria in 1956, Western Australia in 1959 and Tasmania in 1960.<sup>5</sup> Despite several unsuccessful attempts commencing in 1952,<sup>6</sup> a branch of the National Trust was not constituted in Queensland until 1963,<sup>7</sup> lagging well behind the other major states.

The ‘father of the Trust in Queensland’ and driving force was William Richter Moon (1878-1966) who led a ten-year campaign to form the Trust.<sup>8</sup> A dairy farmer, Moon had been active in local government politics for over 40 years. He was one of the founders of the conservatively aligned Citizens’ Municipal Organisation,<sup>9</sup> and for over ten years from 1942 was the Vice Mayor of Brisbane. In 1961 Moon organised the support of a group of eminent citizens to form a National Trust Association.<sup>10</sup> This Association prepared a constitution, wrote a draft bill, and lobbied the government for its implementation. The proponents of the National Trust of Queensland Bill were all pillars of the Queensland establishment.<sup>11</sup>

Even during the parliamentary debate on the Bill, the lack of community support for heritage in Queensland was acknowledged. John Herbert,<sup>12</sup> the champion of the Trust within the government, stated that one of the reasons why a Trust branch was slow to be formed in Queensland was because there had been insufficient public interest.<sup>13</sup> The National Trust of Queensland came into being in a climate of community indifference. While by 1963 the conservative coalition government lead by Premier Frank Nicklin<sup>14</sup> supported the establishment of a statutory body, much of the parliamentary debate centred around funding and the assurances that the Trust would be financially independent from government.<sup>15</sup>

The objectives of the Trust, set out in the legislation, were for the purpose of promoting:

- (a) the preservation and maintenance for the benefit of the public and generally of lands, buildings, furniture, pictures and other chattels of beauty or of national, historic, scientific, artistic, or architectural interest;
- (b) the protection and augmentation of the amenities of such lands, buildings and chattels and their surroundings;

(c) the access to and enjoyment of such lands, buildings and chattels by the public.<sup>16</sup>

The ten supporters of the Bill were appointed to the first 20 member Trust Council with Moon as President and Sir Raphael Cilento as Vice President.<sup>17</sup>

### **Wolston House**

The first historic building to be acquired by the Trust was Wolston House at Wacol. Wolston House is a sandstone and brick homestead on the banks of the Brisbane River. It is the remnant of the Wolston Estate, a large pastoral property established by Dr Stephen Simpson in 1852. The original two-roomed brick cottage was extended, in the 1860s, with a sandstone kitchen and during the 1870s Matthew Goggs, the owner, built a six-roomed cedar bedroom annex, to accommodate his large family. In the 1960s the property was resumed by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock for a tick research centre.<sup>18</sup> As a result of lobbying by the Trust,<sup>19</sup> a small area of land, including Wolston House, was excised from the agricultural reserve, as a reserve for Memorial Purposes under the control of the National Trust of Queensland.<sup>20</sup> The transfer of the reserve was completed in May 1965.<sup>21</sup> Wolston House became the Trust's first building restoration project<sup>22</sup> and the Goggs' Annex was demolished as part of this work.

Recent appraisals of the restoration work undertaken at Wolston House during 1960s have dismissed it as poor conservation and indicative of the uninformed views of the time. In writing about the establishment of the Trust in *Hot Modernism*, Robert Riddell attributes the decision to demolish the Goggs' Annex to Langer:

Strangely enough the Trust engaged Karl Langer, a hard-core modernist, for advice and – following his recommendations – reduced Wolston to half its size, with the removal of the service wing, built of timber but preserving the masonry-built part. Such drastic action would later be considered inappropriate, but at the time there was little discussion on how or what to conserve and decisions were taken mainly on aesthetic grounds.<sup>23</sup>

The Queensland Heritage Register entry for Wolston House, in a more nuanced account, attributes demolition of the Goggs' Annex to both Cilento and Langer and their decisions about the interpretation of the building. "This interpretation rested on the occupation of the property



by Dr Stephen Simpson and so it was decided to demolish the timber section at the rear, which was clearly of a later period.”<sup>24</sup>

### **Karl Langer and Sir Raphael Cilento**

The Executive of the Trust invited Langer to become a member of its Property Sub-Committee in December 1964. “You will appreciate the important role this sub-committee will play in carrying out the objectives of the National Trust. For this reason, it is important that the group be comprised of informed people.”<sup>25</sup> Langer as an architect, planner and landscape architect was active in the professional and cultural life of Brisbane and would have been socially acquainted with the members of the Trust Council. In the early 1960s he was instrumental in the formation of the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects,<sup>26</sup> engaged in designing his last major commission, the headquarters of the Queensland Main Roads Department,<sup>27</sup> and was President of the Queensland Art Gallery Society (1961-62).<sup>28</sup> Cilento, as Vice-President, was the key member of the Trust’s executive involved in the Wolston House restoration project. He was a well-known but controversial figure, who had a career in tropical medicine and public administration, culminating in the 1940s with appointments at the United Nations dealing with refugees and displaced persons. Returning to Brisbane in 1950 Cilento resumed private medical practice but spent much of his time and considerable energy on historical pursuits. He served as President of both the Royal Queensland Historical Society (1933-34, 1943-45, 1953-68) and the National Trust of Queensland (1966-71). In later years he allied himself with the extreme right in Australian politics, including the Australian League of Rights.<sup>29</sup> The correspondence between Langer and Cilento regarding Wolston House is warm and indicates mutual respect and a lively interchange of ideas.<sup>30</sup>

### **Goggs’ Annex**

Langer responded quickly to the request from the Trust for assistance and immediately set to work on the Wolston House project. By March 1965 he had surveyed the property; supervised clearing of the grounds; overseen road and fence construction; provided a ten-point plan for the landscaping; measured the homestead building; and provided advice about immediate maintenance works.<sup>31</sup> The demolition of the Goggs’ Annex appears to have been a point of contention from the outset. In his first written advice to Cilento, in March 1965, Langer argues for its retention. He uses an early photograph as documentary evidence and indicates that he understands the historical significance of the Annexe as part of the Goggs family’s more than 40-year ownership of the property. He identifies that the objections to the Annex are probably a matter of taste and suggests a way of ameliorating this distaste.

While looking at the old photograph of the Homestead, the Annexe is not distributing at all. I understand that it was actually built for the children of the Owner. If so, the objection to this Annexe is not an historical one but purely an aesthetic one. Its factory-like look does not fit the spirit of the original structure. In the photo, only black and white, this detriment is not apparent, and I think if this structure was whitewashed with lime, as it was the custom at the time, the Annexe would merge into the rest of the building.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 2.** Wolston House. Earliest known photograph of Wolston House showing Gogg's Annexe, circa 1890s (Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the National Trust of Australia (Queensland)).

Cilento replied enthusiastically to Langer's advice concerning the Annexe. He asked that Langer, and his wife the art historian Dr Gertrude Langer, direct their 'quick minds' to the problem. Cilento himself had obviously put much thought into the reuse of the Annexe. His annotated three-page letter sets out, in eight detailed points, his suggestions for how the building could be converted and the original fabric treated.<sup>33</sup>

The former children's rooms at Wolston House (GOGGS" ANNEXE) may or may not be demolished. Some desire to keep it. In any case if should not be torn down for some years, if at all. Because it may finally be kept and restored the outer walls must not be altered but, I think if would be utilised for a "coffee rooms" and a residence for 2 active pensioners who could be housekeepers also for Wolston House.<sup>34</sup>

By the end of April Langer provided Cilento with a report on the conversion of Goggs' Annexe into caretaker's quarters, public conveniences and a 'Continental Coffee Lounge'.<sup>35</sup> He had also prepared a layout with the intended furnishings.<sup>36</sup> This sketch plan shows all the original external openings remaining with all the internal walls removed. The northern end of the building is the visitor's coffee lounge with a shared kitchen and the caretaker's quarters occupying the southern section.

### **A Liability rather than an Asset**

The Trust's governance arrangements for the Wolston House restoration project were complicated, perhaps indicative of competing agendas and big personalities. The 1965-66 Annual Report lists three committees: Wolston House Trust sub-Committee (Sir Raphael Cilento as Chairman and Dr Karl Langer as Deputy Chairman); Wolston House Restoration and Building Advisory Panel (Sir Manuel Hornibrook as Chairman with Dr Karl Langer a member); and the Wolston House Restoration Appeal Sub-Committee (Sir Manuel Hornibrook as President and Sir Raphael Cilento as Executive Chairman). The Wolston House Restoration Appeal Sub-Committee was appointed in June 1966 with the aim of raising \$30,000.<sup>37</sup> There was also a Women's Sub-Committee. The appeal was launched on 3 July 1966 with "an attractive and informative brochure containing an excellent cover sketch specially drawn by Dr K Langer." Both the cover perspective and illustrated plans in this brochure show the Annexe.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 3.** Wolston Homestead, Wacol. Perspective looking south-west (Drawing by Karl Langer, BNE1/261 No 1176-5, June 1966. Courtesy of the National Trust of Australia (Queensland)).

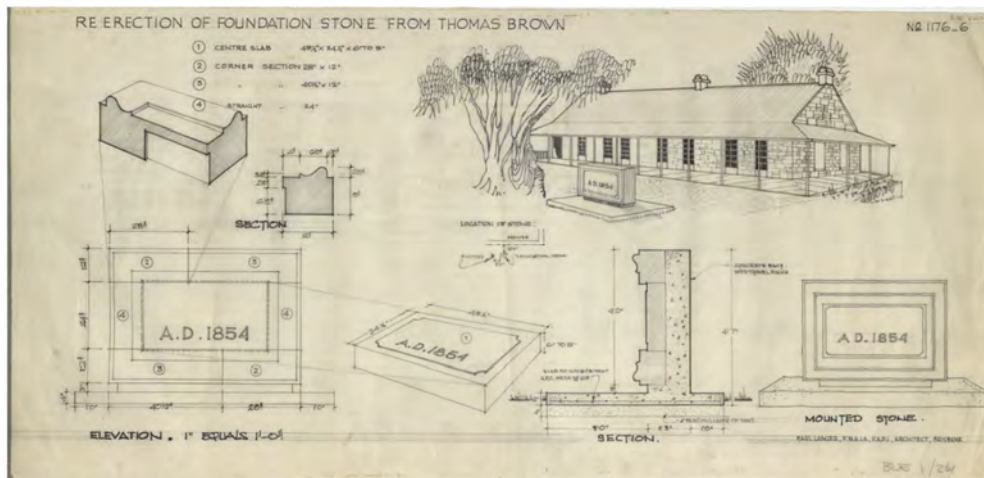
Sir Manuel Hornibrook was chair of two Wolston House committees and, while not a member of the Trust Council, he had been co-opted to help with fund-raising. Hornibrook was a leading Queensland master builder, industrialist and company director. His company was responsible for building large infrastructure projects all over Australia, particularly bridges, including William Jolly and Story bridges in Brisbane, the Hornibrook Highway, the Northbridge and Iron Cove bridges in Sydney and the King's Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue bridges in Canberra. A major success for the company, in the 1960s, was the building of the superstructure and roof sails of the Sydney Opera House. Hornibrook was known for his ability, vision and personal magnetism. As a prominent citizen with the ability to get things done, Hornibrook was often sought after to assist with fund-raising activities.<sup>39</sup> Cilento had approached Hornibrook to be part of the Wolston House project and Hornibrook personally wrote to 555 Queensland Master builders seeking donations.<sup>40</sup> Hornibrook assumed command and in early 1967 made the unilateral decision to demolish the Goggs Annex,<sup>41</sup> despite the expert advice from Langer. It is highly likely that Hornibrook sent his own workmen to Wolston House to undertake this work.<sup>42</sup> While Cilento was equivocal about the long-term fate of the Annex, he lamented its premature demolition at the commencement of the restoration project.<sup>43</sup> The circumstances of Hornibrook's decision were detailed in the Annual Report 1966-67.

The Advisory Panel, after an informal meeting on the site, agreed to delegate to Sir Manuel Hornibrook authority to decide upon the details of the restoration also the priorities in that regard: and to arrange for and to supervise the work. The Executive Committee formally approved this decision with the proviso that Dr Langer should maintain close liaison between Sir Manuel and the Executive and that the reroofing should be completed before the next wet season. Sir Manuel, for his part, emphasised that, because of business responsibilities, he must limit his commitment to the replacement of the roof thus waterproofing the building; the restoration of the verandah; and the securing or replacement of doors and windows. As he considered the Goggs Annexe (even as a tourist tea-room) a liability rather than an asset, he also decided to demolish this at once. He executed his program well within the estimated cost and appeal funds available, leaving a surplus which he advised should be used to floor the verandahs, and to grade and align the area formerly occupied by the Annexe, after his withdrawal.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 4.** Wolston House. Demolition of Gogg's Annexe  
(Photographer unknown, 1967. Courtesy of the National Trust of  
Australia (Queensland)).

Hornibrook was thanked by the Trust Executive for his “expert aid at this critical stage of the project.”<sup>45</sup> With Hornibrook stepping back the oversight of the project reverted to the Wolston House Trust Sub-Committee with Cilento and Langer in charge. Despite the setback of the demolition of the Annex, Langer continued to give his time and expertise freely to the project. He prepared a drawing of Wolston House, minus the Annex, for the Trust’s 1976 Christmas card,<sup>46</sup> and documented the erection of a foundation stone.<sup>47</sup> The restoration work at Wolston House was completed and officially opened in March 1969.<sup>48</sup> The demolition of the Annex had been a partial exercise, with only the timber upper section removed, leaving the brick basement walls. In 1969 Langer prepared a scheme for a museum and storeroom within the footprint of the Annexe, with a reinforced concrete slab forming a roof deck. It was a forceful modernist addition.<sup>49</sup> This scheme did not proceed but the brick walls of the Annex remained and in 2010 were incorporated into a new terrace designed for serving refreshments to visitors.<sup>50</sup>



**Figure 5.** Wolston House: Re-erection of foundation stone from Thomas Brown (Drawing by Karl Langer, BNE1/261 No 1176-6, no date. Courtesy of the National Trust of Australia (Queensland)).

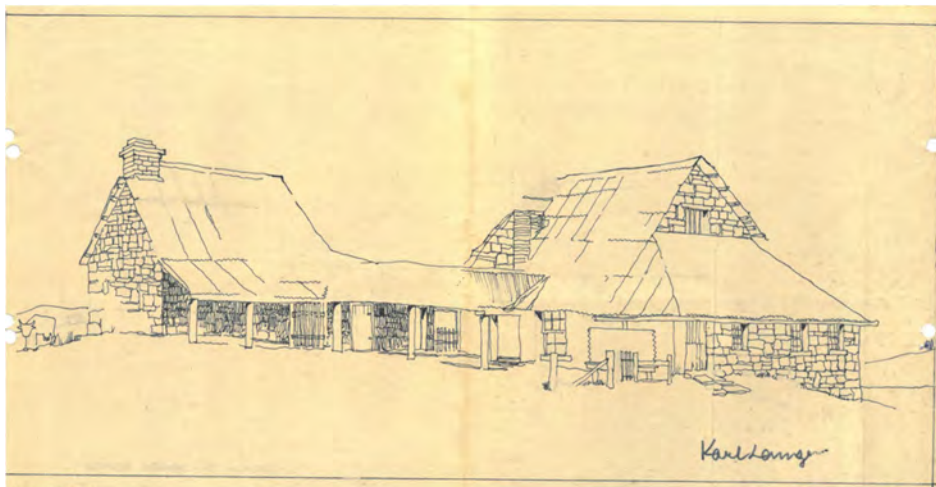
### The Venice Charter 1964

The approach to the conservation of Wolston House by Langer reveals that he was in tune with the developing international philosophy and practice of heritage conservation. In May 1964 Cilento had attended, as an observer, the second meeting of the International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Venice.<sup>51</sup> Instigated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) this was a significant meeting with some 600 participants from 61 countries.<sup>52</sup> At this meeting thirteen resolutions, including two very far-reaching motions, were adopted: “the first being the International Restoration Charter, or *Venice Charter*, and the second, put forward by UNESCO, providing for the creation of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).”<sup>53</sup> Cilento was one of three Australians to attend the Venice congress. The other attendees, E. H. Farmer (1909-2001),<sup>54</sup> the New South Wales Government Architect, was the Royal Australian Institute of Architects representative on the NSW National Trust. He was accompanied by his assistant V. C. Selig with the Venice Congress being included in a government-funded study trip of Europe and the United States for the two public servants.<sup>55</sup>

Cilento’s career in tropical medicine, work for the United Nations<sup>56</sup> and experience at the Venice Congress meant that he had formed a sceptical view of international organisations.<sup>57</sup> However he returned to Queensland with knowledge of the Venice Charter and perhaps discussed it with Langer. Langer’s recommendations for Wolston House align with the principles of the *Venice Charter*, particularly his understanding of the importance of respecting all the periods of a building’s history (Article 11).<sup>58</sup>

### “Our Adviser upon Architecture, Landscaping and Town Planning”<sup>59</sup>

Langer’s contribution to the Trust was not limited to the restoration of Wolston House. In 1966 he was elected to the Council of the Trust,<sup>60</sup> becoming a member of its executive in 1967.<sup>61</sup> By 1968 he was, along with Cilento, a Queensland representative on the Australian Council of National Trusts.<sup>62</sup> In 1967, the Trust turned to Langer for advice about the Ann Street Presbyterian Church and the proposed new city square.<sup>63</sup> Langer’s report supported the retention of the church, which he described as “being a structure of the early pioneer days, straight and honest, with its rhythm of gables.” He thought the design of the new square was “extremely uninteresting as a space” and the church building would in some “way help to humanise this vital Square.”<sup>64</sup> Langer reported on the condition of a rural stone coach house in 1969. He advised that the coach house was worthy of preservation and provided a sketch plan and technical plans along with samples of the stonework and roof timbers.<sup>65</sup> Langer also employed his considerable graphic skills for Trust projects. As well as the Wolston House brochure and Christmas card he designed the Trust’s emblem which was an Ionic capital surrounded by the words “National Trust of Queensland, Inc. 1963.”<sup>66</sup>



**Figure 6.** Stone Coach House, Moore (Perspective by Karl Langer, 9 July 1969. Courtesy of the National Trust of Australia (Queensland)).

Langer also contributed to the intellectual framework of the early lists of historic buildings both in Queensland and nationally. The Trust’s Early Buildings Research Sub-Committee was formed to develop “a comprehensive system for recording and cataloguing material and information relating to historic buildings.”<sup>67</sup> Its first report in August 1967 was a small list of “A” buildings with seven recommended as definite and four as possible.<sup>68</sup> In November 1967 Langer was the Queensland representative at the Australian Council of National Trusts Classification Sub-committee meeting. In an early attempt to adopt uniform standards and a

national list the committee discussed classifications and criteria by which the heritage value of buildings would be determine. It resolved to have an A to D classification system with the characteristics (criteria) determined to be historical, architectural, site of buildings (context) and educational value to the community.<sup>69</sup> In 1968 Langer and Cilento attended a seminar at the Australian National University, Canberra, on the Preservation of Urban Landscapes in Australia. The seminar included background papers from each state National Trust on urban conservation. Langer wrote a paper, “Considerations on the Conservation of Landscape in Urban Areas,” that argued for conserving indigenous landscapes and vegetation in urban areas.<sup>70</sup> Cilento reported to the Trust on the seminar stating that in Queensland, compared to the other states, there was only an “embryonic awareness” of the conservation of urban landscapes and the architectural significance of groups of buildings.<sup>71</sup>

### **Modernism and Conservation**

Langer as an avowed modernist and active participant in the work of the National Trust illustrates the inter-relationship between modernism and conservation that characterised the heritage movement in Europe and Australia the 1950s and 1960s. Architectural historians such as Miles Glendinning have examined this linkage from an international perspective.<sup>72</sup> In Australia, James Lesh has documented this intersection between conservation and modernism in the post-war period – in particular the influence of modernist architects exemplified by Robin Boyd.<sup>73</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Karl Langer, architect, town planner, landscape architect and academic was the consummate multi-disciplinary professional. As a member of the National Trust of Queensland he used all his professional skills to advance heritage conservation. When he died unexpectedly in October 1969 the Trust’s obituary referred to him “as one of our best-loved and most active members” and “a humanitarian, always kindly friendly and helpful, a man of peace and prepared to make equitable compromise in any material matter though adamant of things he considered matters of principle.”<sup>74</sup> Langer’s foundational contribution to the nascent heritage movement in Queensland is now largely forgotten or misinterpreted.

In its formative period Langer was part of a national discussion about the classification and criteria by which the heritage value of buildings would be determine and lists of heritage places developed. The legacy of Langer the ardent modernist, who was also a conservationist, remains in his surviving buildings, his writings and his extensive archive held at the University of Queensland and the State Library of Queensland. Eight of Langer’s buildings are now



entered in the Queensland Heritage Register including his own home in St Lucia; Chapel of St Peter's Lutheran College, Indooroopilly; St John's Lutheran Church, Bundaberg; Sugar Research Institute and Residence, Mackay; Wests Furniture Showroom (former), Fortitude Valley; the Assembly Hall at Ipswich Girls' Grammar School; a classroom block at Ipswich Grammar School; and the Main Roads Department Building (former).<sup>75</sup> Langer's architectural imagination and his commitment to planning for towns and the setting of his buildings can still be seen in many Queensland landscapes. His contribution to the developing understanding of Queensland's heritage also deserves recognition.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaat, Janina Gosseye and Andrew Wilson (eds), *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture 1945-1975* (London: Artifice Books on Architecture, 2015). In the 1959 publication *Buildings of Queensland*, only two Langer projects are illustrated but by 2014 Langer is the most-cited architect in the exhibition and the book, *Hot Modernism*.

<sup>2</sup> Deborah van der Plaat and John Macarthur, *Karl Langer: Modern Architect and Migrant in the Australian Tropics* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Fiona Gardiner and Don Watson, "Australia is Our Fate," in van der Plaat and Macarthur, *Karl Langer*, 63-64.

<sup>4</sup> Ross Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland: From 1915 to the 1980's* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), 388-508.

<sup>5</sup> James Lesh, *Values in Cities: Urban Heritage in Twentieth-Century Australia* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 62.

<sup>6</sup> S. W. Sheaffe, "Protecting Heritage: A Short History of the National Trust of Queensland," *Queensland History Journal* 22, no. 2 (2013): 138-39.

<sup>7</sup> The National Trust of Queensland Act of 1963 was assented to on 9 December 1963.

<sup>8</sup> Sheaffe, "Protecting Heritage," 142.

<sup>9</sup> Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland*, 100.

<sup>10</sup> W. R. Moon, "Biographical Notes on WR Moon," Unpublished manuscript, 1959. F1412, Fryer Library, University of Queensland Library.

<sup>11</sup> Queensland Parliament, *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 236 (1963-64), 1352-53.

<sup>12</sup> Former Member Details, "John Desmond Herbert," Queensland Parliament website, [www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Members/Former-Members/Former-Members-Register/Former-Member-Details?id=1820574083](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Members/Former-Members/Former-Members-Register/Former-Member-Details?id=1820574083), accessed 21 July 2022.

<sup>13</sup> *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 236, 1353.

<sup>14</sup> Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland*, 218.

<sup>15</sup> *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 236, 1353.

<sup>16</sup> National Trust of Queensland Act 1963, section 5.

<sup>17</sup> Sheaffe, "Protecting Heritage," 142.

<sup>18</sup> Wolston House (600339), Queensland Heritage Register, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600339>, accessed 23 June 2022.

<sup>19</sup> In 1960 the Department of Agriculture and Stock resumed the property to establish a tick research centre. They demolished the farm outbuildings and intended to demolish the homestead also, however this was saved following an intensive campaign by the Women's Historical Society, the Historical Society and the newly formed National Trust of Queensland. In 1965, the house was transferred to the National Trust and became their first property. Wolston House (600339).

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Undersecretary Premiers Department to Hon Secretary National Trust, 26 June 1964, National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Collection.

<sup>21</sup> *Queensland Government Gazette*, 17 April 1965, 1275.

<sup>22</sup> "Restoration" is the term used in the fund-raising brochure.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Riddel, "The Discovery of Queensland's Architectural History," in *Hot Modernism*, ed. Macarthur, et al, 109.

<sup>24</sup> Wolston House (600339).

- <sup>25</sup> Letter, 16 December 1964, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4 (folder titled Nat. Trust), UQFL 158.
- <sup>26</sup> Andrew Saniga and Andrew Wilson, "A League of his Own," in van der Plaats and Macarthur, *Karl Langer*, 251.
- <sup>27</sup> Robert Riddel, "Man about Town," in van der Plaats and Macarthur, *Karl Langer*, 184-85.
- <sup>28</sup> Ian Sinnamon, "Langer, Karl (1903-1969)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography (Canberra: Australian National University, 2000), <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/langer-karl-10783/text19123>, accessed 25 July 2022.
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- <sup>30</sup> Folder titled Nat. Trust, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4, UQFL 158.
- <sup>31</sup> Letter, 1 March 1965, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4.
- <sup>32</sup> Letter, 1 March 1965.
- <sup>33</sup> Letter, 18 April 1965, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4. Cilento proposes stripping all the internal cedar linings, numbering the cedar boards and storing them.
- <sup>34</sup> Letter, 18 April 1965.
- <sup>35</sup> Letter 30 April 1965, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4.
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- <sup>37</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Third Annual Report, 1965-66*, 5-6.
- <sup>38</sup> Brochure Wolston House Restoration Fund \$30,000. Karl Langer Collection, Box 19. The plan of the Annexe is as existing, not the plan that Langer had produced for its adaptive reuse.
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- <sup>40</sup> Manuel Hornibrook, Letter, 22 June 1967, File 9-9500, Wolston House Management 1965-1975, National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Collection.
- <sup>41</sup> Manuel Hornibrook, Letter, 31 March 1967, File 9-9500.
- <sup>42</sup> Dr Valerie Dennis, Senior Research Officer, National Trust of Australia (Queensland), Personal verbal communication with author, 28 June 2022.
- <sup>43</sup> Raphael Cilento and National Trust of Queensland, *The Story of Wolston House: (a Property of the National Trust of Queensland)*, (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1968), 13.
- <sup>44</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Fourth Annual Report, 1966-67*, 4-5.
- <sup>45</sup> *Fourth Annual Report, 1966-67*, 5.
- <sup>46</sup> Letter, 17 May 1967, Karl Langer Collection, Box 19.
- <sup>47</sup> Karl Langer, "Re-erection of Foundation Stone from Thomas Brown," Drawing no 1176-6, no date. National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Collection.
- <sup>48</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Sixth Annual Report 1968-69*, 17-18.
- <sup>49</sup> Karl Langer, "Wolston House – Wacol Proposed Alterations," Drawing no 1176-7, 3/2/1969. National Trust of Australia (Queensland) Collection.
- <sup>50</sup> "Officially Open at Last," *Trust News Queensland*, Spring 2010, 19.
- <sup>51</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Second Annual Report 1964-65*, 5.
- <sup>52</sup> Jukka Jokilehto, "The Context of the Venice Charter (1964)," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* vol. 2 (1998): 230.
- <sup>53</sup> ICOMOS International, History (11 October 2011), 2, [www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/mission-and-vision/history?start=1](http://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/mission-and-vision/history?start=1), accessed 19 July 2022.
- <sup>54</sup> Davina Jackson, "Edward Herbert (Ted) Farmer," *Design and Art Australia Online*, [www.daao.org.au/bio/edward-herbert-ted-farmer/biography/](http://www.daao.org.au/bio/edward-herbert-ted-farmer/biography/), accessed 19 July 2022.
- <sup>55</sup> Lesh, *Values in Cities*, 189-91.
- <sup>56</sup> Finnane, "Cilento, Sir Raphael West (Ray)."
- <sup>57</sup> Lesh, *Values in Cities*, 190-91.
- <sup>58</sup> Venice Charter, 1964, adopted by the second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964. Article 11: "The valid contributions of all periods to the building of a monument must be respected, since unity of style is not the aim of a restoration. When a building includes the superimposed work of different periods, the revealing of the underlying state can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and when what is removed is of little interest and the material

which is brought to light is of great historical, archaeological, or aesthetic value, and its state of preservation good enough to justify the action. Evaluation of the importance of the elements involved and the decision as to what may be destroyed cannot rest solely on the individual in charge of the work.”

<sup>59</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Sixth Annual Report, 1968-69*, 6.

<sup>60</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Fourth Annual Report, 1966-67*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Fifth Annual Report, 1967-68*, 2.

<sup>62</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Sixth Annual Report, 1968-69*, 6.

<sup>63</sup> Letter, 14 June 1976, Karl Langer Collection, Box 4.

<sup>64</sup> Report, 15 June 1967, Karl Langer Collection, Box 29.

<sup>65</sup> Report 9 July 1969, Karl Langer Collection, Box 29.

<sup>66</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Third Annual Report, 1965-66*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Third Annual Report, 1965-66*, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Partial List of Buildings Recommended for Definite Inclusion in National ‘A’ Listing, Karl Langer Collection, Box 19.

<sup>69</sup> Minutes and report meeting 11/11/1967, Karl Langer Collection, Box 19.

<sup>70</sup> Seminar Proceedings, “Preservation of Urban Landscapes in Australia,” Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, 16-18 August 1968, Karl Langer Collection, Box 38.

<sup>71</sup> National Trust of Queensland, *Sixth Annual Report, 1968-69*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 259-319.

<sup>73</sup> Lesh, *Values in Cities*, 89-91.

<sup>74</sup> “Obituary – Ave et vale Karl Langer,” *The National Trust of Queensland Newsletter* 2, no. 1 (9 November 1969): 6-7.

<sup>75</sup> Queensland Heritage Register, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/results/?q=Karl+Langer>, accessed 28 June 2022.

# David Crane's 'Capital Web': Crossings between Architecture, Urban Design and Planning as Disciplines and Practices from the 1950s

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## **Abstract**

*Architecture and planning have historically struggled to find agreement on defining urban design and a relevant body of theory. In the 1950s, Dean Josep Lluís Sert first used the term 'urban design' for proposed new programmes of study at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD). However, facing opposition to the move, urban design was introduced as extensions to established teaching programmes. At the same time, Dean George Holmes Perkins at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) took a different approach, embedding urban design into a joint Master's programme. Louis Kahn and David Crane were appointed to lead the architecture and city planning studios respectively. Despite a relatively short tenure at Penn from 1958 to 1964 and publishing relatively little, it is argued that David Crane significantly influenced thinking about urban design at a time when Modernism was failing. Crucial was the revalidating of public spaces and amenities as a key to urban place making and social identity. Importantly he argued that the role of the urban designer was establishing the framework to guide future development: what he called a 'capital web'. The paper traces Crane's core ideas and how they intersected with other urban thinkers at that time. Also examined is the way Crane's teaching shaped the career development of two graduates, Roelof Uytendogaardt and Denise Scott Brown, and how this propelled their subsequent practices. The conclusions argue that Crane's 'capital web' remains a potent conceptualisation finding new relevancy in the twenty-first century.*

## **Introduction**

The disciplines of architecture and planning have struggled to find an agreed understanding of urban design as a practice and coherent body of theory. Although the

design of cities is a practice arguably stretching back to antiquity, Josep Lluís Sert, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD), first used the term ‘urban design’ in the late 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Sert arrived in America in 1939 as one of many émigrés escaping the Nazi uprising in Europe, another being Walter Gropius, who preceded Sert as Dean.<sup>2</sup> They brought to the GSD the intellectual energy of the European Modern Movement and its promotion through the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (CIAM) that counted Le Corbusier among the founding members.

In a 1942 publication, *Can Our Cities Survive*, Sert expressed concerns about the state of American cities and unregulated low-density suburban sprawl.<sup>3</sup> Given his involvement with the CIAM, it is unsurprising that he saw potential salvation in their vision for the modern Functional City demonstrated in Le Corbusier’s Ville Radieuse. Consequently, Sert moved the discourse about American urbanism beyond the American City Beautiful Movement that focused on “civic design” to a more holistic view of the city-making ideas that shaped his thinking about urban design when he was appointed Dean to the GSD in 1953.<sup>4</sup>

In his drive to bring urban design into the GSD curriculum, Sert encountered disagreement on how this should be done. Sert’s view was that urban design should be a collaborative effort able to meld the design skills of architects with the social and economic knowledge of planners, and to debate this idea, they organised a series of conferences in the late 1950s. Despite strenuous efforts, the conferences failed to achieve a consensus, and Sert’s compromise was to offer urban design as extensions to established professional programmes. Richard Marshall describes this as treating “urban design as a free-floating sub-discipline with no real home.”<sup>5</sup> Marshall further notes the developing rift between planning and architecture at Harvard, leading to the whole city planning department moving out of the GSD.

### **Urban Design at the University of Pennsylvania**

The same deliberation took a different path at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) following the appointment in 1951 of Harvard graduate George Holmes Perkins as Dean of the School of Fine Arts.<sup>6</sup> To the existing programmes in architecture and landscape architecture, he added city planning and directed that all teaching should be studio-based.<sup>7</sup> At this time, Penn was looking for ways to capture research funding tied to federal urban

renewal programmes for which research was mandated. Seeing an opportunity for the built environment professions to attract this funding, Holmes Perkins set up the Institute of Urban Studies. He appointed prominent academics to lead the research, including Lewis Mumford, Robert Geddes, Robert Mitchell, Herbert Gans and Ian McHarg. He also hosted several urban design conferences that brought together leading urban thinkers (see Figure 1).<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 1.** Delegates to the 1958 Conference on Urban Design Criticism. Included are key figures at the University of Pennsylvania, from left to right: Lewis Mumford, Ian McHarg, David Crane, Louis Kahn, G. Holmes Perkins, Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch (Photograph by Grady Clay, with captions added by Peter Laurence).

Holmes Perkins also made sweeping changes to modernise the curriculums and to this end, made further key appointments, including Edmund Bacon, Kevin Lynch and Robert Venturi.<sup>9</sup> He also established a joint Master’s programme in architecture and city planning, appointing Louis Kahn and David Crane, respectively, to lead the architecture and city planning studios. Louis Kahn proved to be a star attraction in architecture, but Crane, with his understanding of studio pedagogy, quickly established a programme of study recognisable as urban design. John Lobell sees the period from 1951 to 1965 at Penn as a “golden age that saw a unique convergence of city, practice and education,” and in 1961 *Progressive Architecture* devoted an issue to what was identified as the ‘Philadelphia School’.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike Kahn, David Crane had a lower profile and published little during his relatively short tenure from 1958 to 1964. Notwithstanding, this paper argues that David Crane advanced thinking about urban design in the 1960s, which was influential among colleagues and his graduates, and established a theoretical framing of urban design with enduring validity.

### **David Crane and the ‘Capital Web’**

David Crane studied architecture at Georgia Tech, followed by city planning at Harvard. He went on to practice as an architect/planner in New York and Boston until his appointment to Penn in 1958.<sup>11</sup> He published three papers in 1960: “The City Symbolic,” “The Dynamic City” and “Chandigarh Reconsidered,” and a further one in 1964.<sup>12</sup> In the publications Crane evaluates issues of that time: the perceived failure of CIAM-inspired modern cities and urban renewal programmes at a time when these doctrines were being challenged in the UK.<sup>13</sup> In the quest to revalidate urban design as a pathway towards better-designed cities, Crane saw entrenched professional positions as an obstacle:

Planners are uninterested in city form. Architects who are interested in form are either caught up in fixing or patching or competing with each other on obscure points of small scale philosophy... New philosophies of city form and new processes of city form making must be built.<sup>14</sup>

Finding new philosophies became Crane’s mission. For him, the Modern Movement had devalued the public realm and became “what is left over between individualistic buildings of no communal importance.”<sup>15</sup> He characterised the resulting urban form as the ‘City Freestanding’, as in Le Corbusier’s vision of buildings as objects set in vast open space.

Contemporaneously, Jane Jacobs was articulating her view of the failure of planners in urban renewal programmes to understand the social drivers of good urbanism and the “folly of creating a physical structure at the price of destroying the social structure of a community’s life.”<sup>16</sup> While Crane recognised the social significance of what Jacobs was saying, for him, the primary focus was an appropriate design response to the public realm essential to public life.

Dismissing the City Beautiful Movement as piecemeal civic improvements, Crane argues that cities must be understood holistically. City form needs to construct meaning on the part of users, conceptualising the city as a “giant message system.”<sup>17</sup> While this mirrored Penn colleague Kevin Lynch’s idea of “imageability,”<sup>18</sup> Crane suggested that the concept needed expanding to capture “space and time” and the “great scale and potential disjointedness of the modern city.”<sup>19</sup>

The idea of city development being disjointed underpinned his rejection of the belief that whole cities can be designed in an orderly way, as asserted by Le Corbusier.<sup>20</sup> More realistically, Crane argued that cities develop and change over time as a process that involves countless actors well beyond the capabilities of a single designer – what he called the “City of a Thousand Designers.” This concept of incremental urban growth was later echoed by Christopher Alexander.<sup>21</sup> The conundrum was how to design a city that serves necessary functional and symbolic purposes and yet be able to accommodate incremental development and renewal by many actors over time. To do this, he argued, requires the creation of a:

... least skeletal continuity on a metropolitan scale [and] a more complete planning process philosophy that would embrace the fourth dimension of time and turn from opportunistic juggling to a process of designing built-in capacity for change, followed by successive adaptations based on change possibilities created.<sup>22</sup>

To achieve this outcome, Crane envisaged that the proper focus of city design should be on the configuration of the urban framework that serves both functional and symbolic needs. This framework comprised the networks of streets, parks and public amenities and spaces – what Crane called the ‘capital web’. This concerned both investments by public authorities in necessary physical infrastructure and a public realm able to bring meaning to users. For him, the ‘capital web’ not only enables the symbolic role of cities to be restored but also enables incremental growth over time. The ‘capital web’ provides a robust framework to which the subsequent development can be an ‘outgrowth’.



In “The Dynamic City,” Crane considers what he calls the “basic truths” about the modern city: “the rapid acceleration of change in city life and unequal physical progress, the interdependence of life and structures over time and the complexity of the modern city.”<sup>23</sup> Whereas “The City Symbolic” captured the opportunity to reaffirm the role and value of public spaces, “The Dynamic City” accounts for the piecemeal way cities grow over time, based on “the process principles of capital designing and town building.”<sup>24</sup>

The publications “Chandigarh Reconsidered” and “The Dynamic City” demonstrate Crane’s application of the ‘capital web’ using drawings produced by students participating in his studio, including the 1959 studio project “New City.” Taking the brief given to Le Corbusier for the new capital of Indian Punjab as a starting point, the project was a confronting challenge to the CIAM orthodoxy and thrust students into unfamiliar cultural, social and economic contexts. The outcomes demonstrate designs based on the ‘capital web’, able to develop and expand incrementally over time, with indicative development of city blocks accommodating traditional building methods and self-help construction.<sup>25</sup> The designs lacked the formality and completeness of Le Corbusier’s plan for Chandigarh, which had rigid functional zones and the monumentality of an architecture bearing the imprint of a single designer imposed on Indian culture.

Crane left Penn in 1964 to work as an urban designer for the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) on a project that aimed to reconnect the city to its waterfront. For Crane, this was an opportunity to apply his ‘capital web’ as a framework to establish publicly funded urban spaces and movement networks supporting market-driven development. In “The Public Art of City Building,” published after he left Penn, he discusses the potential contradiction between the American ideal of individual freedom of landowners versus development control and regulation to achieve public outcomes and benefits. To this end, he sees the ‘capital web’ facilitating a quality public realm while enhancing flexibility for private development over time: “to leave and make creative opportunities for the private sphere.”<sup>26</sup> Crane also recognised that the implied freedom for development does not abandon the need for public reviews and controls, and that: “Perhaps zoning should be less a mediation between conflicting private developments and more a bulwark against private encroachment on the common good in public streets and open spaces.”<sup>27</sup>

Roger Trancik observes that Crane's contribution to the Boston project was a reframing of the 'capital web' as a "development synergy in which public and private activities were brought together to create sufficient force to transform the urban district" of Boston's docklands.<sup>28</sup> The recognition of urban design being a partnership between public and private interests is of course now embedded into market-driven development processes and public-private partnerships.<sup>29</sup>

Through the four publications, David Crane articulated his understanding of the failure of Modern Movement-inspired city design to create good urbanism and the inability of architects and planners to reconcile their entrenched views to recognise urban design as a discrete practice. Crane's tenure at Penn is described by Alan Kreditor as the "era of Louis Kahn and David Crane" when the joint programme came to international prominence.<sup>30</sup> They were part of a wider group of distinguished academics at Penn setting out new theoretical groundings that diverged from the mainstream orthodoxy. This energy, however, did not last, as observed by a graduate of the joint programme at that time, Denise Scott Brown:

So eventually all the planners left Penn, as well as many architects who were not Harvard-trained modernists. This was because research money dried up with Nixon and Reagan, but also because our Dean [Holmes Perkins], great in many respects, saw Harvard as the shining model for architectural education. So nonconformists were not reappointed [and] Crane and I left and [Robert Venturi] too, and Penn lost the opportunity to be the first school to build on the early links then forming, over our somewhat mangled bodies, between the social and the physical in architecture.<sup>31</sup>

Moving on from the BRA, David Crane was appointed to Rice University in the 1970s, where he established the Rice Centre for Community Design and Research, and in 1986 joined the University of South Florida in Tampa, retiring in 2002. It is the contributions he made to urban design while at Penn that stand out as being seminal and influential.

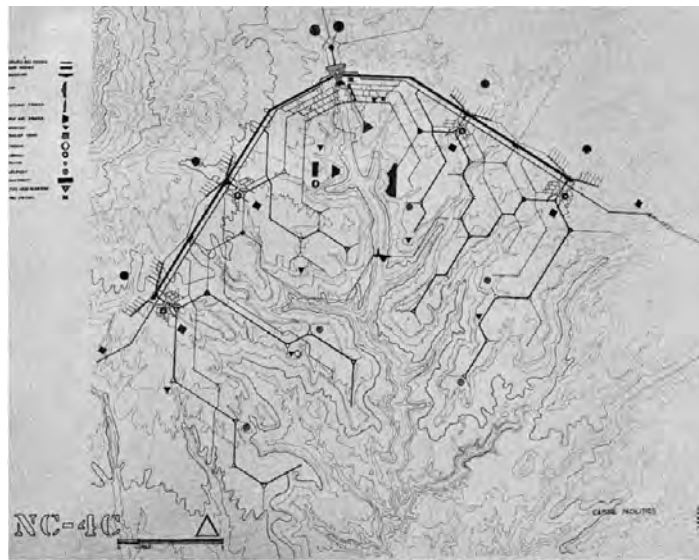
### Post-Penn Legacies

Despite the disintegration of the 'Pennsylvania School' as perceived by Scott Brown, the legacy of David Crane's thinking persisted among his many graduates from the city planning studio.<sup>32</sup> This is well demonstrated by two graduates whose work from his studio is used to illustrate his articles – Roelof Uytenbogaardt (Figure 2) and Denise Scott Brown.<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 2.** Roelof Uytenbogaardt, ca 1994  
([www.cape300foundation.org.za/pop/8.htm](http://www.cape300foundation.org.za/pop/8.htm), accessed 4 April 2023; Courtesy Khula Cape Foundation).

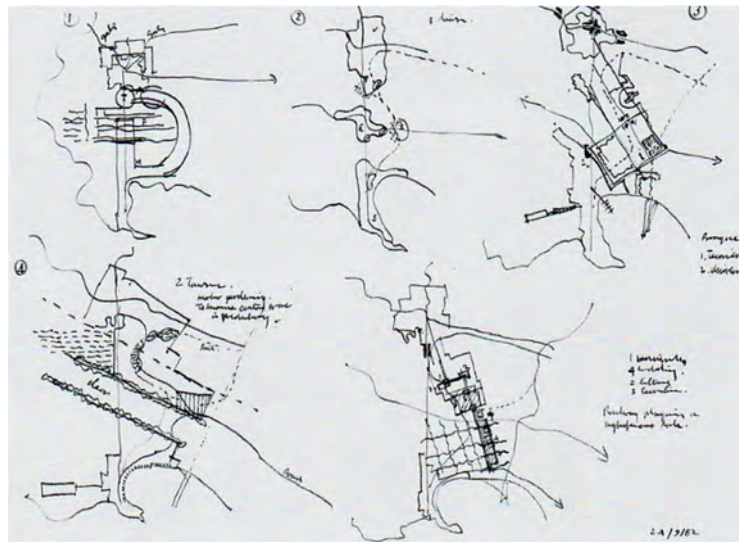
Uytenbogaardt completed the joint programme with Crane in 1958-59, coming to Penn as an architecture graduate from the University of Cape Town (UCT). His project, "A New City at Four Corners, Utah," was used by Crane to demonstrate the 'capital web' in "The City Symbolic" (Figure 3). Crane clearly was impressed with Uytenbogaardt, writing that he was "perhaps the most talented designer we have ever graduated out of this school."<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 3:** A plan for a new city on Four Corners, Utah, by Roelof Uytenbogaardt, 1959 (Crane, “The City Symbolic,” 290; courtesy University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design, Architectural Archives).

After graduating from Penn, Uytenbogaardt was appointed chief planner to the Boston Redevelopment Authority (before the arrival of Crane) and lectured on urban design at MIT and Harvard. Returning to Cape Town in 1963, he established his practice and began teaching at UCT, where he progressed to professor and head of city and regional planning. In 1975 he established the Urban Problems Research Unit and a combined school of architecture and planning to which he was appointed Director in 1985. Among influential publications is the *South African Cities: A Manifesto for Change*, co-authored with David Dewar (Figure 4).<sup>35</sup> Reflecting Crane’s ‘capital web’, they argued that:

... in the creation of order and structure, two different sets of actions can be usefully distinguished: private actions, which seek to further the interests of individuals and corporations; and public actions, ostensibly directed by a concern with societal... good.<sup>36</sup>



**Figure 4.** Drawing by Roelof Uytenbogaardt (1982) showing an analysis of the 'capital web' structure of parts of Cape Town (Roelof Uytenbogaardt Collection, BC1264, University of Cape Town Archive).

Shaped by his Penn experience, Uytenbogaart's academic influence in research, teaching and practice is widespread in South Africa and currently underpins the City of Cape Town's "Dignified Places Programme."<sup>37</sup>

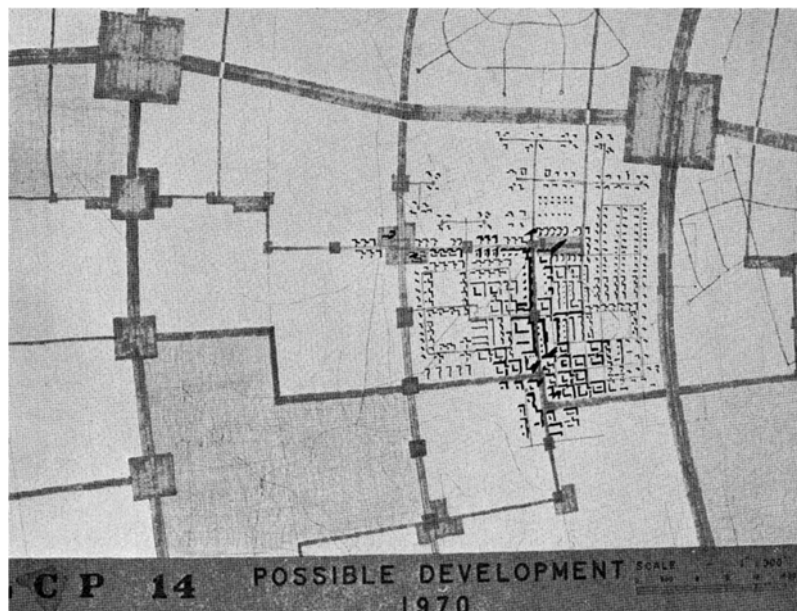
Also originally from South Africa, Denise Scott Brown (Figure 5) completed a Bachelor of Architecture in 1952 at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in Johannesburg, which at that time was fully immersed in the Modern Movement.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 5.** Denise Scott Brown in her home in 1978 (Photograph by Lynn Gilbert, [www.archdaily.com/895624/the-often-forgotten-work-of-denise-scott-brown](http://www.archdaily.com/895624/the-often-forgotten-work-of-denise-scott-brown), accessed 4 April 2023; Creative Commons License).

Scott Brown referred to the political and racial turmoil in South Africa when she graduated, prompting a move to London and study at the Architecture Association (AA). Among the teachers were Alison and Peter Smithson, expounding on New Brutalism, and it was on their advice that she sought admission to Penn.

Scott Brown, with her then-husband, Robert Scott Brown, were part of Crane's studio that produced the "New City" project published in "Chandigarh Reconsidered," and both graduated in 1960.<sup>39</sup> She regards her time at Penn as formative in shaping her thinking, directly acknowledging David Crane's role in interviews and her writing, declaring that much "of my professional life has been spent trying to connect urban thought with architecture."<sup>40</sup> She recounts that during her first year at Penn with David Crane, "we went spinning around like tops in the most interesting intellectual environments we had ever encountered."<sup>41</sup> The "New City" project not only enabled Crane to demonstrate his 'capital web' idea through the work of students but also provided Scott Brown with conceptual tools to take forward her own ideas (Figure 6).



**Figure 5.** Denise Scott Brown drawing for the "New City" project, showing the application of a 'capital web', 1959 studio, University of Pennsylvania (Crane, "The City Symbolic," 286; Courtesy Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design, Architectural Archives).

Following teaching roles at Penn working with Crane, in 1966 she was appointed to the University of California (Los Angeles) to establish a new school of architecture and planning. She acknowledges that Crane provided a model for her studio teaching method, although taking this in new directions. What she called ‘town watching’ was actively deployed in the studio as a “deliberately crafted research and pedagogical tool.”<sup>42</sup> Working with the challenging urbanism of Los Angeles, she sought to identify ‘underlying forces’ and understand the disjointedness of the modern city:

Admitting into urban design the untidy reality of urban decision-making is a risky procedure that designers try to avoid, because all designers experience loss of design control as the sensation of drowning. Yet the infringement of reality on the independence of the designer may act as a goad to imagination and creativity, leading to better designs.<sup>43</sup>

In 1967 Scott Brown married Robert Venturi, who she met at Penn, where he taught architecture theory, forming a long-standing personal and professional association leading to their roles in framing postmodern architecture and urbanism. The analytical methods Scott Brown developed at UCLA underpinned the seminal 1972 book co-written with Robert Venturi and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*.<sup>44</sup> Despite not always being fully and independently recognised, Scott Brown has contributed significantly to reshaping thinking about urban design, building on the foundation of David Crane’s influence.<sup>45</sup>

Evidence of Crane’s conceptualisation of urban design can be detected in the work of many others. Roger Trancik, for example, builds on Crane’s characterisation of ‘The City Freestanding’ in his concept of ‘Lost Space’, reaffirming the crucial role of streets for good urbanism.<sup>46</sup> Leon Krier shared with Crane the same criticism of as Modern urbanism. Krier’s practice of replicating traditional urbanism and architecture, organised by an urban space framework and movement network, went on to underpin the New Urbanism movement.<sup>47</sup>

The idea that urban design fundamentally provides a framework to guide development and condition the quality of the public realm is now embedded into contemporary urban thinking and urban design ‘manuals’. Published in 1985, *Responsive Environments* sees

urban design providing “users with an essentially democratic setting, enriching their opportunities by maximising the degree of choice available to them.”<sup>48</sup> As in many manuals that have followed, urban design ‘principles’ are established as a way of designing the public realm as a framework and an interface with the street edges, underpinned by the ‘capital web’ concept. There is now wider adoption of policies by city authorities aimed at achieving good urban outcomes, focusing on the public spaces and the interface between the public and private realms.

More directly, Peter Buchanan, in a recent call to arms on behalf of urban design, revives David Crane’s ‘capital web’, suggesting that his approach and “its legacy have been too soon forgotten, perhaps because Crane published so little.”<sup>49</sup> Buchanan reasserts that the fundamental purpose of urban design is “to provide a framework to guide the development of the citizen” and revalidates the ‘capital web’ concept as an urban design tool appropriate for the twenty-first century.

Although urban design is deployed at a range of scales, perhaps the more typical is ‘master planning’ at the precinct or neighbourhood scale. Whereas Crane saw the application of the ‘capital web’ at a metropolitan scale, urban design at a smaller scale can still be effective in delivering good urbanism where there are clear distinctions and positive interactions between public and private realms.

## **Conclusions**

While at the University of Pennsylvania, David Crane added his voice to the critique of the Modern Movement and the functional precepts of the CIAM. More controversially, he also challenged the view that city-making should be based solely on social considerations. He revalidated the essential element of good city-making to be the design of the public realm: the network of streets, spaces and public amenities: the ‘capital web’. He further argued that this public realm be conceptualised as a framework supporting the development of the rest of the city over time. The measure of this contribution to urban design thinking is the extent to which it has influenced and shaped the thinking of his graduates and other urban design thinkers since the 1950s, many of whom have contributed new insights building on those of Crane.



Also evident from the 1950s was the disagreement among built environment professionals on what may constitute urban design and which discipline should take the lead. The unresolved discussion at that time led to compromises in establishing urban design as an area of study and practice and in the relationships to the architecture and planning professions. Surprisingly, this disagreement has not entirely dissipated. Michael Gunder argued that “urban design should return to its twentieth-century position within urban planning and principally be practised as an important subset of wider spatial planning.”<sup>50</sup> Opposing this, Alan Kreditor is more optimistic about the potential for urban design to be a distinct practice, which can begin to “create a definable body of knowledge, a set of methods and a professional and civic ethos.”<sup>51</sup> While this may remain unresolved or need thinking through differently, there is little doubt about David Crane’s significant contribution to the discourse on urban design and his widespread influence on shaping urban design knowledge and practice that retains relevance in the twenty-first century.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Mumford and Hashim Sarkis (eds), *Josep Lluís Sert: The Architect of Urban Design, 1953-1969* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus in Germany, appointed Head at the Harvard GSD in 1932. Discussed in Richard Marshall, “Josep Lluís Sert’s Urban Design Legacy,” in *The Urban Design Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, ed. Michael Larice and Elizabeth MacDonald (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 106-17.

<sup>3</sup> Josep Lluís Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, Their Analysis, Their Solutions* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1932).

<sup>4</sup> The City Beautiful movement, founded in America by Daniel Burnham, who, with Edward Bennett, produced the 1909 Plan of Chicago for improvements to streets and civic spaces. See Elmer W. Johnson, *Chicago Metropolis 2020* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Marshall, “Josep Lluís Sert’s Urban Design Legacy,” 115.

<sup>6</sup> The University of Pennsylvania Almanac: Biography of George Holmes Perkins, [https://archives.upenn.edu/collections/finding-aid/upb8\\_4perkins/](https://archives.upenn.edu/collections/finding-aid/upb8_4perkins/), accessed 26 September 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Perkins insisted that all studio projects were ‘real’ projects from professional practices, a point underscored by a Penn Masters graduate, Glen Gallaher, in a recorded interview in Johannesburg by the author, 29 March 2005.

<sup>8</sup> The context of teaching at the University of Pennsylvania is well documented by Denise Scott Brown. See: Oral history interview with Denise Scott Brown, Smithsonian Archives of America Art, 25 October 1990 – 9 November 1991, [www.aaa.ai.edu/askus](http://www.aaa.ai.edu/askus), accessed 26 September 2022. See also William Menking, “Denise Scott Brown on the Unknown History of Architecture and Planning at the University of Pennsylvania,” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, 19 May 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Each were to produce seminal books: Edmund Bacon, *Design of Cities* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967); Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1960); Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966); Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (New York: Doubleday & Co, 1969).

<sup>10</sup> John Lobell, *The Philadelphia School and the Future of Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> No comprehensive biography of David Crane could be sourced. See death notice by Lynwood Abram, *Houston Chronicle*, 9 June 2005, [www.chron.com/news/houston-deaths/article/Deaths-Crane-former-Rice-architecture-dean-1923999.php#:~:text=David%20A.,work%20with%20actual%20city%20problems](http://www.chron.com/news/houston-deaths/article/Deaths-Crane-former-Rice-architecture-dean-1923999.php#:~:text=David%20A.,work%20with%20actual%20city%20problems), accessed 26 September 2022.

<sup>12</sup> The 1960 papers are: David Crane, "The City Symbolic," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 26, no.4 (1960): 280-92; "Chandigarh Reconsidered," *American Institute of Architects Journal* (May 1960): 32-39; "The Dynamic City," *Architectural Design* (April 1960): 158-62; "The Public Art of City Building," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 352, no. 1 (1964): 84-94.

<sup>13</sup> Team 10 was a movement formed by CIAM members who became dissatisfied with the doctrines of functionality, and Alison and Peter Smithson were among the leading protagonists, both teachers at the Architectural Association in London during the 1950s. 'New Brutalist' (as defined by Denise Scott Brown) was less doctrinaire, and more focused on neighbourhood and community development. See Denise Scott Brown, "Paralipomena in Urban Design," an expanded version of a paper presented for a symposium at the University of Kentucky, 1985, <https://web.mit.edu/4.163J/BOSTON%20SP%202011%20STUDIO/Urban%20Design%20Docs/03.%20Urban%20Design%20Reader/Scott-Brown%20Urban%20Concepts.pdf>, accessed 26 September 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Crane, "The City Symbolic," 284.

<sup>15</sup> Crane, "The City Symbolic," 281.

<sup>16</sup> Marshall, "Josep Lluís Sert's Urban Design Legacy," 111.

<sup>17</sup> Crane, "The City Symbolic," 284.

<sup>18</sup> Lynch, *The Image of the City*.

<sup>19</sup> Crane, "The City Symbolic," 284.

<sup>20</sup> Le Corbusier produced a number of city design projects in the 1930s including the Ville Radieuse (1930) and the Plan Obus for Algiers (1930), culminating in his city design for Chandigarh (1952). See Kenneth Frampton, Chapter 20, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> See for example Christopher Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>22</sup> Crane, "The City Symbolic," 283.

<sup>23</sup> Crane, "The Dynamic City," 162.

<sup>24</sup> Crane, "The Dynamic City," 162.

<sup>25</sup> Crane, "The Dynamic City," 161. Crane references Charles Abrams in Ghana who advocated self-built housing in poor countries. The provision of 'core' housing to which occupants add and extend over time is an architectural equivalent to a 'capital web'.

<sup>26</sup> Crane, "The Public Art of City Building," 91.

<sup>27</sup> Crane, "The Public Art of City Building," 91.

<sup>28</sup> Roger Trancik, *Finding Lost Space: Theories of Urban Design* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1986), 141.

<sup>29</sup> For example, David Adams and Steve Tiesdell, *Shaping Places: Urban Planning, Design and Development* (London: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Alan Kreditor, "The Neglect of Urban Design in the American Academic Succession," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 9, no. 3 (1990): 155-63. Louis Kahn died in 1974.

<sup>31</sup> Menking, "Denise Scott Brown on the Unknown History."

<sup>32</sup> Menking, "Denise Scott Brown on the Unknown History."

<sup>33</sup> Crane gives a full list of students participating in the 1959 studio in "Chandigarh Reconsidered" and "The Dynamic City." Projects are not ascribed to individual students, although the work of Denise Scott Brown is easily identified. In "The City Symbolic," Crane names the authors of the work as D. Scott Brown, R. Uytendogaardt and A. Bergamasco (A. Bergamasco could not be found in an internet search).

- <sup>34</sup> Biography of Roelof Uytendogaardt. Artefacts. [www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=2099](http://www.artefacts.co.za/main/Buildings/archframes.php?archid=2099), accessed 26 September 2022. Corroborated by Glen Gallagher, who recalls Louis Kahn saying to him that Uytendogaardt was the “best student” to graduate from the programme. Glen Gallagher, In a recorded interview in Johannesburg, 29 March 2005.
- <sup>35</sup> David Dewar and Roelof Uytendogaardt, *South African Cities: A Manifesto for Change* (Cape Town: Urban Problems Research Unit, 1991).
- <sup>36</sup> Dewar and Uytendogaardt, *South African Cities*, 23.
- <sup>37</sup> The influence of David Crane on Uytendogaardt is underscored by Barbra Southworth, “Urban Design in Action: The City of Cape Town’s Dignified Places Programme – Implementation of New Public Spaces towards Integration and Urban Regeneration in South Africa,” *Urban Design International*, 8 (2003): 119-33.
- <sup>38</sup> South African architecture embraced the Modern Movement with a student study tour of Europe in 1928. See Errol Haarhoff, “Appropriating Modernism: Apartheid and the South African Township,” *ITU AZ* 8, no. 1 (2011): 184-95.
- <sup>39</sup> Robert Scott Brown was killed in a car accident in 1961, and acknowledged in Crane, “Chandigarh Reconsidered,” 34.
- <sup>40</sup> Denise Scott Brown, “Paralipomena in Urban Design,” 6. An expanded version of a paper presented for a symposium at the University of Kentucky, 1985, <https://web.mit.edu/4.163J/BOSTON%20SP%202011%20STUDIO/Urban%20Design%20Docs/03.%20Urban%20Design%20Reader/Scott-Brown%20Urban%20Concepts.pdf>, accessed 23 September 2022.
- <sup>41</sup> Scott Brown, “Paralipomena in Urban Design,” 10.
- <sup>42</sup> Sylvia Lavin, “Positioning Denise Scott Brown: Los Angeles, 1965-1966,” *E-flux Architecture*, March 2022, [www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/443513/positioning-denise-scott-brown-los-angeles-1965-1966/](http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/positions/443513/positioning-denise-scott-brown-los-angeles-1965-1966/), accessed 23 September 2022.
- <sup>43</sup> Lavin, “Positioning Denise Scott Brown.”
- <sup>44</sup> Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1972).
- <sup>45</sup> Lavin, “Positioning Denise Scott Brown.” Apart from not recognising Scott Brown in the Pritzker Prize awarded solely to Robert Venturi, Lavin points to the same omission in Vincent Scully’s introduction to Venturi’s book, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*.
- <sup>46</sup> Transik, *Finding Lost Space*, 140-41. Transik references David Crane’s appointment to the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the application of his ‘capital web’ in this ground-breaking project.
- <sup>47</sup> Leon Krier is an architecture practitioner who replicates traditional architecture and urbanism and has been influential in the New Urbanism movement. New Urbanism as a practice has come under criticism for many reasons including the replication of traditional architecture aesthetics and the appropriation of a sustainability agenda. See Michael Gunder, “Commentary: Is Urban Design Still Urban Planning?: An Exploration and Response,” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31, no. 2 (2011): 184-95.
- <sup>48</sup> Ian Bentley, Alan Alcock, Paul Murrain, Sue McGlynn and Graham Smith, *Responsive Environments: A Manual for Designers* (Oxford: Architecture Press, 1985), 9.
- <sup>49</sup> Peter Buchanan, “The Big Rethink Part II: Urban Design,” *Architecture Review*, 5 March 2013. He provides a checklist of urban design criteria applicable to the concept of the ‘capital web’.
- <sup>50</sup> Gunder, “Commentary,” 191.
- <sup>51</sup> Kreditor, “The Neglect of Urban Design,” 160.

# **W. M. Dudok and Hilversum: Architect and Municipal Planner; Dissemination of this Interconnection amongst Australian Architects, 1925-1955**

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## **Abstract**

*The architecture/town planning of the Dutch modernist Willem Marinus Dudok (1884-1974) is a significant example of the crossover between municipal planning and architecture. Dudok's buildings, particularly those at Hilversum, are widely acknowledged and recognisable as design sources drawn upon by Australian modernists in the period 1925 to 1955. He planned Hilversum as a garden city in 1918 and it was visited by many Australian architects during this study period.*

*Dudok initially trained as an engineer. His career, combining architecture and town planning, presented the ideal modernist project in practice. Hilversum was one of the key locations in Europe after World War I, where modern town planning and architecture worked in unity.*

*Architecture, although often collaborative within a practice, could also be individualistic and Dudok's practice in many ways exemplified this approach. Town planning required the coordination of professionals. At Hilversum, Dudok achieved this unity, with his well-planned municipal areas and modern buildings successfully integrated into them. This was within the context of contemporary Dutch town planning and housing laws, post World War I.*

*This paper presents Dudok's work, emphasising the crossover and integration of architecture and town planning. It examines the significance or not, of this crossover between these disciplines in the dissemination of his work by Australian architects and examines specifically whether Dudok's town planning practices were part of the dissemination of his work. It concludes that for those Australian architects who experienced Hilversum first-hand, Dudok's buildings were perceived as integrated into the town plan, particularly their context and the essentialness of the landscaping.*

*Furthermore, Dudok had a commitment to the social wellbeing of the community through his planning with schools as focal points. Newcastle Technical College, New South Wales, is an exemplar of this in Australia.*

### **Willem Marinus Dudok**

In 1915, Willem Marinus Dudok (Figure 1), aged 31, was appointed Director of Hilversum Council Public Works Department; this position changed to Town Architect in 1928. He had first chosen a military career. Dudok trained as an engineer and remained in the army until 1913 when he was appointed Engineer and Deputy Director of Public Works at Leiden.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1.** Willem M Dudok, 1953  
(Gooienvecht Historisch Hilversum, Netherlands).

Importantly, Dudok's schools and Town Hall (1928-31) of Hilversum, a small town 20 kilometres south of Amsterdam, are widely acknowledged and recognisable as design sources drawn upon by modernists, among them many Australian architects in the period 1930 to 1955. These design sources included the use of rectilinear interlocking and connecting horizontal and vertical cuboid forms, narrow brickwork to emphasise horizontality and the use of De Stijl colours, red, yellow and blue.

Colin Davies in *New History of Modern Architecture* of 2017 claims that architectural historians have neglected Dudok, and suggests the reasons for the scant mention of his works were the fact that Dudok was an active practitioner having 200 completed buildings and that he did not adhere to the dogma of modernism.<sup>2</sup> Rather his Dutch contemporaries J.J.P. Oud and Theo van Doesburg, although completing considerably

fewer works, received the critics' attention. Additionally, much of the literature focuses on the relationship between Dudok and Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>3</sup> What is presented even less is Dudok's work as a town planner. The dominant body of literature on Dudok is in the Dutch architectural, planning and cultural journals. Discussion of his town planning views was also recorded in the English professional publications cited later in this paper. There are few monographs on Dudok and his work in English. Most notable was the 1954 monograph edited by Robert Magnee.<sup>4</sup> A 1995 Dutch monograph on Dudok mentions his town planning schemes against the dominant discussion of his buildings. Donald Leslie Johnson and Donald Langmead in *Makers of Twentieth Century Architecture* suggest that after World War II, Dudok's significance was in urban planning.<sup>5</sup>

This paper commences by briefly describing Dudok's professional work at Hilversum as municipal architect and particularly in this context his work as a planner, his private engagements as both a planner and an architect and the articulation of his views on town planning. However, the focus of this paper and the core of it, is the dissemination of Dudok's work as a planner to Australian architects, not on Dudok's planning schemes themselves. The research undertaken specifically examined this through the first-hand accounts of Australian architects who visited Hilversum in the study period. Their recorded responses to Hilversum, including written notes, sketches, diaries, photographs and reports of the New South Wales (NSW) Board of Architects, Travelling Scholars in Architecture, documented their descriptions of both Hilversum as a city and how they experienced the planning of that city. This has been demonstrated in this paper by the selection of several Australian architects, including John Sulman, Ewen Laird and Winsome Hall Andrew, and the articulation of their reactions to Dudok's planning. What is also evident from these first-hand accounts is their observation that in his planning, Dudok placed buildings to become focal points in the social and cultural environment of the community. The school was most often this building. The final part of the paper is a short case study of Newcastle Technical College, NSW, an Australian example of an education institution whose planning sought to add to the social and economic fabric of Newcastle and whose architect Harry Rembert, Assistant Government Architect, Department of Works, NSW, was very much taken by Dudok's work.

In 1916-18 Dudok designed the Extension Plan for Hilversum, as a garden city. This town plan and its integral buildings brought Dudok professional recognition both within the Netherlands and internationally.<sup>6</sup> The 70-plus public buildings included public

housing schemes, 27 educational buildings from kindergartens to secondary schools, an abattoir, two cemeteries and his most acclaimed building, the Hilversum Town Hall. When Dudok commenced work as the Town Architect, it was understood that designing a new town hall would be a critical part of his role. The Hilversum Council thought that Dudok “had proved himself as a competent architect” whereas the Dutch Architects Institute viewed that “works as the Town Hall should be designed and supervised by highly qualified independent architect.”<sup>7</sup> The Hilversum Town Hall became a seminal work for modernist architects including Australians.

Dudok also accepted private commissions as an architect and a town planner. These projects included Villa Sevensteijn, The Hague (1920-21); the Dutch student hostel at the Cite Universitaire, Paris (1926-38); de Bijenkorf Store, Rotterdam (1929-30); the Extension and Reconstruction schemes for The Hague (1933, 1945); and the unrealised development plan for Zwolle (1948-53). He maintained a professional relationship with Hilversum until his retirement in 1954 and subsequently engaged in private practice until 1967.

### **Twentieth-Century Dutch Town Planning**

Early twentieth-century Dutch town planning and architecture sit within the context of contemporary Dutch town planning. In 1901 the *Wohingwet* (Housing Law) was passed, requiring every city with a population greater than 10,000 to prepare a comprehensive town plan, indicating areas for slum clearance and for new housing construction. Municipal authorities established housing standards and were empowered to construct low-cost housing for workers.<sup>8</sup> With changes to the Housing Act, 50,000 new houses were built in Holland between 1920 and 1930.

Giovanni Fanelli argued that the commissioning of dual role town planners/architects produced a diversity of modern architectural solutions for Dutch public housing:

In discussing the history of modern architecture in Holland the individually important works cannot be considered separately, rather they must be viewed in the context of an architectural and town planning culture, diffuse to such an extent as perhaps not to be found in any other country.<sup>9</sup>



### Hilversum, Expansion Plan, 1916-1918, 1933

Hilversum had expanded rapidly after its connection to Amsterdam by rail. Its population grew from 35,000 in 1915 to 100,000 two decades later (Figure 2). The Dutch preference for low-rise dwellings enhanced the influential role of the garden city in the 1920s and the 1930s (Figure 3). Donald Grinberg claimed that the “garden city ideals significantly influenced the development of Hilversum under Dudok’s leadership.”<sup>10</sup> Dudok’s initial Expansion Plan (1916-18) was designed on the premise that Hilversum should be economically independent of a commuter population. New industries would be established and separated from the worker’s housing by green areas, which would be protected and maintained. They would surround Hilversum as a natural barrier, controlling its development. The preservation of the natural rural environment was Dudok’s starting point for his planning schemes. He saw this approach as a difference between himself and other town planners of the time.<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 2.** Dudok’s Hilversum’s Expansion Plan 1933  
(Gooienvecht Historisch, Hilversum, Netherlands).

I want to consider the task of the town planner from the standpoint from which it is generally not viewed, i.e., first of all from the rural point of view, and then from the urban. For I think that the sound preservation of the land, as far as possible, is a question of great national interest.<sup>12</sup>





**Figure 3.** Public Housing Hilversum, Fifth Municipality. One-to-two storey detached housing (Photograph Carol Hardwick).

The Expansion Plan (1933) represented Dudok's ideal garden city where he authorised the preservation of the surrounding countryside. The public buildings were planned as the central structures from which his triangular urban areas spread out, such as in the fifth municipality. However, after World War II, Hilversum expanded its boundaries and increased the allowable height of buildings.

### **Dissemination**

The United Kingdom was pivotal for Dudok's work being disseminated to Australian architects. He visited there, notably in 1934 and 1935 for his lectures at the Architectural Association, London. These, and the accompanying exhibition of his work, were key points in this journey of dissemination. Like in Australia, there was a recognisable Dudokey vocabulary in English 1930s architectural examples, including the use of brickwork as a modern material and the interlocking vertical and horizontal forms. Perhaps lesser known is that in the 1930s, Dudok was one of the architects to influence a whole new generation of Turkish urban planners and architects.<sup>13</sup> He visited Turkey in 1938 as a jury member for the design of the new parliament building in Ankara.

Dudok's views on town planning are well articulated in addresses he gave to the Architectural Association in 1934, the Société Belge des Urbanistes et Architectes Modernistes in 1950, and to members of the British Town and Country Planning Association group travelling in Holland in 1955. In May 1934, Dudok delivered his address titled "Buildings At Hilversum," at the Architectural Association. However, most of his delivery presented his views of and issues fronting town planners in the 1930s. Dudok was

not always able to put into place the Development Plan that he desired. He lamented, “Its course of development, however, had not proceeded along the right lines: all kinds of casual property interests made their influence felt in the extension of roads so that here and there the plan reminds us strongly of a labyrinth.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Dissemination in Australia**

Mary Turner Shaw, architect, summed up Melbourne’s modernist buildings in the early 1930s and the dominance of brickwork:

What we most approved was horizontality, preferably in brickwork in the mode of the Dutchman Dudok, with rows of windows and bands of cement render. Surfaces were generally plain, though the severity of the Bauhaus School had not imposed itself on us.<sup>15</sup>

The choice of brick as the favoured solid wall material for Australian modernists in the 1930s was not limited to Melbourne; brick was the modernist material throughout Australia in the 1930s.

New research for this paper focused on how Dudok’s role as Municipal Planner was disseminated to Australian architects, illustrated by their responses to their experience of his town planning at Hilversum. Did they share the layered view of Dudok, who equated the relationship between town planning and architecture to that between an orchestra and music, “as the orchestra is the most beautiful instrument for music, the town is the most beautiful edifice to architecture”?<sup>16</sup> This paper suggests that those Australian architects who visited Hilversum, responded to it as a modern integrated town environment in a similar way to that in which Dudok conceived and designed it. Within their perceived holistic view of Hilversum, they appreciated Dudok’s landscaping, green belts, siting of buildings and the creation of public spaces that would enrich the community. In this manner their responses to Hilversum were in line with Dudok’s ideas of the interconnection, and the “town as the most beautiful edifice to architecture.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Dissemination of the Crossover from First-hand Visits to Hilversum**

John Sulman attended the International Town Planning Conference in Amsterdam in July 1924 and visited Hilversum. In his report, “Town Planning in Great Britain, Europe and America,” to the NSW Legislature Assembly, he made special reference to Hilversum and that his excursion there reinforced his garden city planning ideals:

It is a town of trees and gardens well kept, prosperous and clean. The schools and other public buildings were closed (being Sunday) ... Workmen's dwellings are mostly two storied in rows but varied and designed with skill. A good many detached villas, with their own gardens, are also in evidence, while tree planting, public gardens, and playgrounds have not been forgotten.<sup>18</sup>

Sulman collected and kept plans from this 1924 visit of the Hilversum housing schemes and those of Rotterdam.<sup>19</sup> There is no evidence to date that I'm aware of that Sulman met Dudok. However, it is possible that he could have on this 1924 visit to Hilversum.

The view and resultant understanding of Hilversum was one experienced from the street, indeed, the tree-lined streets. The young Australian architects explored on foot; that was how they experienced the environment, walking in the landscaping, along the tree-lined streets, as they went from one building to the next.

In 1934, Ewen Laird and Max Deans, young architects from Geelong, Victoria, visited Hilversum. Their diaries convey the joy that Hilversum held for Australian architects. Laird recorded in a very practical manner, descriptive entries of buildings and their details, often illustrated with sketches. They provide a wonderful first-hand account of this "adventure" and how Laird viewed the buildings in the broader landscape and Hilversum's garden city design. His diaries capture their explorations of Hilversum, the finite housing areas, and their meeting with the green belt, an important element of Dudok's Expansion Plan. Laird diarised in 1934 that he "walked along a leafy road to the edge of the residential area to the first school,"<sup>20</sup> where he did sketches of the school, a site plan, and a detailed description of the dominant yellow glazed bricks. Laird further emphasised the town landscape when describing the tree-lined streets and houses: "Had a long winding walk to the next school through small woods in which are dotted houses (not very good but better than the usual run of suburban work) in their natural settings."<sup>21</sup>

Winsome Hall Andrew, who travelled with Eric Andrew, recorded their April 1935 trip to Holland, detailing places and buildings visited in written notes to her family and photographs including those of her in front of Dudok's Vondel School (1928) and the Van Nelle Factory, Rotterdam (1926-30), which she found no longer found innovative:

We arrived in Rotterdam about 2:30 not long before dusk and Ernie took us around the outskirts of the town to see the flat schemes. – including visit to Van Nelle factory – which is huge and imposing but already seems quite usual design.<sup>22</sup>

Her diary records the anticipation and prospective excitement of visiting Hilversum as the pinnacle of their trip:

We had to double back on our own tracks to get out to Hilversum which we did with a tenseness which was apparent. This was new ground for us all. Griff drove and I sat with map in hand ready for the great adventure.<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, her notes did not include descriptions of their Hilversum visit.<sup>24</sup> Eric Andrew was one of several architects from this period who later, in 1949, qualified as a town planner, after which he referred to himself as an Architect and Town Planner. His papers, in the NSW State Library, contain Werner Hegemann's book, *Civic Planning, Housing Volume 1, 1922-1937*, with Dutch housing examples from Amsterdam and buildings at Hilversum.

The career of Frank G. Costello, the NSW Special Travelling Scholar, 1928, was the most aligned of the travelling scholars to the interconnection of planning and architecture. In 1933 he received the Hunt Bursary prize for planning, awarded by the Royal Institute of British Architects. His town planning contribution and architectural work with Brisbane City Council as Senior City Architect/Planner, 1941-1952, is discussed by Robert Freestone and Darryl Choy in "Enriching the Community: The Life and Times of Frank Costello."<sup>25</sup>

In earlier research exploring how Australian architects knew about Dudok, Costello's accounts were significant because of their enthusiasm for Dudok and his understanding of the importance of the interconnection of town planning and architecture.<sup>26</sup> Costello reported in 1931 on his trip to Holland, emphasising the town planning of Hilversum, a lasting influence on his future career. He was away from Australia for eight years and visited Hilversum several times. He liked what he saw in Hilversum with Dudok's

schemes incorporating more individually designed dwellings compared to those he had seen in Amsterdam. Hilversum to him was the ideal place to live:

To me, Hilversu(m) seems, architecturally, the ideal place in which a man, not requiring an individual detached residence, would desire to live. The layout of the streets is splendid. Such public buildings as schools and churches are all of exceedingly good design.... But there is no monotonous continuity of terrace upon terrace of exactly similar fronts, as is often the case in London developments.<sup>27</sup>

Costello travelled for a time with Graham McDonnell, the 1928 Travelling Scholar, who shared Costello's view that Hilversum was more than just individual buildings and importantly the harmonious way those individual buildings worked together. McDonnell travelled extensively in Europe. He understood the holistic environment that Dudok aspired to, and echoed Dudok's desire for town planning/architecture to create happiness:

The point that impressed me more than anything in regard to the Dutch work generally was that feeling of organisation of life and thought.... The building activities are not haphazard, but all seem to form part of some huge scheme for the organisation and betterment of the community. Probably this accounts very largely for the feeling of happiness and contentness amongst her citizens.<sup>28</sup>

Another Dudok inspired colleague of Costello's was Benjamin Thomas Stone. They were fellow students at Sydney Technical College. In the Student Report of 1927 for *Architecture*, Costello reported on the exhibition of student work completed in 1926. He included an illustration of Stone's scheme for a Boys High School, which demonstrated Stone already showed an interest in site planning.<sup>29</sup> In 1933, he travelled by car, an old Morris Cowley, to Holland and, like Winsome Hall Andrew, described visiting Hilversum as "the grand finale to a Dutch tour; I can imagine nothing finer than a visit to Hilversum."<sup>30</sup> Stone worked for Department of the Interior in the ACT, including work on public housing, until his death from a fall during the construction of the Administration building, Canberra, in 1967.

One adventure which these Australian architect travellers confidently set out to achieve was to meet Dudok himself. Laird described this in his diary:

Took train from Amsterdam Central station to Hilversum. About ½ hour run through typical Dutch country – flat as a board just what you’ve always imagine.... walked through the Town Hall through the shopping area to see if we could see Dudok, however he had not returned from England. From his office got a card to get into any schools that were open.<sup>31</sup>

Pamela and Russell Jack from Sydney travelled through Europe in 1952; Jack was the recipient of the Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship. They hit the jackpot. They not only met Dudok, but also enjoyed a personal tour of Hilversum by him. Pamela Jack recalled meeting Dudok in Hilversum and embarking on a “Cooks tour” with him, remembering him as “a wonderful old man, he spent so much time with us.”<sup>32</sup> Dudok was 68 at the time. Jack Russell expanded on the importance of Dudok’s garden city design for Hilversum: “He was an architect of course and he only told us about his buildings. He strongly believed in organic architecture and the creation of a human environment and a suburban garden city urbanity.”<sup>33</sup>

This paper has highlighted that in Holland during this period the role of Municipal Planner and Architect were often carried out by the same person, giving rise to towns such as Hilversum presenting great harmony in their design. Alan Gamble from Sydney recalled how he loved Hilversum:

Had a good look around. Apart from the fact that his work was breaking new ground it was very consistent and to see a place like Hilversum, with so much work done by the one architect... It was a very unifying (experience) influence in that town. I did note that I had never seen anywhere, not that I had a vast experience of seeing anything anywhere, such consistency in a community as there was with Dudok’s work.<sup>34</sup>

Sydney W. Lucas, Superintendent Architect, Design, Department of Works, and thus like Dudok a senior public sector architect, in his 1952 report on his then recent trip to Holland, aptly titled “Can we Learn from the Dutch,” clearly admired the town planning of Hilversum, including the tree-lined streets, a landscaping element that the Australians

liked. “The Town itself is an excellent example of town planning and has a clean quiet atmosphere with winding treelined streets... it is the architecture of Dudok that attracts one to Hilversum and his influence has greatly enhanced its beauty.”<sup>35</sup>

There were exemplars of housing schemes of the 1920s and 1930s that were of interest to Australians in addition to the Dutch schemes of Dudok and J.J.P. Oud, particularly those in Scandinavia and America. Max Collard, who worked for Stephenson and Turner in Melbourne, was the winner of the Robert and Ada Haddon Travelling Scholarship for 1938, visited Europe and America, and made a special study of government and municipal housing projects. He was most impressed with Scandinavian work, particularly in Sweden. Even though the height of these schemes was more than Hilversum’s one and two storeys, they still addressed the integration of landscaping, he commented, “Not only 4-5 storey blocks but ample garden space.”<sup>36</sup> Research study trips were undertaken to America by Melbournians Irwin Stevenson and Leslie M Perrott who visited New York housing schemes in 1939-40.<sup>37</sup> Sulman also visited America in 1924 and Sweden 1931.

### **The Municipal Architect as a Practitioner of Social Responsibility**

Dudok signified the importance of a building type from his siting of it within the community. He planned schools as focal points, to enhance the wellbeing of the community. These schools, 27 of them, were thoughtfully designed for both the students and the community. Sydney Ancher wrote of his 1931-32 visit:

His [Dudok’s] schools, of which there must be almost a score, are certainly a joy to behold. ... Clean, efficient, and expressive of purpose, they certainly do appeal, and must play an enormous part in the early training of children.<sup>38</sup>

Costello shared a similar view, when he wrote, “no child would feel anything but pleasure when at entering one of those schools.”<sup>39</sup>

In Australia, schools occupy a considerable part of the Dudok-influenced buildings. The most acknowledged is possibly MacRobertson Girls’ High School, Melbourne (1933), by Seabrook and Fildes. However, perhaps lesser acknowledged are Harry Rembert’s Newcastle Technical College, Science Building and Trades Block Classrooms (1936-42), and Sydney Technical College, Building M (1936); Adelaide Boys High School (1940), by Edward Fitzgerald and John Brogan; as well as the many schools designed

with recognisable Dudok elements, in different states, often by state government architect departments. This is evident in NSW, when Harry Rembert was Senior Designing Architect and later Assistant Government Architect; in Tasmania, under S.W.T. Blythe, Design Architect, Tasmanian Public Works Department; in Victoria, Percy Everett, Chief Architect of the Victorian Public Works Department, 1934; and in Western Australia, Gordon Finn, of that state's Public Work Department.

### **Newcastle Technical College**

Newcastle Technical College buildings, the Science Building, the Mechanical Engineering Building and the Trades Classroom (Figure 4), are an Australian example of Dudok's practice that the school was planned to become part of the social and economic fabric of Newcastle. It highlighted the wider community involvement in its planning beyond the design of buildings. The Education Minister argued for local community involvement, albeit to raise funds, that Newcastle should have a more "liberal manner" than Sydney, that there would be an initial grant from government but then large gifts from big local manufacturers would be encouraged and needed.<sup>40</sup> Assumingly what Dudok would have approved of more is the broader social context that the NSW Education Commission employed in their recommendation of the building plans:

The commission recommend that in planning buildings, care should be taken to see that they are satisfactory from the architectural and aesthetic point of view, and that they be so designed to serve as examples both to students and to the community, of what is best for the development of culture, comfort and convenience.<sup>41</sup>

In 1934 Harry Rembert prepared the site plan for the 22-acre site which fronted Maitland Road at Tighes Hill. The overall plan was accepted by the Newcastle Technical Advisory Council in 1936 and half of it was built by 1942. The design of the individual buildings, under the guidance of Harry Rembert, exhibited Dudok elements and it has been established that the office referred to texts and photographs of Dudok's work, including the photographs of Dudok's work in the Dutch journal *Wendingen*.<sup>42</sup> The site planning set out to integrate the buildings on the large site. It was a formal symmetrical site plan with the Science Building located in the centre, set back considerably from Maitland Road. Peter Webber has suggested its location reflected the central position of science in Technical Education.<sup>43</sup> At the rear of the Science Building and separated by a formal garden was the curved Trades Classroom building. The Newcastle Technical Advisory



Council considered its contribution to the community beyond the aesthetics of the buildings. It regarded “the development of an aesthetic and cultural environment of extreme importance.”<sup>44</sup>

In 1938, Sydney architects Henry E. Budden and Nicholas Mackey were appointed as consulting architects. They reviewed the scheme favourably and collaborated with Rembert on the site and building planning. Costello, as noted earlier, admired Dudok’s work, was employed by Budden and Mackey from 1936 to 1939 and likely contributed to and collaborated on the site planning and the evident Dudok influence on the buildings’ design under Rembert’s leadership. This educational complex was larger than Dudok’s schools in Hilversum and was not originally planned as an intervention into the residential sector of the community, and therefore was not as integrated into the built environment as Dudok advocated.



**Figure 4.** Newcastle Technical College, Trades Building, by Harry Rembert, NSW PWD Government Architects Office, 1938-40 (Photograph by Carol Hardwick).

## **Conclusion**

Dudok, acknowledged internationally as a significant modernist architect, had a great influence on Australian architects of the period from 1925 to 1955. This paper has examined from the first-hand accounts of Australian architects who enthusiastically visited Hilversum the dissemination of his town planning. It was on their list of places to explore, and it was openly described as the pinnacle of a European trip. From this research, the paper concludes that these mainly young Australian architects responded to Dudok’s town planning. Even though they only occasionally spoke of their experience

using the term planning, they clearly admired the planned green spaces, the winding tree-lined streets, a favourite phrase used by these Australian architects, and the separation of the built-up areas by green spaces. They experienced these qualities as part of the view from the footpath and it positively impacted how they thought and spoke of Hilversum. This paper has pointed out that in this context, it was often Hilversum they spoke about, not individual Dudok buildings. His dual roles at Hilversum enabled this modernist project, with its integration of buildings within the landscape, and the creation of a harmonious holistic setting to evolve and the Australian architects appreciated that. They were in line with Dudok's premise that the city is the most beautiful edifice to architecture. They observed and described how Dudok had planned schools as the focal point of Hilversum's communities, emphasising the importance of education and the broader social and cultural context of schools in his town planning. Newcastle Technical College, NSW, is cited in this paper as an Australian example where there was wide community involvement in its development and the architects of this complex admired Dudok's work and like Dudok were public sector architects with a broader social responsibility.

## Endnotes

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# Financing Civic Improvement: The Community Amenities Funding Scheme of the Joint Coal Board

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## **Abstract**

*The book Community: Building Modern Australia (2010) is a key reference for understanding the programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing community life within Australia across the twentieth century. It accounts for the relevant authorities and groups that were responsible for driving and supporting the creation of places for community use and enjoyment. One authority not mentioned in the book is the Joint Coal Board – a combined Federal and New South Wales State government-established body that was formed in February 1947 with powers to control the production and distribution of NSW coal. Tied to its powers was a directive to improve the health and welfare of mining communities in the Illawarra, Lithgow and Hunter regions. One branch of this was to financially support the construction of new community amenities in mining townships. This work began with a focus on the improvement of recreational grounds and facilities before moving onto housing and general community projects including baby health centres, ambulance stations, swimming pools and community halls.*

*This paper describes the political background to the creation of the Board, its formation and membership, and the community amenities grant scheme it managed. It then focuses on the building projects the Board became involved with in the first ten years of its operation, including the £156,000 Cessnock Municipal Town Hall. The paper concludes by considering the reception of these buildings as symbols of civic achievement.*

## **Introduction**

The book *Community: Building Modern Australia* is a key reference for understanding the programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing community life within Australia across the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> It accounts for the relevant authorities and groups that

were responsible for driving and supporting the creation of places for community use such as baby health centres, kindergartens, municipal libraries, lawn bowling clubs and public swimming pools. One thing that proved to be particularly complex for the book's contributors was to achieve an overall perspective on the funding arrangements behind these types of building projects, varying as they did from federal, state, local and industry sources.<sup>2</sup>

This paper presents a supplementary study to the *Community* book in introducing the role played by the Joint Coal Board in the creation of community buildings in the post-war years. A combined Federal and New South Wales (NSW) State government authority, the Board was formed in February 1947 with powers to control the production of coal within NSW and its distribution to other parts of Australia. Tied to the Board's powers was a directive to improve the lives and working conditions of miners within the Illawarra, Lithgow and Hunter regions. One branch of this was to financially support the construction of new community amenities in mining townships. This began with a focus on recreational grounds and facilities before moving onto housing and general community projects including baby health centres, ambulance stations, swimming pools and community halls.

The Board worked with local councils and other organisations in providing funds on a 60-40 basis, whereby the Board contributed 60 percent of the costs associated with a particular project, in comparison to 40 percent required from a local council or other organisation. Much depended on the initial estimates which would impact the amount of money the Board would consider contributing. It had the authority to approve plans, specifications, estimates and tender contracts and employed its own engineers and architect to advise on proposals and to take a more influential role if needed in the development of building plans.

Financial support for community projects came from the Board's Welfare Fund which, up until June 1962, had risen to £2,815,402. By this time the Board had approved many grants across the three geographic areas of its concern. The largest share of these – £793,361 worth – had been awarded to the Newcastle district which included the Lake Macquarie Shire (which itself enjoyed the highest portion of the district's allocation in £458,627). In comparison, by June 1962 the Cessnock district had been awarded £724,492, the Wollongong district £422,605 and Lithgow £376,217.<sup>3</sup>

This paper outlines the background to the creation of the Joint Coal Board in attempts by the Federal government to drive reform within the Australian coal industry. It then describes the constitution of the Board and its membership. The paper surveys the building projects the Board became involved with in the first ten years of its operation, from 1947 to 1957, before it looks in detail at its largest investment during this period: the Cessnock Municipal Town Hall.

The initiatives and decisions of the Board were closely followed by the regional press. The *Newcastle Morning Herald*, *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, *Lithgow Mercury* and *Illawarra Mercury* all regularly published news stories and reports on the Board's activities and funding approvals. By drawing on this press coverage, the paper brings to light the critical role played by the Board in the creation of community buildings and reaches the conclusion that, despite delays and project cost increases over time, it can be considered a successful vehicle in financing and fostering civic improvement in the mining districts of NSW in the post-war years.

### **Government Steps at Reforming the Post-war Coal Industry**

One of the most heated industrial debates in Australia during the Second World War took place over the production of coal. Work stoppages, strikes and absenteeism within the industry had contributed to low levels of coal production and supply that were hindering the war effort.<sup>4</sup> In March 1944 the Federal Parliament passed a bill leading to the Coal Production (War-Time) Act which authorised the Commonwealth Coal Commissioner to assume control of idle mines and to appoint new managers to oversee their operation. Debates followed about the value of nationalising the industry, perceived by its supporters as a way of ensuring reliability of production and lifting standards of worker health and safety. In August 1944 the communist-leaning Miners' Federation of Australia urged the Federal government to take further steps in this direction by assuming control of ten mines in the lower Hunter area.<sup>5</sup>

A rise in coal production under the Act opened the door for a consideration of wider reforms within the industry. This was at a time when the British government was contemplating a radical reorganisation of the British coal industry, which, supported by major unions, led to the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act of 1946. This act placed British mines under public ownership and control.

Wanting to explore options in Australia, in December 1944 the Federal government set up a Board of Inquiry charged with investigating all aspects of the coal industry in preparation for post-war reconstruction.<sup>6</sup> Chaired by Justice Colin Davidson of the Supreme Court of NSW,<sup>7</sup> the board included a representative of employers and employees, namely David W. Robertson, chairman of the Western Colliery Proprietors' Association of NSW, and Idris Williams, President of the Victorian District Miners' Federation. The Board held meetings and heard submissions on a range of topics including the possibility of long-term employment contracts and pensions for miners. It travelled to Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and NSW to study the working conditions of miners in each state.

The Board's 2000-page report was tabled in the House of Representatives by Prime Minister Chifley on 22 March 1946. It presented a damning assessment of the coal industry which it claimed was a "tottering industry" that suffered from a lack of discipline amongst its workforce and leadership.<sup>8</sup> It condemned the Miners' Federation as being ineffective in installing discipline amongst its members. It criticised the weakening of a compulsory arbitration system and the inability of the government to enforce laws against large numbers of individual strikes and absentees.<sup>9</sup> It took particular aim at the coal industry in NSW, which provided 80 percent of the nation's coal supply, in stating that it was "drifting towards disaster" and that, unless a greater degree of co-operation was achieved between workers and mine owners, "there may well be a repetition of the depression within the ensuing ten years."<sup>10</sup>

As a way of addressing the problems it had identified, the Board recommended the establishment of a Federal authority whose power would be derived from the granting of a "bounty" to mine owners willing to come under its jurisdiction. Receiving this "bounty" would help owners keep mines open and improve their efficiency, and in doing so provide greater certainty and confidence within the industry. The authority would be an independent body, ideally made up of one man "with legal training who would readily acquire the knowledge of the Industry required to give a balanced decision on varied issues."<sup>11</sup> This person would be supported by a team of senior officials and staff.

The Board's idea of a Federal authority however placed a heavy responsibility on the Federal government to take leadership in reconciling relations between workers and mine operators, and to assume powers that it would no longer possess with the expiry

of regulations under the war-time National Security Act. The Board had also alienated the Miners' Federation which had its own plans to drive reform by compelling the State Government of NSW to take responsibility for the reorganisation of the industry in that state. Constitutionally, the State government possessed powers to rehabilitate the industry but did not possess the financial resources held by the Commonwealth. In conference with the NSW State government, executives of the Miners' Federation proposed the creation of a joint Commonwealth-State committee devoted to reform.<sup>12</sup>

After further discussions between Commonwealth and NSW State government ministers and representatives from the industry, in July 1946 the Federal government announced the creation of the Coal Control Bill designed to ensure reliability in the production and supply of coal by giving the government greater influence in the running of coal mines and in the lives of coalminers.<sup>13</sup>

At the centre of the Bill was the establishment of an independent authority, to be known as the Joint Coal Board, charged with the duties sanctioned within the new legislation. It would be responsible for regulating the working conditions of privately owned mines, undertaking a long-term programme of mine mechanisation, improving health and safety standards within the industry and assisting in the provision of housing and community amenities for mine workers and their families. It was a means through which regulation and rehabilitation of the coal industry could be achieved within the framework of private ownership.<sup>14</sup> The joint nature of the board and its powers was based on the combination of Federal and State legislation by which two bills were passed in the Federal and NSW State parliaments creating the Commonwealth Coal Industry Act (no. 40 of 1946) and the Coal Industry Act (no. 44 of 1946) of the State of NSW.

### **The Joint Coal Board**

The two Coal Industry Acts stipulated the need for the Joint Coal Board to be an authority without affiliation with miners' unions or owners. Miners themselves would be excluded from its executive membership, something the Miners' Federation took umbrage with.<sup>15</sup> Initially Prime Minister Chifley and Premier McKell struggled to find men who were willing to take a position on the Board until in late December 1946 it was announced that Keith A. Cameron would become its chair. Cameron was a mining engineer and superintendent who had worked in several states of Australia and Canada. He was the Broken Hill manager of North Broken Hill Limited, considered an



advantage in “coming from a centre where industrial relations have been good” and would bring to the position “a tradition of reason and conciliation.”<sup>16</sup> Joining Cameron on the Board was Albert E. Warburton, Assistant Under-Secretary of the NSW Treasury, and Robert Parker Jack, who had been production manager of the Commonwealth Coal Commission since 1941 and an Inspector of Mines in the NSW Mines Department. Throughout 1947 other appointments were made to assist the Board in its duties, principally welfare officers and engineers who were assigned to each of the three districts of concern.<sup>17</sup>

The Board began its work in February 1947 and in March visited Wollongong, Lithgow and Newcastle where it met with local officials and miners’ representatives to outline its plans to improve working and living conditions for miners (Figure 1).<sup>18</sup> This included supporting the provision of community amenities within mining towns with the aim of raising the standard of these amenities “to that of the best townships of a similar size in other parts of Australia which over the last 50 years or so have had a background of relatively stable and prosperous industry.”<sup>19</sup>



**Figure 1.** Members of the Joint Coal Board with miners’ representatives at a March 1947 conference in Newcastle. In this image Cameron is on the far left, and Jack and Warburton are on the right (*Newcastle Morning Herald*, 18 March 1947, 3).

Soon after the Board began its operation, local councils started to mobilise and lobby the Board. An early starter was Kearsley Shire Council in the lower Hunter which organised a delegation to present the Board with a request for assistance in the construction of a swimming pool and baby health centre at Kurri Kurri.<sup>20</sup> Cessnock Municipal Council invited the Board to visit Cessnock to inspect sites for the new amenities it was hoping to build.<sup>21</sup> It became evident the Board would need to establish

a process for working with local councils and also develop a set of priorities for assessing requests for assistance. One of these priorities was the supply of new affordable housing for mine workers and their families.<sup>22</sup> What was more manageable in the short term was assistance for the creation and upgrading of recreational areas within mining towns such as children's playgrounds, sportsgrounds, camping areas and tree planting. This comprised the first flourish of grant money to councils.<sup>23</sup>

Funding for amenity projects was made on a 60-40 basis, whereby the Board would grant 60 percent of the cost of a project in comparison to a 40 percent contribution by local councils or other organisations.<sup>24</sup> The amount of the grant depended on the initial accepted estimates of a project and could cover purchase of land and site preparation, architects' fees and construction costs. The Board was well financed by the Commonwealth coffers, whereas the financial pressure was on local councils and other organisations to raise money – which could take a long time – even years.

In recognition of the lack of financial strength of several councils, which encompassed areas with low rateable values, the Board also administered a 'grant-in-aid' programme which consisted of grants to councils based on the quantum of coal that had been raised to the surface within their boundaries at the value of one penny per ton. This incentivised production from the point of view of councils. The grant money could be used at a council's discretion so long as it was directed to benefit mineworkers and their communities. It often constituted the means through which a council could meet its 40 percent contribution to the cost of a project. As an indication of the size of these grants in the early years, by April 1948 the Board had awarded the Wollongong Council £6469 as grant-in-aid.<sup>25</sup>

### **Building Projects**

By late 1947 the Board had received numerous requests for new amenities to service mining town communities. Almost all local councils had drawn up lists they presented to the Board for consideration. In most cases the Board was prepared to support new projects in principle but reserved any financial commitment until realistic specifications and cost estimations were presented. In the case of Lithgow, a "comprehensive scheme" for major amenity construction was envisaged including the development of running and cycling tracks, the construction of an Olympic-size swimming pool, diving pool and children's wading pool, hockey fields, tennis courts, a community hall and children's playgrounds.<sup>26</sup> Another major scheme was planned for townships within the

Kearsley Shire, to be implemented in stages, which would include recreation areas, sporting facilities and clubrooms at different localities, and new community halls and centres in Bellbird, Ellalong and Neath.<sup>27</sup>

One of the first building projects to receive support from the Board was a new ambulance station in Muswellbrook in the upper Hunter region. In November 1947 it was announced the Board had agreed to grant £3000 for the station and £8000 for equipment.<sup>28</sup> In this case the recipient was the NSW Ambulance Transport Board, which was responsible for the construction of new ambulance stations, not the local council. About a year later, plans were drawn up for council approval. A problem with the site delayed the project further until new plans were made in February 1952, tenders called, and a bank loan secured by the Transport Board. Construction began in February 1953 and the building was opened in October that year. It cost £12,000 to build and £500 to furnish, of which, by that time, the Board's contribution to the building itself had risen to £4500.<sup>29</sup>

This example indicates the protracted length of time that it often took for a community building project sponsored by the Board to reach fruition. Many projects, which gained initial Board approval and initiated a flurry of fund-raising activity, did not make it that far. Such was the case with the Lake Macquarie Shire Council which in May 1948 was promised a £1968 grant from the Board for the purchase of an old hall on the main street of Boolaroo for conversion into a new community centre. After plans were initially approved and then amended, the modest project never went ahead, leaving the council with the architects' fees to pay.<sup>30</sup>

The following table is a list of building projects that were realised with the assistance of Board grants between 1947 and 1957. It includes the overall approximate final cost of the building, the amount of grant money provided by the Board, the opening date of each building, and the name of the architect(s) and builder(s) involved.<sup>31</sup> The list is provisional in the sense that it only contains buildings that were known to the author at the time of writing this paper. Photographic images of some of the buildings are also included. The paper is not able to treat each of these buildings in detail, but in the next section turns to a study of the largest project on the list, that of the Cessnock Municipal Town Hall.

**Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings**  
**25-27 November 2022**

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<b>Building</b>	<b>Final cost (est.)</b>	<b>JCB grant amount</b>	<b>Opening date</b>	<b>Architect(s)</b>	<b>Builder(s)</b>
Kurri Kurri Baby Health Centre	£7500	£1710	December 1947	R. Lindsay Little (Sydney)	
Belmont Baby Health Centre		£1233	1951	Edwin Sara (Newcastle)	
Kurri Kurri Olympic Swimming Pool	£70,000	£27,500	February 1951	Rudder, Littlemore & Rudder (Sydney)	W. B. Wiggington (New Lambton)
Cessnock Baby Health Centre	£6500-£7000	£5130 (inc. grant-in-aid)	March 1951	Walter Bunning (Sydney)	
Charlestown Baby Health Centre	£3400	£1020	May 1952		
Cessnock Ambulance Station	£40,000	£18,000	September 1953	J. Bartlett (Maitland)	Cecil C. Turnbull (Cessnock)
Cardiff Baby Health Centre	£5000	£704	October 1953		
Muswellbrook Ambulance Station	£12,500	£4500	October 1953	J. H. Cunningham (Tamworth)	V. Garlick and Sons
West Wallsend Baby Health Centre	£4500	£1454	November 1953		
Cessnock Police and Citizens' Boys' Club	£40,000	£10,500	November 1953		
Cessnock Spastic Centre	£6400	£1000	August 1954	J. Bartlett (Maitland)	Cecil C. Turnbull (Cessnock)
Kandos Community Hall		£3000	October 1954	W. J. Magoffin	
Cessnock Municipal Town Hall	£156,000	£30,000	October 1957	Thelander and Deamer (Maitland and Newcastle)	Cecil C. Turnbull and Sons (Cessnock)



**Figure 2.** Kurri Kurri Olympic Swimming Pool, opened February 1951 (*Cessnock New South Wales*, pamphlet published by the Municipality of Greater Cessnock in conjunction with the Rotary and Lions Clubs of Cessnock and the NSW Department of Tourist Activities, undated).



**Figure 3.** Cessnock Baby Health Centre, opened March 1951 (Museums of History NSW – State Archives Collection: Government Printing Office 2 – 02229).





**Figure 4.** Cessnock Ambulance Station, opened September 1953  
(State Library of NSW, Home and Away – 27156,  
dated 17 September 1953).



**Figure 5.** Cessnock Police and Citizens' Boys' Club, opened  
November 1953 (*Cessnock New South Wales*, pamphlet).

Apart from community amenities, the other area of building construction the Joint Coal Board became involved in was the provision of housing for mineworkers and their families. The poor standard of workers' housing in minefield districts and the need for more adequate dwellings had been a long-standing topic of discussion and debate within miner unions. In May 1941 the Central Council of the Miners' Federation lobbied Federal and State governments to take greater action in this area, citing a scheme by

the government of New Zealand which had built 10,000 houses, costing £15.5 million, and which had also spent £3.5 million to purchase the land upon which they had been erected.<sup>32</sup>

The Joint Coal Board initiated its scheme to support the construction of new homes for miners in May 1948. This took the form of a subsidy for specially formed Miners' Cooperative Building Societies to assist miners in the construction of their own homes. The arrangement was that a miner could join one of these building societies, take out £40 shares for the amount borrowed, and repay this in fortnightly instalments with a subsidy from the Board amounting to £260 of the £1240 cost of a new home.<sup>33</sup> By November 1949, 1245 mineworkers had applied for the scheme (about one in every seventeen in NSW), 43 homes had been erected and another 178 were under construction.<sup>34</sup> The scheme had the support of the NSW Minister for Building Materials who had guaranteed the supply of materials for the home building projects.<sup>35</sup> The demand grew so great that in July 1950 the Board advised the NSW government that 1000 new homes were needed, for which the government tendered for this supply from overseas sources.<sup>36</sup> After 1000 pre-fabricated home units had arrived from Austria, the Board was instrumental in guiding their construction in northern mining towns.<sup>37</sup>

Not afraid of experimental construction, the Board even contemplated the construction of prefabricated aluminium homes, with steel frames.<sup>38</sup> It also considered aluminium construction for other buildings, including proposals for community halls in Oakey Park and Littleton, near Lithgow.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Cessnock Municipal Town Hall**

The biggest building project the Joint Coal Board became involved with was a new town hall for Cessnock. This came after years of discussion and proposals, dating back to the late 1910s, directed at the need for suitable premises in which to hold large meetings and social gatherings. The incorporation of Cessnock as a municipality in 1926 cast into stark light the need for a dedicated town hall and place of local government. Instead of proceeding with the construction of a new building, the existing Memorial Hall was adapted to include municipal chambers. In 1939 Cessnock City Council sought to gain a loan for the construction of a new town hall to be positioned behind the Memorial Hall, estimated to cost £20,000.<sup>40</sup> This did not come to pass. After the war, discussions continued with a renewed sense of optimism as the Joint Coal Board's grant scheme made the prospect of a new town hall a closer reality. By 1948

thinking had expanded to envisage the hall as a multipurpose venue centred on a high-capacity auditorium able to host international artists and symphony orchestras.<sup>41</sup> In early 1953 plans and estimates for a new town hall were lodged with the Board, and, following this, it was announced that the Cessnock Council had secured a £30,000 loan for the hall, estimated to cost £60,000, with the Joint Coal Board contributing the £30,000 balance.<sup>42</sup> Eager to commence construction, the Council ambitiously accepted a tender for £74,575, assuming the extra funds could be found. Construction had begun when a new Council discovered that the cost of completing, equipping and furnishing the building would be about £35,000 greater than the initial estimate.<sup>43</sup> This prompted a stoppage of construction work and a re-evaluation of the project, including its site, and an approach to the Coal Board for the re-direction of funds intended for another project.

Assured of the Board's grant money, the Council embarked on a new scheme for a new site located on Darwin Street facing the new Technical College, currently under construction. Maitland architects Thelander and Deamer were appointed, who consulted with Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and a manager from J. C. Williamson Ltd over the stage design. Sketch plans and working drawings were produced for an auditorium to seat 950 people, with a separate dining and meeting hall with the capacity to accommodate 300.<sup>44</sup> The overall estimated cost at this point was £75,000. This amount however was to double in the ensuing years as additions were made for a gallery within the auditorium and as other costs arose.

In July 1953 the Joint Coal Board decided to end its grant-in-aid programme, much to the frustration of a number of councils who had made plans assuming it would remain available.<sup>45</sup> This meant Cessnock Council needed to look elsewhere for the remainder of the funds for the cost of the town hall project, for which it was able to secure a loan of £25,000 from the Coal and Oil Shale Mineworkers' Superannuation Fund.<sup>46</sup> In the end, the building, with the resumption of land, cost £156,000.

Opened by the Governor-General, Sir William Slim, on 16 October 1957, the occasion was a major celebration for the town of Cessnock. A march of school children preceded the official opening ceremony. The Mayor of Cessnock, Alderman W. S. Blair, praised the new town hall as "a magnificent building, a long needed amenity, but it will be some years before the people of Cessnock are able to call it their own," an allusion to the large amount of loan repayment the Council needed to generate.<sup>47</sup>



Critical to this was the capacity of the town to expand its industrial base beyond coalmining into other areas to help generate tax and rent revenue. Within his remarks, Alderman Blair acknowledged the Joint Coal Board as having “helped materially in financing the project.”<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 6:** Cessnock Municipal Town Hall, opened October 1957  
(*Hunter Valley Greater Cessnock Vintage Festival, Feb. 13 to 17, 1963*, booklet published by the Vintage Festival Committee, Cessnock, NSW, 1963, 11).

## Conclusion

The opening of the Cessnock Municipal Town Hall was a day when civic pride was on display. The openings of the other community amenities mentioned here were also occasions when there was cause for celebrating the achievement of creating a new facility that would have a real benefit to people’s lives. A consistent theme was the pride that was taken in these buildings, that the mining townships could now boast modern facilities equal to those anywhere else in the country.<sup>49</sup> Also strong was the sentiment of mining communities possessing a toughness of spirit and a sense of self-determination. The voluntary nature of service to the community was highlighted and the dedication of those who had spent unpaid hours in working towards the goal of achieving a new facility or having donated money to fundraising efforts was lauded. Central to the celebration of civic pride was an acknowledgement of the financial support provided by the Joint Coal Board for each project. This was a genuine expression of gratitude, within which it was understood that without this support the project would not likely have gone ahead.

As this short study has shown, the post-war history of the mining districts of NSW, particularly within the Hunter region, cannot be written without understanding the role played by the Joint Coal Board in the provision of community facilities. The Board was not the only funding body, there were other sources involved, but it was a central player within a major programme of modernisation. Its community amenities funding scheme was one branch of its operations in supporting the general welfare of miners – it also sponsored initiatives in miner health and education. As an instrument of government involvement and influence, the Board had significant success in terms of the creation of community facilities and the real value that was seen in these by members of the communities themselves, even if, in some cases, there was still a hefty bill to pay.

The Cessnock Municipal Town Hall was not the last building project the Joint Coal Board financially supported. The grant scheme continued into the 1960s with further funding made available to local councils. By the late 1960s, however, the accumulative provision of community services, decentralisation within the mining industry, and changing patterns of mining populations had reduced the need for assistance from the Board to fund community facilities.<sup>50</sup> It is left to a future paper to examine this second chapter in the history of the Joint Coal Board and its grant scheme.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Lewi and David Nichols (eds), *Community: Building Modern Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Lewi and Nichols (eds), *Community*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> *Joint Coal Board - Review of Activities 1947-62* ([Sydney]: The Board, 1962), Appendix No. 5, Table B.

<sup>4</sup> See Robin Gollan, *The Coalminers of New South Wales: A History of the Union, 1860-1960* (Parkville, Vic.: Melbourne University Press in association with the Australian National University, 1963), 225.

<sup>5</sup> "Miners Urge Nationalisation," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 1 September 1944, 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Wide Scope for Coal Inquiry Board," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1945, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Davidson had chaired the 1929 Royal Commission on the Coal Industry and the 1938 Royal Commission on Health and Safety of Workers in Coal Mines.

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Commonwealth Board of Inquiry Appointed to Inquire into and Report upon the Coal-Mining Industry 1945-1946. Extract from report of conclusions arrived at under the various terms of reference* (N.S.W. Combined Colliery Proprietors' Association, 25 March 1946), 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Commonwealth Board of Inquiry*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the Commonwealth Board of Inquiry*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the Commonwealth Board of Inquiry*, 62.

<sup>12</sup> "Federal Move in Coal Industry," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1946, 1.

<sup>13</sup> See "Coal Control Bill Today," *Queensland Times*, 24 July 1946, 2.

<sup>14</sup> See *Joint Coal Board - Review of Activities 1947-62*, Section 17.

<sup>15</sup> "Joint Coal Board, Exclusion of Miners," *Age*, 14 August 1946, 3.

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- <sup>18</sup> "Joint Board Needs Cooperation," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 May 1947, 2; "Joint Coal Board's First Newcastle Meeting," *Newcastle Sun*, 17 March 1947, 2.
- <sup>19</sup> "Joint Coal Board, First Annual Report," *Construction* (Sydney), 16 February 1949, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> "Coal Board Asked for Amenities," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 1 March 1947, 2.
- <sup>21</sup> "Invitation to Members of Coal Board," *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 14 March 1947, 1.
- <sup>22</sup> "Coal Board Can't Solve Home Lack," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 18 July 1947, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> "Grant for Wangi Camping Reserve," *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 3 October 1947, 1; "Coal Board Grant for Weston Tree Planting," *Newcastle Sun*, 2 September 1947, 5; "Coal Board Grant for Sports Area at Pelican Flats," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 16 October 1947, 4.
- <sup>24</sup> This policy was revised in mid-1952 to the effect that the Board's contribution to a new project would not exceed 50 percent of the cost. See "Council's Want Grant-In-Aid," *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 8 September 1953, 4.
- <sup>25</sup> "Joint Coal Board's Liberal Grant to City Council," *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 8 April 1948, 1.
- <sup>26</sup> "Joint Coal Board Approves of Major Amenities in Lithgow Scheme," *Lithgow Mercury*, 2 July 1948, 2.
- <sup>27</sup> "Amenities for Kearsley Shire, Coal Board Gives Its Approval," *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 15 July 1948, 5.
- <sup>28</sup> "£3000 for Muswellbrook Ambulance, Grant from Joint Coal Board," *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 4 November 1947, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> "Muswellbrook Ambulance Station Opened, Fulfilment of Many Years' Work," *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 6 October 1953, 1.
- <sup>30</sup> "£2162 Account From Architects," *Newcastle Sun*, 30 May 1952, 3.
- <sup>31</sup> In the case of the Kurri Kurri Baby Health Centre, the Joint Coal Board made a contribution of £1710 after the building had been opened and once the Board had considered its grant policy in relation to supporting baby health centres. The majority of funding for the Kurri Kurri centre was provided by the NSW Department of Health. See "Joint Coal Board Considering New Medical Plan," *Newcastle Sun*, 11 June 1947, 4; "Grant of £1710 to Kurri Baby Health Centre," *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 9 March 1948, 3.
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<sup>46</sup> “Hall Loan for Cessnock,” *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 25 April 1957, 5.

<sup>47</sup> “Governor-General Opens Town Hall,” *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 17 October 1957, 4.

<sup>48</sup> “Governor-General Opens Town Hall,” 4. For a description of the building see Frank Mattocks, “Cessnock’s Hall of Distinction,” *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 11 October 1957, 8.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, “Kurri Kurri Pool Officially Opened,” *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 27 February 1951, 1; “First Baby Clinic at Cessnock in 1917, New Centre Opened by Dr. Conolly,” *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 9 March 1951, 1; “New Ambulance Station Opened by Coal Board Chief,” *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 22 September 1953, 1; “3000 See Governor Open Boys’ Club,” *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 25 November 1953, 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Joint Coal Board Twenty-First Annual Report for Year 1967-1968*, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 1968, Parliamentary Paper No. 221, 148.

# Women and Design Leadership: A New Era of Architects in the Public Sector

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## Abstract

*The gradual per-capita decline in the size of the public service in Australia since the orthodoxy of economic rationalism became entrenched in the 1990s has impacted on the design of the built environment most obviously in the shift away from the in-house design and delivery of public works by government-employed architects. Yet with rising interest in design-led cities, a new generation of architects in state and local government are taking leadership roles in design governance, where public sector actors exert influence predominantly through informal means such as through design advisory, review and advocacy processes. These roles represent an important point at which architects can participate in the complex multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder delivery of projects and positively influence the quality of built environment design outcomes, for the public good. Yet this form of architectural work tends to be invisible and not well understood by the profession. Women at present have high visibility in such design leadership roles in Australia, with all State and Territory Government Architect positions and many City Architect positions currently held by women. This paper investigates women's experience in public sector design leadership roles to better understand this work and how career paths involving the public sector have changed since earlier eras of government public works departments. Drawing on interviews, the paper explores aspects of women's career experience including the specific skills and expertise utilised in design advisory roles, and the extent to which this form of work is recognised within the profession. Contemporary career narratives are analysed in relation to an historical survey of women architects in the public service and changing ideas about professional expertise. The paper focuses on exploring two themes: the ways in which public sector work is incorporated into portfolio careers in architecture, and the expertise involved in design leadership.*

## Introduction

Speaking at the 2020 UNSW Engaging Women in the Built Environment event, Abby Galvin described her transition from Principal at BVN Architecture, a large-scale Australian practice with international offices, to the role of New South Wales State Government Architect in 2019: “I’ve gone from being in some ways an invisible architect doing very visible work, to being a very visible architect doing invisible work.”<sup>1</sup> This form of leadership in design governance is emerging as a key activity of architects working in government, but what does it involve? Galvin’s reflection on her new role hints at the potential for design leadership to have a significant impact on shaping the built environment beyond designing buildings. It also highlights the evolution of the role of architects working in government from being designers to advisors. The NSW Government Architect position is the longest running in Australia and was historically part of the NSW Public Works Department (PWD) which maintained in-house production capacity as other state public works departments were being dismantled. More recently, the office of the GANSW has followed other states in developing its advisory capacity as a key service.<sup>2</sup> Galvin’s reflection on the work of design advisors as being invisible thus also highlights the double remove of this work from the conventional understanding of the work of making buildings, to include a remove from the authorship of designs.

However, the issue of visibility of public sector architectural work also has a gendered dimension. If today, all State and Territory Government Architect positions in Australia are held by women – arguably the most visible of architects in government – what relationship does this have to the changing nature of the work and its value and status in the profession? The careers of women architects in the public sector have been gradually recovered and recognised. Historically, the public service was one of the only places for women architecture graduates to find work, and more recently, it is noted as a comparatively progressive workplace in terms of working conditions. Many women architects working in the public service in the first half of the twentieth century were pioneers of workplace change. We know much less about the career experience of women architects working in the public sector in the recent past and today. This is part of a broader gap in understanding of the changing role of architects working in government, as the expectations and operations of governments have themselves changed. There is no reliable data on the number of architects working in government or the gender breakdown.<sup>3</sup> Architectural education and professional accreditation don’t explicitly distinguish public sector career pathways.

What can we learn from women architects working in the public sector as the architecture profession seeks more diverse ways to influence the quality of the built environment; as the public sector workforce seeks to engage design thinking in the processes of public administration; and as societies recognise the crucial role of governments in managing large-scale change of the built environment particularly in relation to climate adaptation?

The purpose of this paper is to analyse the career experiences of Australian women architects working in the public sector, historically and in the present, to identify key themes that describe public sector career paths and changes in the expertise of architects working in these positions. The research is part of a larger project investigating design governance and the architecture profession in Australia, and the public sector as a particular site of production of architecture that has been neglected in the contemporary conceptualisation of the profession. The research draws on anonymised interviews with women architects whose careers have included working in the public sector, with our participants having graduated between 1980 and 2005.<sup>4</sup> The public sector encompasses what is traditionally referred to as the public service – the workforce that serves governments’ executive and judicial branches – but extends to include state-owned corporations, government agencies and government authorities. Participants in our research were employed at both state and local government levels. The historical survey in this paper focuses on women in the public service who worked in public works departments or similar state-run departments.

The paper focuses on presenting two themes identified in the histories of women architects working in the public service and our preliminary thematic findings from the anonymised interviews with women working in the public sector today. The first theme discusses features of portfolio careers involving the public sector and draws on literature on the career experience of women in the architecture profession, in particular the concept of a portfolio career used by Paula Whitman in her 2004 study of women in the architecture profession in Australia to describe non-traditional career trajectories that incorporated breaks and/or periods of part-time work, and employment across diverse roles and sectors.<sup>5</sup> The second theme looks at the expertise associated with design leadership in the public sector, which highlights the skills required to fulfil advisory and advocacy functions in built environment governance as a distinct form of professional

leadership. It draws on design governance theory and feminist analysis of the concept of leadership.

The themes identified in this paper will be used in the larger research project to advance in-depth analysis of the interview data collected from women architects currently working in the public sector. This paper raises further research questions for the larger project around the value and nature of design leadership expertise in both the architecture profession and public administration.

### **Women Architects in the Public Service in Australia, ca 1900s-1990s**

Australian women have worked in government departments of architecture, public works and town planning from the beginning of the twentieth century. Records of employment and archival material maintained by state and commonwealth government departments have made the working lives of these women somewhat more visible to historians. However, individual authorship of buildings and the contribution of women working in these departments has been consistently difficult to ascertain.<sup>6</sup> Echoing Galvin's statement, the careers of women architects working for government departments may be visible but their contribution and the work they created in the form of drawings and documents often remains invisible. The invisibility of women's contribution to the architecture profession is a recurring theme in feminist historiography.<sup>7</sup> However the lack of design authorship for public service architects has been an issue for both genders, and is not dissimilar to the situation in some large practices, highlighting the unresolved status of authorship and attribution in the architecture profession that emerges in a new way for architects working in an advisory capacity in government in the twenty-first century. This section of our paper compiles a brief historical survey of women working in the public service in Australia predominately across the twentieth century, drawing on the scholarship of Julie Willis, Bronwyn Hanna, Harriet Edquist, Judith McKay, Don Watson, Deborah van der Plaat, Kirsty Volz, Desley Luscome and Davina Jackson. It relies to a large extent on the scholarship of Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hanna, extracting relevant instances from their wide-ranging research published in *Women Architects in Australia 1900-1950* (2001), and seeks to add to this, by identifying examples of women working in the public service in the second half of the twentieth century drawn from a range of additional sources.

Queensland's Department of Public Works (DPW) was noted by Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hannah as a "sympathetic environment" for qualified women architects.<sup>8</sup> Out



of the eight known women working in architecture in Queensland prior to the Second World War, six of them were working for the Queensland Public Service.<sup>9</sup> The high rate of women working in the DPW has also been attributed to Government Architect Thomas Pye, who worked at the DPW from 1894 to 1921, and his daughter, Juanita, who wanted to pursue a career in architecture.<sup>10</sup> As early as 1910, Dorothy Brennan started as a probationary draftsman along with Isabella Kerr who started as a tracer.<sup>11</sup> Kerr left in 1916 and this is when Juanita Pye commenced work in the architecture department of the DPW as an assistant draftsman.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the First World War these women filled positions made available by men undertaking wartime services. Along with her father, Juanita Pye left the DPW in 1921 and moved to Sydney to work for *Building* magazine with Florence and George Taylor. Brennan continued to work for the DPW throughout the interwar period, retiring in 1956.<sup>13</sup>

Alongside Brennan, three women were working in the State Advances Corporation for the Workers' Dwelling Branch (WDB) throughout the interwar period. They were Nell McCredie, Eunice Slaughter and Ursula Jones (later Koroloff). None of these four women were ever hired as architects, with Jones, Slaughter and McCredie only ever hired as draftswomen, and Brennan only ever promoted to the position of Assistant Architect, even after 46 years of working for the DPW.<sup>14</sup> Architects working for the Queensland public service never signed drawings, making it difficult to attach these architects to specific projects. The lack of signed drawings and the attribution of buildings has been lamented, especially in the case of Brennan's long career. Authorship can be attributed to public service architects via records other than drawings, such as project correspondence and newspaper articles. However, as none of these women were ever promoted to the position of architect, they were never in the position to be included in such documentation. The high proportion of Queensland's early women architects working in the public service compounds the more pervasive issue of authorship for women in architecture, identified by Hanna and Willis.<sup>15</sup>

Most Australian states introduced a Workers Dwelling Scheme during the interwar period. Workers Dwellings were affordable housing provided to medium-low income residents via government-funded fixed rate loans.<sup>16</sup> In Western Australia, the scheme was the Australian Workers Homes Board and local architect, Zoie Fryer commenced working with this department in 1938.<sup>17</sup> In New South Wales, Jessie Ross worked for several government departments including the Commonwealth Department of Works and Railways and the NSW Education Department before commencing employment

with the NSW Department of Public Works (initially employed under the Government Architects' Branch) in 1933. Similarly to Brennan in Queensland, Ross enjoyed a significant career with Public Works, retiring in 1962, and yet little is known about her career and the buildings she worked on.<sup>18</sup> During this period Enid Beeman was also working for the NSW DPW.<sup>19</sup>

The Second World War saw a significant surge of women in government departments. Brought about by the drying up of work in private practice, women were motivated to join the public service either to help with the war effort or to fill positions left vacant by men serving in the war.<sup>20</sup> These women included Rosette Edmunds in Sydney who joined the Commonwealth Department of the Interior on naval defences and reconstruction around Australia at the beginning of the war.<sup>21</sup> Also in Sydney, Bronwyn Munro and Gwendolyn Wilson joined the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) at the beginning of the war.<sup>22</sup> Cynthea Teague in Melbourne joined the CDW in 1941.<sup>23</sup> Teague was followed by Mary Turner Shaw, who joined the CDW in 1942. Also in Victoria, Edith Ingpen was the first woman to be employed in the Victorian Department of Public Works at the beginning of the Second World War. In Queensland, Elina Mottram, who had an established architectural career, which included running her own practice, joined the public service during and after the Second World War in the Railways Department.<sup>24</sup> Mottram's career could be described as an early portfolio career, where she worked for herself in private practice, taught architecture courses at the Central Technical College at night in the interwar period, before employment with the government during and after the Second World War.<sup>25</sup>

Women continued to join the ranks of the CDW in the postwar era. Marjorie Simpson joined the CDW in Sydney in 1950 to work on housing for new immigrants, and later moved to South Australia, where she worked on a project in Woomera.<sup>26</sup> Many of the women who worked for government departments during the Second World War, continued their careers with the public service in the postwar era. Edmunds moved to a senior staff appointment in 1946 with Cumberland County Council. Teague continued with the CDW becoming the first woman to rise to Assistant Director General in 1964, and fought for equal pay for women in that department throughout her career.<sup>27</sup> By this time, women were not only working in the public service, they were occupying senior and leadership roles in departments, as noted by Hanna: "Women also rose to responsible positions in the various Public Works Departments (PWD) of the State and Commonwealth Governments."<sup>28</sup> Although more generally, as identified by Edquist, the

architecture profession remained “rigidly hierarchical and male” and there were few opportunities for women to take on leadership roles in the profession.<sup>29</sup>

Except for Brennan and Ross, all the women mentioned in this brief survey worked in private practice prior to joining the public service. Some only worked briefly for private firms, and some had established careers, even running their own practices prior to joining the public service. A 1986 report commissioned by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects titled *Women in the Architectural Profession*, stated that working for a private firm before transitioning to the public service was a common career progression.<sup>30</sup> This report represents one of few instances where the RAIA or AIA has collected statistical data on architects related to the sector of their employment. The report is revealing for indicating the public service as a significant employer of architects, showing 18.2% employed in salaried positions in the public sector, with the comparative percentage for women being 14.1%.<sup>31</sup> The report elaborated that architects typically worked for privately owned practices up until their late 20s or early 30s, then they transitioned most commonly into running their own practices, or working in the public sector. According to the report, once architects were in their 40s very few remained as salaried employees in private practice. Considering the tendency for women to have their careers interrupted at around this same point, it explains why the survey data presented in the report showed that there were comparatively fewer women architects in the public service than men.<sup>32</sup> Although the picture is incomplete, there are notable examples of women thriving in the public sector as young architects, and then leaving to establish their own practices.

Beverley Garlick was the first women to be awarded an RAIA NSW Merit Award in the non-residential category for Petersham TAFE (1983), undertaken when she was working for the NSW Government Architects Office. In an interview with Abby Galvin, Garlick describes how she worked with the bricklayers on site to develop a specific language for the building during construction, but how she had to battle to maintain involvement during the contract administration phase of the project when this role was momentarily given to a “more suitable” male colleague. Garlick left the public service to establish her own practice in 1987, after failing to be promoted.<sup>33</sup> Suzanne Dance is another notable example, having worked after graduation in 1965 for the NSW Government Architects Office under Ted Farmer, before returning to Melbourne in the 1970s and combining private practice with heritage and community activism.<sup>34</sup>

In Queensland, Robyn Hesse, Fiona Gardiner, Margaret Tonge and Margaret West, who graduated in architecture in the 1960s and 1970s, had portfolio careers that included working in the public sector. These women are identified in Deborah van der Plaat's study of women architects' careers from the post-war period based on oral history interviews.<sup>35</sup> Oral history methods have been an important way of capturing career experiences and contributions of women in more recent historical periods. Hesse undertook town planning study after graduating in architecture and working for Karl Langer and was then employed in government. Gardiner's pioneering career as a heritage expert in the Queensland government followed early experience working for several Brisbane-based architectural practices and further study in heritage conservation in the UK. Tonge moved to government to develop policy and legislation on housing and disability. West had a long career in government after moving to Queensland Project Services in the late 1970s.<sup>36</sup> The career paths of these women are described by van der Plaat as "sidestepp[ing] architecture into related professions, working for government in policy development, heritage and planning."<sup>37</sup> While recognising the additional skills and expertise gained by these women in their career trajectories, this statement is also revealing of the narrow definition of the architecture profession that saw these careers as outside the mainstream.

In a 1994 article in *Architecture Australia* titled "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," Desley Luscombe and Davina Jackson highlighted the hidden contribution to civic architecture by women working in public sector.<sup>38</sup> The article highlighted the careers of six architects working for the public service in South Australia and New South Wales, with profiles of Patricia Les (SACON South Australian Department of Housing and Construction, 1988-), Ingrid Kerkhoven (SACON, 1989-), Margaret Petrykowski (NSW Public Works, 1982-), Darlene van der Breggen (NSW Public Works, 1978-), Rebecca Heartly (NSW Public Works, 1984-) and Linda Gosling (NSW Public Works, 1971-).<sup>39</sup> Importantly, the article featured the women next to projects that they had completed; a rare record of authorship between public service architects and their buildings.

The invisibility of architects working in the public service is acknowledged as an ongoing issue. It described the women as "anonymous" while also highlighting the significant and sometimes award-winning projects they were designing and delivering. While Government Architects were acknowledged as figure heads, the work of many architects in departments was completed without any recognition. Women working in the NSW Public Works Department found that this lack of acknowledgment impacted

on their careers and that “their careers are restrained by Bureaucratic strategies to resist acknowledgement of authorship of buildings.”<sup>40</sup> Women were still attracted to public service architecture roles because of the potential job security and because “Government offices have a history of providing maternity leave and employment flexibility with the onset of children.”<sup>41</sup> Additionally, there were opportunities to fast-track careers through a “high level of autonomy” and the capacity to lead the delivery of projects with the support of senior technical staff within the department or consultants and contractors on projects. While it was more common for women architects to hold management positions within the public service, there were still no women holding the title of Principal Architect.

Luscombe and Jackson’s article also acknowledges the low rate of registration for women architects in the public service. Professional recognition appears to be a persistent issue across the twentieth century, from Brennan whose career started in 1910, to the women featured in this article in the 1990s. It should also be noted that while Brennan did not hold a job title that reflected her skill level, in 1935, she was identified as the highest paid female in the Queensland Public Service.<sup>42</sup> Some women were deterred from management pathways, seeing them as a predominately administrative role that would separate them from design work and any opportunity to achieve acknowledgement for project work. Consequently, promotion sometimes meant becoming even more invisible. The prestige of design work was also evident in the 1986 RAI A survey. Luscombe and Jackson’s article found that ultimately:

For women architects in government, visibility appears not to be a major motivation: more desirable is the opportunity to build medium to large projects long before they could in private practice. This is a significant satisfaction to weigh against the well-known irritations of working in bureaucracy.<sup>43</sup>

The invisibility of women in government is the most persistent theme found in the career trajectories examined in this brief and incomplete historical survey. Hanna and Willis observed that the women architects who worked in the public service between 1900 and 1950 “rarely had prominent careers, as it was rare to acknowledge the work of individual architects within the organisation.”<sup>44</sup> While several notable examples of women architects in the public service rising to leadership roles within government are identified, it is also the case that women hit a glass ceiling in the public works offices

and pursued private practice as a solution. The survey also identifies several types of careers incorporating public sector work including instances of careers in the public sector after varied experience in the private sector, as well as departures from the public service due to lack of career progression.

### **Portfolio Careers and the Public Sector**

In her 2005 report *Going Places*, Whitman used the term “portfolio career” to capture the creative way women handled “interrupted career patterns” and fashioned careers in a male-dominated sector while juggling caring responsibilities associated with having children.<sup>45</sup> Whitman’s usage of the term aimed to distinguish careers where individuals take on “various appointments and roles over a period of time, collating, in the manner of a portfolio, a range of skills and experience,” from a normative “climbing the ladder” career path.<sup>46</sup> A more pointed label for this kind of career path that has emerged from feminist scholarship is the “mummy-track” which problematises the gendered dimension of a portfolio career if it disadvantages women’s participation and progression.<sup>47</sup> In more recent decades the concept of a portfolio career has been co-opted under neo-liberalism, with the de-regulation of work and the value placed on individual entrepreneurship.<sup>48</sup> It has thus become a shorthand way to explain non-traditional career paths that value skills diversification and life-long learning, if at the same time being blind to the precarity of workers in the creative economy, and the ambition for greater protection of care work, volunteering work and well-being in an individual’s work life. As succinctly put by one participant in Whitman’s study: “if being a sole practitioner is the answer, then I think we need to have a good hard look at the question!”<sup>49</sup>

For the purposes of our analysis, the concept of a portfolio career is nonetheless a useful way to identify and understand the varied career trajectories of women who have incorporated public sector work, both historically and in the present, while at the same time questioning the ways in which public sector work is held apart from the mainstream architecture profession. In our research interviews, we found that all participants combined private and public sector work in their careers. This section of our paper presents preliminary analysis of our interview data.

Although several interview participants have had long careers in the public service, it is more common to move into the public sector mid-career after gaining experience working in private practice, or to have moved between the public and private sectors throughout a career. “Honing your craft” in private practice, and gaining experience in

preparing development applications and contract administration, and working with diverse clients and stakeholders, particularly with developers, was seen as a valuable grounding for a career in the public sector and a way to understand the industry “from as many sides as you can.”<sup>50</sup> Sustained development of public sector experience was also recognised as valuable. As noted by one participant: “sometimes you need ten years’ worth of corporate knowledge to finally see a project outcome to fruition ... in the political realm it can take ten years.”<sup>51</sup> These various examples of portfolio careers involving the public sector are not well understood or assimilated into the identity of the architecture profession.

Parental leave or a change of work pattern associated with caring responsibilities was a catalyst to move into the public sector for several participants, and many identified flexible work, leave entitlements, clear remuneration structures, reasonable work expectations and job security as attractors. As described by one participant, working in government “allows me to provide well for [my family] ... One choice was to go back to practice. ... I couldn’t see having flexibility in that ... For a lot of people you’re expected to work late hours and that would not have worked for me.”<sup>52</sup> Joining the public sector was also a way to achieve better work satisfaction than what was on offer working part-time in private practice, without the risks associated with establishing a practice and operating as a sole practitioner, which was identified as a recurring strategy for women to advance their careers in architecture in historical studies.<sup>53</sup> As described by one participant: “there wasn’t much further career progression I could have in my current situation [in private practice] ... and the opportunity to have a bigger impact on the built environment at a much bigger scale was really exciting.”<sup>54</sup> Another described her motivation to move to government: “There was definitely a desire to get a better balance in terms of lifestyle and work. ... But I actually found the move to government has given me a much greater passion and a much greater feeling that I’m contributing to overall built environment outcomes that are better.”<sup>55</sup>

Many participants engaged in teaching work in universities before and/or alongside their work in the public sector. The design evaluation and communication skills developed in teaching were identified as useful for public sector careers, particularly those involving development of assessment, design review and design advocacy. “It’s the best training ground for this sort of role,” as one participant put it.<sup>56</sup> They also engaged in professional advocacy work through the AIA and other professional organisations, and community volunteering work, which were recognised as avenues through which to develop

networks and transferable skills in communication, administration and management. One participant observed, “All that experience you get outside of architecture, running committees, setting up community [initiatives] ... that sort of leadership stuff ... It’s an amazing training ground for women that a lot of people don’t recognise where you have to stand up to power.”<sup>57</sup>

The interviews also revealed diverse opportunities for design leadership in many arenas including across a range of government departments, public sector authorities, universities, company boards, property development companies and the legal sector.

### **Design Leadership Expertise**

If in the historical survey of women’s public sector careers, the recognition of design contribution was complicated by bureaucratic processes that obscured authorship, new forms of design leadership in government present new challenges to the recognition of professional contribution. Interview participants recognised design expertise as fundamental to their employment in the public sector, and a point of continuity between private and public sector career experience. A focus on design provided “a really good base for understanding how to get better built outcomes and [communicating] what was good design [in government].”<sup>58</sup> However, many also developed additional expertise in relation to their public sector careers, and in their roles as design advisors. This included both additional or specialist technical expertise, for example in the areas of planning, urban design, heritage and environmental law, as well as what is described as “relational expertise” or “common knowledge built ... where the boundaries of practices intersect,” and needed to work effectively in inter-professional work settings involving complex tasks.<sup>59</sup> As described by one participant: “One of my roles is to be able to see things from all these perspectives and to try and find the middle ground ... to be encouraging but also quite direct on what isn’t going to work. ... I’m using design skills. ... [But I also need] to see it from consultant’s perspectives ... engineers, landscape architects. ... It is important to be able to negotiate well.”<sup>60</sup> This additional expertise was obtained through formal education as well as informally, or tacitly, through on the job experience and mentoring.

It is important to reflect on the changing role of architects in government here. Where there was once an emphasis on the technical expertise of design, documentation and contract administration in the delivery of public projects by public works departments, the work of architects in government in the twenty-first century is much more focused on



expert guidance informing policy, procurement and design review. Design governance theory provides a framework to understand the toolkit for design-led built environment governance where design intelligence is prioritised in strategic planning processes and good design outcomes are seen as a means to deliver social, environmental and economic benefit. The concept of design governance arises out of the “governance turn” in the late twentieth century. It conceptualises a mode of urban governance that involves distributed power and decision-making through networks rather than big government. However, design governance theory has not explicitly addressed the question of professional expertise or professional competence, or considered how leadership demonstrated through design advisory processes might expand understanding of the architecture profession.<sup>61</sup> Recognising design governance as a specific expertise provides a framework in which different modes of professional leadership can be recognised and valued.

Design review panels are a good example to illustrate the technical and threshold expertise required in design governance processes. Chairing or participating as a design expert on a design review panel requires design expertise and the ability to analyse and understand technical aspects of a design proposal, as well as the skills to translate the benefits of design outcomes to non-designers, including public administrators, politicians and government and community stakeholders, as well as the ability to utilise the role of the review process to build project capacity, consensus and commitment. One interview participant described it bluntly: “it’s a different skill set. ... you get great practitioners who are not good reviewers.”<sup>62</sup> Another described the importance of stakeholder engagement within government: “not only is it about making sure you glean some of that expertise from the different areas, but it is also [an opportunity] to make sure that everyone is on board and is supportive.”<sup>63</sup>

Many interview participants developed specialist knowledge and skills through further formal study in cognate areas including heritage, planning, urban design and environmental law, and through training in public administration and executive leadership. Study was often undertaken concurrently with full-time or part-time work and functioned to credentialise and reinforce knowledge gained on the job as much as provide an opportunity to reflect on praxis. Accelerated paths to leadership were not explicitly mentioned by interviewees, however access to leadership and management training, and support to pursue these activities externally was mentioned multiple times.

The impressive diversification of expertise amongst interview participants sits in contrast to the persistent problem of professional registration in architecture being a barrier to women's career progression. Approximately one third of participants in our research were not registered, which is similar to the findings in the historical survey of women working in the public sector, and higher than for women in the profession in general.<sup>64</sup> The public sector has had varying capacity to support post-graduation registration pathways, and transition into the public sector sometimes came at the expense of getting registered.

Lack of registration did not necessarily inhibit meaningful contribution or public sector career progression but was still consequential, and for some participants led to a feeling of exclusion from the profession. While in some contexts and roles professional registration is required, for some participants working in roles with job titles not including the term "architect" there is no requirement or incentive to acquire or maintain registration. Although several participants felt that it was "important to maintain an identity as an architect" and this was seen as one way to do so, and to protect and advance the value of design expertise in government.<sup>65</sup> The National Standard for Competency in Architecture (NSCA), which prescribes the pathways to registration for architects in Australia, focuses on core technical expertise that can be evidenced through the creation of designs, and doesn't tend to accommodate modes of practice through which design expertise may be delivered or evidenced through a wider range of outcomes.

To what extent leadership theory is relevant in design governance is another question raised by this research. The emergence of design governance has paralleled the evolution of leadership theory in business and management. Feminist analysis of leadership theory recognises its origins in mid-twentieth-century American capitalism and critiques its attachment to individuals. Sinclair highlights that leadership is better understood as a process of influence and how it is deployed is "a result of power not truth uncovering,"<sup>66</sup> while Hutchinson, speaking particularly in relation to women's access to leadership positions in government, points out that "rather than being gender neutral, concepts and practices of leadership are embedded in a variety of social interactions which shape ideas of gender and leadership."<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, recognition of what counts as design leadership in the public sector has the potential to change our understanding of professional leadership, and the contribution of women doing this work to the profession.

The question of what constitutes design leadership expertise also needs to be put into a larger contemporary context in which our understanding and valuing of expertise and the professions is under interrogation. This is a question for our larger research project that we hope our interview data will help address. Deamer argues that the failure of the profession to adequately value creative labour is an argument for de-professionalisation,<sup>68</sup> while post-professional paradigms are challenging the role of expertise in government.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the value of expertise *per se* is being challenged, both in the context of post-truth paradigms and in relation to critiques of the dominance of Western epistemology.<sup>70</sup> There is a challenge for the profession in how to effectively navigate this larger context, to articulate its value in a changing world, while recognising the diversification of professional expertise evidenced in public sector work.

## Conclusion

In this paper we have explored how analysis of the public sector careers of women opens a new understanding of design leadership that can inform the evolution of the architecture profession. A more precise understanding of the expertise and roles of design leadership alongside a more comprehensive recognition of the range of ways that architects make careers in the public sector, has the potential to overcome the problem of invisibility, and usefully inform the evolving identity of the profession.

Part of this research has involved uncovering the careers of the many, often invisible, architects, especially women, who have worked in the public sector. Our focus on women's career experience in this research has highlighted what counts as visible architectural work, and what this excludes, and how this is changing. This is relevant not only for women but also for men. While this paper has started to document the work of women in the public sector, there is still more work to be done in uncovering their careers – especially in the postwar era. Failing to understand the historical evolution of architects working in the public sector creates a blind spot for architects into the future.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Abbie Galvin, "Engaging Women in the Built Environment," University of New South Wales, 2020, [www.be.unsw.edu.au/event/2020-engaging-women-built-environment](http://www.be.unsw.edu.au/event/2020-engaging-women-built-environment), accessed 20 June 2021. The UNSW Engaging Women in the Built Environment ran as an annual event from 2016 to 2020 under the leadership of Professor Helen Lockhead, Dean of UNSW School of Built Environment from 2015 to 2020.

<sup>2</sup> The New South Wales Government Architect position was established in 1816 (Francis Greenway). During Chris Johnson's tenure (1995-2005) the Office was commercialised. During

2015 the DPW was restructured and downsized to deliver primarily advisory and leadership services. The position of Government Architect was re-established in Queensland as an advisory role in 1999. Western Australia and the Northern Territory followed this model with appointments in 2004, Victoria in 2006, Tasmania in 2009, and the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia in 2010. Offices have been maintained in NSW, QLD, WA, VIC, ACT and SA.

<sup>3</sup> The Australian Institute of Architects membership data doesn't include sector of employment. Architects Registration Boards collect information about place of employment, but this is not routinely aggregated at a national level. Neither of these sources gives a comprehensive picture of the architecture profession as many practitioners do not register or are not members of the AIA. Census data is imprecise on this question, collecting occupation data on architects alongside other built environment industries and professions. The difficulty of obtaining reliable data on the architecture profession, and particularly women in the profession, has been recognised by Matthewson and Hanna. Gillian Matthewson, , "Dimensions of Gender: Women's Careers in the Australian Architecture Profession," PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2015. Bronwyn Hanna, "Absence and Presence: A Historiography of Early Women Architects in New South Wales," PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Ethics approval for the interview-based research was obtained (2021/HE000992). Participants working in an architectural capacity may be not registered.

<sup>5</sup> Paula Whitman, *Going Places: The Career Progression of Women in the Architecture Profession* (Brisbane: QUT and RAI, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia, 1900-1950* (Canberra: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 2001), 59.

<sup>7</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*; Hanna, "Absence and Presence"; Desley Luscombe and Davina Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," *Architecture Australia* 83, no. 2 (March-April 1994): 56-62.

<sup>8</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*.

<sup>9</sup> Kirsty Volz, "Claiming Domestic Space: Queensland's Interwar Women Architects and their Labour Saving Devices," *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*, 23 (2017): 108.

<sup>10</sup> Judith Mackay, "Designing Women: Pioneer Architects," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 20, no. 5 (2008): 169.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Watson and Judith McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects to 1940* (Brisbane: University of Queensland, 1984), 160.

<sup>12</sup> Watson and McKay, *A Directory of Queensland Architects*, 119.

<sup>13</sup> Bronwyn Hanna, "Australia's Early Women Architects: Milestones and Achievements," *Fabrications* 12, no. 1 (2002): 39.

<sup>14</sup> Volz, "Claiming Domestic Space," 112.

<sup>15</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 59.

<sup>16</sup> Judy Rechner, "The Queensland Workers' Dwelling 1910-1940," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 15, no. 6 (1994): 266.

<sup>17</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 59.

<sup>20</sup> Hanna, "Australia's Early Women Architects," 48.

<sup>21</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 50.

<sup>23</sup> Willis and Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Watson and McKay, "A Directory of Queensland Architects."

<sup>25</sup> Mackay, "Designing Women," 161.

<sup>26</sup> Hanna and Willis, *Women Architects in Australia*, 40, 84.

<sup>27</sup> Harriet Edquist, "Architecture and Design," *The Encyclopaedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*, The Australian Women's Archive Project, 2014.

[www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0030b.htm](http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0030b.htm), accessed 18 August 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Hanna, "Australia's Early Women Architects," 52.

<sup>29</sup> Edquist, "Architecture and Design."

<sup>30</sup> Russell Darroch and John Dean, *Women in the Architectural Profession* (Canberra: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1986), 25.

<sup>31</sup> Darroch and Dean, *Women in the Architectural Profession*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> The report also indicated that women were more highly represented in freelance/contract, academic and salaried non-architect employment categories. Darroch and Dean, *Women in the Architectural Profession*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> "Abby Galvin in Conversation with Beverley Garlick," *Regional Bureaucracy: Works by the NSW Government Architects Office 1958-1988*, ed. Guillermo Fernandez-Abascal and Hamish McIntosh (Melbourne: Perimeter Editions, 2022), 111-15.

<sup>34</sup> Suzanne Dance, interview by Meg Lee and Hilary McPhee, Fitzroy History Society, 3 November 2016, <https://oralhistory.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/FHS-Suzanne-Dance-2016-.pdf>, accessed 18 August 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Deborah van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?: Women Working in Architecture in Post-War Queensland," *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture 1945-1975*, ed. John Macarthur, Janina Gosseye, Deborah van der Plaats and Andrew Wilson (London: Artifice Books on Architecture, 2015), 182-99.

<sup>36</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 197, 199.

<sup>37</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 197.

<sup>38</sup> Desley Luscombe and Davina Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," *Architecture Australia* 83, no. 2 (March-April 1994): 56-62.

<sup>39</sup> Luscombe and Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture."

<sup>40</sup> Luscombe and Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," 58.

<sup>41</sup> Luscombe and Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," 58.

<sup>42</sup> "Female Hopes are Fired: Victories Scored in Public Service Appeals," *Truth*, 17 February 1935, 20.

<sup>43</sup> Luscombe and Jackson, "Invisible Women of Public Architecture," 58.

<sup>44</sup> Hanna and Willis, *Women Architects in Australia*, 59.

<sup>45</sup> Whitman, *Going Places*, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Whitman, *Going Places*, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Amanda Sinclair, "Not Just 'Add Women In': Women Remaking Leadership," *Seizing the Initiative: Australian Women Leaders in Politics, Workplaces and Communities* (Melbourne: eScholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne, 2012), 22.

<sup>48</sup> Peggy Deamer, *The Architect as Worker: Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015); Andrew Templer and Tupper Cawsey, "Rethinking Career Development in an Era of Portfolio Careers," *Career Development International* 4, no. 2 (1999): 70-76.

<sup>49</sup> Whitman, *Going Places*, 23.

<sup>50</sup> Interviews 05 and 04.

<sup>51</sup> Interview 02.

<sup>52</sup> Interview 03.

<sup>53</sup> Whitman, *Going Places*, 2005. Darroch and Dean, *Women in the Architectural Profession*, 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Interview 06

<sup>55</sup> Interview 04.

<sup>56</sup> Interview 01.

<sup>57</sup> Interview 01.

<sup>58</sup> Interview 04.

<sup>59</sup> Ann Edwards, "Building Common Knowledge at the Boundaries between Professional Practices: Relational Agency and Relational Expertise in Systems of Distributed Expertise," *International Journal of Educational Research* 50 (2011): 33. Helga Nowotny, "Transgressive Competence: The Narrative of Expertise," *European Journal of Social Theory* 3, no. 1 (2000): 5-21.

<sup>60</sup> Interview 03.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew Carmona, Claudio de Magalhaes and Lucy Matarajan, *Design Governance: The CABE Experiment* (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), 11.

<sup>62</sup> Interview 07.

<sup>63</sup> Interview 06.

<sup>64</sup> Gill Matthewson and Parlour, *The Numbers in a Nutshell: Women in Architecture, Australia* (18 June 2017), <https://parlour.org.au/research/statistics/the-numbers-in-a-nutshell/>. This report indicates that 22% of registered architects in Australia are women.

<sup>65</sup> Interview 03, 01 and 05.

<sup>66</sup> Sinclair, "Not Just 'Adding Women In'," 16-17.

<sup>67</sup> Jacquie Hutchinson and Elizabeth Walker, "Leadership in Local Government: 'No Girls Allowed'," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 73, no. 2 (2014): 182.

<sup>68</sup> Peggy Deamer, "De-Professionalisation," in *Architects After Architecture: Alternative Pathways for Practice*, ed. Harriet Harries, Rory Hyde and Roberta Marcaccio (New York: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>69</sup> Terry Johnson, "Governmentality and the Institutionalization of Expertise," *Health Professions and the State in Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 7-24.

<sup>70</sup> Tom Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Daniele Hromek, Sara Lynn Rees and Françoise Lane, "Not an Expert," Asia Pacific Architecture Forum panel discussion. <https://parlour.org.au/indigenise/not-an-expert/>, accessed 18 August 2022.

# The Cemetery and the Golf Course: Mid-Century Planning and the Pastoral Imaginary

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## **Abstract**

*The well-draining 'sandbelt' in the southeast of Melbourne boasts many world-famous links established during the 'golf boom' of the 1920s. The soil conditions that make for good golf – sandy, loamy dirt – are also optimal for cemeteries. Starting in the 1930s 'memorial parks,' built at the urban periphery, began to replace crowded churchyards and Victorian-era cemeteries in the urban core. Sometimes within a stone's throw of putting grounds, these new sites for burial placed the dead below bronze markers set into undulating green surfaces – very much reminiscent of a golf course. This paper offers a history of the landscape architecture, planning, and cultural shifts that aided in the development of both the suburban 'memorial park' and the modern golf course, two typologies that place a huge importance on Sylvan water features and grassy dells. The space allocated to each in rapidly urbanising areas illuminates the tension between the infrastructure of death and memorialisation and the land reserved for the living, and their leisure activities.*

*Taking the history of the cemetery and the golf course together, this paper examines the pastoral imaginary of mid-century spatial planners as both a cultural phenomenon and a technological feat, made possible by advances in irrigation and pest control. In the ensuing years the green imaginary of these heavily sprayed 'lawnsapes' has evolved with the emergence of various 'green infrastructure' framings, and a new scrutiny of land- and sod-intensive sites. Creating greenspaces for humans may not be enough, and both cemeteries and golf courses have struggled to justify their existence. Managers of these sites have started to channel a more-than-human constituency that includes plant and animal life who also 'inhabit' their spaces.*

### **Saying Goodbye to the 'Boneyard'**

In 1938, three decades after its opening, Fawkner Cemetery, in Melbourne's north, undertook a rebranding project. The site would drop the suffix "Cemetery", replacing it with "Memorial Park", a designation that was coming into vogue. A lux pamphlet celebrated new plantings and structures across the site. Its first page set out the reasoning for the name change:

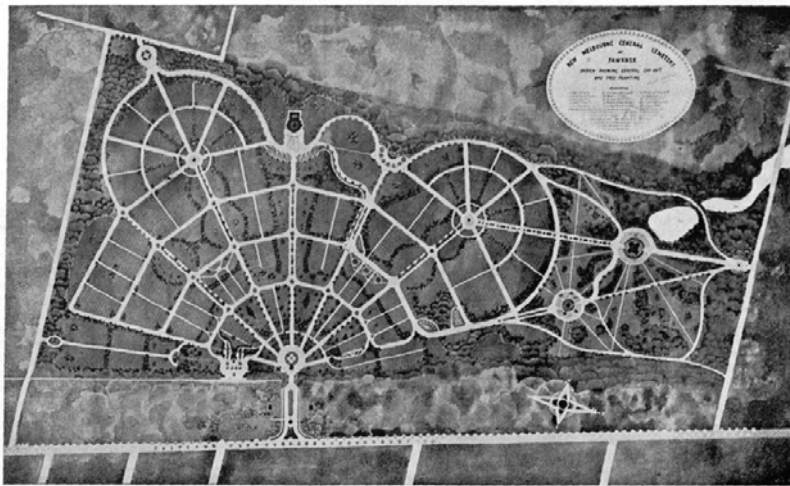
For those who deplore the neglected graveyards of yesterday, and the marble-lined cemeteries of today, the Fawner Memorial Park will come as a welcome relief. To lift the shadow of death... has forever been the object of the creators of this remarkable institution.<sup>1</sup>

The renaming was framed using the familiar language of cemetery overhaul. The remaking of urban burial grounds began in the United Kingdom as a project focused on hygiene and metropolitan growth at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Starting with the closure of churchyard burial grounds (as small, urban cemeteries were called whether they were adjacent to a church or not)<sup>2</sup> in favour of 'reform' cemeteries, it continued through the 1830s and 1840s with the creation of park-like 'rural' cemeteries at the urban periphery (the most famous being London's 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries). While Australia largely inherited the mortuary and burial traditions of its coloniser, there were far fewer churchyard burial grounds. Most of the cemeteries established in the mid-nineteenth century – such as Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery (1858), Coburg Pine Ridge Cemetery (1856) and Footscray General Cemetery (1869) in Melbourne; West Terrace Cemetery in Adelaide (1837); and Rookwood Cemetery (1867) in Sydney – combined reform elements with some pathways and plantings that reference the romanticism of the rural cemetery movement. Therefore, it was only in the 1920s and 1930s, as this older stock of cemeteries filled up and new neighbourhoods sprang up alongside them, that cemeteries were given a new look.

In keeping with the demands of rapidly growing colonial cities, older cemeteries were built with transport and infrastructural development in mind. Founded in 1906, Fawkner gave purpose to a failed train venture (the Upfield Line) and supplemented smaller Victorian Era cemeteries in Melbourne's core.<sup>3</sup> It remains one of the largest cemeteries in the state, and, at the time of its creation, represented a major outlay of Crown land at the city fringe (successive waves of urbanisation mean that it is now surrounded by what are considered Middle Ring suburbs). Designed as both a cemetery and a green



amenity – its creator, Charles Heath (1867-1948), was one of the first in Australia to take on the title of ‘landscape architect’.<sup>4</sup> His plans called for a fan-shaped southern sector inspired by City Beautiful town planning and a more free-flowing northern quadrant that embraced the curved pathway of rural cemeteries (Figure 1). Crucial to the cemetery’s creation was its position adjacent to the Upfield train line, which skirts its eastern edge. Not only did this provide easy access for visitors (the fan-shaped pathways radiate out from a train stop at the front gates), but it also allowed a mortuary hearse car to arrive with the newly dead. For over 30 years, bodies came up the train line from the major hospitals and morgues in the city centre. This echoed the necro transport accommodations established at Sydney’s Rookwood Cemetery, which was even more closely bound to the rails. It had its own station, Regent Street Station (also called Necropolis Receiving Station and Mortuary Station), that brought people directly from the centre to the cemetery from 1869 to the late 1940s. Both major cemeteries relied on rail transport and saw themselves as part of larger infrastructural systems that included fixed sites, like hospitals, mortuaries and (starting in the 1920s) crematoria; but they also included conduits, notably rail lines and, later, highways.



**Figure 1.** Fawkner Memorial Park master plan, with the northern quadrant at right (State Library Victoria).

The mechanical, social and architectural infrastructure of death in Australian cities shifted with two major changes in the 1920s and 1930s: the acceptance of cremation and the rise of automobiles. First, the arrival of good roads helped to obfuscate (but not sever) the connection between cemeteries and existing infrastructural systems. Railroad mortuary wagons disappeared in favour of black hearses and, often, nondescript vans. Second, cremation helped to break the link between bodily interment

and cemeteries, because once a body is cremated and turned to ash, it can be scattered, kept at home in an urn or, if one wishes, interred in a cemetery.<sup>5</sup> Bodies no longer *needed* to go to a cemetery and visitors no longer had to rely on train timetables and lurching trams to pay their respects.

The modernisation of cemetery infrastructure cast the ‘death ways’ of the Victorian and Edwardian Eras in a gloomy light. In 1900, headstones sold in Australia were “distributed... with inscriptions and designs usually chosen by the bereaved families from a pattern catalogue.” These were “almost without exception, the styles of markers, the symbols carved... upon them... thoroughly derivative of graveyards of Great Britain.”<sup>6</sup> Within the space of a generation these symbols came to be seen as totally antiquated and a local carving industry, largely reliant on the new technology of pneumatic chiselling, began to create new headstone designs. They moved away from nineteenth-century staples, like cherubs and stricken angels, and towards modern decoration and abstraction. The verticality of Victorian ‘boneyard’ tombstones, often 1.5-1.8 metres high, was replaced by Streamlined Moderne altar tombs that were rarely higher than a metre, and featured glass, metal and tile accents that emphasised their horizontality (Figure 2). In short, the graves began to take on curves, accent lines and shiny finishes – they began to look somewhat like the automobiles that were increasingly delivering the well-to-do to the cemetery. Even the less fortunate, who still packed onto suburban trains at the end of the Depression, could partake in these new aspirational styles. With the creation of Memorial Parks, cemetery managers sought to take this a step further: headstones would compress almost completely, taking the form of bronze plaques laid flat into the grass to discreetly mark the grave below. Most ceremonies, the managers hoped, would not involve burial at all, but ash interments directly into the niche walls that came up from the manicured lawns. The melancholy Victorian cemetery with its winding paths, water features, and glens had begun to fade, replaced by park-like surrounds with uninterrupted sightlines.



**Figure 2.** Melbourne General Cemetery with low-lying headstones dating from the 1930s in the foreground and Victorian monuments in the background (Photograph by Samuel Holleran).

### The Growth of Golf

In 1925, Melbourne's *Herald* ran a short piece in their miscellany section under the heading "More and More Golf," noting that "more people in and around Melbourne are playing golf now than was even dreamed of a few years ago. The demand for new courses is continuous... The trouble is there is not so much suitable land available for courses close to the city, and the tendency to go well out of the metropolis for a day's golf is growing."<sup>7</sup> While the first generation of grand dame golf courses, like the Royal Melbourne Golf Club (established 1891), date back to the turn of the twentieth century, the sport's boom followed the First World War, when upper-class officers returned to Australia with plans for courses to be built along the lines of those they had played on in the U.K. In 1920s, five new clubs were established along the southeast 'sandbelt' in Oakleigh and Cheltenham (Table 1).

The Commonwealth Golf Club	Oakleigh South, VIC	1920	58 ha
Huntingdale Golf Club	Oakleigh South, VIC	1924	57 ha
Kingston Heath Golf Club	Cheltenham, VIC	1925	63 ha
Yarra Yarra Golf Club	Bentleigh East, VIC	1926	52 ha
Victoria Golf Club	Cheltenham, VIC	1927	50 ha

**Table 1.** Melbourne Sandbelt golf clubs built in the 1920s.

While, in the early 1920s, it was assumed that golfers would arrive by train,<sup>8</sup> the professional classes who played golf at private clubs were, by the decade's end, expected to arrive in their own automobiles. This development untethered golf clubs from trunk railroad lines, allowing them to find new locations in what was still largely undeveloped land in the southeast. Several clubs, including the Royal Melbourne Golf Club, moved down tram lines and then out into the undeveloped scrubland, selling their links and pushing them further out as urbanisation caught up. In this manner many clubs sold their old sites as housing developments, turning a profit that allowed them to realise more ambitious links down the road. Simultaneously, homebuilders were able use the creation of these golf courses as a selling point for their new developments.

With large swaths of land being developed, new standards for the design and planting of courses were put into place. The Royal Melbourne club – which had shifted from its original location in Caulfield, to Sandringham, to Black Rock – brought in Alister MacKenzie, the famed Scottish-English golf course designer, in 1931 to create a new course with Alex Russell, a local golf enthusiast. Given the opportunity to start anew, MacKenzie and Russell departed from the modest design of their Sandringham predecessor (Figure 3), which was in operation from 1901 to 1931, to create two naturalistic 18-hole courses. The courses – which along with the clubhouse, surface parking and other amenities, occupy over 80 hectares of land – were designed to partially follow the natural contours of the dunes that occupied the site. Golf clubs were no longer sporting amenities in parks, but entirely planned environments, with hedge-lined drives, large car park areas, complex drainage and pumping, and armies of groundskeepers.



**Figure 3.** The Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Sandringham, Victoria, 1909 (State Library Victoria).

The *Referee*, a sport-heavy paper published in Sydney from 1886 to 1939, assiduously followed the rise of golf in Australia. A 1933 article notes the phenomenal expansion of the sport in “less than a decade” and chronicles the rapid maturation of golf landscaping, “an army of men are kept in employment” and dress-code style, the “days have gone by when any sort of old suit was considered good enough.” They note that keeping grass healthy cost a lot, with one suburban club using “900 tons [of] manure for top-dressing fairways,” while others incurred huge water bills and collectively used “thousands of yards of rubber hose.” The article concludes by noting that “golf, all in all, costs more than any other game to play, and the figures in aggregate reach amazing proportions.”<sup>9</sup> This is not a dismissal of the game but an acknowledgment that it was ‘thirsty’, cash-intensive, and growing in popularity. Many of those costs were initially excised as golf-mania swept over the country and it would be years before they would be fully tallied.

### **“I build my altar in the fields” – Ritualised Green Space**

Critiques of mid-century ‘lawnsapes’ are many, and they mostly draw on the environmental harms of cultivating millions of acres of turf grass, often in climates in which it cannot thrive without extensive irrigation. Much of the scholarship on the rise of turf grass – famously called out as the primary ‘crop’ of the United States – focuses on the green spaces of individuals and the politics of suburban lawn maintenance. The creation of millions of hectares of institutional lawns, golf courses, parks and park-like cemeteries has received far less attention. These landscapes were the product of a socio-technical shift that preceded the “lawn boom period of the post-war era.”<sup>10</sup>

Starting in the 1920s, new methods appeared for creating verdant landscapes, including: improved irrigation technologies, newly available turf varieties and the ability to bring water across vast sites, first with networks of hoses and then with in-ground sprinkler systems. Beneath these technological improvements was an emergent sense of 'green-is-good' in the creation of new leisure and memorialisation landscapes; a sentiment multiplied against the Anglo-Saxon settler discomfort with the red hues of Australia's indigenous landscape that resulted in a drive to turn the continent's semi-arid southwest into something more akin to the "bowling greens of urban parks" and the "heavily rolled cricket pitches of the British Empire."<sup>11</sup>

The emergent lawnsapes of the golf club and the memorial park shared several commonalities, in addition to their wide-open expanses of heavily tended grass: both were created at the urban periphery, both relied on increased automobility for access and both were mono-use. The limiting of such broad areas to narrow forms of use was premised on the greater good: it was assumed these landscapes would have a regenerative effect on visitors. In the nine decades that have followed, critics of both traditional burial and golf have argued that these "dead spaces"<sup>12</sup> occupy too much land and could better serve municipalities as multi-use parks or housing; but supporters of both have countered that wide green areas provide respite and solace for over-stressed city dwellers.

Urbanised nature was advanced as a curative, not just for the *anomie* that comes with living in a big city but for grief itself. Fawkner Memorial Park deployed a stanza from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "To Nature" in its brochure:

So will I build my altar in the fields,  
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,  
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields  
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee

Across the page, a caption makes clear what kind of nature this is to be, not an enchanted forest-like surround but a broad and open meadow unencumbered by headstones:

Where could we find a more appropriate place for a memorial than in a beautiful garden where flowers grow and birds sing: with wide spreading

lawns... and quiet shady nooks... Could we associate anything finer with the memory of a loved one?

A photograph, on the overleaf (Figure 4), shows the new turf-heavy landscaping and details options for cremation and placement in the Gardens of Remembrance, its “dignity and simplicity” presented in stark contrast to the over-the-top monumental headstones of years past.<sup>13</sup> The large swathes of green are presented as areas of nature that have been extensively shaped by landscape architects for therapeutic purposes, creating a beauty and calm that will help visitors to lose their sense of grief. “The park-like nature... and use of *lehmannii* gums” along with the wide vistas stirs “a song in the soul and triumphant joy in the heart after every visit to the Gardens at Fawkner.” Green spaces are not just pleasant looking, they are curative. Passing through a well-landscaped cemetery will help those afflicted by grief to slowly come out healed on the other side.



THE MAIN APPROACH TO FAWKNER  
MEMORIAL PARK FROM SYDNEY ROAD

**Figure 4.** An image from the brochure *The Fawkner Memorial Park*, 1938 (State Library Victoria).

Golf also emerged as a remedy for trauma. It is no coincidence that the great golf boom of the 1920s was led by soldiers returning home from the First World War. Programmes were developed to encourage wounded veterans and amputees to take part in the low-impact sport,<sup>14</sup> and clubs helped to maintain friend networks forged during the conflict. Alex Russell, who worked with Alister MacKenzie to design and create the Royal Melbourne Golf Club’s courses, was wounded in France in 1916 when a shell exploded next to him.<sup>15</sup> His enthusiasm for golf seemed to sprout from the fact that the sport was not based on war-like manoeuvres but on individual exertion in the company of fellow

leisure-seekers. The recuperative nature of the greenway brought a tamed and verdant nature within reach of city dwellers and allowed newly decommissioned servicemen to take part in convivial forms of exercise that reflected their status and gentlemanly ideals.

The pastoral imaginary of large swathes of grass, in both memorial parks and golf courses, might be seen as a response to the asphaltting over of actual productive farmland. When it became impossible to reach the ‘countryside’ in a day’s journey, pastures and forests were brought to the city as simulacra. In the 1920s both land uses were designed with the middle and upper classes in mind. A costly annual membership to a ‘country’ club not only granted access to pristine fairways but also business connections; what’s more, it alluded to the inheritance and holdings of a grazier class that, while dwindling in actual political clout, was still important to the imagination of prosperity.

### **Cars, Cremation and Cul-de-sacs**

Between 1921 and 1930 the rate of car ownership in Australia went from one vehicle per 45 persons to one vehicle per 11 persons, with much higher rates in Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>16</sup> The 1938 brochure put out to christen Fawkner as a ‘Memorial Park’ makes sure to lead with the fact that it is just “twenty minutes’ journey by car from the [Melbourne] G.P.O.” This period marks a mainstreaming of automobility for the well-to-do, who were increasingly traversing the city on newly sealed roads (some created as Depression-Era work projects). Golf courses helped to fill in the area between nodal suburbs and their design and construction became increasingly sophisticated, as landscape architecture firms sprang up to do work that was previously supported by community volunteers.<sup>17</sup> The sophisticated, industrialised lawnsapes that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s presaged the post-World War II era when these interlocking varieties of green pastoralism – memorial parks and municipal golf – became available to all.

By the 1930s, with some clubs foundering during the Great Depression and a surfeit of labour, local councils began work on new municipal courses. In some cases, like that of Albert Park, this meant taking over ailing clubs and re-opening them as public amenities; in other cases, such as Yarra Bend, it meant building links from scratch on parkland. Here, Melbourne played a game of catch up with Sydney and cities that, by the early 1930s, already had “two or three” municipal links “to give the artisan class



the opportunity to play this popular game.”<sup>18</sup> The ‘artisan class’ developed a fondness for golf that is, perhaps, unique to Australia and also New Zealand. Whereas in North America and other settler colonial states, like South Africa, golf is associated only with a very narrow swath of society, the popularity of the sport extends well beyond the upper classes in Australia and New Zealand. The democratising of leisure that followed the Second World War has a lot to do with this. A second golf boom, this time for working- and middle-class men, had commenced before the war’s end. In December 1944, as Allied troops were closing in on Germany, an editorial in Melbourne’s *Weekly Times* noted that there were within the “fighting forces... vast numbers of sailors, soldiers and airmen... who have been introduced to golf during their service, and one is immediately conscious of the fact that all these will want to continue playing after demobilisation.”<sup>19</sup>

Like golf, the grassy memorial parks of the 1930s started out as relatively elite spaces. This was not based on price *per se* (a Dead of Cremation cost £5 in 1938, or £7 with a niche in a Garden of Remembrance,<sup>20</sup> roughly \$475 or \$665 in today’s dollars<sup>21</sup>) but on taste-cultural terms. In the 1930s, all of the crematoria in Victoria were less than ten years old; and the process appealed primarily to highly educated elites interested in the ‘scientific’ and hygienic disposal of the dead. Working-class Melburnians still preferred the “marble-lined cemeteries” that the memorial park was meant to be an anecdote to. Roman Catholics were still officially barred from cremating their loved ones (this would only change with the reforms of Vatican II in the early 1960s). The memorial park designs of the time assumed that society would move towards cremation *en masse*, and, while the move has occurred (Australia has, at over 70%, one of the highest cremation rates in the Anglophone world) it happened over the course of decades. Memorial parks subtly shifted, retaining their wall niches and manicured lawns but also creating a variety of ‘products’ for in-ground burial that would maintain the visual sweep of lawns while allowing them to accommodate extensive subterranean burial vaults.<sup>22</sup> By the 1960s, lawn burial had been democratised and, in many new Memorial Parks like Atlona (opened in 1961) it was the only option. No headstone would rise from the surface and tributes – like plaster angels and stuffed animals – would be cleared after a set period. A sweeping green vista became the new language of memorialisation for all (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Altona Memorial Park, built in 1961, has wide swathes of lawn with grave markers set flush into the grass (Photograph by Samuel Holleran).

The Australian embrace of car culture encouraged the development of suburban housing, tracts of bungalows and ranch houses that often went up well before schools, recreation centres and other pieces of infrastructure. Ironically, the golf course came to be thought of as far more integral to the civic life of a suburban community than a cemetery; and while proximity to a golf course raises property values for individual homeowners, a cemetery (even when branded as a memorial park) was thought to lower them. Suburbs, that owe their winding roads and cul-de-sacs to the same landscape gardening impulses as rural cemeteries, turned their back on neighbouring graveyards. In the 1980s, there was even talk of turning under-maintained nineteenth-century cemeteries, like Coburg Pine Ridge, into Pioneer Memorial Parks by removing headstones and setting down sport fields.<sup>23</sup> While neighbourhood groups fought back against the plan, other communities pressured councils to wall in cemeteries with opaque fencing, least the site of headstones through wrought iron rails impede the sale of their homes. Because of skyrocketing land prices, not-in-my-backyard sentiment and the rise of 'direct cremation', few new cemeteries were built in the last decades of the twentieth century. Those that were, focused on providing multi-functional green spaces where visitors could experience a 'tamed' nature, with picnic tables, large kangaroo populations and water features. This green pastoralism is presented as a primordial landscape that, although entirely non-native to the continent, is the appropriate Edenic location to remember loved ones.

### **From “Dead Space” to Green Infrastructure**

Both cemeteries and golf courses are intensive land uses that, as cities grow, find themselves in the centre of urban areas, while their initial designs were informed by the urban periphery. Here, it’s worth briefly touching on how these large green swathes, set out between 60 and 100 years ago, have changed. Both cemeteries and golf courses have had to contend with criticisms that they lack relevance in today’s society, and ought to be repurposed. More subtly, both have had to tweak their grounds and their maintenance to accommodate new understandings of urban ecosystems and biodiversity.

In the late twentieth century, golf clubs added new buildings for restaurants, gyms and gear shops (a change mirrored, albeit far more modestly, by the basic cafés and stores that sprung up on municipal courses). In contrast, cemeteries often removed structures to make way for new burials. The logic of cemetery land use, particularly in Victoria where trusts are self-funded entities and interment rights are in perpetuity, is to use every square metre for burial, sometimes to the detriment of visitor amenities and the preservation of historic structures. Both St Kilda Cemetery and Melbourne General Cemetery, in Carlton, faced pressure to make more land available in their historic locations; both raised ornate entry gates to make room for lawn burial sections. Areas designed to be pathways and lawns were repurposed as new sections for burial, adding more hardscape to cemeteries and reducing the number of trees and permeable surfaces they provide.

Many golf courses have gone in the opposite direction, encouraging less spraying of insecticides and allowing some wooded areas to develop as more diverse habitats to serve as sites of “localised cooling” and “carbon sequestration” in warming cities.<sup>24</sup> The framing of these areas as spaces for biodiversity is indicative of the rise of ‘urban greening’ as both a set of planning practices and as a buzzword within the suite of social responsibility terminology that has grown exponentially in corporate and not-for-profit spheres. Ironically, one of the reasons that golf clubs provide sanctuary for plant and animal life is because of their relative exclusivity: limited use means limited disturbance. But the dwindling number of golfers has also led some to label their land as ‘dead space’. In the last two decades, golf clubs shed over 23% of their members. Those who still play are nearly 80% male, of Anglo-Australian origin, and getting on in their years; in 2019, 71% of Victorian golfers were over 50 years old,<sup>25</sup> an increase of twofold since the turn of the millennium.<sup>26</sup> While the most prestigious of Sandbelt

courses will surely remain, some municipal courses have already been converted to other uses, such as the Elsternwick Park Golf Club, which was transformed into a nature reserve in 2020.

In conclusion, taking the development of golf clubs and memorial parks together helps us to understand the competing needs of leisure and memorialisation in the mid-century city and the reliance of both land uses on a pastoral imaginary imported from the United Kingdom to Australia. In both cases, green swathes of land were supported by hidden-in-plain-sight infrastructural systems that required huge outlays of money and maintenance to keep running. The manicured environments provided by memorial parks and golf links presaged the suburban lawn boom of the post-war era but, like the lawn, have been re-evaluated from the perspective of urban ecology and, in recent years, have had to prove themselves as spaces worthy of retaining.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> *The Fawkner Memorial Park* (Melbourne: Ruskin Press, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 112-18.

<sup>3</sup> David Nichols, Robert Freestone and Yvette Putra, "Frank Heath: Transitions of an Architect Planner from the 1930s to the 1960s," *The La Trobe Journal | State Library of Victoria*, no. 93-94 (2014): 125-39.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Saniga, *Making Landscape Architecture in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2012), 30.

<sup>5</sup> This is the case in most countries but not all; some countries, such as Germany, still require that cremated remains be interred in a cemetery. In Victoria and Western Australia, almost all cremations happen in facilities run by cemetery trusts, on the grounds of cemeteries. In New South Wales and South Australia, private cremation is allowed and crematoria can be found outside of cemeteries, often in nondescript buildings in light industrial areas.

<sup>6</sup> Pat Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 122.

<sup>7</sup> "More and More Golf," *Herald* (Melbourne), 7 September 1925, 6.

<sup>8</sup> "Woodend Development: A New Golf Course," *Herald* (Melbourne), 12 November 1924, 15.

<sup>9</sup> "The Amazing Growth of Golf in Australia: Some Significant Figures," *Referee* (Sydney), 19 April 1933, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Robbins, *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 573.

<sup>12</sup> Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 573

<sup>13</sup> Many mid-century memorial parks went back on this, establishing separate areas for monumental headstones, often from Italian, Chinese and Vietnamese communities, that wanted larger headstones and not in-ground plaques.

<sup>14</sup> David Randall, *Great Sporting Eccentrics* (New York: Richardson, Steirman & Black, 1988), 102.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Daley, *Golf Architecture: A Worldwide Perspective, Volume III* (New Orleans: Pelican Publishing, 2003), xiii.

<sup>16</sup> Dennis Trewin, *2001 Yearbook Australia* (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), 819-20.

<sup>17</sup> Ben Bainbridge, "Planning for Golf in Victoria, Discussion paper," State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, 2017, 7.

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<sup>18</sup> "Municipal Golf Courses," *Referee* (Sydney), 12 April 1934, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Jock Whillans, "More Municipal Golf Courses Immediately After War," *Weekly Times* (Melbourne), 6 December 1944, 25.

<sup>20</sup> *The Fawkner Memorial Park*, 10.

<sup>21</sup> "Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator," Reserve Bank of Australia, [rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html](http://rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html).

<sup>22</sup> Burial vaults, concrete berms and other grave-filling techniques helped to keep the visual integrity of burial spaces, allowing them to maintain smooth, grassy surfaces as graves settled below; but many of these techniques add concrete to the ground, enlarging the environmental footprint of earth burial.

<sup>23</sup> Bob Millington and Fiona Capp, "Fight on to Leave no Stone Turned in Coburg's Vale of Weeds," *Age*, 16 April 1987.

<sup>24</sup> Caragh Threlfall, Alessandro Ossola, Amy Hahs, Nicholas Williams, Lee Wilson and Stephen Livesley, "Variation in Vegetation Structure and Composition across Urban Green Space Types," *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution* 4 (2016): 12.

<sup>25</sup> *2019 Golf Club Participation Report of Australia* (Cheltenham, Vic: Golf Australia, 2020), 37.

<sup>26</sup> *Issues & Challenges for Golf Clubs in Victoria* (Melbourne, Vic: Victorian Golf Association, 2004), 42.

# Renovation Machizukuri in Contemporary Japan: The Cases of Suwa, Kokura and Onomichi

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## **Abstract**

*The increasing number of vacant properties is a pressing challenge in Japan today. Depopulated towns and neighbourhoods are experiencing socio-economic decline. In response, citizen groups have carried out diverse activities known as “machizukuri” to improve the quality of life in their communities and living environments. Since the 2000s, machizukuri practices that involve the renovation of vacant building stock came to be known as “renovation machizukuri” (renovation town-making) which emphasizes social engagement through participatory design and do-it-yourself (DIY) building methods. This paper presents examples of renovation machizukuri that have emerged in recent years and are still ongoing in three Japanese cities – Suwa, Kokura and Onomichi. These three case studies shed light on the evolving role of architects and professionals who work together with citizens and volunteers in the sharing of knowledge and resources drawn together through strong social networks both online and offline. They are part of a larger movement in the rise of renovation culture, signifying a new era in contemporary Japanese architecture and town planning.*

## **Introduction**

Japan is one of the first countries to transition into a post-growth society.<sup>1</sup> The miracle period of economic growth in the post-war years propelled Japan into an unprecedented urban transformation during the 1960s, as exemplified by the “faster, higher, stronger” slogan for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The high-growth period from the 1960s saw the completion of large infrastructure projects, transport systems, and mega-developments especially in Tokyo, which had become the world’s largest metropolis. Since the burst of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, Japan entered a period of slowdown with a stagnant economy. The concentration of population in Tokyo and other large cities led to issues of uneven development and access to resources, especially for rural and peripheral areas. Natural disasters further prompted the need for social and

environmental sustainability. The 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake was seen as a catalyst for social design and the emergence of alternative practices that prioritize placemaking, co-creation, and participation.<sup>2</sup> More recently, a 2022 exhibition at the Swiss Architecture Museum in Basel, titled *Make Do With Now: New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, showcased the next generation of architects in Japan who are “developing a range of critical, ecological, and social approaches that creatively ‘make do’ – with limited resources, found materials, and existing space.”<sup>3</sup> Many are taking matters into their own hands, tackling renovation projects themselves through low-tech, do-it-yourself (DIY) methods with like-minded collaborators.

Architects in Japan today must respond to contemporary socio-economic and environmental challenges such as depopulation and the increase in vacant building stock. Renovation has become a key strategy in community design and revitalization activities known as “renovation machizukuri.” Collective efforts by both professionals such as architects and non-professional volunteers have slowly transformed local regions through incremental renovations of multiple projects over time. Though most of the buildings may not have high heritage value, some have gained heritage status after renovation activities raised awareness. Renovation also contributes to the concept of “preservation through use,” which not only extends the life of buildings and preserves the character of the area, but also ensures the long-term vitality of the region through the creation of new businesses and jobs.

The paper first outlines the development of machizukuri and renovation culture in Japan before introducing case studies of three renovation communities that have emerged since the 2000s in small towns outside large city centres, where the effects of ageing and decline are most severe:

- I. ReBuilding Center Japan in Suwa, a city in Nagano Prefecture;
- II. Renovation School, which originates from Kokura, a district in the city of Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture; and
- III. Onomichi Vacant House Renewal Project in Onomichi, a city in Hiroshima Prefecture.

### **Machizukuri as an Alternative to Traditional Town Planning**

“Machizukuri” is considered a relatively new term in the history of city planning in Japan, first used in the early 1950s. It is vague, broad and hard to translate, as terms such as “community development,” “community design” and “community building” are too narrow

and limited.<sup>4</sup> While there is no single definition, scholar Shigeru Satoh describes machizukuri as a methodology “of adaptive action design process, which involves bottom-up creative approaches based on collective action and the conscious use of the available local resources and human skills.”<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the literal translation of machizukuri as “town-making”<sup>6</sup> is most relevant when referring to “renovation machizukuri,” owing to the physical (re)making of space through renovation. Machizukuri calls for increased citizen participation in decision-making processes concerned with the management of community life.<sup>7</sup> The diverse efforts of local citizen groups in activities related to placemaking, architecture, urban planning and heritage have come to be known under the umbrella term “machizukuri.”<sup>8</sup> Machizukuri is seen as a form of participation urbanism to address issues through the collaboration of citizens, experts (e.g., architects and planners) and local government, when the planning system fails to provide the desired improvement or preservation of the urban environment.<sup>9</sup>

Planning scholar Shun-ichi J. Watanabe contrasts the term with the traditional statutory city planning in Japan known as *toshi keikaku* (literally “city planning”), an older term dating back to 1913, which describes the top-down Japanese planning system as one based on a set of national laws from the government.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, machizukuri denotes a wide range of activities centred on the local community and civil society, including not-for-profit organizations (NPOs), neighbourhood associations and citizen groups. It rose in prominence in the latter half of the 1960s during a period of protest and activism in reaction to the adverse effects of growth-oriented urban renewal that caused pollution and deteriorated living environments.<sup>11</sup> Concerns over the loss of heritage was another factor leading to protests over new construction and calls to maintain local character and preserve historical districts.<sup>12</sup> In 1968 the City Planning Law was passed to support the decentralization of planning to local municipalities, which bolstered the establishment of local machizukuri groups. Machizukuri is representative of the need for public participation in urban governance across cities in Asia, where people are starting to claim their “right to the city” in similar ways to other civil society movements in the West.<sup>13</sup>

Machizukuri has also played a large role in post-disaster reconstruction. The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in Kobe saw an unprecedented number of volunteers, and over a hundred machizukuri organizations were active immediately after the disaster.<sup>14</sup> In 1998, the Law to Promote-Specified Non-profit Activities (“NPO Law”) was established to allow NPOs and community groups to become incorporated and have a legal foundation on equal terms with the government. This asserted the value of machizukuri



and the inclusion of civil society in disaster recovery, which once again proved crucial after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake in Tohoku. The disaster triggered a rise in socially engaged design with an emphasis on the role of architects, activists, and designers to lead participatory placemaking practices that emphasized place-specificity, co-creation, and community resilience.<sup>15</sup> Machizukuri highlighted the importance of self-help initiatives that leverage social capital and networks in the rebuilding of soft infrastructure, which is often overlooked by government efforts that focus on the physical building of hard infrastructure.<sup>16</sup> By the 2000s, machizukuri had spread widely and became an established community-based approach that was accepted as an integral part of urban planning in Japan.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Rise of Renovation**

The first businesses specializing in extensions and renovations in Japan were established around 1975. They focused on repairing old buildings, a process often referred to as *rifōmu* (reform) in Japanese to describe the act of restoring deteriorated buildings to their original state. The word *rinobēshon* (renovation) became widely used in the media from the 1990s, when the scale and volume of renovation activities increased after the high-growth period. One of the early architects to focus on renovation projects, Yoshihiko Oshima from Blue Studio, differentiated the two terms by describing *rifōmu* as being limited to repairing and maintaining the hardware of a building, whereas *rinobēshon* includes considering the software such as the future use and how new programs can add value to benefit the area as a whole.<sup>18</sup> Arts & Crafts, one of the first companies to focus solely on renovation projects, organized an exhibition in 2018 titled *Renovation 1998 – 2018 and Then*, which traced twenty years of renovation activities in Japan. It profiled thirty key renovation practitioners from various backgrounds and their projects, showing how renovation developed from single residential buildings to other typologies such as share houses, guest houses, coworking spaces, and urban development.<sup>19</sup> By the 2000s, clear renovation communities had formed with key individuals, NPOs, and companies working exclusively on renovation projects throughout Japan.

The proliferation of vacant building stock is another factor that contributed to the rise of renovation in Japan. The number of vacant houses (*akiya*) is often covered in the media as a serious issue. According to the 2018 Housing and Land Statistics Survey conducted by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the number of vacant houses is 8.76 million accounting for 13.6% of the total number of

62.42 million houses.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, the number of new constructions is still increasing, even though the overall population and need for housing is shrinking. The surplus in existing building stock, coupled with the change in working styles and lack of long-term stable employment, has made it harder for young people to purchase and own new properties. Cheaper alternatives from the second-hand market have become an attractive option for many. The younger generation are also questioning the current unsustainable consumer culture and traditional scrap-and-build mentality in favour of a more sustainable approach.

How then have renovation projects developed to encompass the regeneration of whole areas and regions? The next section will introduce three case studies of renovation-based machizukuri practices, known as renovation machizukuri, which have emerged since the 2000s. They are different to the more standard machizukuri approaches that traditionally involve government-approved machizukuri councils, which carry out activities under a predefined machizukuri plan. All cases have varying levels of input from the government, private sector and NPO groups, involving collaborations between professionals and amateurs. The three examples are well-known initiatives in Japan that have created strong networks of diverse participants, forming new communities brought together by the shared process of renovation.

### **Kokura's Renovation Machizukuri**

Against the backdrop of population decline and changes in social structure, the hollowing out of town centres has made them experimental grounds for renovation. Kokura Kita Ward (Kokurakita-ku) – where Kokura Station, Kitakyushu's main railway hub – is located, had a population of about 370,000 in 1973, which was halved to about 180,000 by 2014. The nearby Uomachi Gintengai was once a bustling shopping district in the 1960s, when large industrial companies supporting Japan's rapid economic growth were based in Kitakyushu. As primary industries declined and large stores moved to the suburbs where new residential areas were developed, empty office spaces and closed shops increased in the shopping district and surrounding areas. Building vacancy in the Kokura area surpassed 18% in 2008, above the national average of 13%. With a rising number of vacant tenancies, visitors also decreased, leading to a vicious cycle of decline.

In 2010, the city of Kitakyushu set up a committee consisting of academics, government officials, local people from the shopping district, and experts in the field of urban

regeneration to assist with Kokura’s regeneration efforts. The committee developed a strategy to revitalize the town centre by creating employment opportunities for people to utilize vacant buildings. The first project collaboration was with Tokyo-based architect Yohei Shimada of Lion Kenchiku. Shimada, originally from Kitakyushu, worked on the transformation of the Nakaya Building in Uomachi Gintengai into a bustling shopping complex. As the floorplates were too large making them expensive to rent out to one tenant, they were broken up into smaller tenancies that could be rented at a below market rate that attracted young creatives and entrepreneurs to sign up before renovation started. The result was Mercato 3, an eclectic offering of restaurants, second-hand clothing stores, shared studios, and offices (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Nakaya Building before and after  
(Photograph by Lion Kenchiku).

The project was the catalyst for a series of subsequent renovations in the area, including the coworking space MIKAGE1881, hostel and cafe Tanga Table, and Comichi, a strip of *nagaya* (wooden tenement housing) renovated into rental spaces catering to mothers who wanted to start small businesses. The strategy of renovation combined with business creation through collaborative efforts between architects, property owners, and future users was promoted as “renovation machizukuri” after the establishment of the Kitakyushu Renovation Machizukuri Promotion Council in 2011.

To promote the renovation machizukuri approach as a replicable model, the Renovation School was established soon after the completion of Mercato 3. The school provides existing underutilized properties as teaching materials and requires participants required

to carry out on-site surveys and discussions before making feasible proposals towards the realization of actual projects. It is run as a multi-day workshop, usually lasting three to four days, during which participants work in small groups to formulate a business plan for a specific vacant property. The participants come from different backgrounds, including those wanting to start a small business, designers, homemakers, and students. They are supported by lectures and guidance from experts across the fields of architecture, design, and renovation. On the last day, the participants propose their business plans to property owners, who then select the best plans that will be refined further implementation. The workshop format was held twelve times from 2011 to 2018, from which sixteen projects had been implemented by 2015.<sup>21</sup> As of March 2022, the number of participants in Renovation School events has reached over 5,700 nationwide spanning over ninety cities in Japan, as well as some in Korea.<sup>22</sup>

After the first Renovation School course was held, its core members established a private company called Kitakyushu Yamorisha in 2012. There was continual and increased demand to support property owners in commercializing their vacant properties by connecting them with entrepreneurs, creatives, and other users. The model is based on the traditional concept of *yamori*, from the Edo period (1600-1867), when housekeepers were employed to help landlords manage their properties. The company collaborates with property owners and the local municipality by jointly investing in projects such as the MIKAGE 1881 coworking space where rent expenses and income are shared by the property owner, Yamorisha, and the town. Subsequent projects completed by the company have created more than three hundred jobs, and numerous events have been held in the shopping district. The initiatives in Kokura demonstrate how long-term residents and property owners can work with those from outside the region to come up with new ideas for the future and sustained use of vacant buildings. The workshop-based format has encouraged input from various collaborators, including residents, and the private and public sectors.

### **ReBuilding Center Japan Suwa, Nagano**

In 2016 a large three-storey second-hand, or “recycle” shop opened in the small town of Suwa, about two-and-a-half-hours from Tokyo on the bullet train. It offers a range of recycled building materials, tools and furniture rescued from demolished buildings (Figure 2). This is the base of ReBuilding Center Japan, known as Ribisen for short.<sup>23</sup> In addition to selling second-hand goods and tools, Ribisen’s goal is to promote a new way of thinking that creates new value from old things.



**Figure 2.** The inside of ReBuilding Center Japan showing the collection of second-hand goods on sale (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

The founders, Azuno and Kanako Tadafumi, were active as designer-builders running their studio Medicala, working like nomads renovating guesthouses and cafés throughout Japan. Frequently travelling to stay on site to complete projects, they encountered many vacant houses that were often demolished with everything still inside. On a trip to Portland, Oregon, the couple visited the ReBuilding Center and were touched by their motto “building community through reuse.” There was nothing similar in Japan at the time, which inspired them to set one up after acquiring a three-storey property in Suwa. Around half the visitors now come from outside the region, and many visit on the weekend. To fund the ReBuilding Center Japan project, an online crowd-funding campaign was launched successfully, collecting 5.4 million yen, 181% over the targeted amount. After securing the vacant property, renovation was completed in two months by five staff members and nearly five hundred volunteer helpers known as “supporters.”

Ribisen now has a staff of twenty-two, sixteen of whom are working full time. Most have been able to move to Suwa from elsewhere and make a living by working at Ribisen. Each has their own role, such as creating promotional content for the second-hand shop, managing and shipping online orders, completing custom furniture orders and running monthly events such as DIY workshops that teach participants how to upcycle and use power tools. Ribisen continues to manage an ongoing system of supporters who are an integral part of the labour force. The supporter system invites volunteers to stay in Suwa by offering them accommodation and food in exchange for helping with a range of daily

activities, such as dismantling, picking up, cleaning, and sorting materials. Supporters have included design students, people interested in DIY, and those interested in moving to the area, enabling them to get to know the town and community of Suwa. The café (Figure 3) has also become a popular gathering place for locals and visitors including DIY enthusiasts. Ribisen also continues to offer design and construction services and have completed projects all over Japan.



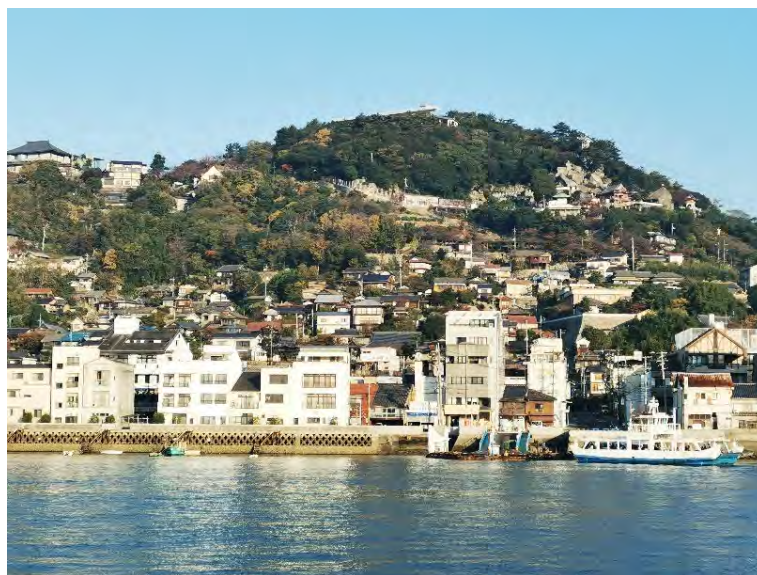
**Figure 3.** Café entrance at ReBuilding Center Japan. The front of the café is made from repurposed windows and doors (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

In November 2022, there was a new project under construction a few doors down the road. It is one of Ribisen’s current design and build projects – a bookstore, the first of its kind in the area. The owner of the store is a woman who had recently moved into the area. She had seen a call-out on Ribisen’s Instagram page, where co-founder Kanako had lamented the lack of bookstores in Suwa and hoped someone would open one in a vacant property that had become available. The bookstore owner contacted Kanako who connected her with the property. Since starting the renovation process, the bookstore owner is now working on site everyday with carpenters from Ribisen, and chooses most of the furniture and fixings from the Ribisen shop.

One of the barriers to renovation is access to properties, as it can be difficult to contact or persuade local property owners to rent or sell to people they do not know. Ribisen, having been active for a few years in the area, have built trust with the local community and property owners who may otherwise not rent their properties to outsiders. Ribisen



is also providing much-needed information about available properties and connecting them to potential users through their large social network, both online and offline. Thus, Ribisen has broken down the barriers for new people from outside the region wishing to set up business in the area by renovating various properties into guest houses, cafés, bakeries and shops in Suwa and surrounding areas. It is an example of a private company that welcomes the public as supporters into its community and provides valuable support for those considering moving into the area.



**Figure 4.** In the Yamate district, houses are built on the slopes of the mountain overlooking the Seto Inland Sea (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

### **Vacant House Revival in Onomichi**

Onomichi is a quaint town in Hiroshima Prefecture, built around a port that was established over 850 years ago (Figure 04). The area on the mountain overlooking the Seto Inland Sea is known as the Yamate district and is now a popular tourist attraction with many temples dotted on the slopes. It is a historic city well known in literature and cinema, having featured in Yasujiro Ozu's 1953 film *Tokyo Story*. In the late Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926) and early Showa (1926-1989) periods, wealthy merchants began to build villas and tea gardens, followed by Western-style buildings, inns, and common wooden row houses for veterans. These various styles form the unique present-day landscape, consisting of old buildings that have been spared from large-scale damage from war or natural disaster. Indeed, the town has been described as a kind of outdoor architecture museum (*tatemono no hakubutsukan*). One characteristic of the sloping residential areas is the web of narrow walkways, some only barely a metre

wide, making them inaccessible to cars. Current building laws forbid any new building due to road access requirements for fire trucks, limiting any construction to renovation or extensions. Even then, the difficult access means renovation costs are around three times higher compared to the easily accessible flat areas. As a result, many of the houses are left unoccupied as owners do not have the resources to fix and maintain them. It is estimated that over a quarter of the two thousand or so houses around Onomichi station, including the sloped areas, are vacant.



**Figure 5.** Gaudi House was the first vacant house purchased by NPO Aki-P founder Masako Toyota. Renovation started in 2007 and was completed in 2020. It was designated Tangible Cultural Property in 2013 (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

Masako Toyota, a former tour guide, had returned to her hometown of Onomichi in her early 30s to raise her young children. Motivated to do something about the rising number of vacant houses, she purchased one in 2007 on the sloped Yamate area and began renovating it with her carpenter husband. Nicknamed Gaudi House (Figure 5), she started to document the renovation progress on her blog. People became interested in the project with many inquiring about renovation and the availability of vacant houses in the area after reading her blog. This prompted interest in the project, with many people inquiring about renovation and the availability of vacant houses in the area. Soon, a voluntary organization was established and formally incorporated as an NPO called the Onomichi Vacant House Renewal Project (*Onomichi Akiya saisei purojekuto*), known as Aki-P for short.



Since its inception in 2008, Aki-P has renovated around twenty properties, including guest houses, share houses, cafés, and an artist-in-residence. From 2009, it has also worked to disseminate information on vacant houses and promote migration to Onomichi through managing the vacant house bank for the town, helping to match over a hundred houses to new residents. Other key activities include holding the annual Onomichi Architecture School, where architects and university professors lead walking tours and renovation workshops for students and the public to experience on-site renovation projects guided by local carpenters and craftspeople. Regular meetings and public discussions are also held to discuss strategies on how to best utilize vacant houses with presentations by guest researchers and experts to share their knowledge. Events such as flea markets are held to sell goods left behind in the houses.

One of the first projects was a small two-storey house, which had a leaky roof, extensive termite damage, and rotting beams after lying empty for twenty years. More than one hundred people were involved in the renovation process, including volunteers guided by specialists. Structural work was carried out by experts, while building workshops were held for the public to learn and experience various renovation techniques with craftspeople, plasterers, carpenters, and architects. The space opened in early 2009 and is now used as the NPO office and a space for mothers and children (Figure 6). Subsequent projects follow similar methods of volunteers and specialists working on the renovation together, including two guest houses now managed by the NPO providing employment for young people in the town.



**Figure 6.** Kitamura Shoten is now used as an office space for the NPO above and a resting space for mothers and children below (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

Two properties, Gaudi House (Figure 5) and guest house Miharashi Tei (Figure 7) were successfully designated Tangible Cultural Properties by the Agency for Cultural Affairs after the NPO applied for recognition.<sup>24</sup> Onomichi's NPO led renovation movement is an example of a not-for-profit initiative that aims to support people's livelihoods while preserving an old historical area based on the motto of "preservation through use."



**Figure 7.** Miharashi Tei is one of two renovated properties now operating as guest houses by the NPO Akiya-P. It was registered as a Tangible Cultural Property in 2013 (Photograph by Nancy Ji).

## Conclusion

The three examples presented are indicative of a new era for architecture and machizukuri activities from the 2000s. The rise of renovation has opened architecture to a wider audience to include non-professionals and amateurs. University of Tokyo professor Shuichi Matsumura described this as a new era of "open architecture" where ordinary people could participate in placemaking efforts through DIY renovations.<sup>25</sup> Renovation machizukuri has diversified the activities of professionals such as architects and planners and their role in civil society. Though professional carpenters and trade professionals are still employed for specific jobs, the rise of DIY renovation undertaken by the wider public has seen architects transition to roles beyond design. Architects and designers such as Shimada who started the Kitakyushu Yamorisha property management company and Tadafumi from Ribisen running a café and store are both entrepreneurs in addition to taking on design work. Shimada also runs a small bakery in his local neighbourhood where he works in his spare time. He believes that running a local business is a crucial part of being involved in community life, giving him the chance to create the "contents" of the building, which he sees as more important than the

container or building itself. Matsumura uses the phrase “democratization of architecture” to highlight the transition of the construction industry supplying buildings as “boxes” to meet demand, to the current renovation climate that utilizes the left over boxes to create more meaningful “places” (*ba*) focused on the creative activities taking place within them.

Architects are also working closely with NPOs and members of the community as equal contributors that break down the traditional architect-client relationship in the co-creation of renovation projects. Co-creation can be seen as a modern form of *yui*, a kind of mutual assistance and collaborative work originating from traditional Japanese village life (Figure 8). Villagers would help each other in the building and maintenance of houses such as the rethatching of straw roofs, which needed many hands to complete in a timely manner.



**Figure 8.** A modern form of *yui* in Onomichi. Volunteers working together to dispose of waste materials in a relay format and plastering walls during a workshop (Photographs by Onomichi Akiya Saisei Purojekuto).

The process of renovation also emphasizes inclusivity and flexibility for different people to contribute their own skills as seen in the supporter system at Ribisen, or the diverse profiles of volunteers at renovation workshops in Onomichi, who range from school children to elderly locals. The adoption of technology and social media, where renovation leaders skilfully gather diverse participants from both their own social networks, as well as reaching strangers via platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, further promote inclusivity by allowing anyone to easily get in contact to participate or support renovation endeavours. Rather than a single client funding the projects, call outs

on social media through crowd-funding campaigns have raised funds from hundreds of supporters, including the initial Ribisen renovation and the Miharashi Tei Guest House in Onomichi, allowing the public to choose which projects they would like to see realized.

Though the case studies represent a new era of machizukuri, they are still based on traditional concepts such as *yamori* and *yui*. All three examples are still ongoing after many years, allowing small-scale changes that adapts to the changing needs of a locality over time. Each started with one key project that gathered a community of people to build up momentum, know-how, and skills for subsequent renovations. The open workshop format adopted provides accessible venues for public participation, including those directly related to the region such as building owners and people living in the area, as in the case of the Renovation School workshops held across Japan. As described by architect Yohei Shimada, “renovation is no longer just about refurbishing a building, it is about changing the atmosphere of an entire area.”<sup>26</sup> With more buildings being renovated, new businesses and jobs are created, attracting new people to move to the area, which in turn attracts more visitors to depopulated regions. Many previous volunteers such as Ribisen supporters maintain connections to the local area, returning regularly as another source of support and exchange between regions. In addition to the sustained use of the buildings, many events and activities are held regularly to further engage with the wider town and community, such as the walking tours, various talks, and exhibitions in the case of Onomichi.

As renovation machizukuri continues to develop in Japan, some thoughts for further research are outlined below. Firstly, the practice of DIY renovation machizukuri is diverse and varied, and existing research is mainly based on single case studies with a focus on successful cases in specific localities. How can one measure the success (or not) of renovation machizukuri to understand if there are common recipes for success that can be applied over multiple locations? What are some best practices that could serve as guidelines without restricting creativity?

Secondly, the DIY approach of making do with what is at hand by using available and repurposed materials deserves further investigation. How can the field of architecture recognize DIY as a legitimate method, particularly in areas relating to community revitalization and heritage? For example, we need new ways to evaluate heritage to include more diverse approaches such as DIY renovation, as opposed to strictly regulated restoration, which could be instrumental in the preservation of old townscapes

as in the case of Onomichi. Though there is still much more to learn in the field of renovation machizukuri, what is clear is that the increased number of renovation projects reflect contemporary realities and attitudes in Japan, where people are advocating for a more socially engaged and environmentally conscious approach to the practice of architecture and town planning. It is time to open wider discussion on the topic of renovation machizukuri as a promising way forward for inclusive placemaking in post-growth Japan.

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# Crossing Landscape and Architecture: Embodiment of A-Perspectival Space in Wang Shu's Oblique Drawings

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## **Abstract**

*Over the past two decades, Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate Wang Shu has experimented with renewing vernacular architectural vocabularies by reinterpreting traditional Chinese landscape paintings and gardens. However, the role of Wang's design drawings in his architectural undertakings remains largely underexplored. By analysing Wang's handmade design drawings, this paper examines how the architect bridges the gap between traditional landscape painting, which is often considered to be the epitome of Chinese modes of spatial perception, and the modern oblique projection method, which is a technique that is based on the Cartesian coordinate system.*

*First, through a literature review, this paper frames a salient aspect of Wang's appreciation of the traditional Chinese landscape painting, namely the genre's a-perspectival treatment of pictorial space. For Wang, the landscape painting embodies a culture-bound mode of "seeing," which resorts to neither the illusionary perspective nor Cartesian metric space. Second, through case studies, this paper analyses the key aspects of Wang's landscape painting-informed a-perspectival oblique drawings and his drawings' critical implications. In his design for the Tengtou Pavilion (Shanghai, 2009-10), Wang creates nonrepresentational, immeasurable spaces with inconsistent projection fragments to evoke intended phenomenally boundless depth and transforms the technique into a collage device to prompt an architecture-landscape parallelism. In his sketch for the Lingyin Temple teahouse complex (Hangzhou, 2008-20), Wang doubles the modes of oblique drawing to attune the landscape painting and architectural projection and transform nature into built forms.*

*By drawing on Wang's case, this paper offers insights into how the standardised oblique drawing method can afford culturally grounded a-*



*perspectival uses and how such critical adaptations could assist the architect to move across the ontological border between architecture and landscape.*

### **A-Perspectival Landscape Painting and Perspectival Oblique Drawing**

Linear perspective is a specific mathematically codified projection technique and “symbolic form” of worldview that is rooted in European logocentric epistemology and an assumption of sovereign subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> The perspectival window gives an illusionary view of the world, which is outside the petrified viewer’s immediate presence. Linear perspective is also said to have anticipated the Cartesian notion of space-in-itself, whereby space is conceived as an “infinite, isotropic, and homogeneous” continuum that is “independent of all time, matter, and motion.”<sup>2</sup> In a critical sense, an alternative a-perspectival mode of space conception requires a paradigmatic break with the homogeneous continuity of metric space and perceives the space not as a self-sufficient abstract coordinate but a lived phenomenon that emerges with embodied human experiences.

The history of oblique drawing illustrates the technique’s entanglements with perspectival ideologies. Modern oblique drawing, whereby parallel projectors intersect with the pictorial plane at non-right angles, is a subtype of rationalised parallel projection. Despite the empirical uses of prototype oblique drawings in ancient civilisations, the oblique drawing method was only mathematically codified at the end of the eighteenth century by Gaspard Monge, William Farish and other mathematicians and technicians.<sup>3</sup> European military architects and engineers favoured oblique drawing owing to its objective representation with metric accuracy, which perspective distortion failed to provide. At the turn of the twentieth century, the avant-garde (e.g., El Lissitzky, Theo van Doesburg and many others) was primarily interested in the oblique drawing method’s a-perspectival potentials, that is its dimensional reversibility and indeterminacy regarding the viewer’s relationship with the pictorial field.<sup>4</sup> Stan Allen implied that perspectival ideologies remain detectable in the avant-garde’s historical oblique drawings, where “the model of space in depth persists.”<sup>5</sup> Recently, Adam Jasper theorised that parallel projection in general is a “meta-perspective fulfilling the goal of a complete spatial continuum,” especially in digital media wherein the living environment is reduced to data.<sup>6</sup>



Wang Shu is a major proponent of the recent discourse on the revival of Chinese picturesque tradition. For Wang, the traditional Chinese landscape painting epitomises “a different way of seeing” in the sense that the genre is not a window through which to gaze but a realm inviting “you [to] really enter it [the painting].”<sup>7</sup> The landscape painting’s participatory mode of perception is closely linked to the painting’s pictorial method of structuring “the spatial depths of the mountains” without geometric unity.<sup>8</sup> The long history of the Chinese landscape painting or *Shanshui Hua*, which means the paintings of the mountains and rivers, dates back to the fourth century, and these paintings reached their peak during the Song Dynasty (Northern Song [960-1127 AD] and Southern Song [1127-1279 AD]) when the natural landscape became a dominant subject in Chinese visual arts. Although Wang never uses the neologism “a-perspectival” when discussing landscape paintings, certain commonly observed features that Wang frequently discusses in his own essays – such as the painting’s participatory mode of perception; nonrepresentational elements; visual and cultural flatness; and incorporation of bodily movement, time, and multifocality when structuring pictorial depth – reflect the art genre’s most recognisable a-perspectival characteristics. Some of these features are revisited in a subsequent analysis of Wang’s design drawings. For now, it is sufficient to briefly outline Wang’s general stance and key points.

Wang belongs to the generation of Chinese architects exposed to the Western discourses on the so-called crisis of representation, whereby the traditional theory of mimesis (in the Greek sense), which regards representation as the secondary imitation of an a priori transcendental reality, is disputed. From Cubism to Russian Constructivism, Wang is well aware of Western modernist paintings’ revolutionary break with mimesis and its associated perspective illusionism, as he notes that such paintings are “not reproducing reality” but “create a genuinely real object.”<sup>9</sup> Wang adopts this critical antimimetic attitude in his reading of the Chinese landscape painting, which is rooted in an entirely non-Western epistemological and aesthetic tradition through which the ontological disparity between the transcendently real and concrete experience is unknown.<sup>10</sup>

Wang asserts that the landscape painting is a “mythic machine of real reality” in the sense that the genre is never a mere realist representation of nature’s appearances but attempts to embody “the experience of travelling amidst real landscapes of natural beauty.”<sup>11</sup> Ancient landscape painters reinvented the two-dimensional pictorial surface, whose spatiotemporal coherence arises with viewers’ mental meanderings inside the

optically and geometrically incoherent image. It follows that the painting's pictorial depth is not a geometrically prescribed dimension but is perceived as a phenomenon experienced through time and the viewer's imaginary motion.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the landscape painting champions a nonhierarchical part-whole relationship, where the pictorial whole is not structured by pre-given geometric uniformity but grows out of local segments' lived interactions.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the painting is culturally flat, as it embodies a nonanthropocentric ethical value whereby the natural and artificial are considered equal.<sup>14</sup>

Arguably, Wang's points are in line with the mainstream discourses of the cross-cultural studies of Chinese landscape painting and philosophy, which compare the Chinese art form's deep-lying cosmological thoughts, modes of perception, aesthetic criteria and compositional characteristics with those defining the tradition of European Renaissance paintings. It is a historical fact that linear perspective, along with Euclidean geometry, remained unknown to Chinese painters until the late sixteenth century (through Jesuit missionaries) and that the perspective technique was never favoured.<sup>15</sup> Art historian John Hay called the pictorial field in traditional Song Dynasty paintings "algebraic space" (in contrast to Renaissance paintings' geometric space). Through algebraic space, spatial depth is additively constructed from compartmentalised sections and "tensions between opposing organisational schemata" are part of the paintings' effects.<sup>16</sup>

In light of the above discussions, this paper posits that the traditional landscape painting's a-perspectival sensitivities, which are highlighted by Wang and his own architectural drawings, which often take the form of modern oblique drawings, are potentially incompatible. The following analysis of Wang's handmade design drawings focuses specifically on how he navigates the identified paradigmatic gap by distorting the rationalised oblique projection in multiple ways.

### **Tengtou Pavilion: Collage Oblique**

In 2009, the Amateur Architecture Studio, which was cofounded by Wang and Lu Wenyu, was commissioned to design the 2010 Shanghai Expo exhibition pavilion for the village of Tengtou, Zhejiang. "A picturesque house," as Wang calls the pavilion, aims to offer an architecturally mediated sensation of spatial depth. On the restricted site (50 metres long and 15 metres wide), the architects attempted to create an effect of "ever-deeper space" by inviting the visitor to circumnavigate a series of densely aligned self-similar building layers (Figure 1).<sup>17</sup> The intended spatial boundlessness in

the design went hand in hand with Wang’s staged drawing procedure, which he describes in his essay titled “The Field of Vision on Section [*sic*]” as “start[ing] drawing from sections.” Wang explains:

For me, the seemingly unthought cartographic formats – plan, elevation, section, and the before-after order of producing them – decide, in a fundamental way, whether we are reckoning on architecture.<sup>18</sup>

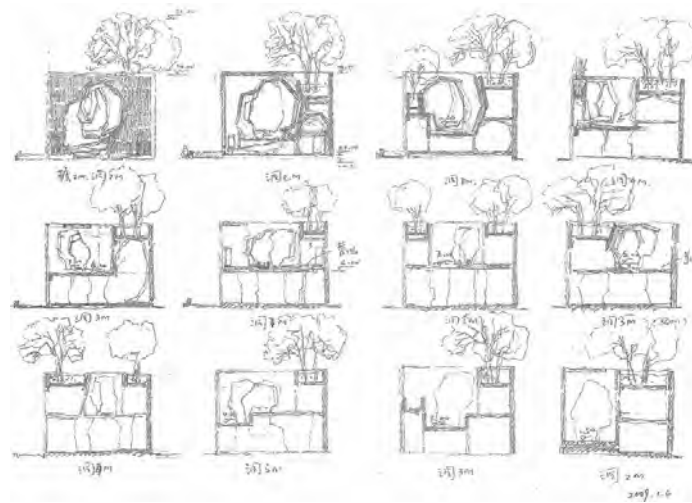
Wang’s starting-drawing-from-sections imperative brings into question the privilege granted to the architectural ground plan as a primary order giver. According to Wang, in traditional gardens and paintings, the spatial coherence emerges from “mutual correspondences and interdependences of the [local] sections” rather than being predetermined by an overarching order.<sup>19</sup> This inversed part-whole relationship is also recalled in Wang’s adaptation of oblique drawing, which is used as an assembling device to create aggregate pictorial depth.



**Figure 1.** Interior spatial layers (left) and exterior prismatic envelope (right) of the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2010 (photograph courtesy of Yige Yinghua).

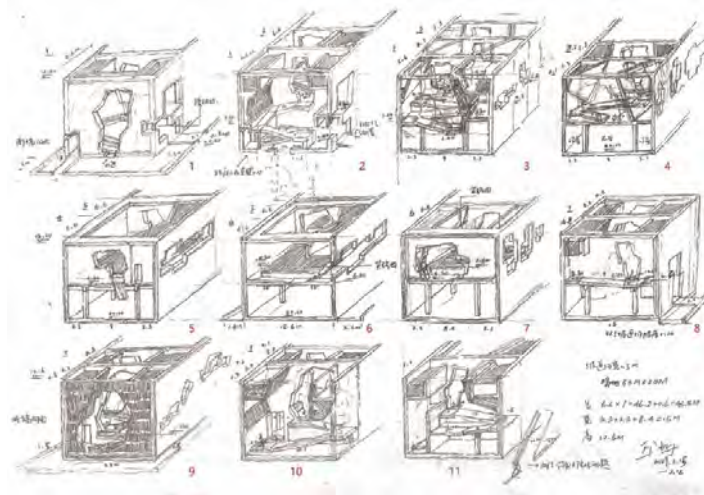
### **Boundless Depth**

Wang’s published drawings for the Tengtou Pavilion contain three stages of work: sectional sketches, section-oblique drawings, and an overall view collage. With twelve sectional sketches, the architect proposes dividing the building’s north-south longitudinal axis (46.9 metres) into a series of self-similar layers (Figure 2). Based on the sectional sketches, Wang proceeds to draw eleven obliques to further study the intermediate floors between these vertical planes (Figure 3).

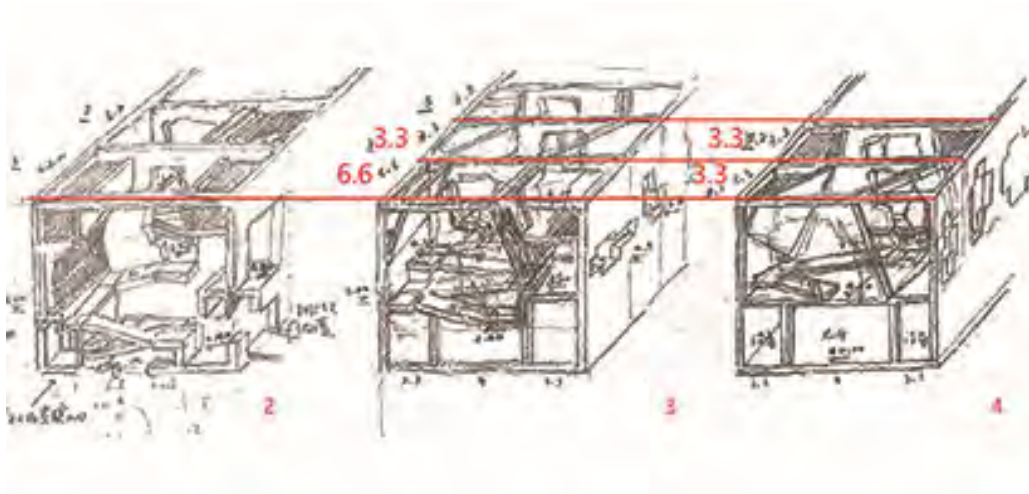


**Figure 2.** Wang Shu, Twelve sectional sketches for the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2009 (A4 printer paper; pencil; sketches courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).

Wang’s oblique drawings combine notations and graphics. The numerical notations indicate “the number of times of cutting out the architectural layers and their actual measurements.”<sup>20</sup> In this technical representation, the pavilion’s longitudinal axis is studied as a metrically controlled sequence comprising a number of successive units, of which 3.3 metres is used as the basic module. In addition, Wang’s section-oblique drawings meticulously delineate the topological attributes of the floors spreading across the sectional planes, such as the subtle changes in elevation levels, semi-interior corridors, ramps, a short bridge and planting trays. Tensions between the metric measurements and visual depictions are in play. By closely examining the eleven section-oblique drawings in Figure 3, one observes that their diagonal recessions are not drawn to a consistent scale. For example, in Oblique 3, 3.3 metres and 6.6 metres are drawn as almost equal lengths. This visual equivalence of different lengths is also true when Obliques 2, 3, and 4 are compared (Figure 4). In Obliques 6 and 7, 6.6 metres appears to be nearly identical to 13.2 metres (Figure 5). Notwithstanding, all of the frontal sections are drawn to the same scale. These repeated inconsistencies suggest that, in Wang’s section-oblique drawings, the shifts in scaling when depicting spatial recession may not be careless errors.

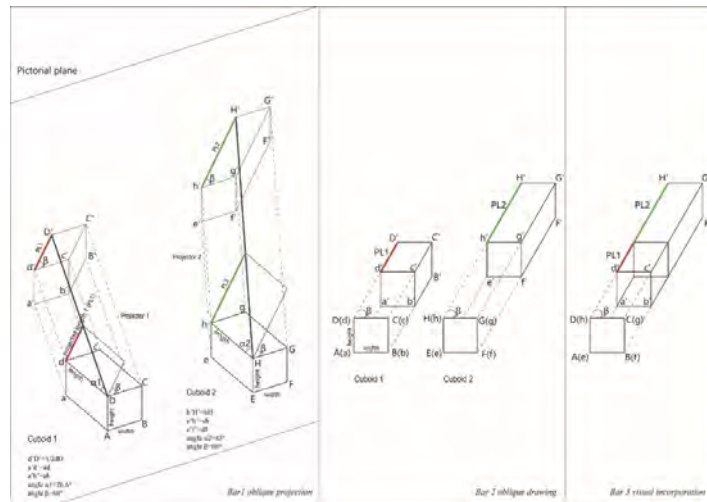


**Figure 3.** Wang Shu, Eleven oblique drawings for the Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo, 2009 (A3 printer paper; pencil; drawings courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio), with each oblique drawing being labelled with numbers in parentheses for the purposes of the author's analysis.



**Figure 4.** Comparisons of diagonal extrusions across Wang's oblique drawings (Obliques 2, 3, and 4).





**Diagram 1.** Synthesis of inconsistent projected lengths  
(Drawing by Xin Jin).

In Figure 3, Wang uses the oblique method in a collagelike manner, even though the “seam” or visual rupture signifying grafting work is disguised. On the one hand, each individual oblique fragment remains faithful to the oblique system and represents illusory spatial recession on a two-dimensional surface. On the other hand, Wang dismantles the linear recessional axis of the oblique system and constructs additive virtual spaces with the intervals between the individual obliques. These virtual spaces are immeasurable, abstract and shallow, as they are not modelled on spatial recession but constructed from the discontinuities between fragmentary images. There is an inversed image-space hierarchy at work in Wang’s oblique drawings. The two-dimensional images are not merely mimetic representations of the three-dimensional space but become the condition of perceiving the abstract virtual spaces. The drawings meticulously delineate the architectonic details of the building sections’ floors, whose intricacies invite the viewers’ vicarious strolls through the episodically laid architectural scenes.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the virtual spaces beyond the geometric coordinate prevent the depicted floors from being integrated into a single homogeneous ground plane. Wang’s treatment of uncommon grounds is more than simply a conceptual game; it helps to provide a sense of phenomenal boundlessness central to the pavilion design. Wang’s starting-from-section strategy and collage oblique drawings play a part in abolishing the prerogative of the plan and criticising the tyranny of metric space over spatial sensation.

### Architecture-Landscape Parallelism

In the material world, the interior of the Tengtou Pavilion ends at its outer walls. Nevertheless, Wang’s virtual construction of depth, which is marked by his



nonrepresentational – and thus a-perspectival – sensitivities, continues further in the pictorial domain. In the overall view drawing for the project, Wang’s previously disguised assembling work evolves into his demonstrative collage of architectural drawing and landscape painting (Figure 6). Wang once called collage “the secret of our traditional landscape painting,” and he often adopts a stylised photomontage strategy, which is similar to that of the English artist David Hockney’s “joiners,” as a means of site survey.<sup>22</sup> In Figure 6, Wang combines the eleven oblique drawings as readymade blocks into variants of the constructed Tengtou Pavilion and further combines these variants to form a village-scale compound. Furthermore, the drawing of the village is juxtaposed with a collage reworking of the handscroll *Painting of a Country Retreat* (*Shanzhuang Tu*; 28.9 x 364.6 centimetres in its original size) after the Northern Song master Li Gonglin (1049-1106 AD). In particular, Wang selects two sections of *A Country Retreat* and collages the cut-outs left and right. He explains that his collage “delineate[s] an overall view of the new village, which comprises meticulous constructions preserving the diversity of lifeworld.”<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that Wang’s kaleidoscopic overall view is achieved through the enlarged pictorial scope and, perhaps more importantly, the inclusion of the fragmentary images’ qualitative differences.



**Figure 6.** Wang Shu and Wang Ning, an overall view drawing for the Tengtou Pavilion scheme, 2010 (digital collage, courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).

In linear perspective, a single scaling system regulates the sizes of all depicted objects. However, Wang notes that, in *A Country Retreat*, there is neither a consistent scaling nor a stationary vision but rather that “the distance in his [the painter’s] depiction is changing” and that the distinctions between distant and close views are visually blurred



in their continual flow. Wang remarks that, in *A Country Retreat*, a “site map”-like distant view of the mountains “in a 1:2000 scale” merges with the close views of landscape sceneries “in a scale of 1:100” (see the middle-left part of the reworked painting in Figure 6).<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that, in Wang’s adaptation of the painting, the sequential flux of the distant and close views becomes the views’ collage juxtaposition. In fact, Wang’s reworking of *A Country Retreat* constructs a new bifocal structure, which is absent from the original painting, comprising left-right and distant-close views.

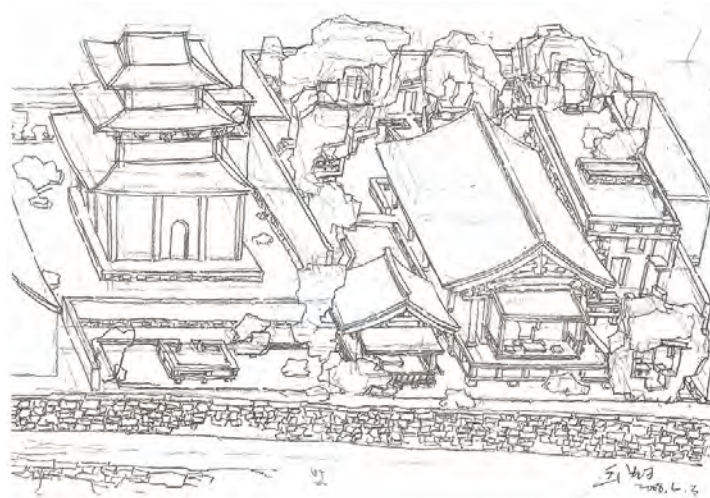
This new left-right bifocal structure is consistent with the up-down side parallelism of the images of architecture and landscape. First, the bifocal structure in Wang’s reworking of *A Country Retreat* invalidates a reading of the adapted painting as a stable pictorial background, since the painting as a whole is neither a compositionally nor a spatially integrated image at all. Rather than as a conventional background, Wang adapts *A Country Retreat* to serve as a model of imaging, whose collage logic is already reflected in Wang’s own oblique drawings of the envisioned village. The absurd oversizing of *A Country Retreat*’s sceneries in relation to the village scene reinforces the identified architecture-landscape parallelism. This overproportioning treatment allows the painting cut-outs to be perceived as independent visual narratives, whose excessive pictorial details remain indifferent to the established architectural context.

Second, the loose parallelism of the images of architecture and mountains is connected through the agency of time and narrative. In *A Country Retreat*, the same literati figures appear several times in different sceneries. The figures’ reappearances allude to their virtual processes of roaming the landscape sceneries through time. The painting’s already existing temporal threads are further prolonged as the literati figures in the mountainous landscape walk into Wang’s architecture (Figure 6). The peripatetic figures’ invisible paths function as place binders that stitch the built and mountainous scenes together. The depth of the mountain and village, which is experienced through the unfolding of time, defies the reductionist idea that regards the architecture-landscape relationship as a mere visual composition (Figure 6). The loose architecture-landscape parallelism in Wang’s collage can be considered an externalisation of the inherent parallelism structuring the oblique drawing, whereby no privileged centrality would be pre-established. Wang’s collage parallelism also foregrounds his polemical discourse that insists on a “mutual understanding and harmonious relationship between humanity and nature.”<sup>25</sup> For Wang, landscape is not a passive background

against which studio-designed buildings can be placed, with or without posterior modification, but an “interlocutor” with which architecture comes into being.

### **Lingyin Teahouse: Architecturalising Landscape through Drawing the Obliques**

In the design for the Lingyin Teahouse in Hangzhou (2008-20), Wang’s a-perspectival uses of the oblique method, which models depth without recourse to unified axial recession, play a part in bridging the gap between landscape painting and architectural drawing, as well as architecturalising the mountain topology as architectonic forms. Almost at the same time as the Amateur Architecture Studio was working on the Tengtou Pavilion, the Zen Buddhist monks of Lingyin Temple, which was established in 328 AD, commissioned the studio to design a new teahouse complex housing areas for religious mediation and recreational activities (Figure 7). The teahouse complex design involves Wang’s long-term landform design motif “architecture as a mountain,” which recapitulates his efforts to translate the artistic image of the mountain in traditional paintings into architectural organisational strategies and formal vocabularies. Wang’s metaphorical motif also implies an inwardly layered structure wherein the architecture is conceptualised as a world within a world. Wang explains that “to regard a building as a mountain is to regard the building as a world.”<sup>26</sup> Regarding the teahouse, the motif “architecture as a mountain” is more than a personal approach and is endowed with strategic significance. Owing to the site’s historical sensitivities, the main tea hall and pagoda had to be designed in an ancient style, a demand that conflicts with Wang’s refusal to directly emulate tradition. Wang’s strategy involves “adding on [*sic*] a ‘landscape’” to ancient-style buildings.<sup>27</sup> On the site, the added landscape takes the form of an L-shaped area of artificial mountain, or what Wang calls “Taihu rock houses,” along the courtyard’s east and north walls. Having been experimented on in several previous projects (e.g., the urban renovation of the Southern Song Imperial Street in Hangzhou [2007-09; Figure 8]), the landscape-architecture hybrid form of Taihu rock house takes direct inspiration from the ornamental limestones quarried from Lake Tai, which one routinely encounters in traditional gardens and paintings. In Wang’s preliminary sketch, the artificial mountain comprises five interlocking “rocks,” which are actually multistorey pavilions with irregular concrete wraps that simulate the jagged contours of natural stones.



**Figure 7.** Wang Shu, preliminary sketch showing an aerial view oblique drawing for the teahouse complex at Lingyin Temple, Hangzhou, 2008 (A3 printer paper; pencil; sketch courtesy of the Amateur Architecture Studio).



**Figure 8.** The Taihu rock houses in the Southern Song Imperial Street renovation project, Hangzhou, 2007-09 (Photograph by Xin Jin).

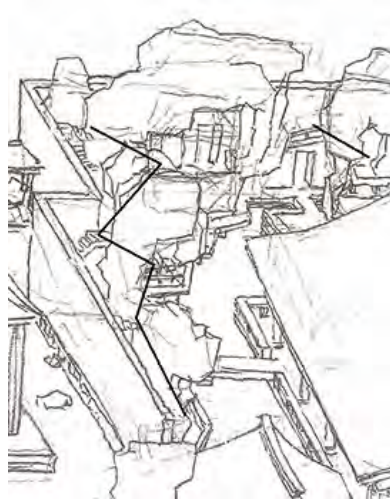
Despite the rock houses' figurative symbolism, Wang also seeks to translate the landscape painting's a-perspectival mode of structuring "the spatial depths of the mountains" into architectural organisation, which is discernible in his aerial view oblique drawing for the teahouse project (Figure 7). Initially appearing formulaic, Wang's visualisation of the artificial mountain follows the "deep distance" (*shen yuan*) formula, which is a composition type of the structural schema known as "the three distances" (*san yuan*). In *The Lofty Message of Forests and Streams (Linqun Gaozhi)*, the Northern Song painter and theoretician Guo Xi (active 1070 to after 1123 AD), who was among the first to theorise how to structure the mountain's pictorial depth, elaborated that:

mountains have three types of distance. Looking up to the mountain's peak from its foot is called the high distance. From in front of the mountain spying past it to beyond is called deep distance. Gazing from a nearby mountain at those more distant is called the level distance.<sup>28</sup>

As Guo specified, the “idea of deep distance is of repeated layering.”<sup>29</sup> With the deep distance technique, space is not represented as a continuous volumetric expansion but “obscured depth captured in a picture that was only partially perceived.”<sup>30</sup> This type of painterly opacity in the deep distance scheme is different from perspective, which comes from the Latin verb *perspicere*, which means “to see through.” The important role of the three distances schema in shaping architecturally mediated space perception in projects such as the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art, Phase II (2004-08), and the Fuyang Cultural Complex, which was completed in 2017, has been repeatedly affirmed by Wang and explored recently by David Leatherbarrow.<sup>31</sup> Writing to explain his design inspiration for the Tile Mountain Guesthouse (2010-13), Wang references the middle section of the hanging scroll *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao* (*Huanghe Sanjiao Tu*) by Ming Dynasty painter Xie Shichen (1487 to after 1567 AD; Figure 9).<sup>32</sup> In the painting's middle section, the ground plane is almost completely eschewed. What is visually displayed are mainly the overlaps of congesting scenes that allude to invisible depth behind. Wang contends that this type of artistically charged concealment is Chinese painters' quintessential means to evoke the experience of “viewing a mountain inside a mountain.”<sup>33</sup>



**Figure 9.** Xie Shichen, *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao*, Ming Dynasty (Left: hanging scroll; ink on paper; 58.9 x 31.2 centimetres; Nanjing Museum, Nanjing; Right: the middle section of the painting).



**Figure 10.** Detail, the aerial view oblique drawing for the Lingyin Teahouse.

The idea of evoking depth through concealment is in Wang's preliminary sketch of the artificial mountain at the Lingyin Teahouse. Unlike with the continuous receding lines when representing the volumetric expansion of the tea hall and Buddhist pagoda, Wang arranges mutual occlusions of depicted scenes, such as the rock houses, outdoor steps, grottoes, water banks and flying passages, to evoke the artificial mountain's depth (Figure 7). Here, Wang utilises occlusion, density and congestion as expressive devices through which multiple threads reciprocally penetrate and fragmentise one another. The winding path and water bank disappear and reappear, which evokes hidden passages connecting a number of places for drinking tea. The result is that remote correspondences and disrupted threads between scenes replace visually revealed continuity as depth cues. As the viewer's sight is constantly interrupted and distracted, the pictorial depth of the artificial mountain cannot simply be "read off" but must be reconstructed by the viewer when they closely attend to the arranged parallaxes of the elements in the drawing.

The co-presence of the two distinct ways of modelling depth (i.e., depth as occlusion and depth as recession) also doubles the monolithic oblique method. Unlike with the highly expressive painterly occlusion in traditional paintings such as *Landscape After Huanghe Sanjiao*, Wang handles overlaps in a rather patternised manner. Almost mechanically, he adds up the compartmentalised overlays of the front (water bank), the middle (rock profile) and the back (walking path) scenes towards the top of the picture's edge. Despite the rocks' varying sizes and profiles, each rock body in the middle of the tripartite pattern slopes slightly to the right side to shelter the front water

bank at the rock's foot and make it possible to glimpse beyond the rock to the paths behind. In turn, the rhythmic repetition of the tripartite pattern implies a number of serpent-like folding lines that guide viewers' perceptions of pictorial depth (highlighted in Figure 10). These local oblique lines are after-effects that do not submit to a single prescriptive diagonal axis that dominates the depictions of the building halls. Hence, in Wang's drawing, two subtly distinct yet mutually communicable modes of oblique coexist: first, the continuous axialised oblique recession, which represents depth, and, second, the locus-to-locus, orientation-changing oblique layering, which evokes sensations of depth.

Wang's dual-mode oblique drawing attunes the landscape painting and architectural drawing and plays a role in his translating of the mountain topology into the building morphology. This translation, which begins with drawing, brings forth Wang's radical domestication of the relationship between landscape and architecture, which is implied in his motif "architecture as a mountain." Wang does not confine the landscape-architecture correlation to a conventional figure-background or building-site composition but attempts to imprint this correlation inwardly onto the architectural form.<sup>34</sup> Regarding the Lingyin Teahouse, the aforementioned architecture-landscape parallelism manifests in a fuller form. The architect formulaically redraws the landscape using pencil and transforms it from a cultural reference into an internalised figure within the architectural drawing. In this sense, Wang's oblique drawing operates as a threshold through which the image of the mountain enters that of the architecture and a site wherein the act of architecturalising the mountain occurs.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Wang's a-perspectival adaptations of oblique drawing manifest in multiple ways. In his sketches for the Tengtou Pavilion, non-representational virtual depth is constructed with the inconsistent projection images that mimetically represent three-dimensional spaces. In the overall view collage for the same project, the relational depth between the landscape and the architecture unfolds via bodily movements through time. Regarding the Lingyin Teahouse, spatial depth is evoked through organised parallaxes. Wang's a-perspectival oblique drawings bridge the gap between the culture-bound way of perceiving and constructing depth in the traditional landscape painting and the standardised architectural projection method. The collage and parallax logics, as Wang discerns them in the landscape painting, act as primary modes of imaging space. This methodical shift from space modelled on continuity to space modelled on discontinuity signals how Wang reconceptualises the changing border between

architecture and landscape. Through his a-perspectival oblique drawings, Wang illustrates an architecture-landscape parallelism that goes beyond conventional figure-background composition. Landscape is neither merely a tabula rasa that is to be occupied by artificial construction nor an exterior condition awaiting a design response but emerges from within the architectural form.

### Acknowledgements

I thank Prof. Stanislaus Fung (the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Harvard University) for inspirational discussions on the topic of a-perspective space.

### Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup> Hilary Bryon, "Revolutions in Space: Parallel Projections in the Early Modern Era," *arc: Architectural Research Quarterly* 12, no. 3-4 (2008): 337-46.
- <sup>4</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, "Metamorphosis of Axonometry," *Daidalos*, no. 1 (1981): 40-58.
- <sup>5</sup> Stan Allen, *Practice: Architecture Technique+Representation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 28.
- <sup>6</sup> Adam Jasper, "God's Eye View," in *This Thing Called Theory*, ed. Teresa Stoppioni, Giorgio Ponzio, and George Themistokleous (London: Routledge, 2017), 132.
- <sup>7</sup> Wang Shu, "The Narrative of the Mountain," *Log*, no. 45 (2019): 12; Wang Shu, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," in *Architectural Studies 02: Topography and Mental Space*, ed. Mark Cousins and Chen Wei (Beijing: China Architecture and Building Press, 2012), 182.
- <sup>8</sup> Wang, "The Narrative of the Mountain," 17.
- <sup>9</sup> Wang Shu, "Dang 'Kongjian' Kaishi Chuxian" [When "the Space" is Coming into Being], *Jianzhushi [The Architect]*, no. 5 (2003): 68 (my translation).
- <sup>10</sup> Roger T. Ames, "Meaning as Imaging: Prolegomena to A Confucian Epistemology," in *Culture and Modernity: East-West Philosophic Perspectives*, ed. Eliot Deutsch (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 227-44.
- <sup>11</sup> Wang, "The Narrative of the Mountain," 24; Wang Shu, *Imagining the House* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013), under "A House as Sleep."
- <sup>12</sup> Wang, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," 192.
- <sup>13</sup> Wang, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," 186-90.
- <sup>14</sup> Wang, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," 180.
- <sup>15</sup> Massimo Scolari, *Oblique Drawing: A History of Anti-perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012), 341-357.
- <sup>16</sup> John Hay, "Some Questions concerning Classicism in Relation to Chinese Art," *Art Journal* 47, no.1 (1988): 31.
- <sup>17</sup> Wang, *Imagining the House*, under "A Picturesque House."
- <sup>18</sup> Wang Shu, "Poumian de Shiye" [The Field of Vision on Section], *Shidai Jianzhu [Time+Architecture]*, no. 2 (2010): 86 (my translation).
- <sup>19</sup> Wang Shu, "Ziran Xingtai de Xushi yu Jihe – Ningbo Bowuguan Chuangzuo Bijì" [The Narration and Geometry of Natural Appearance: Notes On the Design of Ningbo Historical Museum], *Shidai Jianzhu [Time+Architecture]*, no. 3 (2009): 74 (my translation).
- <sup>20</sup> Wang, "The Narration and Geometry of Natural Appearance," 74 (my translation).
- <sup>21</sup> When he closely attends to the drawn details, Wang notes, "I begin to walk into it [the pavilion]."
- <sup>22</sup> Wang, "Build a World to Resemble Nature," 199.
- <sup>23</sup> Wang, "The Field of Vision on Section," 87 (my translation).



<sup>24</sup> Wang, “Build a World to Resemble Nature,” 194.

<sup>25</sup> Wang, “Build a World to Resemble Nature,” 180.

<sup>26</sup> Wang, “The Narrative of the Mountain,” 11.

<sup>27</sup> Aric Chen, “Tea House at Lingyin Buddhist Temple by Amateur Architecture Studio,” *Architectural Record*, August 4, 2020, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/14753-tea-house-at-lingyin-buddhist-temple-by-amateur-architecture-studio>.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1985), 168-69 (the author has slightly modified the original translation).

<sup>29</sup> Bush and Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 169.

<sup>30</sup> Liu Linfan, “A Pictorial Vision of Space: Looking at Modern Architecture in China Through Landscape Painting,” PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2018, xxxi.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Wang, “The Narrative of the Mountain,” 18-25; David Leatherbarrow, *Building Time: Architecture, Event, and Experience* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021): 123-48.

<sup>32</sup> Wang Shu, “Inquiring the Hills from Beyond the Bank: An Aggregation of Diversified Architectural Typology” [Gean Wenshan – Yizhong Juji Fengfu Chayixing de Jianzhu Leixingxue], *Jianzhu Xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], no. 1 (2014): 47.

<sup>33</sup> Wang, “Inquiring the Hills from Beyond the Bank,” 47 (my translation).

<sup>34</sup> For an elaboration on Wang’s strategy to reproduce the architecture-landscape correlation within the architectural form, see Xin Jin, “Flowing Boundaries: Wang Shu’s Experiments of Theoretical Writing and Architectural Design” [Liudong de Bianjie: Wang Shu de Lilun Xiezuo Shiyan yu Jianzhu Sheji], *Jianzhu Xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], no. 5 (2022): 89-90.



# Lights, Camera... Aluminum! Materiality and Monumentality in Welton Becket's Masterplan of Century City, CA

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## **Abstract**

*The scale and ambition of the masterplan doesn't fit neatly in either architecture or urban planning, and therefore, the history of master planning as a practice, its aesthetics and its ethics have long existed at the margins of both disciplines. In the postwar period, masterplan proposals designed by architects committed to high modernist ideals reimagined cities as orderly and aesthetic agglomerations – but with considerable anticipation of large-scale growth and development – both in the United States and abroad. As architects moved away from solely designing buildings to spearheading larger scale planning projects – straining their disciplinary expertise to the border of urban planning – an important transition took place. This shift might be best understood as a blend of omniscience and naivete, a stance that required architects to suspend specific knowledge to champion broad visionary pursuits.*

*This paper considers an important aspect of everyday life: leisure time. Much touted by the tenets of high modernism, the ability to carve out time to “play” was largely a modern luxury, and this played out in a variety of projects worldwide, from beach resorts in Hawaii and ski resorts in France, to reimagined cities within cities, such as the masterplan for Century City, California in the Los Angeles Basin. Welton Becket's 1963 urban vision called for the replacement of Hollywood studio lots with a composed entertainment, shopping and living centre focused on the needs of the Southern California entertainment industry. The ultimate buildout includes projects by a wide variety of late modernist architects, including Minoru Yamasaki, Charles Luckman and I. M. Pei, and it joins a long list of projects that champion leisure aesthetically expressed through architecture and planning schemes. Taken together, such projects underscore the increase in leisure, vacation time and*

*conspicuous consumption that occurred after World War II and continues into the present day.*

## **Introduction**

The scale and ambition of the masterplan doesn't fit neatly in either architecture or urban planning, and therefore, the history of master planning as a practice, its aesthetics and its ethics have long existed at the margins of both disciplines. In the postwar period, masterplan proposals designed by architects committed to high modernist ideals reimagined cities as orderly and aesthetic agglomerations – in anticipation of large-scale growth and development – both in the United States and abroad. As some architects moved away from solely designing buildings to spearheading larger scale planning projects – straining their disciplinary expertise to the border of urban planning – an important transition took place. This shift might be best understood as a blend of omniscience and naivete, a stance that required architects to “suspend disbelief” to champion broad visionary pursuits.

Much touted by the tenets of CIAM-driven high modernism, the ability to carve out time to “play” was largely a modern luxury, and one that was ultimately reflected in myriad architectural commissions and planned communities. Such plans for new and reimagined urban and suburban centres that included a mix of programmatic functions proliferated across the United States in likely and unlikely locales. It was no surprise that cities such as Detroit launched major urban renewal projects such as the John Portman-designed Renaissance Center and adjacent Isamu Noguchi-designed riverfront Civic Center Plaza and Fountain, aimed at revitalising a city hollowed out by racial tensions and the omnipresent automobile. But visionary masterplans also cropped up in less obvious locations, such as Angelos Demetriou's plan for downtown Peoria, which imagined reconfiguring the area as a kind of Greek forum, with agglomerations of civic, state governmental, commercial and entertainments centres, stitched together with skywalks, a revamped transportation network and accentuated by riverfront marinas and a spherical arena that recalled the theme building of the Epcot Center. The result was a kind of Disney World-meets-American Heartland mashup. From the pragmatic to the fantastic, masterplans were invigorating to civic leaders, private corporations and the general population, and often appealed to people's vague notions of a future aesthetic. Many

proposals were designed around the sleek lines of the automobile, elevated monorails and wide avenues that suggested endlessness in a manner that didn't yet foreshadow the emptying out of cities such proposals became known for in the decades that followed. Although the majority of these proposals remained unbuilt, some came to fruition. One particularly salient example that blended visionary master planning with varied architectural components, rather than championing a cohesive aesthetic vision, took shape in West Los Angeles, and became known as a "city within a city." For many, the Welton Becket and Associates (WB&A) masterplan for Century City was one glimpse into the future of US urbanism, but also acted as a laboratory for mixed-use developments and material exploration, finished off with a Hollywood sheen.

The masterplan of Century City began in 1958 and intended to replace Hollywood studio lots with a combined entertainment, shopping and living centre focused primarily on the needs of the Southern California entertainment industry. Located on Los Angeles' wealthy west side and near the WB&A-designed Beverly Hilton (1955), the ultimate buildout included projects by a wide variety of late modernist architects, including Becket, Minoru Yamasaki, Charles Luckman and I. M. Pei, an architectural snapshot of its era. Most significantly, perhaps, the development also became a veritable playground for the rich and famous, centred on the Century Plaza Hotel, and later, the ABC Entertainment Center. A new Jet-Age frenzy, combined with the image of attainable luxury, circulated in cinemas across the United States, fuelled these entertainment-centred developments and captured the imagination of many upwardly mobile Americans, bringing people further west to California, Hawaii and beyond. Such projects championed leisure aesthetically, underscoring the increase in conspicuous consumption and vacation time that was newly affordable to a wider public in the years following World War II. Focusing on the masterplan put forth by WB&A for Century City, this paper explores the way in which the urban experiment shares more in common with a Hollywood sense of scenography than it does with a real, urban sense of place.

### **From Groundwork to an Aluminum Framework**

The deal to develop a large area of land 14 miles west of downtown Los Angeles began in the late 1950s, when New York real estate mogul William Zeckendorf, president of development firm Webb & Knapp, Inc., purchased 260 acres of land from the then

Twentieth Century Fox president, Spyros P. Skouras. At \$60 million, the transaction was significantly more than the \$1.5 million Skouras had paid for it 30 years prior, however there was some playful contention between the two men at the ground-breaking event.<sup>1</sup> During an interview for a *New York Times* article on the festivities, Skouras suggested that Zeckendorf had outsmarted him into selling the land for a third of its perceived value, resulting in a sale that was any developer's "dream." In response, Zeckendorf pointed out that his firm had in fact paid more for the Century City land than the United States had paid for Alaska, the Louisiana Purchase and the Virgin Islands combined.<sup>2</sup> In short, the outsized real estate transaction foreshadowed significant growth and development in the entertainment capital and had significant effects on architecture and urban development in the Los Angeles metropolitan region for decades to come.

By 1960, Webb & Knapp – financially overburdened by the purchase – sought to improve their financial position by selling “a substantial minority interest” in the project to the Aluminum Corporation of America, better known as Alcoa.<sup>3</sup> By 1961, Alcoa took control of two-thirds of the development, a figure that ultimately rose to 70% by 1963.<sup>4</sup> The initial plans involved developing 180 acres into a master planned office, retail and residential complex, with the remaining 80 acres to be leased back to Twentieth Century Fox to support its rapidly expanding film production. By all accounts, the initial impetus for the shift from movie lots to urban redevelopment stemmed from a decrease in the formulaic “assembly-line movie production” strategies championed by Fox. As a result, the large tract of land in a fast-growing area of Los Angeles became too heavy a tax burden on the corporation and presented the owners with an opportunity that could be leveraged for greater economic and political gain.<sup>5</sup>

This proved to be a significant move for Alcoa, which was in the process of investing in major urban development and renewal projects around the country. In addition to Century City, by November 1962, Alcoa held controlling shares in large-scale projects in Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and San Francisco. Although the real estate itself was considered a good investment, there was a secondary motive for Alcoa's involvement in the projects at an early stage, one which involved Alcoa, and other corporations, diversifying their portfolios. Aluminum made new appearances in architectural applications and accounted

for nearly 21% of the industry's total production, and Alcoa was eager to further increase this figure.<sup>6</sup>

Industrial-scale use of aluminum was well understood during World War II, when companies went into wartime production of vehicles and aircraft that relied heavily on it. But in the postwar decades, the need for aluminum significantly decreased, prompting companies such as Alcoa to seek creative peacetime uses for its eponymous product. In 1956, executives at Alcoa commissioned landscape architect Garrett Eckbo to design a garden that included large quantities of aluminum in decorative screens and water features, which he did for his own family's home in Los Angeles. The Alcoa Forecast Garden, as it was known, became a central part of Alcoa's advertising campaigns for many years after its completion, tying the imageability of architecture and design to the marketplace.<sup>7</sup>

As with many major firms practising in the 1950s and 1960s, Minoru Yamasaki and Associates had used aluminum in a variety of projects, from the 1959 Reynolds Metals Regional Sales Office outside Detroit and later in the 1973 World Trade Center in New York, and his success with the product did not go unnoticed by Alcoa and other aluminum manufacturing corporations. In 1970, the architect was invited to present at the Alcoa Aluminum Association's "Aluminum in Architecture" conference held in Chicago in early March of that year. Yamasaki's talk, entitled, "Aluminum in Architectural Design," covered a variety of projects undertaken by the firm, including the Reynolds Metals building. Perhaps as recognition of the architect and his firm's successes in using the material, Yamasaki gave the first presentation after the keynote address on the opening day of the conference, setting the tone to bolster the conference's overt economic aims. Many of the presentations focused on aluminum's myriad applications in architecture, from wall systems to window frames to surface treatments, as well as on the long-term merits and economic benefits of aluminum finishes.<sup>8</sup> Although this was happening across the country, Century City provided an ongoing testing ground for these new materials.

As an early partner with the developers Webb & Knapp, the management team at Alcoa hoped that a close association with the project "would provide the opportunity to use a 'city within a city' as a giant laboratory to improve building design and devise new construction

methods.”<sup>9</sup> Chief among the interests was to test out aluminum curtain wall construction in large-scale housing developments, an application which Zeckendorf predicted would have a lengthy future. Alcoa’s then President Frank L. Magee suggested further that his company’s interest lay in “the unprecedented opportunity to develop new uses for aluminum in apartment buildings and other structures.”<sup>10</sup> The financial incentive for Alcoa was manifold; not only did it foreground aluminum in the short term with the immediate projects, but such developments would also serve as a kind of built “look book” of products, styles and trends for years to come. Furthermore, with the proliferation of automobile ownership and the advent of instant cameras, everyday citizens became important agents in the circulation of images, which were often focused on mass consumption, and sleek new buildings in aluminum served as a prime backdrop to capture postwar frivolity and excess.

### **Century City Takes Shape**

An early version of the masterplan for the project, initially slated to cost around \$500 million, called for a total reworking of the site, bounded on the west by Santa Monica Boulevard and to the east by Pico Boulevard. A new thoroughfare was proposed to run roughly through the centre of the site laterally before bifurcating toward Santa Monica Boulevard and would ultimately become known as the Avenue of the Stars. At this juncture, WB&A proposed a hotel connected to an entertainment complex along the western edge that included a theatre, auditorium, restaurants and an adjacent shopping centre. Just to the north they imagined a series of high-rise office towers. The southeastern quadrant was leased back to Twentieth Century Fox, and the balance of the site was slated for a mix of housing types at several scales including apartment towers, apartment buildings and garden apartments. Later site models depicted as many as 28 structures dedicated to office space along with 22 apartment buildings.

As with many masterplan proposals, the initial design was not the configuration that came to fruition, but core elements remained in place. A 1966 article in the *Los Angeles Times* illustrated the progress of the site, which by then had begun to take significant shape. At the intersection of the Avenue of the Stars and Santa Monica Boulevard, a pair of office towers designed by WB&A and completed in 1963-64 flanked the entrance to the development, firmly anchoring it along its western edge. Several other major projects were

underway at that same moment. The sixteen-storey Century Plaza Hotel, designed by Minoru Yamasaki and Associates, was nearing completion at the centre of the site, also along the main axis. To the north, Charles Luckman designed a 480-unit housing complex known as Century Park Apartments that comprised two 20-storey towers, and along the far eastern edge, I.M. Pei's Century Towers Apartments rose 27 storeys.<sup>11</sup> Apartment rental rates varied widely, and in 1966, were estimated to range from \$300 to \$4,000 per month, indicating that portions of the development were aimed at a high wealth clientele, while others were set to attract people of more modest income.<sup>12</sup> The combined development also made it possible for people to live, work and play without leaving its boundaries, obviating the need for lengthy, twice-daily commutes. The developers thought these amenities – or “unusual advantages,” as they called them – may have played a role in attracting residents, despite the significantly higher rents than nearby suburbs.<sup>13</sup>

Commercial retail was also a central component of the development, which complemented the significant real estate dedicated to office and residential uses.<sup>14</sup> At the southwest corner of the development, the Century Square Shopping Center provided 280,000 square feet of space for specialty stores and luxury boutiques, all with the convenience of direct access to underground parking.<sup>15</sup> By 1965, much of the shopping centre had been completed, providing area residents with a variety of amenities including a pharmacy, department stores, the Mayfair Market for groceries and the Century House restaurant, which took the shape of a hexagon in plan and enticed patrons with its excessively gabled roof structure that nearly reached the ground, perhaps a reserved nod to the Googie or Populuxe architecture of the era and the then recent past. In short, the stage was set for a new kind of urban development, conceived as an autonomous entity driven by a masterplan.

### **A Hotel for the Stars – and Beyond**

The importance of the Century Plaza Hotel as a metaphorical heart of the development was clear from the outset, and succinctly summed up by the architect himself:

As we examined the overall master plan for the 1,800-acre site, we realized that in contrast with office buildings, which tend to be rather quiet after six

o'clock in the evening, a hotel is alive day and night and should be at the center of activity of the entire complex.<sup>16</sup>

This was part of the impetus to relocate it from its previous site further west in the development. A Hollywood-style spectacle was expected for the hotel's opening, during the weekend of 10-13 June 1966.<sup>17</sup> The *New York Times* summed up the event, and Century City proper, calling it "an architectural spectacle," further suggesting that the "view from the hotel is that of a vast, adult Disneyland, a spectacle of architecture and urban planning that is brimming with implications of what can be done elsewhere."<sup>18</sup> In subsequent years, Century City would be criticised for lengthy distances between buildings, which contributed to low walkability and a lack of street life, but for the moment there was a celebratory mood. Through the Century Plaza and its surrounds, many felt as though they had glimpsed the future of urbanism in Southern California.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to being designed for travellers' overnight stays, the hotel aimed to host large events, entertainment galas and even played host to a series of smaller-scale nightlife concerts and jam sessions over the years. In keeping with the overall theme of Century City as a grand gesture to entertainment, the leisure spaces were on a large scale. Indeed, the California Level featured an outdoor plaza that was larger than a football field sunken below the entrance, and the Avenue of the Stars and the ballroom was slated to be "the largest in the west... able to seat more than 2,000 at a banquet."<sup>20</sup> The common spaces of the property were also designed with more casual engagements in mind. As originally built, the main lobby area featured a sunken seating area, which at Carlson's suggestion served as the hotel's main cocktail lounge, and according to Yamasaki's recollection, became "the most popular cocktail lounge in the area, if not in Los Angeles."<sup>21</sup> The sunken design allowed guests entering the lobby to have relatively unobstructed views through the hotel onto the outdoor leisure area – referred to as the garden side – which included landscaped ponds, pools and lush gardens. Exotic foreign travel was a theme in the restaurant offerings – six unique establishments including what was effectively a replication of the Plaza Hotel's famed Persian Room in New York.<sup>22</sup> Appropriate to the entertainment industry-centred focus of the project, the entryway featured a celebratory "cantilevered, skylit canopy, glittering with low-wattage lamps at night," highlighting the guests' comings and goings and which provided a backdrop against which to take photos,



by official photographers and the paparazzi alike. The pomp and circumstance of the entry sequence and lobby was a perfect companion to the latest developments planned for the end of the decade, which included plans for a landscape of cinemas and stage-based theatres.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the property owners' desire for the Century Plaza to host the Academy Awards ceremony, this level of prestige never came to fruition, but the hotel still served as an epicentre for the cultural and political elite. One of the more notable events to take place was "The Dinner of the Century," and one of the only Presidential State Dinners ever to take place outside of the White House. On 13 August 1969, President Richard Nixon and his wife welcomed 50 members of congress, representatives of 83 foreign nations, members of the Presidential cabinet and the just-returned astronauts from the Apollo 11 Mission. According to archival documents, a celestial theme prevailed at the dinner and the Century Plaza was chosen for its location at the intersection of "The Avenue of the Stars" and "Constellation Boulevard," in Los Angeles' "space-age Century City complex." This Atomic Age theme was reflected in elements of the dinner, notably the dessert, for which the pastry chefs selected the "Clair de Lune" or "moonlight," which was a delicate marzipan confection encrusted in a thin meringue whose orb-like shape recalled the moon. In this case, the proverbial cherry on top was in fact a miniature replica of the American flag, underscoring the United States' significant achievements in the Space Race and honouring the successful mission of the Apollo 11 astronauts there gathered.

The visible notoriety of the developments in Century City, and events like the Dinner of the Century, made headlines across the country, and fuelled plans for further additions to the 260-acre development, which included a major entertainment complex slated to take shape across from the Century Plaza Hotel beginning in 1969. With the \$20 million ABC Entertainment Center, developers aimed to bring two large movie theatres – seating 1500 and 800 – as well as a "2000-seat legitimate theatre." This new development would be connected to the Century Plaza Hotel by an underground walkway so venue attendees could avail themselves of the boutiques, bars and restaurants housed within, and which after only a year from its opening was already slated for a major addition. This was part of a larger agenda to make the area more attractive to Los Angelenos on weekends, when hotels typically hosted fewer guests due to the decrease in business travel. As vice

president of development for Century City, Inc. Andrew B. Rawn suggested, “we feel that with an entertainment center and a wide range of recreational facilities for swimming, tennis, and golf, this will change. Inside our ‘city-within-a-city,’ we are creating a unique urban resort.”<sup>24</sup> Such a resort, centred on an entertainment centre and hotel complex, might attract visitors from near and far, or even give those on business a reason to extend their stay. The ABC Entertainment Center was part of a larger “Theme Center,” a 12-acre superblock which included plans for new office towers, underground parking for “thousands of cars” and held together with expansive, landscaped plazas.<sup>25</sup> The enthusiasm for the project was palpable: “This area will be a thriving place by day or by night, making it one of the liveliest spots in the West, if not the entire country.”<sup>26</sup> For this to come true, the developers knew they needed additional hotel rooms, and by 1970, both Western International Hotels and Alcoa announced plans for an additional tower with a further 800 rooms, effectively doubling its size.

The addition was slated to take only two years, for an anticipated opening in 1972. MYA was initially retained for the design, along with the Turner Construction Co. The addition called for a 35-storey tower sited just south of the existing hotel, and plans included new restaurants, a health club and as many as seventeen meeting rooms, significantly expanding the available conference and banquet facilities the hotel provided to the area. MYA’s proposed design was thought of as “an architectural match with the existing Century Plaza Hotel... built with an opposite curve to that of the existing structure.” In late December 1973, the developers anticipated construction would begin on a smaller 450-room addition to the Century Plaza and be completed by 1975. This attempt also failed, likely due to the economic downturn across the United States. In the 1980s, however, the addition was revisited as a 30-storey tower with a smaller footprint, designed as a more luxurious complement to Century Plaza’s modest rooms, reflecting the changing attitudes of increasingly discerning travellers in the later part of the twentieth century.<sup>27</sup>

### **Total Design in Architecture: An Urban Resort or a Grand Corporate Precinct?**

In many ways, the firm of Welton Becket and Associates is an ideal case study in understanding a visionary masterplan sensibility in the mid-twentieth century. Emanating from Becket’s style and commitment to design, the firm’s core identity came to underscore the importance of what they referred to as “total design.” Although this was initially borne

out of a desire to control the interiors of early residential projects, it soon became a driving principle of the firm's ethos at every scale. Indeed, the firm aimed to specialise in no singular building type, rather, to take on projects at many scales and programs.

In the 1960s, a significant portion of the firm's work shifted toward large-scale and complex projects, such as an overall masterplan with five resort hotels for the development of a new Walt Disney theme park in Orlando, Florida, shopping centres and college campuses across the United States and the Kennedy Cultural Center in upstate New York, among many others.<sup>28</sup> Although the firm's principals invested significantly in the organisation of production and management within their office structure, employees understood projects as "parts of the overall service" rather than siloed divisions. This was also readily apparent in the firm's approach to master planning: "Contrary to what would be the case in many firms, WB&A has no master planners who spend all of their time in this type of work. Here, master planning becomes part of the work of the designers who handle buildings."<sup>29</sup> Perhaps fittingly, the very first building completed on the site was a new headquarters for Welton Becket and Associates. This provided the firm with much-needed expanded office space, and a de facto field office at the northwest corner of Century City during the remainder of the buildout, from 1960 onward. The firm leased out the first two floors and occupied the three upper floors which, in addition to the requisite office space for each division, included a gallery, lounge and cafeteria, and an outdoor terrace looking inward toward the centre of the development.

In a special to the *Los Angeles Times* published in 1991, architectural critic Aaron Betsky suggested that twenty years later, Century City is a place where

... everything is perfect, from the steel-and-glass grids to the absence of cars cluttering the roadway. Office buildings, a shopping mall, hotels and condominiums each occupy their own zone, each secure and successful. At the heart of it all rise the twin triangles of the Century Plaza Towers, 44-story obelisks that mark the presence of this grand corporate precinct.<sup>30</sup>

The towers to which Betsky refers are a later addition to Century City designed by Minoru Yamasaki and Associates, and act as a kind of locator beacon for the project given their

substantial height and unusual footprint. On final approach to Los Angeles International, this pair of towers allows passengers seated in window seats to easily locate the city-within-a city amid a carpet of urbanism sprawling across the L.A. Basin. Like their now destroyed New York counterparts, these massive, gleaming towers took their fair share of criticism from the public and critics alike for their “cold, distant kind of beauty.” The towers, Betsky suggests further, “show us the power of architecture, both in its ability to create strong forms to stand against the seeming chaos of the city, and in its brute force, imposing form and scale on our lives.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, the towers were like a keystone in an arch: a structural piece that held the development together and anchored it in a landscape that lacked a focal point. As such, they were the final *mis-en-scène* of the aluminum playground – the tallest, the shiniest and arguably the most formally exquisite of the built projects.

Much like the entertainment spectacles that emerge from Hollywood, the developments at Century City were meant to instil a sense of wonderment and excitement in those that came to the area to work or to play, and in many ways, they delivered on this promise. Stars such as Barbara Bouchet – the original Moneypenny in “Casino Royale” – and Sharon Tate, among many others, were part of opening ceremonies to drum up widespread interest in the development. As the century progressed, many films were shot on location, including “Caprice,” featuring a smiling, bespectacled Doris Day dressed in yellow matching the awnings, the floral plantings and the tableware – a nod to the type of *gesamtkunswerk* often championed, but rarely achieved by masterplans. But despite its sunny locale and associations with the rich and famous, Century City failed to achieve the kind of urban vitality espoused by many planners and sought after by city officials nationwide. Amid the tangle of highways, the car-driven culture of Los Angeles and the see-and-be-seen quality of the film industry, we might better understand the development itself as a permanent movie set, a scenic backdrop for the lived-production of urbanism, rather than a truly vital urban node. The imageability of the urbanism projected by Century City is, in fact, mediated through its reflection in glass and aluminum, underwritten by corporate sponsors. Like a mirage that shimmers in the distance, the urbanism of this city-within-a-city is alluring, but always just out of reach.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Murray Schumach, "Fox Cameras Roll at Birth of a City," *New York Times*, May 26, 1959.
- <sup>2</sup> Schumach, "Fox Cameras Roll."
- <sup>3</sup> "Huge Cost Plan is Aided by Alcoa," *New York Times*, August 26, 1960.
- <sup>4</sup> Gladwin Hill, "Huge Metropolis Rising on Coast," *New York Times*, October 6, 1963.
- <sup>5</sup> Hill, "Huge Metropolis Rising on Coast."
- <sup>6</sup> "Huge Coast Plan is Aided by Alcoa."
- <sup>7</sup> Description text of archival photographs, ALCOA Forecast Garden, Los Angeles, CA, 1952-1966, Online Archive of California, <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/28722/bk0000m892r/>. Accessed July 14, 2022.
- <sup>8</sup> ALCOA, Conference Proceedings, "Aluminum in Architecture," March 3-5, 1970, Chicago, IL. Box 11, Folder 10, Minoru Yamasaki Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Archive of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.
- <sup>9</sup> "Huge Coast Plan is Aided by Alcoa."
- <sup>10</sup> Frank L. Magee, as quoted in, "Huge Coast Plan is Aided by Alcoa."
- <sup>11</sup> Ward Allan Howe, "Alcoa's New City Nears Completion," *New York Times*, December 4, 1966.
- <sup>12</sup> Gladwin Hill, "Century City – New Stop on the Tourist Map," *New York Times*, June 26, 1966.
- <sup>13</sup> "The Art of City Building," *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 1969.
- <sup>14</sup> Howe, "Alcoa's New City Nears Completion."
- <sup>15</sup> Howe, "Alcoa's New City Nears Completion."
- <sup>16</sup> Minoru Yamasaki, *A Life in Architecture* (New York: Weatherhill, 1978), 97.
- <sup>17</sup> Invitation to President's Preview and Dedication, Box 38, Folder 11, Minoru Yamasaki Papers.
- <sup>18</sup> Hill, "New Stop on the Tourist Map."
- <sup>19</sup> Refer to "Century Plaza Hotel to Double Capacity with Tower Addition," *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 1970; and Dick Turpin, "Century City at Halfway Mark," *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1973.
- <sup>20</sup> "Start Luxury Hotel in Century City," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, date unknown. Box 2, Folder 11, Minoru Yamasaki Papers.
- <sup>21</sup> Yamasaki, *A Life in Architecture*, 97.
- <sup>22</sup> Hill, "New Stop on the Tourist Map."
- <sup>23</sup> Yamasaki, *A Life in Architecture*, 97.
- <sup>24</sup> Andrew B. Rawn, as quoted in, "The Art of City Building," *Los Angeles Times*, March 10, 1969.
- <sup>25</sup> "The Art of City Building."
- <sup>26</sup> Rawn, as quoted in, "The Art of City Building."
- <sup>27</sup> The MYA proposal was abandoned forever, but ultimately an addition was completed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and included 322 rooms at a project cost of \$80 million. Today, the addition is no longer part of the hotel campus, having been spun off as privately owned condominiums. Although the Century Plaza Hotel operated under the Hyatt Regency banner from 2006-16, it was closed for a multi-year renovation, and opened Fall 2021 as the Fairmont Century Plaza.
- <sup>28</sup> William Dudley Hunt, Jr., FAIA, *Total Design: Architecture of Welton Becket and Associates* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), 16.
- <sup>29</sup> Hunt, *Total Design*, 49-50.
- <sup>30</sup> Aaron Betsky, "Century City a Towering Example of Self-Contained Urban Center," *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1991.
- <sup>31</sup> Betsky, "Century City a Towering Example."

# Unfolding the Secrets of Vijaydurg Fort

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## **Abstract**

*In India historic forts have been attracting the attention of Indian and Western scholars in recent times. National and international heritage institutions like ICOFORT-ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee on Fortifications and Military Heritage – International Council on Monuments and Sites), ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) and State Archaeology Departments are focusing on the study of these forts, aiming for their conservation.*

*This paper presents a history and analysis of Vijaydurg Fort, one of the Maratha Sea forts of the Konkan region of Maharashtra, built along the coastline of Arabian Sea from 1657 to 1740 C.E. Vijaydurg Fort was an important naval station during the Maratha rule in order to administer the southern part of the Konkan coastline.*

*This paper provides a brief review of the literature on Vijaydurg Fort, and an historical overview of it, and then focuses on a graphic record of the place that comprises maps from both the Maratha and British periods as well as drawings and paintings. The paper seeks to establish what this unique and significant graphic record contributes to an understanding of Vijaydurg Fort. Why was it located where it was, what factors affected its design and its evolution, and why did it maintain its importance over time despite change in the ruling dynasties?*

*The paper shows that Vijaydurg Fort was strategically placed, given the cultural and maritime context, and that the design of the fort has evolved as per the requirements of each ruler and the activities carried out in and around it. Today the fort is accessed only from land, but the design and shape, including the proximity of gates and bastions to the inner built forms, convey its former maritime purpose. The fort was certainly placed at a strategic location using the natural features and it has evolved and undergone physical changes with the changing dynasties. The*

*amendments mostly dealt with expansion and strengthening with smart defence mechanism aimed at safeguarding the trade and maritime activity of the region.*

## **Introduction**

Often compared to the fort of Gibraltar, the impregnable fort of Vijaydurg, built on the west coast of India in the Konkan region of Maharashtra between 1657 and 1740 CE, is known by different names. These include ‘Gibraltar of Konkan’ or ‘Gibraltar of the East’, due to its resemblance of being flanked by sea and situated on a hill top like that of the European Gibraltar fort.<sup>1</sup> This portrays the rock-solid strength of the fort and the fact of it being impenetrable. Vijaydurg is also called the ‘Victory Fort’ which is the literal translation of the name. It is also known as the ‘Nest of Eagle’, referring to Sarkhel<sup>2</sup> Kanhoji Angrey, Head of Maratha<sup>3</sup> Navy from 1693, as an eagle, because he “nested” in this fort. He was the main reason behind Vijaydurg being strong and difficult to invade.

This paper on Vijaydurg is motivated by the fact that it was a royal fort, yet is in a state of disrepair today, facing multiple issues like structural deterioration, growth of vegetation, poor maintenance, negligence, etc. There is no holistic proposal for the conservation of the fort and the building fabric needs immediate attention. In December 2021, the owners, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti,<sup>4</sup> demanded the inspection of the fort, repairs and conservation works; and further investigation and conservation of the archaeological evidence found.<sup>5</sup> Regardless, there have been no substantial conservation works commenced to date.

Along the western coast of India lies the Arabian Sea, where there is a chain of coastal forts built to defend the surrounding regions. Each fort caters to a purpose that has either acted as a main fort, a secondary fort or a fortified post. The secondary fort was to protect the main fort while the fortified post was to protect the main and the secondary forts. This distinction was on the basis of their function.<sup>6</sup> One of the main places to store and produce arms and ammunition was Kolaba fort of Alibag; and the forts of Vijaydurg and Suvarnadurg were two naval depots,<sup>7</sup> housed to establish the naval control of the sea depending on their locations. These three were main forts in the north and south parts of Konkan.

Once an important naval station, the fort of Vijaydurg provides fertile ground for research. It is situated in the town of Devgad, approximately 50 kilometres from Ratnagiri city of Konkan, Maharashtra. The fort is also known as Gheria as it is situated in Girye village. Apart from the associated historic battles, the main reasons behind Vijaydurg being a strong and impregnable fort have not been researched to date. There exist a few archival maps that provide an understanding of the earlier existence of the fort, but to date the maps have not been studied and analysed thoroughly. Various history and conservation institutions such as ICOFORT-ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee on Fortifications and Military Heritage – International Council on Monuments and Sites), ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) and State Archaeology Departments in India are recently involved in the research, study and conservation of Vijaydurg fort.

This paper explores the architectural design of the fort, comparing what exists on site with a unique and significant resource of graphic maps that are available from the Maratha period (1648–1818) and the British period (1818–1947). This paper analyses the location and the geographical setting of the fort to understand the strategic purpose of its establishment and evolution in light of the ruling dynasties and their maritime context. The continuous usage of Vijaydurg fort over centuries demanded structural and activity-based amendments that shaped its architecture. Today the fort is accessed only from land but the proximity of gates and bastions to the inner built forms suggest the design and shape of the fort had a larger maritime purpose.



**Figure 1.** The fort of Vijaydurg in 2021  
(Photograph by Mugdha Kulkarni).

### **Literature Study**

The available literature about the fort resonates around history. Strangely, there exists almost no scholarship about the architecture of the sea forts. The history is found recorded in the British Gazetteer of Ratnagiri district;<sup>8</sup> Rev. Alexander Kyd Nairne's



book *History of the Konkan*,<sup>9</sup> and Gajanan Mehendale's book *Shivchhatrapatinche Aarmaar*.<sup>10</sup> The British Gazetteers were an early type of publication and included physical documentation. They were personalised and the information is difficult to authenticate.

However, more scholarly and well referenced, Nairne's book clearly provides accounts of Konkan. In its elaborate textual description, the evidence proving the existence of old forts is confidently presented, but identification of architectural design and features is missing. The sections dealing with geographic locations do explain the terrain and topography along the creeks, bays and passes which have played an important role in history. The book also includes the topographic maps which were compiled by the US Army Map service from 1941 to 1968. This was a Military Cartographic agency of the US Defence Department. Such maps are documented in the British Gazetteers as well.

On the other hand, Mehendale writes about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's navy and how he was the first ever Maratha ruler to have successfully established control over the sea. References about the Portuguese and the English making their ways through sea trade and attacks are included. In fact, one understands that the foreign attacks demanded Marathas to enter seafaring and in response to this the Maratha navy was prominently established to ensure its sovereignty.<sup>11</sup>

Another source that cannot be excluded are the romanticised historic novels such as Ranjit Desai's *Shreemaan Yogi* and Dr. Babasaheb Purandare's *Raja Shivchhatrapati Vol I & II*. Both romanticise the forts rather than being reliable as scholarly sources. Story books for children such as Ninad Bedekar's *Vijaydurgache Rahasya* and Bhagwan Chile's *Famous Forts in Maharashtra* glorify the forts even more, but in doing so, ensure that children growing up in the region are aware of these structures even before they visit them.

Similar to this generic literature about the forts, the immensely celebrated writings merely touch upon the design and evolution of Vijaydurg fort. They do not deal with the venerable rulers and their contribution towards the design of Vijaydurg fort. Moreover, the location of the fort with reference to the surrounding natural features and volatile maritime activities are not considered together. Hence the scholarship seems insignificant. However, there are two extraordinary archival maps of Vijaydurg fort that

belong to the two significant eras of Indian history. The exact date for the Maratha map is unknown, but the British map was produced in 1756.

### Historical Description

The founder ruler of the Maratha rule was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630-1680) who established the Maratha navy under the name of Swaraj.<sup>12</sup> The rule that was limited to the land only, established the navy on the west coast of Arabian Sea to protect the coast and the hinterlands from foreign invaders like the Islamic, Portuguese, Dutch, British and the Siddis. They were sailing their ways in through trade, seafaring and maritime activities. Such congestion of powers began due to the activity of trade, but this was followed by invasions to procure lands and control over the sea. This tussle between different powers resulted in fort building activities that administered nearby trading ports and the recessed entries into the land.

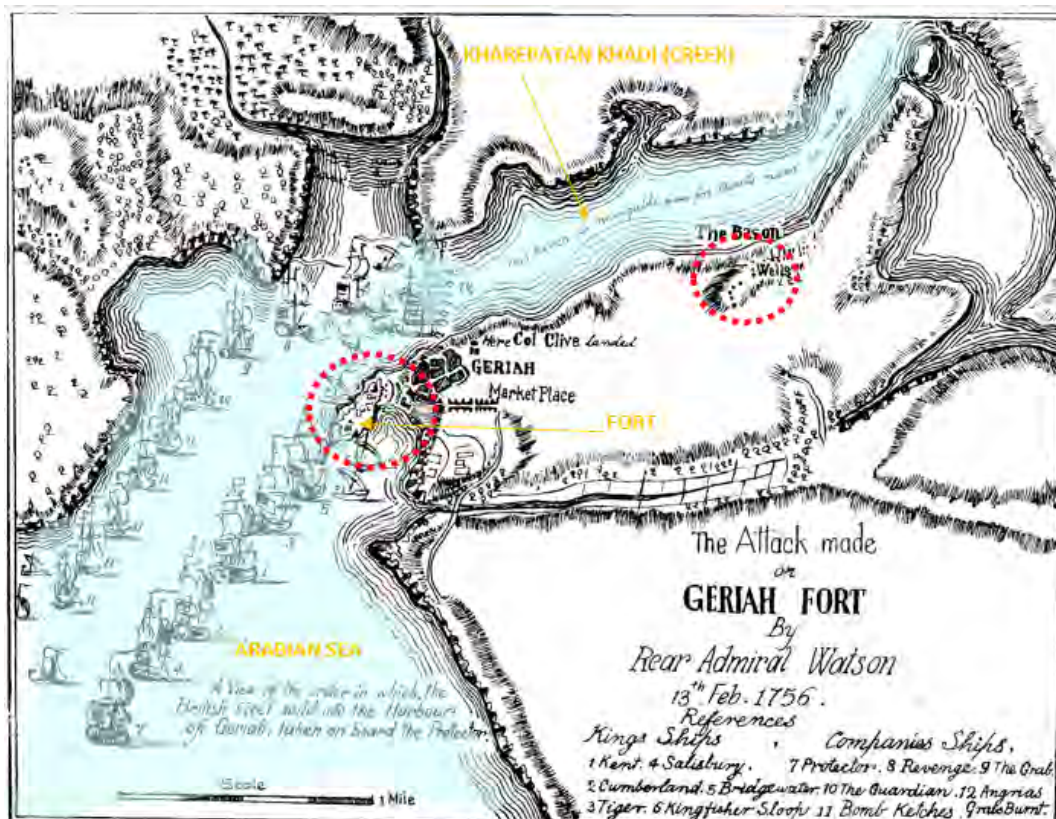


**Figure 2.** The image shows the location of Vijaydurg fort and the indents of the creek (Diagram by Mugdha Kulkarni).

Vijaydurg is one such sea fort, built in the ancient period by the Silaharas in the eighth century, later controlled by the Bahamani Kingdom in 1431 and further ruled by the Marathas from 1653 onwards.<sup>13</sup> It is understood to have been strengthened and enlarged by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who added a third layer of fortification, making it triply fortified. Vijaydurg sits on a rock and is flanked by sea on three sides and land on the south side that leads to the town. Its greatest advantage is the natural setting that helped it stand tall. The Vagothan River lies to the south of Jaitapur Creek and at the mouth lies Vijaydurg fort. 30 kilometres east of Vijaydurg fort is Kharepatan Creek and Kharepatan port, from where the river bed widens nearing an indented hill. This hill provides protection from the south-west monsoon which is one of the very

important reasons to have ships take safe shelter here.<sup>14</sup> This estuary is deep enough to carry large vessels. The rocky hill is at a height of 30 metres above the sea level on top of which lies the fort. Its location at the mouth of Vagothan River meant that Vijaydurg became the main naval station of the Maratha navy,<sup>15</sup> while administering the Vagothan Creek.

Vijaydurg was successfully attacked only once, by the British Admiral Watson in 1756 (see Figure 3). That a series of historic maps of Vijaydurg survives is one indicator of its historical significance, but this particular map also sheds light on the geographical settlements around the fort. In order to understand the significance of the fort, consideration of its natural setting is crucial. It helps explain the fort's strategic purpose. The natural formations around Vijaydurg fort allow access for medium size vessels up Vagothan River from Vagothan Creek, while only small vessels managed to sail to Kharepatan due to the respective water depths.



**Figure 3.** Map showing the attack made on Vijaydurg fort. The map also shows the indented profile of land where sea water enters and the areas in which differently sized vessels could reach (© The Trustees of the British Museum; Annotations by Mugdha Kulkarni).

The available scholarship explains the strategic location of the fort. Below, archival maps and drawings are analysed, together with an on-site inspection, to discuss and reflect on the physical design and architecture of the fort.

### **Physical Description based on Maps**

The hand drawn and painted Maratha map of Vijaydurg fort is a unique graphical representation. The exact year of completion is unavailable but it can be easily predicted that it belongs to the Maratha period considering the cartography skills. The map contains buildings presented in plan and also in front elevation. This not only conveys the layout of buildings but also records evidence of their architectural form. The floors and roof profiles can be identified. To help decipher the individual features of the map, author B. K. Apte drew or commissioned a black-and-white diagram of it, which is considerably more legible. Along with different sized ships, the map shows different sizes of fish in the waters. This helps determine the depths of waters around the fort: the bigger the fish, the deeper the water, and vice versa. The depth can also be determined by the sizes of ships, as in the larger the ships, the deeper the water and vice versa. However, the map is not to scale; it is an abstract depiction of the fort, and the overall sizes of buildings, ships and fish are not proportionate to each other.

Here the individual parts of the map are identifiable in terms of function. Like any other fort, the buildings include entrances, bastions, ditches, administration headquarters, secondary offices, granaries, water storage tanks, store houses, hidden accesses, multi storey residences, palaces, etc.

More or less similar activities were carried out in the fort over time, in spite of the changes in rulers. Such parallel activities that are necessary to sustain a main fort, are present in the map from the British period as well. This map (Figure 4) was drawn in 1756. Both the maps are symbolic and representational rather than accurate, but the proximity of structures to each other and the basic layout of the fort in two different eras can be analysed. The important activities like a quay and dockyard in and outside the fort remained as per the drawings. Locally, the quay is called Godiwadi<sup>16</sup> or Girye Godi.<sup>17</sup> It was for ships to halt for a while and sail back, while the dockyard was where the ships were repaired and new ships were built. At one stage, 500 tonnes of Maratha ships were anchored and repaired here. The fort is said to have hosted a ship building

industry.<sup>18</sup> This is the only quay on the west coast built by the Marathas and the built form is still present today.

Such activities were a response to the strategic location and natural landscape. The fortification and the bastions having machicolations, embrasures and merlons were adopted as they were by the British. Their sniping ranges and directional observations have given justice to all its rulers in attack and defence.

Vijaydurg is typical of Maratha built form in its combination of load-bearing and trabeated construction. The load-bearing walls grow thinner upwards, having small openings. The members like columns and beams are on the inside of the structure that are housed inside the walls and the floor. The mortar used for stone or brick walls is lime mortar that is mixed with local ingredients like jaggery, rice, etc. The floor was made of mud and plastered with cow dung. The roofs were usually sloping covered with clay tiles, thatch or hay. The entire fort is built in the locally available Jamba stone.

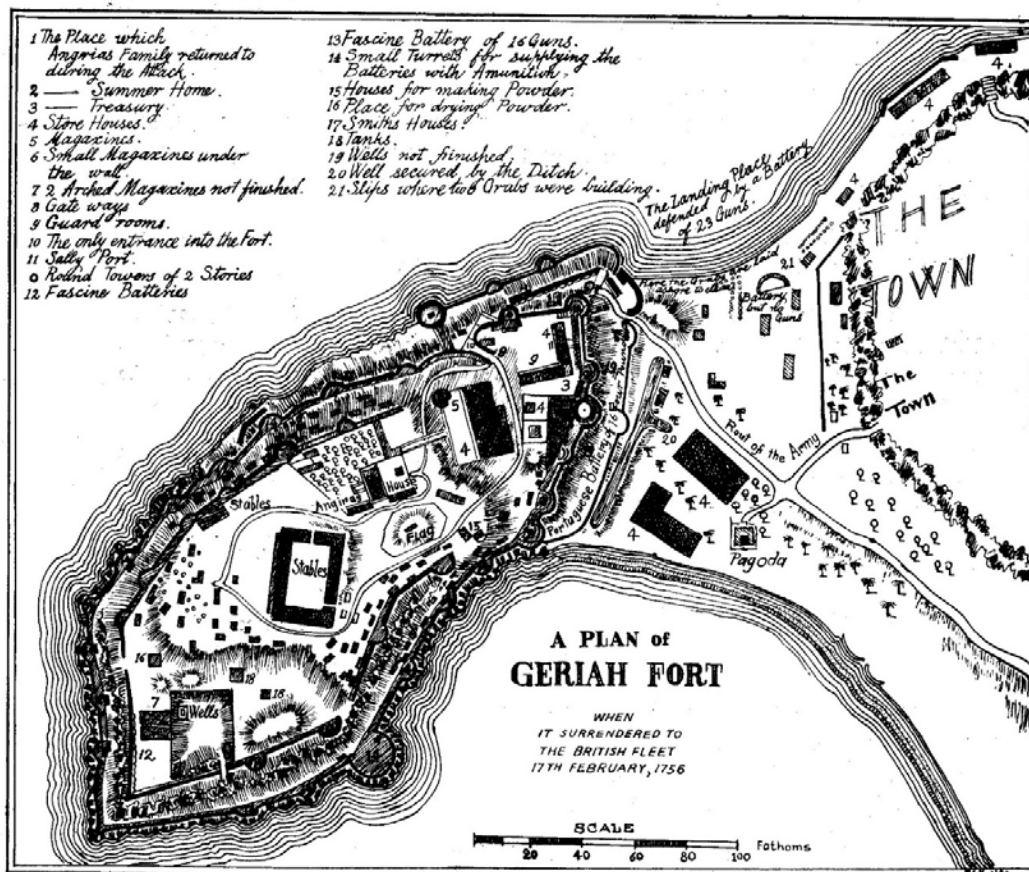
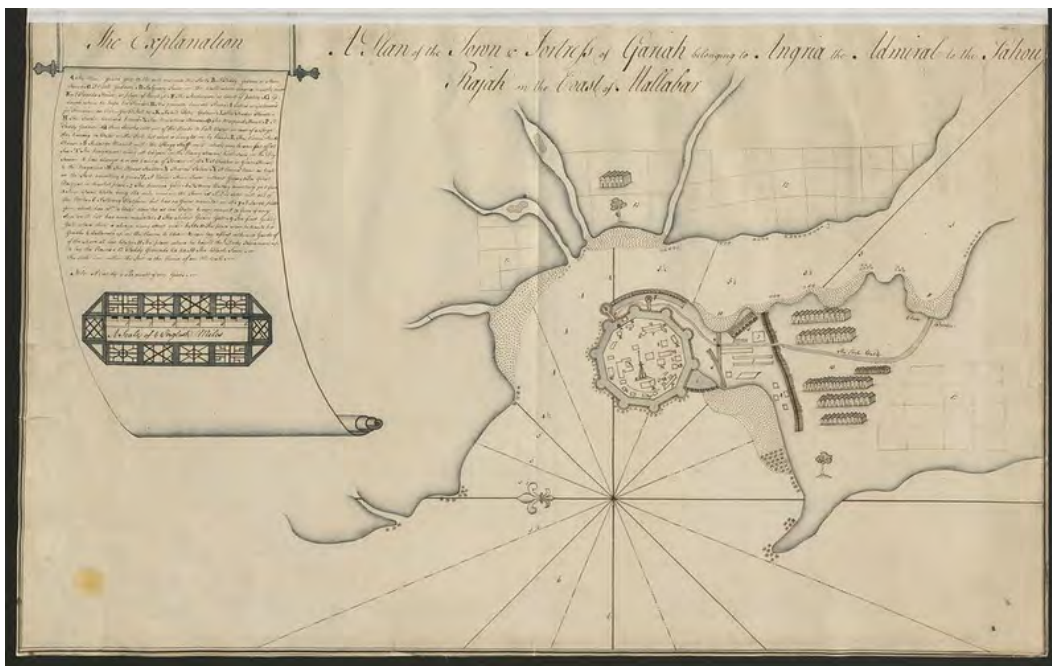


Figure 4. Map of Vijaydurg fort from the British period labelling all its parts (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

There is another map from the British period (Figure 5) that emphasises the layout of the town in relation to the fort, but the fort is represented in a very basic manner. Here, the fort shown is symbolic, as the map depicts it as circular or a decagon which was certainly not the case. There is a possibility that the British map of Vijaydurg was in progress or didn't exist at all before this map. On learning the nomenclature and identifying the parts of the map below, the features of the fort are seemingly covered but the map conveys the idea of the town well, just not the size and shape of the fort.



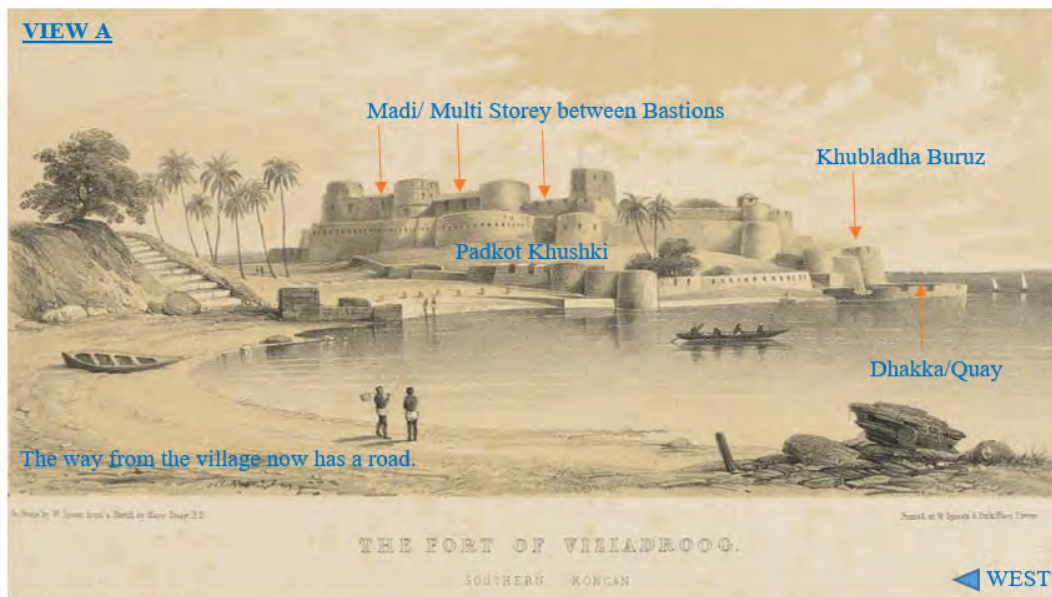
**Figure 5.** Map of Vijaydurg fort along with Girye town  
(© British Library Board, Maps K.Top. 115.59.2).

There are also features that are visible at fort today that are not present in any of the Maratha or British maps. This suggests that such features were built after the maps were made. One such feature that was built in 1868 was Sahebache Ote.<sup>19</sup> These were plinths built by two European scientists, Pear Johnson and Normen Lockeyer, to view and study a solar eclipse through a spectroscope. During this study the gas Helium was discovered. It was named Helium as Helios means Sun in Greek and the new gas form was found over the sun.<sup>20</sup> Thus the renowned fort of Vijaydurg is also known to be the place where Helium gas was first discovered.

### **Physical Description based on Drawings**

In addition to the maps, a series of paintings and drawings also illustrate the features of the fort and further illuminate aspects of its design.

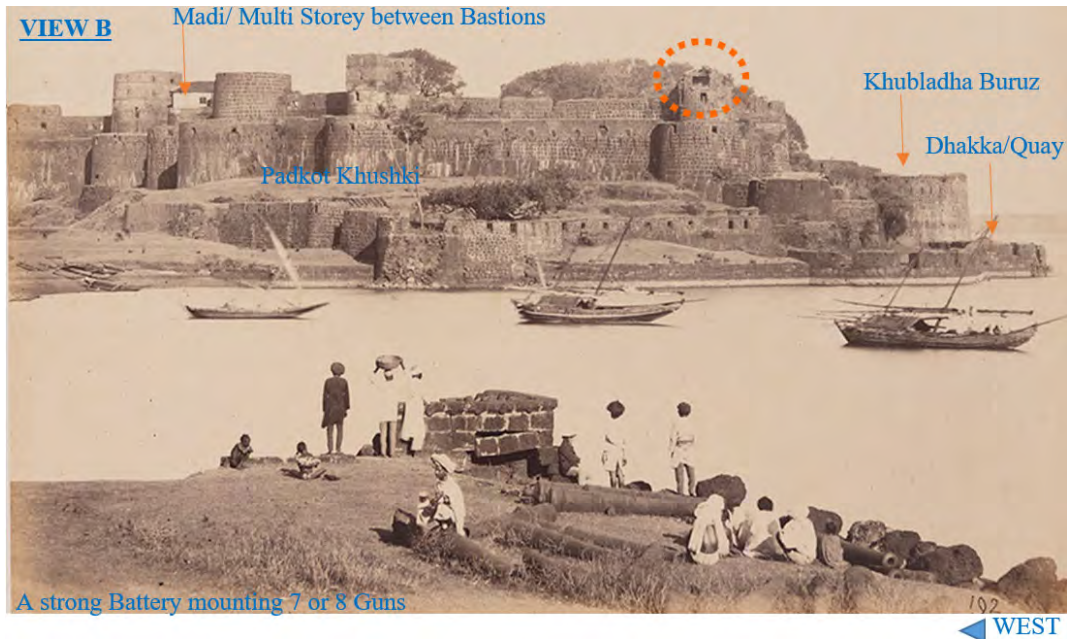




**Figure 6.** Vijaydurg fort in 1756. Lithograph of the Fort at Vijaydurg by William Spreat after an original sketch by Robert Pouget and one of a series of 'Views in India and in the vicinity of Bombay' dated c.1850 and published in London (© British Library Board, P2363/2363).

Figure 6 was hand-drawn and painted from 1756. Some parts of the fort are labelled to give an overview of the fort. One of the items is Madi,<sup>21</sup> the purpose of which is unknown but Madi usually refers to a multi-storey residential structure in Maratha architecture, and usually acts like bed rooms. These spaces were usually multi-functional.

The fort of Vijaydurg is said to have triple fortification as the third layer of fortification contains a Dhakka<sup>22</sup> or a quay. The outermost fortification on the land side is called Padkot Khushki<sup>23</sup> and the elaborate Khubladha<sup>24</sup> bastion. Khubladha is a celebrated bastion and was larger than those used to snipe. It was also called the Khubladha Nava Tofa Bara.<sup>25</sup> This means a bastion where 12 cannons or guns were placed to snipe. The location of the three features had different purposes to serve forming the third layer of fortification.



**Figure 7.** Old image of Vijaydurg fort in rear and land surface of town in front ([www.alamy.com](http://www.alamy.com)).

Figure 6 depicts items like the marine yard and a strong battery mounting seven or eight guns. Here, one can also observe the small sized boats or vessels called the Grabs or Gallavats that accessed the inner-most part of the creek. The image clearly identifies the different levels of land, sea and the fortifications. It is evident how the fort was designed to capitalise on the advantages of the natural topography.

Figures 6 and 7 depict Vijaydurg as a rugged strong structure. The entire fort sits on naturally available rock and is built in local materials. The fort has a large number of bastions with varying heights. The top of the bastion is highlighted in orange colour that appears to have a very European castle-like profile.

The Madi or the multi-storey structure has sloping roofs similar to the local houses in the region. These sloping roofs were either covered with thatch and hay, or mud tiles called Cowl.<sup>26</sup> This is evidently found in the local Maratha architecture of the period. The truss kind of sloping roof engineering was introduced by the British. However, no remnants of it survive. The bastions were also covered with sloping roofs to protect the defenders who were armed to look out and snipe throughout the day. Only one or two bastions can be seen in the images below.

Another view taken from the north-east side, shows the Granary or the two arched magazines. From this end, the medium size vessels sailed near the fort. In this view,



the Dhakka or the quay show a large number of vessels anchored to load and unload the passengers or the commodities. The small houses of the town are shown with identical sloping roofs in single line near the fort, similar to that in the British map with the fort and town together (Figure 5).

The two small bastions highlighted in yellow may have been newly introduced by the British as they do not appear to be a part of the old fort from the Maratha period. It appears to be a European addition, considering their size and the cone-shaped roof on top.



**Figure 8.** View showing the attack made on Vijaydurg fort by Admiral Watson on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1756 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

Under the command of Admiral Charles Watson, a fleet of British-led ships of Indo-Portuguese force of the East India Company is shown in Figure 8. This is a formation in front of the fortified island of Gheria, i.e. Vijaydurg. The image shows the stronghold of the Maratha ruler Tulaji Angrey on the fort with a flagpole on a hill in the centre and a line of fire barges approaching from the left. From the west, medium and large size ships are seen nearing the fort to attack.

On studying the history of Vijaydurg fort in the 1980s, Mumbai's Maritime History Society's Curator Commander Ajit Gupchup learnt about various ships that attacked

Vijaydurg and either sank or broke down while approaching the fort from the north-west.<sup>27</sup> Thus an archaeological underwater expedition was carried out in 1989. The Commander was thrilled to have found a V-shaped stone wall underwater. This wall was at a distance of 100 to 150 metres from the Vijaydurg fort and to its north west. It stands at a depth of 2 to 5 metres below the water level and runs east-west before turning north-south. It was claimed to have been at least 300 years old, probably built by Kanhoji Angrey.<sup>28</sup> This is a very unique feature of Maratha fort architecture which has not been found anywhere else as yet. This experiment was further explored by the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, in 1995. These researchers found that the small sized stone blocks were of three sizes; namely 1 x 0.4 x 0.3 metres, 0.7 x 0.5 x 0.3 metres and 0.55 x 0.3 x 0.22 metres; while the large sized stone blocks were 3.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 metres. These stone blocks are placed together without mortar.<sup>29</sup> This is called as the Chirebandi<sup>30</sup> style of stone wall construction. It was one of the masterpieces of Maratha fort architecture. This secret feature, having a very strategic purpose, shows the level of innovation in construction engineering in the Maratha period.

### **Conclusion**

A sustainable city in itself, the major activities of the fort of Vijaydurg were to protect itself and its region during a siege. People resided in the fort and in the surrounding town. Its placement not only commanded the mouth of Vagothan creek,<sup>31</sup> but also protected the ports in close proximity. Though the fort underwent so many different dynasties, no ruler changed the location or the access routes to the fort. The same fort served the purposes of defence since the Silahara dynasty. This does not make the fort typical, but the consecutive expansions and additions of building elements added complexity to the structure. On understanding the advantages of the fort, the Maratha Navy eventually made Vijaydurg the main naval station for South Konkan.

Along with the fort the adjoining areas have proved to be significant as well. The places like the quay and the dockyard were used as they were, considering the factors of location, topography, climate and geography; they remained the same. Along with these factors the strategic location of the creek and the indented pieces of land also played a vital role. Their able capacity ensured the prolonged use of the fort and its quay and the dockyard. Once the dockyard was built the fort-related and defence activities increased and were enhanced. In spite the dockyard being a Maratha establishment, it served for ship building and repairs even in the British period. The

sea farers assassinated the opponent rulers and without any hesitation acquired their possessions and continued with similar operations, owing to the strategic setting of Vijaydurg fort.

It is evident that the fort of Vijaydurg has evolved over time and has undergone physical changes with the changing rulers, but the amendments were mostly concerned with expansion and smart engineering techniques of construction. The advancement in the technology of defence mechanism demanded updates in construction, but the purpose of safeguarding the region based on trade and maritime activities was always prioritised.

The political situation then played a vital role in the significance of Vijaydurg. Forts have always been crucial entities in changing rulerships. The changes in leadership demanded the architecture of the fort to be shaped accordingly. The newer layers of construction were plastered on top of one another with different purposes such as necessary activities, expansions, strengthening, repairs and maintenance. Each new set of rulers demanded an advanced set of requirements, depending upon their strength, finances and the baggage that they carried from their native lands. Moreover, the degree of destruction of the old structures in the fort also resulted in the volume of new construction and the architectural alterations.

Nevertheless, one cannot deny the role of local artisans and the locally available construction materials. The time frame of each rule and ruler had their influence on architecture of Vijaydurg fort. If the ruler was consistent for a longer duration, he had contributed more effectively as opposed to the ruler having ruled for a shorter term or who was volatile.

Supporting this, of forts in general author Alexander Kyd Nairne states that the old works are hidden below more recent works, and this is the case for Vijaydurg fort. In spite of the Bijapur Kings building or using the fort for a long time, there is more importance attached to Vijaydurg than just its use by the Islamic rulers.<sup>32</sup> If the two layers of Maratha and the British periods are compared with what is existing today on site, one can easily predict the architectural changes in the fort.

The maps cater the most to understand the design and layouts of Vijaydurg fort. More pictorial representation showing buildings in plan and the front elevations is found in

the Maratha map. All the buildings have sloping roofs with thatch or hay like profile or a semi covered front porch that is prominent in Wada construction. Such a profile is of typical Maratha buildings. However, the British map showing the town and the fort together (Figure 4) help explain the town in relation to the fort rather than the details of the individual features of the fort.

Based on the maps and the available scholarship, this paper concludes that the major styling of Vijaydurg fort can be called Maratha. The fort may not have been this large in scale during the Bijapur Kings, but the architectural styling must have been evident then too. Also, as Nairne rightly suggests, there is hardly any Islamic feature that stands out on site today. Evidence of Islamic inhabitation is probably not available on site, but there is a strong possibility of the Islamic fort being transformed into what is Maratha facing continuous evolution. In addition to the Maratha layer, the British layer also must have added their flavour during their long reign, but their additions were probably in the interior structures that hardly exist on site today. Ignoring the changes the fort has undergone since 1947, nothing but a few plinths, a majority of dilapidated ruined structures, the triple layered fortification walls and some bastions still exist.

In comparison to the other sea forts, Vijaydurg is relatively in better condition, marking the epoch in the history of sea forts. Considering the scenario of fort architecture, there is nothing that has evidently belonged to a particular ruler, but rulers carried influences and that eventually generated into respective architectural styles with appropriation. Stylistically the word appropriation is preferred as the word literally means “the act of taking something such as an idea, custom, or style from a group or culture that you are not a member of and using it yourself.”<sup>33</sup> The local attributes in some or the other form were added to the forts then.

Countering this, Alexander Kyd Nairne claims Vijaydurg to be Islamic with most massive buildings within and on the fort walls.<sup>34</sup> However difficult it is to typecast a fort under one style of ruling dynasty, and in spite of Vijaydurg undergoing a continuous evolution due to the seafaring activities of various rulers like the Mughals, Siddis, Portuguese, British and the Marathas, its architecture can be called as Maratha with appropriation. As the architecture of Vijaydurg fort is a result of series of stylistic evolution put together, it is the culmination of changing rulers and their layers evident in the built form.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Alexander Kyd Nairne, *History of the Konkan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2008 [1894]), 93.
- <sup>2</sup> Sarkhel was a post that means Admiral of the fleet.
- <sup>3</sup> Maratha is identified as a caste and Maharashtra state gets its name from being the land of Marathas.
- <sup>4</sup> Hindu Janajagruti Samiti translates as The Indian Public Awareness Committee.
- <sup>5</sup> Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, "Pitiable State of Vijaydurg fort, HJS demands conservation and maintenance of the fort" 29<sup>th</sup> December 2021, <https://www.hindujagruti.org/news/154109.html> Accessed 22nd June 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> M S Naravane, *Forts of Maharashtra* (New Delhi: APH Publication corporation, 1995), 34-35.
- <sup>7</sup> Nairne, *History of the Konkan*, 79.
- <sup>8</sup> Maharashtra State Gazetteers Ratnagiri District (Bombay: Directorate of Government Printing, Stationary, and Publications, Maharashtra State, 1962[1880]).
- <sup>9</sup> Nairne, *History of the Konkan*.
- <sup>10</sup> Gajanan Mehendale, *Shivchhatrapatinche Aarmaar*, translated by Santosh Shintre (Thane: Param Mitra Publications, 2010).
- <sup>11</sup> B. Arunachalam, "Maratha Naval Resistance to European Powers on the Konkan Coast" in *Essays in Maritime Studies Vol I* (Mumbai: Maritime History Society Seminar [2007], 2016), 34.
- <sup>12</sup> Swaraj translates as self-rule or self-governance.
- <sup>13</sup> D.R. Ketkar, *Mazi Itihasatil Mushafiri*, (Pune: Aparant, 2015), 20.
- <sup>14</sup> Mehendale, *Shivchhatrapatinche Aarmaar*, 166, 167.
- <sup>15</sup> B. Arunachalam, "Maratha Naval Resistance to European Powers on the Konkan Coast" in *Essays in Maritime Studies Vol I* (Mumbai: Maritime History Society Seminar [2007], 2016), 37.
- <sup>16</sup> Godi translates as Dockyard and Wadi means place.
- <sup>17</sup> Girye is the name of the town and Godi translates as Dockyard.
- <sup>18</sup> Ketkar, *Mazi Itihasatil Mushafiri*, 25.
- <sup>19</sup> Saheb translates as Boss – in this case the British and Ote translates as plinths in Marathi language.
- <sup>20</sup> Ketkar, *Mazi Itihasatil Mushafiri*, 23.
- <sup>21</sup> Madi is a multi-storey building in Marathi language.
- <sup>22</sup> Dhakka is place from where goods and passengers are loaded and unloaded in Marathi language.
- <sup>23</sup> Padkot Khushki translates as the outermost fortified wall on land side.
- <sup>24</sup> Khubladha translates as fight nicely in Marathi.
- <sup>25</sup> Tofa means cannon or guns and bara means 12 in number in Marathi.
- <sup>26</sup> Cowl is a vernacular roofing tile made out of mud and clay.
- <sup>27</sup> Ketkar, *Mazi Itihasatil Mushafiri*, 24.
- <sup>28</sup> Ketkar, *Mazi Itihasatil Mushafiri*, 24.
- <sup>29</sup> Sila Tripathi, M.K.Saxena, Sundaresh, P.Gudigar, S.N.Bandodkar "Marine Archaeological Explorations and Excavation of Vijaydurg – A Naval Base of the Maratha Period, Maharashtra, on the west coast of India," *The International Journal of National Archaeology*, 27, no. 1, (1998), 51-63.
- <sup>30</sup> Chirebandi is a Marathi word which means a stone wall built without mortar. Instead of mortar small stone chips were used as fillers.
- <sup>31</sup> Sachin Pendse, *Maritime Heritage of Konkan* (Mumbai: Maritime History Society, 2011), 269.
- <sup>32</sup> Nairne, *History of the Konkan*, 42.
- <sup>33</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/appropriation>.
- <sup>34</sup> Nairne, *History of the Konkan*, 42.

# Shifting Focus from Architecture to Heritage: Stories of Three Australian Women Architects

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## **Abstract**

*This paper considers the stories (oral histories) of three Queensland women architects: Fiona Gardiner, Helen Wilson and Ruth Woods. Studying architecture in the 1970s and working in architecture from 1980 to the present, each story reveals new insights into the experiences of women architects in Queensland at a time when women were achieving parity in architectural education and greater representation within the profession. A focus of the paper will be the move made by each to the new and emerging discipline of heritage and conservation in Queensland in the 1980 and 1990s. Revealing new histories of the heritage movement in Queensland, it will be argued that the value of their stories also lies in the “benefits” they felt heritage work offered women architects practising in Queensland. These include the chance to establish sole practices (together with the flexibility this offered) and the opportunity to escape the traditional hierarchies of mainstream (private) practice.*

## **Introduction**

Fiona Gardiner, Helen Wilson and Ruth Woods are three Australian women architects who historically made pivotal shifts from mainstream architectural practice to heritage conservation when the discipline and its value began to grow in the 1980s in Queensland. They moved from an architect’s main role of planning, designing and supervising buildings to identifying resources of historic value, highlighting their prospects/impacts on a community and advocating for their recovery, adaptive re-use and/or heritage listing. Depicting the intersections of architecture and heritage, their individual stories (oral histories) reveal reasons for studying architecture in Queensland in the 1970s, initial design practice and the pivotal events leading to their shift to heritage. Factors impacting this focus and project outcomes are also identified to demonstrate their wealth of participation and contributions in the field.

Helen Wilson and Ruth Woods are currently in private practice of heritage architecture, having worked for over 30 years while Fiona Gardiner recently retired (2021) from the public service after serving as Director of Heritage, Queensland Government for thirteen years. These three women form part of a larger cohort of women who were individually interviewed from 2020-21 for a PhD project by the author. The project examined (hi)stories of women who studied and/or practised architecture in Queensland from 1975 to 2000, to demonstrate their contributions and career impacts for best practices in women's collections/archives. These three women were selected for this paper because their histories inform knowledge and understanding around the significance of women architects shifting to heritage. It suggests what people trained in architecture can bring to the discipline and indicates important lessons about women moving to heritage architecture in the period. Their stories also reveal new information/histories on the foundation of the 1992 Queensland Heritage Register, its related legislation and beneficial outcomes.

As part of the PhD project, data (interviews and materials) collected were added to the *Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture* (DAQA), launched in 2014 by the University of Queensland (UQ).<sup>1</sup> DAQA is an open access interactive online database, initially conceived to share oral histories of architects in postwar Queensland and connect these to other tangible resources.<sup>2</sup> Now expanding to include architects of the postmodern period, it aims to stimulate global interest in sharing and learning Australian historical knowledge.<sup>3</sup> In the absence/less of the material archive, oral histories are used to explain and provide in-depth understanding of the women's experiences in heritage architecture of the period.<sup>4</sup> The narratives are occasionally complemented with contextual literature, as evidence and to deal with memory or subjectivity. Each story reveals new insights into the experiences of women architects in Queensland at a time when women were achieving parity in architectural education and greater representation within the profession. It revealed architecture was an unusual career choice for women at the time, often perceived as a masculine profession. However, strong personal interests (passion) and self-persistence (determination) mainly motivated Gardiner, Wilson and Woods to complete a five-year Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Queensland (UQ) in 1978 and 1980.<sup>5</sup>

### **Reasons for Studying Architecture**

An architectural education was an unusual choice for women in 1970s Queensland and very few women were encouraged to pursue architecture as it was often perceived

as a masculine profession.<sup>6</sup> Several studies have demonstrated that women were in the minority at architecture schools in Australia during the interwar and post-war periods.<sup>7</sup> When women enrolled in architecture they were often dismissed by their teachers and male counterparts as “not serious,” “just there [in architecture school] to get a husband,” “wouldn’t work” after graduation and as such “taking a man’s place” within the program.<sup>8</sup> For example, a male student said to Wilson at UQ, “I can tell you’re really interested in architecture, you do great things, not like the other girls here who are just here to get a husband.”<sup>9</sup> Wilson perceived the male student (and probably many others) to be ignorant as most, if not all, the women were genuinely interested in architecture. Gardiner added;

... some of the lecturers actually just thought that the women... were there for sort of fun and they’d get married and... these women aren’t going to contribute to the profession. They’re just dilettante here at university filling in time till they catch a husband. That was the kind of attitude and remarks made to make you feel like you weren’t serious.<sup>10</sup>

Deborah van der Plaats demonstrates in “‘Shabby’ Careers?: Women Working in Architecture in Post-War Queensland” that a number of women in post-war Queensland entered architecture “accidentally,” often due to missed opportunities in the sciences or other professions.<sup>11</sup> For example, Christina Metcalfe’s father insisted she pursued a professional course, so after missing the entry requirements for science, she enrolled architecture in 1964 at UQ.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary Gardiner, Wilson and Woods’ entry into architecture was intentional, planned and determined. They had already made up their minds from a young age, as Gardiner explained: “it was an idea from very early and I had to make sure I chose the right subjects to get into the course and things like that.”<sup>13</sup> Their personal interest in design and creativity encouraged the study of an architectural degree at UQ. Each woman recalls developing a passion for architecture-related projects or subjects including arts, science and history, as early as secondary school. Gardiner explained: “I did art through school, so I was interested in art and painting and drawing.”<sup>14</sup> Likewise Wilson: “I was always very interested in drawing and painting, so I was doing quite a lot of that.”<sup>15</sup> This reinforces van der Plaats’ findings that an individual passion for modern design was often cited by women as the reason they chose to study architecture in post-war Queensland (1945-75).<sup>16</sup>



The three women also identified family, high school environment, friends and the Commonwealth Scholarships as contributing factors to their entry into architecture. Wilson “was deciding whether to do Fine Arts” or something in the “sciences and math field,” when she decided to study architecture.<sup>17</sup> After talking to a senior colleague in her high school arts class, she learnt about architecture and developed an interest. She became interested because it brought her two interests together; art and science. Wilson came “from a long line of architects,”<sup>18</sup> but this was a fact she only discovered after starting architecture. She explained: “I was amazed... I wonder why they didn’t tell me this earlier.”<sup>19</sup> Additionally, interactions with (art) teachers, school leaders and career counsellors within high school environments had a profound effect where architecture was often suggested as a career choice. Gardiner and Wilson had both been to private girls’ high schools, which encouraged their decision to study architecture.<sup>20</sup>

I went to an all-girls school and had a very good art teacher, and I can remember telling my art teacher. I got a lot of encouragement from the school about studying architecture. They would say that there was only one other girl who had been to that school who’d gone ahead and studied architecture at that stage but we’re talking about the late sixties.<sup>21</sup>

Gardiner’s experience can be compared to that of Margaret Ward (nee Tonge). She too recognised that her private girls’ school education put her in a privileged position to study architecture. She explained: “this was an all-girls school with... high academic aspirations... and I had taken that for granted... that my silver tail start in life influenced where I went... [so later] reflecting, they were pretty terrific.”<sup>22</sup>

Parents, especially fathers who were either architects, engineers or builders, were also commonly identified as an influence on daughters studying architecture during the post-war era.<sup>23</sup> It has been previously argued that fathers often indirectly influenced their daughters by demonstrating examples of “accomplishments and success,” while mothers were more of “motivators,” affecting through their artistic/creative abilities, style or taste in the home.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Woods traces interests in architecture from an early age and attributes her interest partly to her father’s profession.

I knew from a very early age, maybe 10 or 11 that that’s what I wanted to do. I just enjoyed looking at building sites. My father was a builder at the

time so I would have lots of leftover materials, muck around with those, go onto building sites, and I just knew I wanted to be an architect from quite an early age.<sup>25</sup>

Gardiner's father was an (electrical and mechanical) engineer and her mother, a member of the National Trust of Australia. She grew up around engineering drawings and looking at plans/buildings in magazines related to the built environment including heritage journals and *Australian Home Beautiful*. She perceived "the kind of magazines that were around in the house" motivated her high interests in design and heritage.<sup>26</sup> Gardiner's experience slightly differs from Wood's in that her interests in architecture (and heritage) seem to have come more from her mother than her father. Unsurprising Gardiner at age 21, and fellow student Helen Wilson, aged 20, both coordinated a live heritage project in their third year after enrolment at UQ in 1972.

Seeking to preserve the South Brisbane Gas and Light Company Works (1880s, West End, Brisbane), Gardiner and Wilson wrote a report in 1974 to preserve the site. With the support of lecturer Stanley Marquis-Kyle, they lobbied for the site to be "converted to an industrial museum."<sup>27</sup> They met with the then director of Queensland Museum, Alan Bartholomew, to excite his interest, and campaigned via national television and *The Australian* (15 November 1974).<sup>28</sup> Wilson explained: "It had been bought by a developer, F.A. Pidgeon and it was an amazing building... very sculptural – made of brick in a steel frame and with a latticework of brick to let the light into the interior of the gas works."<sup>29</sup> Assisted by the Queensland Works Department, Wilson and Gardiner submitted a heritage report to the Works Director but were unsuccessful and the Gasworks was demolished in 1975.<sup>30</sup> However, they were (academically) assessed positively on the heritage report and one structure (a cast iron prefabricated retort tower) on the site was saved. Also known as the Gas Stripping Tower, it was acquired, dismantled and stored in 1975 by the National Trust of Queensland.<sup>31</sup> In 1979, the National Trust reassembled and relocated it along the Brisbane River in Davies Park. The tower was later entered on the Queensland Heritage Register in 1992 when the register was established.<sup>32</sup> Gardiner and Wilson made a little impact that contributed to the tower being heritage listed. This action clearly formed the foundation of their later heritage focus.

Woods explained that apart from parental influence, the Commonwealth Scholarship actually facilitated her enrolment in architecture in 1973: "I wanted to go to university,

we weren't very well off. I told him [my dad] I would only go to study architecture if I got a scholarship."<sup>33</sup> Full-time architectural education was costly at the time and as Gardiner explained: almost "everyone [at UQ] had a Commonwealth Scholarship," as "to get into architecture... whatever score you needed meant you got a Commonwealth Scholarship anyway."<sup>34</sup> Prior to 1974, students had to rely on competitive Government (Commonwealth) Scholarships based on Grade 12 final results and few industry scholarships. The former funded tuition and provided a living allowance while the latter covered tuition in exchange for a work commitment.<sup>35</sup> From 1974, however, the Labor government of Edward Gough Whitlam (1916-2014) abolished university fees across Australia.<sup>36</sup> Together with other socio-economic reforms including university expansions in the 1970s, university education became more accessible for women and other minority groups.<sup>37</sup> Gardiner explained: "things changed quite a bit because I think making universities free changed the composition of the students."<sup>38</sup>

Though an unusual career choice at the time, it was discovered Gardiner, Wilson and Woods were motivated to graduate mainly due to their strong desires, persistence and natural love for architecture. Wilson and Gardiner both graduated in 1978, during which Wilson received the Queensland Institute of Architects (QIA) Memorial Medallion.<sup>39</sup> Gardiner advised: "you should only be doing architecture if you're passionate about it. I think within architecture, there's a huge range of things that you can do... find your niche."<sup>40</sup> This could possibly be a contributing factor – they each found a niche in heritage and remain relevant in the profession today, despite industry (gender) challenges. It also aligns with a number of studies that have demonstrated little self-interest, motivation and determination cause several women to leave the profession, especially after encountering work restrictions and barriers.<sup>41</sup>

### **Heritage Shift and Significant Impacts**

Gardiner, Wilson and Woods completed an architectural education during a period (1970s) when women were in minority and there was much gender discrimination both at university and in practice. Apart from being seen as unserious, likely not to practise after graduation and "just taking a man's place" at architecture school, women were also predicted to be sexual distractions to male co-workers and economic liabilities towards clients, and their outputs always needed to be supervised by usually a male colleague or boss.<sup>42</sup> Hence practising women in this period were rare, often regarded as unsuitable for job/site supervision, managing projects/contracts and limited to

domestic work or the design office.<sup>43</sup> Women finding architectural jobs was difficult, as Gardiner recounted: “it wasn’t particularly easy to get a job... it did take people time then to get a job,”<sup>44</sup> which was also heightened by the economic recessions of the late 1970s to early 1980s.<sup>45</sup> She, however, managed to secure employment (through a friend) around April 1978, with Alexander Ian Ferrier (1928-2000), a Brisbane-based architect. In 1979 Gardiner moved to Conrad, Gargett & Partners, where she worked on the restoration of Queensland’s Parliament House in Brisbane.<sup>46</sup> This was her turning point when she decided to specialise in heritage. She explained:

I was just a very junior person doing details. For me, that was a very important experience. That helped set the direction of where I wanted to go with my career. Even though my part in it was minor, for me, it was really important.<sup>47</sup>

Gardiner then travelled in 1981 to pursue a year-long Post-Graduate Diploma (now Master’s) in Conservation Studies at the University of York, UK.<sup>48</sup> Returning to Brisbane in 1982, Gardiner worked on a number of conservation projects as a freelancer. From 1983 to 1986, she prepared a conservation management plan for the Glengallan Homestead (1864) with UQ lecturer Ian Sinnamon (1935-2017),<sup>49</sup> and the nationally funded *Register of Significant 20th-century Architecture in Queensland* (1988), with heritage architect Robert Riddell for the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA).<sup>50</sup> By the late 1980s, Gardiner explained local interest in the heritage values of the regional built environment had grown and she found employment with the Queensland Works Department’s new ‘historic building section’. She then registered as an architect in 1990. Documenting government heritage buildings, Gardiner was tasked with the conservation management plan for Boggo Road Gaol (1903-1992) at Dutton Park, Brisbane. As no heritage legislation existed in Queensland at this time, she worked with historian Judith Mackay who helped to convince the then Director-General, Mal Grierson, that the prison buildings needed to be preserved.<sup>51</sup>

Gardiner then joined the Department of Environment and Heritage in 1992, just at the commencement of the Heritage Act and establishment of the Queensland Heritage Register.<sup>52</sup> Her architectural training led to initial heritage experiences that greatly enhanced her expertise in contributing to Queensland’s heritage legislation and register. For instance, Gardiner directed a three-year state-wide heritage survey to discover and develop heritage places for the Queensland Heritage Register in the late

1990s. Under her leadership, the Queensland Heritage Register expanded from 970 places in 1992 to more than 1,750 places by 2019.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, she led the development of a ten-year Queensland Heritage Strategy in 2009 (updated 2015), which made Queensland the second state in Australia to have a heritage strategy after Victoria, towards preserving its built heritage.<sup>54</sup> Gardiner has been part of numerous legislative reviews of the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, and believes she engendered a culture of excellence and best practice in heritage regulation facilitated by her architectural background.<sup>55</sup> She rose to Director of Heritage until her retirement in 2021, influencing good heritage outcomes for Queensland by spearheading the development of many state and local government heritage policies/strategies. She was recognised with a Public Service Medal in 2019 for “outstanding public service through management of cultural heritage in Queensland.”<sup>56</sup>

Gardiner’s training in architecture enabled her to easily lead and work with a like-minded multidisciplinary group (historians, archaeologists, planners, environmental activists, etc.), always focused to promote and produce significant outcomes in heritage and conservation. From her experiences as the first president of the Women in Architecture Queensland group (formed in 1983 to showcase women architects via events and publications), she developed equity policies and flexible working conditions in government to aid workers (especially women) find work-family balance. During the 1970s-1980s, many historic (government) buildings in Queensland were faced with threats of demolition by the Bjelke-Petersen (1911-2005) government.<sup>57</sup> Gardiner was instrumental in the late 1980s through the 1990s in advocating for historic/significant buildings, as well as the veiled heritage of Queensland (women) architects to be recognised, conserved and/or heritage listed. Since 2010, Gardiner serves as the only female board member of the Brisbane Open House,<sup>58</sup> and was recently awarded the 2021 Paula Whitman Leadership in Gender Equity Prize for her “relevant, sustained and active leadership.”<sup>59</sup>

Helen Wilson, on the other hand, moved through a number of practices including Bruce Buchanan Heritage Architects at Ipswich, which she really enjoyed. She was also attracted to heritage and influenced by UQ lecturer Ian Sinnamon who assigned “really interesting projects” related to heritage.<sup>60</sup> For instance, one assignment was to find a neighbouring historic building, research its history (including talking to the owners), take photographs, prepare the drawings and present the findings in a report. Wilson explained: “I loved drawing it for the record. I found it fascinating. And it was

unexpected, I didn't expect to be so interested."<sup>61</sup> Like Gardiner, Wilson also travelled to study in the UK at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA London) in 1979, gaining a Graduate Diploma in International Housing Studies. This was funded by the (shared) A.E. Brooks Memorial Travelling Scholarship she received upon graduation at UQ.<sup>62</sup> In London, Wilson worked for David Heffernan and Associates around 1980 before returning to work with Perumal, Neill, Barbara & Partners in 1981 in Glebe, Sydney. She recalled enjoying working at Perumal as they "did a lot of heritage work."<sup>63</sup>

In 1983, Wilson took up an appointment at Sydney University as First Year Architecture Coordinator. She lectured design studio and prepared/coordinated curriculum and staff. Here, she had the opportunity to take students to India for a seven-week archaeological heritage work. They joined the Vijayanagara Research Project to hand-draw historic buildings in Karnataka, India – a fifteenth-century city (now a World Heritage site).<sup>64</sup> She explained: "They're sandstone, they're very intricately carved and photographs don't record them very well, so they needed to be drawn."<sup>65</sup> Drawing in the day and partaking in heritage lectures from experts in the evenings became Wilson's turning point to heritage. She admitted: "it really opened up my world to these amazing [heritage] sites and the opportunities."<sup>66</sup> On her return, she registered as an architect in 1985 and joined Conybeare Morrison & Partners in 1986 to work on architectural and heritage projects. She then set up Helen Wilson Heritage Conservation Design in 1991, offering heritage advice, studies, reports, management plans, adaptive re-use and conservation best practices. Wilson was also a founding member of the New South Wales Heritage Advisory Program, established in the early 1990s to provide heritage advisory services to local councils and governments. She acknowledged its influence in enhancing her heritage focus:

... it really gave you a lot of on the ground experience speaking to people, helping to re-jig their designs to make them more appropriate context, or less damaging to the actual heritage item... having to be quick on your feet... to think broadly... quite creatively, and work out how you could quickly turn the design around to get what they wanted, but without the damage.<sup>67</sup>

Wilson's contributions in the program were appreciated via the Sustainable Cities Heritage Award in 2013 from the Office of Environment & Heritage and Heritage

Council of New South Wales (NSW). She is actively involved in ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), having served as secretary from 2009 to 2013. She also assists in the organisation of the annual General Assembly and serves on many (inter)national Scientific Committees. For example, as convenor of the Caring for Country Committee, she advocates for climate change and sustainability.<sup>68</sup> Wilson was also awarded an Energy Australia Heritage Award by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 2010 for her conservation work on Montrose, an 1867 villa in Glebe, Sydney (2007-13). She described how collaborating with the architect as the heritage consultant contributed to the project success: “We were both on site a lot and having to react to situations quite quickly and work things out, and I think we made a really good team.”<sup>69</sup> Wilson has worked on a number of heritage and adaptive reuse projects, mostly in New South Wales. For instance, she prepared heritage reports on Yerranderie, a ghost town in Sydney, and recounts: “the buildings were in a really remote area. It was very hard to get to,” so she “hired a helicopter” for herself and the consultants.<sup>70</sup> From her experiences, Wilson has become an authority in the field and now speaks at conferences, symposiums and workshops, including the 2019 National Trust Seminar held in Brisbane. She explains: “I’m an idealist, I’m working to change things for the better in whatever means I can in terms of these various committees and roles I have.”<sup>71</sup>

Ruth Woods reiterated “jobs were really hard to get as a graduate” in 1980.<sup>72</sup> Unable to secure a position in architecture, she worked in an engineering company before securing an architectural position with Ainsley Bell and Murchison to register as an architect in 1981. In contrast to Wilson, Woods stayed with Ainsley Bell and Murchison which later became Haysom Middleton, and then Devine Erby Mazlin (DEM), until 2001. She explained that the Queensland Heritage Act passed in 1992 created a large demand for heritage, conservation and adaptive reuse projects that required “proper scrutiny and approvals,”<sup>73</sup> such as the Treasury Building (1880s).<sup>74</sup> DEM tendered for some of these heritage jobs, engaging Bruce Buchanan as their heritage architect. This was the turning point for Woods, as she subsequently had the opportunity to work closely with Buchanan on a number of heritage projects. She explained: “I just started to love the whole idea of working with heritage buildings. It had that extra parameter to deal with.”<sup>75</sup>

In the early 1990s, Woods was made Project Architect for the adaptive reuse of the Challinor Centre (1908-46) at Ipswich into a UQ campus.<sup>76</sup> She described this as the

“most pivotal” project in her career.<sup>77</sup> The numerous buildings on the site had to be adaptively reused in a short time so a relatively large team of consultants and professionals were put together to be able to complete the project within schedule. She travelled to Ipswich three days a week for project supervision and regularly returned to finish off related administrative works at the Brisbane office. Woods has loved working on heritage projects since, because of the privilege of learning and experiencing amazing historic buildings. From 2005, she has run Ruth Woods Architecture Heritage as a sole practitioner which she admitted provides much flexibility in work-family balance. Woods revealed her shift to heritage was also because it provided a better sustainable income: “if I took on the traditional architectural role now... I’d be lucky to do two or three jobs a year. It’s very difficult to sustain an income on that.”<sup>78</sup>

Woods was appointed to the Queensland Heritage Council in the 1990s for almost 8.5 years. She enjoyed that experience and is currently on the Urban Places Panel for Queensland Government Heritage and the Brisbane City Council Independent Design Advisory Panel for heritage. Some of her outstanding projects include the adaptive reuse of Rhyndarra stables (1880s) as her family residence in Yeronga, which won an AIA regional award and the National Trust’s John Herbert Gold Award, as well as the restoration and maintenance of Rockhampton Courthouses in 2018 and Brisbane Racing Club in association with BVN Architects. She prepares conservation management plans and statement of impact reports, and acts as an expert witness in the Planning and Environment Court, sometimes offering pro bono services. For instance, with other community members, she fought a council approval for developments in a heritage-listed park roughly thirteen years ago. Woods organised the appeal that ended in court. She was assisted by colleagues in heritage and got all expert witnesses pro bono to fight the case. She explained:

We got some legal assistance through a large company but then we had to fund it ourselves, so we were all putting money in. But we fought and won and I’m very proud of that. I’m not against development at all but this was a development that should never have been approved and ultimately the Appeal was upheld, so I’m pretty proud of that.<sup>79</sup>

The 2008 Australian Institute of Architects’ Heritage Policy recommends “the involvement of appropriately skilled architects in relevant decision-making regarding



the conservation of listed heritage buildings and places” for better heritage outcomes.<sup>80</sup> This has been demonstrated by Gardiner, Wilson and Woods who have all made significant contributions and impacts as heritage advisors/consultants or heritage architects. Woods and Wilson are past ICOMOS Executive Committee Members and Queensland Heritage Council Members, while Gardiner has been on various juries for the AIA. All three remain members of the Australian National Trust, Australia ICOMOS and other heritage councils/panels, promoting and contributing to state and (inter)national heritage decisions, policies and projects.

### **Factors Affecting Focus**

Gardiner, Wilson and Woods revealed the main factors affecting their specialisation in heritage have been prolonged turnaround time, valuable mentors or senior colleagues, and gender challenges/barriers. Unlike Wilson and Woods, who remained in private practice, Gardiner moved into government to “affect more change” and influence “things in a broader sense.”<sup>81</sup> She argued after witnessing the buildings Queensland lost to demolitions in the 1970-80s, Queensland was “late to heritage legislation,” and “It seemed that if you could be part of the policy settings you could really have an impact.”<sup>82</sup> This motivated her to stay in a government position working in heritage for over 30 years. Gardiner however discovered heritage projects often take many years to be listed, restored and/or appreciated. For example, the Queensland Education Heritage project initiated under her directorship took about 20 years “to come to absolute fruition.”<sup>83</sup> Likewise the former Petrie Terrace Police Barracks, Brisbane (1850s-1960s), which was derelict since 1987 and redeveloped into a commercial precinct in 2008.<sup>84</sup> Also, the former Newstead Gasworks, Brisbane (1870s-90s), abandoned in the 1990s and renovated to a retail, residential and entertainment hub in 2013.<sup>85</sup> She explained: “it does take a long time for things to get done,” or for all stakeholders to agree and receive appropriate funding.<sup>86</sup>

Gardiner again cited the maiden heritage criteria guidelines project for state heritage places she led from 1989-2006. The report, “An Interpretation and Methodological Framework for Entering Places in the Queensland Heritage Register using the Criteria Established by the Queensland Heritage Act 1992,”<sup>87</sup> was demanding, she disclosed: “It took us quite a long time to do. I was probably responsible for getting it started and going and finished and everything, but a lot of people contributed to the document.”<sup>88</sup> She explained the document was possibly “the first of its type in Australia that really set out how to use heritage criteria.”<sup>89</sup> Gardiner hinted that while some work has been

done, more buildings of the second half of the twentieth century need to be represented on the Queensland Heritage Register, which she looks forward to pursuing.<sup>90</sup>

Woods agreed with Gardiner that heritage projects often entail large sites and many structures that take lots of years to be completed. She described that changes in ownership, client's needs and statutory requirements add to the delays and lengthen the process. She gave examples of the adaptive reuse of the Toowoomba Foundry (1910s-40s) that started around 2004 but has extended over fifteen years now,<sup>91</sup> and the Holy Cross Convent site, Woolloowin (1880s), undergoing design for adaptive reuse since 2007.<sup>92</sup> Wilson also attested to the impact of prolonged turnaround time. She cited her experience of working with successive owners on Byron Lodge – a Victorian Gothic sandstone house in Coogee, Sydney – that extended from 1998 to 2015 (seventeen years).

Secondly, all three women admitted the positive impact of mentors or senior colleagues on their (early) heritage work, which encourages them to also mentor younger women in the field now. Gardiner explained: "Having a mentor would give you more confidence and strategies... the thing about having a mentor is that maybe they would encourage you to take the leap, go for things that you wouldn't do yourself."<sup>93</sup> This supports other research that has argued the lack of mentors in the profession affects women's confidence and work outputs.<sup>94</sup> Gardiner referred to Richard Allen and Don Watson as "intellectual" leaders of the heritage movement in 1980s Brisbane that influenced her early career: "I've done various research projects and things with him [Don Watson] and... not only is he an encyclopaedia of everything that's happened in architectural history in Queensland, ... he's [also] a wonderful... fantastic architect... a bit of a genius I think."<sup>95</sup>

Woods admitted Bruce Buchanan was a strong influence that developed her interests and confidence into heritage practice. She explained: "Bruce Buchanan was actually the Heritage Architect, but he just gave me free reign, he would just check in and I would ask him questions. It was terrific, that's where I really learnt more about it [heritage]."<sup>96</sup> Buchanan allowed Woods to explore and take charge of the project, a similar experience encountered by Gardiner and Wilson in their early days of heritage work. Wilson was also influenced by architect and heritage consultant Robert Moore,

who she job-shared with as heritage advisors at Ashfield Council for ten years. She explained:

He's a delightful guy and his approach to design, architecture and heritage and working with people is so wonderfully ethical and also, he's got a very good sense of design, and a very good capability of working things out with people... and his heritage knowledge is quite extensive. So, I found him quite influential.<sup>97</sup>

Another impact identified was gender barriers. Practising women were very few and Woods confirmed initially there were offices she worked as the only woman architect. She revealed often being the only woman in meetings during the 1980s when she worked for large firms. Although she never allowed this to discourage her, she admitted it was quite liberating when more women entered the profession in later years. She cited attending a large project site meeting in 2019 where the structural engineer, planner, project manager plus she the heritage architect were all women: "We were talking and we all realised, we're all women! We all just laughed and said, that's terrific! They're lovely moments when you think, we've all made it."<sup>98</sup> Gardiner also stated there were some subtle gender barriers in her early public service days. However, by the time she became director in 2008, several other female directors had been appointed and there were some improvements in gender equity. Notwithstanding, Gardiner and her team assisted for the Queensland Heritage Council Board in 2021 to achieve its first ever female majority (eight women and four men).<sup>99</sup>

Wilson explained one of the reasons for starting her own heritage practice in 1991 from home was gender bias. She recounted: "Some of the later jobs, it was a real barrier to be a woman, even teaching at university. You tend to be side-lined a bit because they don't take you as seriously as the men."<sup>100</sup> Wilson observed most women weren't treated well in architectural practices, especially by male engineers and building inspectors, which encouraged her move to private practice with a heritage focus. She explained: offices were "ridiculously" hierarchical in the 1970s and 1980s, with demanding hours and uninteresting projects. This supports a number of studies that indicate similar traits for women in practices today, including rigid work cultures, unfriendly work hours and progress barriers, which often result in women leaving

architecture or diverting to other related fields.<sup>101</sup> Wilson, however, agreed there are now some improvements in gender equity within the government:

I also worked at the New South Wales Heritage Office recently. It was a very difficult job. There were a lot of stresses and strains, but what I liked there was the equal opportunity they give to women, to Aboriginal people, to people of all different races, religions – that was fabulous!<sup>102</sup>

### **Conclusions**

Despite the unfavourable circumstances of the period, Gardiner, Wilson and Woods successfully finished their architectural degrees mainly due to self-determination and deep interests in architecture. They shifted to heritage work, influenced by their architectural training, previous practices and mentors/senior colleagues in the field. They indicate training in architecture provided an appropriate foundation and relevant networks that presented various opportunities leading to their heritage focus. Excelling at the inadvertent opportunity to work on heritage projects, they each grew to love and develop expertise in the field. Gardiner's story reveals new information on the heritage movement in 1980s Queensland, when the Queensland Heritage Register and legislation were founded in 1992 to protect historic/heritage places and buildings in Queensland. It also discloses how her key role in government as Director of Heritage contributed to legislative reviews, heritage policies, strategies and public projects. Wilson and Woods on the other hand established and run heritage-focused sole practices, mainly because this offers fewer restrictions and more flexibility. Heritage work appeared for them to have fewer gender restrictions compared with mainstream practice in the 1980s, thus becoming more appealing and compatible for women working in private practice.

It is therefore argued that the value of these stories also lies in the “benefits” the three women felt heritage work offered women architects practising in Queensland at the time. Paula Whitman discovered women strongly desire to “find balance in their lives,” so have sacrificed career continuity and progression for this balance.<sup>103</sup> Possibly because, as several studies indicate, the definitions, rigid structures and traditional hierarchies of mainstream architecture don't allow this balance and have influenced women architects to constrain/erase their contributions, participation and significance in the profession over the years.<sup>104</sup> Hence, as heritage work allowed flexibility for work-family balance, growing professional talents/networks and recognition, all three saw it

as an enabling field that offered women practitioners greater opportunities and escape from the biases of mainstream (private) practice in the 1970s-1990s.<sup>105</sup> Other emerging related fields such as planning, academia, urban design and interior design also offered similar advantages for women architects in the 1980s-1990s, but Gardiner, Wilson and Woods chose heritage largely due to developed personal interests in the discipline. They are all proud to have contributed and be influencing sustainable heritage projects across the world.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>2</sup> John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaats, Janina Gosseye, Jane Hunter and Andre Gerbers, *The Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture* (Brisbane: ATCH Research Centre UQ, 2014).
- <sup>3</sup> Macarthur et al., *The Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture*.
- <sup>4</sup> Nick Emmel, *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research: A Realist Approach* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 141.
- <sup>5</sup> Gardiner and Wilson first earned Bachelor of Design Studies in 1975 (Woods in 1976), before the Bachelor of Architecture in 1978 (Woods in 1980). See <https://qldarch.net/architects>.
- <sup>6</sup> Deborah van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?: Women Working in Architecture in Post-War Queensland," in *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture, 1945-1975*, ed. John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaats, Janina Gosseye and Andrew Wilson (London: Artifice Books, 2015), 184-90.
- <sup>7</sup> Julie Willis and Bronwyn Hanna, *Women Architects in Australia, 1900-1950* (Red Hill, ACT: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 2001); van der Plaats, "'Shabby Careers?'," 184-99.
- <sup>8</sup> Kay Standley, Bradley Soule and Jo Standley, "Women and Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education* 27, no. 4 (1974): 81, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1423937>.
- <sup>9</sup> Helen Wilson, Interview by Cyndelle Kwabi, 9 June 2020: 00:48:50, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, [www.qldarch.net](http://www.qldarch.net).
- <sup>10</sup> Fiona Gardiner, Interview #1 by Cyndelle Kwabi, 21 December 2021: 01:06:52, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, [www.qldarch.net](http://www.qldarch.net).
- <sup>11</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 185-99.
- <sup>12</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 185-86.
- <sup>13</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:01:59.
- <sup>14</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:02:49.
- <sup>15</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:09:01.
- <sup>16</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 188.
- <sup>17</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:00:31.
- <sup>18</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:01:41-00:02:47.
- <sup>19</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:02:47.
- <sup>20</sup> Gardiner attended Strathcona Girls Grammar School in Melbourne, Victoria, and Wilson Somerville House in Brisbane, Queensland, during the late 1960s.
- <sup>21</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:00:50.
- <sup>22</sup> Ward was allowed to combine science with arts (a rarity then), studying physics, maths and visual art at Brisbane Girls Grammar (1968), enabling her entry into architecture. See "Margaret Ward", Interview by Janina Gosseye and Deborah van der Plaats, 7 April 2013 :00:07:27-00:08:20, <https://qldarch.net/architect/interview/2544?architectid=728>.
- <sup>23</sup> van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 186.
- <sup>24</sup> Standley et al., "Women and Architecture," 80.
- <sup>25</sup> Ruth Woods, Interview by Cyndelle Kwabi, 28 May 2020: 00:00:21, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, [www.qldarch.net](http://www.qldarch.net).
- <sup>26</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:01:59.

- <sup>27</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:24:13; Peter Marquis-Kyle, "Fiona Gardiner: It's your Birthday!," 8 November 2003, [www.marquis-kyle.com.au/mt/000403.php](http://www.marquis-kyle.com.au/mt/000403.php), accessed 12 July 2022.
- <sup>28</sup> Fiona Gardiner, Interview #2 by Robert Riddell and Janina Gosseye, 1 March 2013: 00:25:06-00:26:10, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, [www.qldarch.net](http://www.qldarch.net); Marquis-Kyle, "Fiona Gardiner."
- <sup>29</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:29:51.
- <sup>30</sup> "West End Gasworks Distribution Centre (entry 601595)", Queensland Heritage Register, last updated 20 January 2016, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601595#>, accessed 12 July 2022.
- <sup>31</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:30:59; "Gas Stripping Tower (entry 600342)", Queensland Heritage Register, last updated 20 January 2016, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600342#>, accessed 12 July 2022.
- <sup>32</sup> The South Brisbane Gas and Light Company refurbished the tower in 1988, and landscaped its surroundings, and the tower still stands.
- <sup>33</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:00:59.
- <sup>34</sup> Gardiner, Interview #2: 01:30:01.
- <sup>35</sup> Michael Ostwald, Anthony Williams and Australian Learning and Teaching Council, *Understanding Architectural Education in Australasia* (Sydney: Australian Learning and Teaching Council, 2008), 12.
- <sup>36</sup> Ostwald et al., *Understanding Architectural Education in Australasia*, 12; Bruce J. Chapman and David Pope, "Government, Human Capital Formation and Higher Education," *The Australian Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (1992): 275-92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20635686>.
- <sup>37</sup> Harriet Edquist, "Architecture and Design," in *The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth Century Australia* (Australian Women's Archives Project, 2014), [www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0030b.htm](http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0030b.htm), accessed 30 June 2022.
- <sup>38</sup> Gardiner, Interview #2: 01:29:43.
- <sup>39</sup> The Medallion is an annual prize awarded to two students with the highest GPA in Bachelor of Design Studies (now Bachelor of Architectural Design) and Bachelor of Architecture (now Master of Architecture). It was established in 1948 to commemorate the Queensland Institute of Architects (now the Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter), and is maintained by a donation.
- <sup>40</sup> Gardiner Interview #1, 01:11:44.
- <sup>41</sup> Karen Burns, "Why do Women Leave?", Parlour, 17 November 2014, <https://archiparlour.org/why-do-women-leave/>, accessed 21 July 2019; Amity Kett, "The Importance of Women in Architecture – 6 Barrier-breaking Women Architects," <https://amitykett.com/importance-of-women-in-architecture-6-women-architects/>, accessed 05 February 2020.
- <sup>42</sup> Standley et al., "Women and Architecture," 81- 82; van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 184-99; Samuel Alan Rayner and Frederick Bruce Lucas, *Architecture in Queensland, Occupational Survey No.3* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1964).
- <sup>43</sup> Rayner and Lucas, *Architecture in Queensland*, 30-31; Milka Bliznakov, "Women Architects," *The Structurist*, nos 24/25 (1985): 121-23; van der Plaats, "'Shabby' Careers?," 184-99.
- <sup>44</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:10:03.
- <sup>45</sup> Patrick Mullins, "Cities for Pleasure: The Emergence of Tourism Urbanization in Australia," *Built Environment* (1992): 187-98.
- <sup>46</sup> Neil Laurie, "The Challenges of Working in and Preserving a Heritage Listed Building: Parliament House," *Queensland History Journal* 23, no. 11 (2018): 798-813, <https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.062631121215397>.
- <sup>47</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:17:37.
- <sup>48</sup> The lack of heritage legislation in Queensland motivated Gardiner to study how heritage legislation is implemented. She was influenced to study in York after attending lectures by Derek Linstrom, head of the course at the time when he visited Brisbane as part of a tour across Australia. See Gardiner, Interview #2: 01:02:20-01:02:45.
- <sup>49</sup> "Glengallan Homestead (entry 600007)", Queensland Heritage Register, last updated 20 January 2016, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600007>, accessed 12 July 2022.
- <sup>50</sup> Fiona Gardiner, "Register of Significant 20th-century Architecture Queensland," report to RAI, 1988; Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter, *Queensland*

*Architect* (Brisbane: R.A.I.A., Queensland Chapter, February 1990), 11, 16; Robert Riddell and Royal Australian Institute of Architects, *Significant Queensland 20th Century Architecture: A Report* (Petrie Bight: Robert Riddell Architect, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> “Boggo Road Gaol: No 2 Division and Remnant No 1 Division (entry 601033)”, Queensland Heritage Register, last updated 20 January 2016, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601033>, accessed 12 July 2022; Boggo Road Gaol, “Tours and Experiences,” <https://boggoroadgaol.com/tours/>, accessed 16 July 2022.

<sup>52</sup> Places, structures, buildings, parks, gardens or sites identified as of cultural heritage value to Queensland are preserved for future generations under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 and listed in the Queensland Heritage Register founded in 1992. The Department of Environment and Heritage (now Environment and Science) manages the list (register) of heritage places in Queensland. See Queensland Government, Heritage Places, *Heritage Conservation in Queensland*, last updated 6 June 2022, [www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/queensland](http://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/queensland).

<sup>53</sup> “Australia Day Awards of the Public Service Medal 2019: Fiona Gardiner,” AIA, News & Media, 4 February 2019, <https://wp.architecture.com.au/news-media/australia-day-awards-of-the-public-service-medal-2019-fiona-gardiner/>.

<sup>54</sup> Queensland, Department of Environment and Resource Management and Queensland Heritage Council, *Queensland Heritage Strategy: A Ten-year Plan / Department of Environment and Resource Management in association with the Queensland Heritage Council* (Brisbane: Department of Environment and Resource Management, 2009), [www.derm.qld.gov.au/publications/docs/p203719.pdf](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/publications/docs/p203719.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:26:54.

<sup>56</sup> “Australia Day Awards of the Public Service Medal 2019: Fiona Gardiner.”

<sup>57</sup> Johannes Bjelke-Petersen was Queensland Premier from 1968-1987, noted for inciting political protests and demolition of some historic public buildings in Queensland, See Libby Connors and Drew Hutton, “Who Owns Brisbane’s Radical Past?,” *Queensland Review* 12, no. 1 (2005): 91-100, doi:10.1017/S132181660003937; and *Hot Modernism*, ed. Macarthur et al.

<sup>58</sup> Free annual event where selected iconic buildings around Brisbane city are opened to the public for exploration, often on a weekend, See Brisbane Open House, Board & Ambassadors, <https://brisbaneopenhouse.com.au/about/board-ambassadors/>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>59</sup> “Heritage Champion Awarded Gender Equity Prize,” *ArchitectureAU*, Industry News, 8 March 2022, <https://architectureau.com/articles/heritage-champion-awarded-gender-equity-prize/>.

<sup>60</sup> Wilson, Interview 00:22:00.

<sup>61</sup> Wilson, Interview 00:23:25.

<sup>62</sup> The A.E. Brooks Travelling Scholarship is awarded for overseas post-graduate studies. It was founded in 1962 from the bequest of Arnold Edwin Brooks, a Brisbane architect who died in 1958. The international travel plus subsequent knowledge and experience gained by the recipient is expected to aid development of architecture in Queensland.

<sup>63</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:14:30.

<sup>64</sup> UNESCO, World Heritage Convention, “Groups of Monuments at Hampi,” 1992-2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/241/>; “Vijayanagara Research Project at the British Library,” *Asian and African studies blog*, 26 April 2019, <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2019/04/vijayanagara-research-project-at-the-british-library.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:27:20.

<sup>66</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:29:25.

<sup>67</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:18:05.

<sup>68</sup> Wilson copy-edited Climate Change and Heritage Working Group, *The Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action: Outline of Climate Change and Cultural Heritage* (Paris: ICOMOS, 2019); ICOMOS Webinar Series, “Caring for Country,” Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Change, 4 August 2021, [www.icomos.org/en/resources/webinars/75992-icomos-webinars-2](http://www.icomos.org/en/resources/webinars/75992-icomos-webinars-2).

<sup>69</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:19:90.

<sup>70</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:31:22. Yerranderie is a mining ghost town abandoned in the 1960s but currently being restored and conserved as a tourist attraction. See NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Yerranderie Private Town, [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/historic-buildings-places/yerranderie-private-town](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/historic-buildings-places/yerranderie-private-town), accessed 19 November 2022.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:39:08.



<sup>72</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:11:15.

<sup>73</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:14:00.

<sup>74</sup> Formerly a significant government office complex at Brisbane City, the Treasury Building was heritage listed in 1992 and refurbished to an entertainment centre called the Treasury Casino in 1995. It now consists of a hotel, restaurants, bars, nightclub and function rooms. See Ian Hadwen, *Brisbane's Historic North Bank, 1825-2005* (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 2005); Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Queensland Chapter, "Treasury Building: Discussion of Significance," *Queensland Architect* (Brisbane: R.A.I.A., Queensland Chapter, November 1992): 5.

<sup>75</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:14:30.

<sup>76</sup> The Challinor Centre used to be a psychiatric hospital covering ca 140-acre site. It consisted of several structures including dormitories, offices, canteen, workshops and staff development centre. It closed down in 1994 and was heritage listed in 1996. The site was adapted as UQ Ipswich campus from 1998-2014 and was acquired by the University of Southern Queensland in 2015. See "Challinor Centre (entry 601821)," Queensland Heritage Register, last reviewed 1 July 2022, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601821>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:14:38.

<sup>78</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:32:16.

<sup>79</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:39:00.

<sup>80</sup> The Australian Institute of Architects, *Heritage Policy* (Melbourne: AIA, 2008), 4, [www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Heritage-Policy.pdf](http://www.architecture.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Heritage-Policy.pdf), accessed 10 July 2022,

<sup>81</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:28:53.

<sup>82</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:29:15.

<sup>83</sup> Gardiner and her team advised the Queensland Education Department to nominate "significant" educational buildings and sites (from the 1860s) to the heritage register, following some demolitions in the late 1990s. Later launched as the Queensland Schools Heritage Strategy, the project spanned 20 years with 102 schools and sites currently listed across Queensland. See Queensland Government, State of the Environment Report 2020, *Queensland Heritage Places, Key Finding*, last updated 3 September 2021, [www.stateoftheenvironment.des.qld.gov.au/heritage/historic/queensland-heritage-places](http://www.stateoftheenvironment.des.qld.gov.au/heritage/historic/queensland-heritage-places).

<sup>84</sup> From 1987, the former Barracks and entire site ceased as a police facility. Heritage listed in 2001, it was remodelled to a commercial/retail precinct called "The Barracks" in 2008, consisting of a cinema, Coles supermarket, shops, bars and restaurants. In 2009, the redevelopment won two UDIA Awards for Urban Renewal and best large Retail/Commercial development. See "Petrie Terrace Police Depot (Former) (entry 601894)," Queensland Heritage Register, last reviewed 1 July 2022, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601894>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Heritage listed in 2005, the Newstead Gasworks was approved for mixed-use development in 2008 with first stage of development opened in 2013. The development is ongoing to include seven buildings of retail, commercial and residential apartments. See "Newstead Gasworks No.2 Gasholder (Remnants) and Guide Framing (entry 601594)," Queensland Heritage Register, last reviewed 1 July 2022, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601594>; "Home (entry 600242)," Queensland Heritage Register, last reviewed 1 July 2022, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600242>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>86</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:31:53.

<sup>87</sup> Queensland, Environmental Protection Agency, Cultural Heritage Branch and Queensland Heritage Council, *Using the Criteria: A Methodology / Prepared by Cultural Heritage Branch, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency 2006* (City East, Qld.: Queensland Heritage Council, 2006).

<sup>88</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:21:15.

<sup>89</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:21:10.

<sup>90</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 00:25:30.

<sup>91</sup> Heritage listed in 2004, the former foundry (metal factory and machine shop) was closed down in 2012. Burnings Warehouse bought it in 2013 and since 2016, has redeveloped portions as their Toowoomba outlet. See "Toowoomba Foundry Pty Ltd (entry 601300)",



Queensland Heritage Register, last reviewed 1 July 2022, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601300>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>92</sup> The Holy Cross Convent is part of other structures on the Catholic Sisters of Mercy site at Woolloowin sold in 2015 to a private developer. From 2017, the site is being redeveloped as an aged care and residential apartments (which was delayed in court appeals for about fifteen years) and the convent adapted to a 110-place childcare centre (yet to be approved). See Nundah News, “Demolition Eyed at Former Convent Site in Woolloowin as Part of Residential Project, Heritage Buildings to be Preserved,” <https://nundahnews.com.au/demolition-eyed-former-convent-site-woolloowin-part-residential-project-heritage-buildings-preserved/>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>93</sup> Gardiner, Interview #1: 01:10:14.

<sup>94</sup> Kathy Roberts, *Women in Architecture: A Recognised Place* (Brisbane: UQ, 1995), 76; Julie Collins, “A ‘Powerful, Creative History’: The Reticence of Women Architects to Donate Their Professional Records to Archival Repositories,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 40, no. 3 (2012): 181-90; Standley et al., “Women and Architecture,” 81.

<sup>95</sup> Gardiner, Interview #2: 01:04:16-01:09:30.

<sup>96</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:16:05.

<sup>97</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:24:52.

<sup>98</sup> Woods, Interview: 00:35:45.

<sup>99</sup> The Queensland Heritage Council (QHC) was established under the 1992 Queensland Heritage Act to identify and protect heritage places, buildings and sites in Queensland. See Queensland Government, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, “Case Study: Queensland Heritage Council Board,” last updated 6 October 2021, [www.justice.qld.gov.au/about-us/services/women-violence-prevention/women/boards/case-studies/heritage-board](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/about-us/services/women-violence-prevention/women/boards/case-studies/heritage-board).

<sup>100</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:36:10.

<sup>101</sup> Despina Stratigakos, *Where Are the Women Architects?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Gill Matthewson, Naomi Stead and Karen Burns, “Women and Leadership in the Australian Architecture Profession: Prelude to a Research Project,” in *Seizing the Initiative: Australian Women Leaders in Politics, Workplaces and Communities*, eScholarship (2012): 247-61; Burns, “Why do Women Leave?”; Karen Burns, Justine Clark and Julie Willis, “Mapping the (Invisible) Salaried Woman Architect: The Australian Parlour Research Project,” *Footprint* (2015): 143-60.

<sup>102</sup> Wilson, Interview: 00:43:25

<sup>103</sup> Paula Whitman, Queensland University of Technology, and Royal Australian Institute of Architects, *Going Places: The Career Progression of Women in the Architectural Profession: Findings of a National Study Examining the Careers of Women in the Architectural Profession in Australia* (Brisbane: QUT, 2005), 13.

<sup>104</sup> Matthewson et al., “Women and Leadership,” 247-61; Burns, “Why do Women Leave?”; Burns et al., “Mapping the (Invisible) Salaried Woman Architect,” 143-60; Stratigakos, *Where Are the Women Architects?*

<sup>105</sup> *Hot Modernism*, ed. Macarthur et al.

# Selective Consciousness: Re-crossing Heritage Narratives

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## **Abstract**

The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance *has evolved with a broadening of definitions, scope and acknowledgement of multiple values since first adopted in 1979. Accepted normative cultural heritage practices have been called into question in recent years, especially in places where settler colonial settlement occurred. These advances have unsettled previously accepted relationships between place, heritage fabric and community. This paper re-investigates the former Burns, Philp & Co Ltd Offices and Warehouse (1895) in the North Queensland regional centre of Townsville. It was identified in 1975 as a landmark and is at an important intersection of heritage buildings. The change from a hastily erected frontier settlement to a town confident in its future and place in the region is illustrated in this building.*

*The research found that the narratives underlying the cultural significance were incomplete and disconnected. This place was intrinsically linked with the foundation of Townsville and its early development as a port. Hence, it also symbolises the crossing of settler colonial and First Nations peoples' cultures. It was also evident that the relationship between ongoing commercial needs and the cultural significance of the place were unsettled due to the selective consciousness evident in the narratives. Re-crossing these narratives within the context of contemporary practice provides a framework to inform ongoing change. This is essential for a commercial use that is required to adapt to commercial reality while also responding to heritage constraints. The focus of the paper is then the underlying narratives rather than their possible interpretation. This study is timely in the case of the Burns Philp Building as new owners contemplate further change after a period of decline and Townsville City Council is rapidly constructing the East End boardwalk across the site.*

## Introduction

The Burns Philp & Co Ltd Townsville premises at 108-124 Flinders Street, built in 1895 (hereafter the Burns Philp Building; Figure 1), has been an acknowledged place of cultural significance since 1975 when listed by the National Trust of Australia (Queensland). It is a prominent building with a visually arresting corner tower in a heritage precinct of late nineteenth-century settler colonial buildings. The building was rescued from neglect in 1978 by an adaptive reuse project initially approved as thirteen individual offices with modern amenity. While this did achieve the preservation of the primary elevations and prevented the loss of the place, it has not prevented further decline as commercial uses changed in response to changing commercial conditions. Internal modifications demonstrate the unsettled relationship between ongoing use and heritage where change has occurred without consideration of the impact on the cultural significance.



TOWNSVILLE (HEAD) OFFICE OF MESSRS. BURNS, PHILP, AND CO., LIMITED.

**Figure 1.** Burns, Philp Co Ltd Building, Townsville, 1897  
(City Libraries Townsville, Local History Collection, “Burns Philp & Co., head office, Flinders Street East, Townsville. 1897,”  
<https://townsville.pydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/WPAC/BIBENQ/18682886/12533102,1?FMT=IMG>).

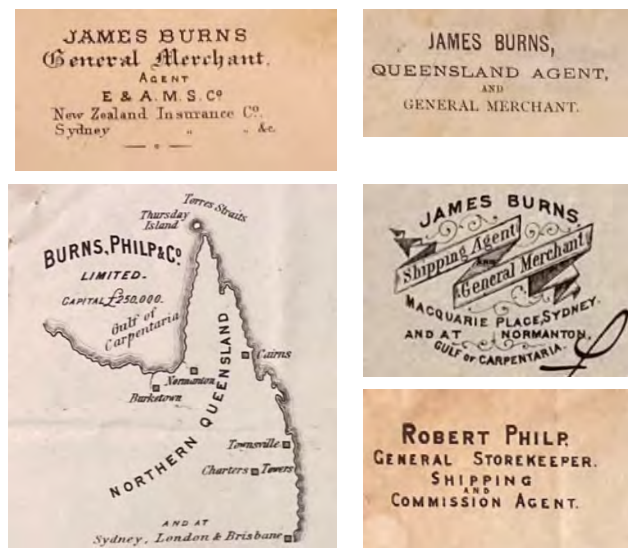
The focus on the external physical architectural object and its contribution to the streetscape is not surprising given that the adaptive reuse predates the adoption of the *Burra Charter* in 1979. This was the Australia ICOMOS response to the *Venice Charter* (1964) with the focus on “the single architectural work.” While the importance of “cultural significance” was noted, the term was not defined.<sup>1</sup> The early versions of the

*Burra Charter* followed a building focus but defined cultural significance as “aesthetic, historic, scientific, and social value for past, present or future generations.”<sup>2</sup>

The *Burra Charter* continued to be revised, reflecting significant changes in heritage practice. Place no longer includes the term “building” and “may have tangible and intangible dimensions.” The document now also acknowledges that places “may have a range of values for different individuals or groups” and the term “spiritual”<sup>3</sup> has been added to the definition of cultural significance. Over the same period, the Burns Philp Building has become more insular and detached from its cultural significance including the underlying narratives.

The historiographical understanding recorded in the entries associated with the listings for the National Trust and Queensland Heritage (QHR) registers are not consistent. Both acknowledge the start of Burns Philp & Co Ltd in Townsville and its importance in the development of north Queensland, as well as a link between this site and the founders of Townsville. One entry suggests Philp acquired the land and built the infrastructure including wharves, whereas the other links the acquisition to Burns, Philp & Co Ltd with “their offices in an old building which had been erected in the 1860’s for Robert Towns and John Melton Black.”<sup>4</sup> The building’s plaque, the most recent and public record, adds further interpretations suggesting that the site was acquired from Robert Towns and the 1895 building was “erected as the principal offices and warehouse” of the company. These inconsistencies suggest that the underlying narratives have not been fully understood. The primary role of this paper is to establish a clear understanding of how this place relates to the colonial settlement of Townsville and how it became part of Burns, Philp & Co Ltd. The research clearly shows that the site was the location of Townsville’s first wharf and store, the primary reason for the settlement’s founding. Tracing the acquisition of the property also shows how Burns and Philp conducted their businesses prior to the registration of Burns, Philp & Co Ltd in Sydney. Paul Walker and Amanda Achmadi have highlighted the “geographical spread and ambition” of Burns Philp. As the authors rightly point out, “this is a geography organised neither by colony nor country... but an organisational one.”<sup>5</sup> Townsville was the starting point of the business. Philp expanded westward and into Cairns after Burns relocated to Sydney in 1877. Relocation to a different colony did not prevent Burns from starting new ventures in northern Queensland, serviced by a growing fleet of ships with the two men in constant communication.

Business letterheads illustrate this pragmatic approach (Figure 2). The 1884 company letterhead identified the branches but without any indication of a principal place of business. London and Sydney are coupled with Brisbane reflecting the contribution of branches to profits. Northern Queensland accounted for 84%. London, the centre of a global empire, averaged just over 2% in the first decade of operations. Over this period the business continued to operate with a flat organisational structure controlled by Burns in Sydney and Philp in Townsville. Even after the completion of the Sydney Bridge Street branch, the company's own illustrated publications refer to "principal buildings" and location without identifying any single head office (although company letterhead from the time designated Sydney).<sup>6</sup> Burns and Philp were responsible for different regions, had different business interests and operated independently, yet seemed to act as one and were in constant communication.



**Figure 2.** Business letterheads, 1873-1884, clockwise from top left: James Burns - Townsville to 1877; Sydney to 1879; expansion to Normanton from 1879; Philp's Townsville business from 1877; and the company letterhead 1884 (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Sir Robert Philp Papers Box 8583 OM 65-32/6 3/2, 3/19; Box 8585 OM 65-32/25 RP Letter to Jas. Cook, 9 September 1878; Box 8585 OM 65-32/6 3/173; Box 8583 OM 65-32/8 3/393, OM 65-32/12 3/908).

The close association of this place with the founding of Townsville, assessed with the broadened *Burra Charter* framework, opens several narratives in addition to the settler colonial associations. This includes the impact on the First Nations people and the Pacific Islander labour trade. A deeper understanding of the place and its associated

rich narratives offers opportunities to inform both the adaptive reuse, current works and future projects not yet considered. This raises the further question of what narratives an owner/client would be open to considering?

### **The Crossing of Cultures**

The Burns Philp building site on Ross Creek is located on Country of the Bindal and Wulgurukaba First Nations peoples. The creek was called Cal'ghimg'a<sup>7</sup> and was a tidal mangrove estuarine environment, an important source of food and material, although inhabited by crocodiles and with the creek frequented by sharks. Michele Bird and Nicolaas Heijm, in conjunction with the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples, have undertaken several cultural heritage studies in the area including Ross Creek. These studies highlight the importance of an enduring and close connection with Country despite more than 150 years of intense settler colonial development.<sup>8</sup>

Written accounts from expeditions prior to settlement indicate that the land supported a large local population with evidence of cultivation and some noteworthy habitations. The early coastal surveying expeditions included Philip Parker King in the cutter *Mermaid* (1819), accompanied by the botanist Allan Cunningham, and Joseph Jukes' 1839 survey voyage in the *Fly*. Interactions between the different cultures were friendly and mutually inquisitive. Later voyages such as the *Santa Barbara*, seeking a "Northern Port in the year 1859," and the subsequent 1860 expedition in the Queensland Government schooner *Spitfire* under Joseph Smith with George Dalrymple, were specifically directed to assess the country for colonial exploitation. Interactions included more violent confrontations. Dalrymple's writing illustrates the narrow self-serving views of the settler colonist. He noted a "country swarming with hostile natives" and had no doubt they practised cannibalism, although had not witnessed this first-hand.<sup>9</sup> However, he did concede the "workmanship and ingenuity displayed in the erection of their huts, and formation of their canoes, nets, fishing lines, dillybags, clubs, and weapons, is superior to anything I have seen elsewhere in Australia."<sup>10</sup>

James Morrill's reminisces of seventeen years spent living with one of the local groups after being shipwrecked in 1846 and washing up on the shores of Cleveland Bay provide a very different perspective. This is a unique record of the First Nations people at the start of settler colonial expansion. Morrill reported several of Dalrymple's confrontations from their perspective and noted the devastating impact of settler

colonial expansion on their lives. The increasing violence prompted Morrill to reconnect with “civilisation” in 1863.<sup>11</sup> He went on to act as interpreter between the two cultures until his death in 1865.

### Founding a Settler Colonial Port

The narrative surrounding Townsville’s founding is an exercise in settler colonial private entrepreneurship. Expansion into North Queensland was driven by the pastoral industry after the establishment of Port Denison (now Bowen) by the Queensland Government in April 1861. This opportunity encouraged John Melton Black to relocate from Melbourne after operating a successful carrier business servicing the Victorian gold rush. He arrived in Port Denison the same month as the founding of the settlement and proceeded to obtain pastoral leases north of the Burdekin River. Lack of capital eventually led Black into a partnership with the Sydney-based ship owner, merchant, businessman and banker Robert Towns in 1864.



**Figure 3.** Detail from Black’s sketch showing “Port for Vessel” (1.). (Queensland State Archives, PR626278 (L6 1864; SRS1848/1/15), Mouth of the Ross River and Ross Creek drawn by J Melton Black to illustrate its discovery by his employees. Ca 29 chains to the inch (2 copies, quarter size map) [from Lands and Works Office in-letter 2205/1864] Copy 2).

Black, with his carrier background, considered access to Port Denison difficult due to distance from the northern pastoral areas and the Burdekin River becoming impassable in the wet season. Towns was also keen to build a boiling-down works to process livestock which was not supported by the residents of Port Denison.<sup>12</sup> Acting on the report of two of his stockmen, Black set out from Fanning River Station to examine a river entering Cleveland Bay in May 1864. His resulting map clearly shows



the location of the port, Towns' boiling-down works to process stock and a "Road to interior over sound country" (Figure 3). However, the Government would not commit to the venture on the terms sought by Towns and Black, having established Port Denison and the new port at Hinchinbrook in January 1864. The partners decided to proceed anyway, and a covert overland founding party arrived on 5 November at Ross Creek to commence clearing.<sup>13</sup> By the end of November, mangroves had been removed to access the creek, and Black had laid out a plan shoehorned between Cleveland Bay, Ross Creek and the rocky outcrops, with several structures under construction (Figure 4).<sup>14</sup> The purely commercial focus of the settlement can be seen in the first survey. Unlike Port Denison, there were no reserves for public infrastructure such as a market, water supply or municipal council building apart from the Customs House which was essential for a port of entry. Parts of the main commercial road adjacent to the wharf would have been inundated at high tides according to the survey. Towns and Black had proceeded on the basis that site improvements such as fencing and even partially constructed buildings were a pre-emptive form of possession. After further discussions with Government, the Government Surveyor was dispatched to survey Black's layout for land sales in 1865. Black and Towns obtained Townsville's prime sites, including the settlement's wharf area, without having to compete on the open market. Townsville's first wharfage, the "100 x 30 Timber Store" and "Wharf on Piles," was clearly identified on the first official survey plan of 1865 (Figure 4).<sup>15</sup>



**Figure 4.** Detail from Stuart's 1865 survey showing Blacks layout and improvements including: 1. "Store 100x30 Weatherboard" and "Wharf on piles" and 2. Reserve for Customs House (Survey T118.1. © State of Queensland (Department of Resources) 2023).



By 1866, the settlement was a gazetted port of entry, declared a municipality named after Towns, with Black the first Mayor, and had an operational boiling-down works. In January 1887, Towns and Black obtained the title for the 1-acre Crown Allotment encompassing the Store and Wharf with 152 metres of street and creek frontages (Figure 5). Shortly after this, the fledgling settlement experienced their first cyclone, the partnership dissolved, Black left town and the title was transferred to Robert Towns by the end of the year. Some sources suggest that Black was simply an employee of Towns. However, their many town properties were in joint names, suggesting more of a partnership. While Towns did provide the financial backing for the enterprise, Black was instrumental in assessing the suitability of the location for shipping and carrier operations inland, laying out the settlement and construction of the first buildings including the boiling-down works. This was a collaborative endeavour between two men operating from two locations separated by a vast distance.



**Figure 5.** Left – Part Townsville Survey T118.2 of 1866 showing the extent of the title and expanded wharf stores. Note high water mark in Flinders Street reserve. Right - Plan of Survey taken from Certificate of Title N<sup>o</sup> 40.367 Vol.274 Folio119 County of Elphinstone, Parish of Coonambelah; © State of Queensland (Department of Resources) 2023).

### **Merchants, Ship Owners and Partners**

Past heritage listings have focused on Burns, Philp & Co Ltd and its establishment in Queensland. However, it is the founding partners Burns and Philps that are critically important to the narrative of this place and Townsville's growth into the major regional port.

Townsville's potential attracted the attention of James Burns on his return to Australia in 1872 and he promptly purchased land. Burns had previously worked in his brother's Brisbane merchant business. He established several stores in and around Gympie to service the gold rush before returning to Scotland to settle his father's estate. By 1873 he had opened the store, James Burns General Merchant, on Flinders Street. Erratic

shipping connections to Sydney largely monopolised by the Australasian Steam Navigation company (ASN) led Burns to charter his own vessels to ensure a reliable supply chain, eventually becoming a shipowner.<sup>16</sup>

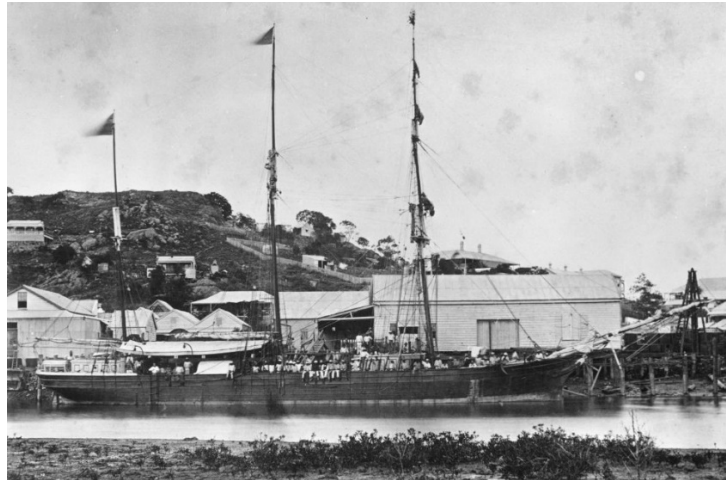
Robert Philp started his working life with the shipping company Bright Brothers in Brisbane and knew Burns from business interactions. They crossed paths again in 1874 when Philp was in Townsville on business and Burns quickly offered him a position.<sup>17</sup> Philp bought into the business in 1876 with the majority of the funds provided by Burns. The continuing effects of malaria led Burns to relocate to Sydney in 1877 where he initially acted as a Queensland Agent, expanded his shipping interests and soon started up another mercantile business that serviced Normanton and surrounding areas.<sup>18</sup> The Townsville operation was renamed Robert Philp General Storekeeper although the land title remained in Burns' name.

In late September 1877, a "disastrous fire" broke out in a store belonging to the merchants Messrs Brodziak & Rogers, destroying "two thirds of that division of Flinders Street," including Philp's store.<sup>19</sup> The State Library of Queensland holds the Sir Robert Philp papers, which include a large number of letters from Burns. On 15 October Burns wrote to advise against Philp's initial idea for "contraction" of the business to wholesale only and that Philp "would run large risks on small profits something like myself here."<sup>20</sup> It is evident that Burns' share in the business was significantly larger than Philp's and yet Burns acknowledged Philp had to make the final decision.<sup>21</sup> On 3 November Burns enclosed "plans and specification for what I would consider a suitable building" and "I now leave it all with you."<sup>22</sup> The letter of 28 November indicates Philp had decided to continue and Burns expressed that he was "enchanted" on hearing from a separate source "you only paid half the true value for Towns wharf."<sup>23</sup> The more senior Burns, with his heavy financial exposure, didn't refrain from expressing strong views on the direction of Townsville but also acted as friend, mentor and psychologist. It was a collaborative approach based on mutual respect and trust.



**Figure 6:** Ross Creek ca 1890. The Burns Philp site is in the lower right-hand corner with the company name on the roof of the original 100x30 foot store. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland Negative number: 12649, *Shipping companies and wharves on the Ross River, Townsville, ca. 1890*. <https://collections.sq.qld.gov.au/viewer/IE259645>).

The correspondence suggests Philp had secured the former Black and Towns wharf site (Figure 6) by 1877. However, the title did not transfer from the Executors of Towns' estate into Philp's name until 1880.<sup>24</sup> The 1-acre site had plenty of room for expansion, included wharfage, and several buildings with extensive street and creek frontages to support their growing shipping and lighterage services. Lighters were small vessels required to run between the Ross Creek wharves and larger vessels anchored in Cleveland Bay unable to enter the creek. By 1883, Philp had ten vessels of various sizes and Burns had a similar number.<sup>25</sup> Their move into shipping, initially to support their mercantile enterprises, also demonstrates their lateral approach to business opportunities. Burns and Philp were part of a consortium that established the Queensland Steam Shipping Company (QSS) in 1881 to improve services along the Queensland coast and connections with Asia and the United Kingdom via the Torres Straights, making Queensland the first ports of call in Australia rather than the last. Becoming ship owners also meant they directly experienced the high cost of shipping insurance. This spurred them on to establish the North Queensland Insurance Company Ltd (NQI) for their shipping needs in 1886. This new entity was the first to benefit from a purpose-built and imposing headquarters completed in 1892 across from their Townsville offices and wharfage. NQI continues today as QBE Insurance.



**Figure 7:** The schooner *Heath* docked in front of the original wharf. (John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland Negative number: 24441, Labour vessel, the *Heath*, arriving in Ross Creek, Townsville, Queensland, ca. 1878, <https://collections.siq.qld.gov.au/viewer/IE1182100>).

Not all business ventures undertaken by Burns and Philp were successful. Several of Philp's vessels including the *Heath* (shown docked at the original wharf in Figure 7) were involved in the Queensland labour trade from 1880. This trade had been initiated by Robert Towns in 1863 when he imported indigenous Pacific Islanders to work his cotton plantation in Logan, south of Brisbane. Burns expressed concern over this activity, suggesting "we should say goodbye to the labour trade at whatever loss to the firm."<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately they were unable to exit before Philp's vessel *Hopeful* became embroiled in a Royal Commission that resulted in successful criminal prosecutions against the captain and several crew members. It appears that the company had exited the trade by 1885, well before it was discontinued in 1904. Only Robert Towns' involvement in this trade is acknowledged in Townsville.

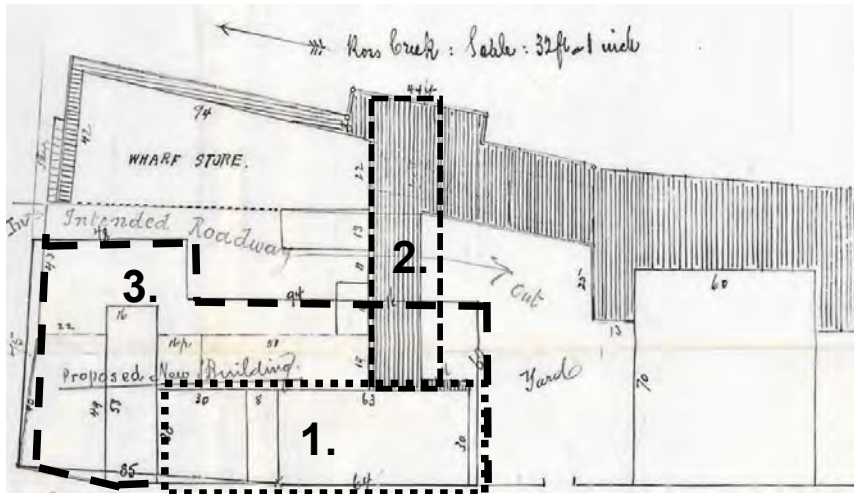
Burns, Philp and Co Ltd consolidated the partners' common business interests into one Sydney registered entity. However, it continued to function as a series of branches with joint managing directors based in Townsville and Sydney. Townsville's operations generated 49% of profits in 1882. This dominance steadily declined to 15% in 1894 as more branches were established.<sup>27</sup> Townsville's preeminent position was further weakened when Philp relocated to Brisbane in 1886 after being elected to the Queensland Parliament.<sup>28</sup> Philp resigned as a director in 1893, liquidating his shares to cover poor private business ventures with Burns, the sole Managing Director. Philp had served as an Alderman of Townsville Municipal Council before being elected to

Parliament. He went on to serve twice as Premier and held various portfolios over a 29-year parliamentary career.

It is the initial Townsville partnership between Burns and Philp that laid the foundations for Burns, Philp & Co Ltd that continued to expand and adapt for a further 100 years. Sydney certainly became the headquarters of Burns, Philp Co Ltd, but this was a gradual process. Even after the completion of the company's "most celebrated architectural artefact"<sup>29</sup> at 2 Bridge Street in 1901, company publications continued to refer to "principal buildings" without nominating any one primary office.

### **A New Office and Warehouse**

The 1895 building marks the transition from "shabby timber and iron buildings" (captured in Figure 6) to a "most solid and impressive appearance on Flinders Street,"<sup>30</sup> portraying a business and town confident in their future. The building was designed by the Sydney architects A. L. & G. McCredie who had warehouse experience and had recently completed the Norman Wharf for Australasian United Steam Navigation in Brisbane in 1892 (the company formed after the amalgamation of the ASN and the QSS in 1887).<sup>31</sup> The Townsville building is in a classical revival style constructed from rendered local masonry with a prominent corner tower atop the heavily stepped parapet. The two functions of office and warehouse are integrated into a single unified structure even though the warehouse includes an additional floor. The office corner includes an impressive "verandah arcade" formed with large arched pilasters. The waterfront and west and elevation are devoid of any decoration, emphasising the importance of the street frontages. While the tower makes the corner a clearly defined landmark at the street intersection, Philp's memoir indicates that the extensive views served the practical purpose of identifying ship arrivals for prompt servicing.<sup>32</sup> While the Figure 1 photograph includes the designation "Townsville (Head) Office," the company structure, with a Managing Director located in Sydney, suggests this was a local designation only.



**Figure 8.** Probable first wharf and store configuration:  
1. 100x30 Store; 2. First Wharf; 3. 1895 building outline. Base drawing titled "Plan showing extent to which old buildings will be replaced by New Building," on Proposed New Premises for Messrs Burns Philp & Co Ltd @Townsville, AL & G McCredie Architects & Consulting Engineers, ca 1894 (Queensland State Archives, Item Representation ID PR3861086).

A facsimile of the original tender drawing held by Queensland State Archives includes a "Plan showing extent to which old buildings will be replaced by New Building."<sup>33</sup> One building to be replaced adjacent to Flinders Street has dimensions that corresponded to Towns and Blacks' original store (Figure 8).

### Commercial Adaptation

The site associated with the Burns Philp Building encompasses the original Crown Allotment (Figure 5) and has undergone continual adaptation since 1864 (shown diagrammatically in Figure 9). The 1895 building removed the original stores and constructed the hard edge to what was previously an ephemeral water boundary. A large single-storey warehouse addition to the west was completed in 1913. There were alterations to the 1895 building in 1922 to increase the public areas by expanding into the original warehouse. The hipped warehouse roof was destroyed by fire in 1949<sup>34</sup> and replaced with a bow-line truss.

Ross Creek had become largely redundant as a port by the 1930s. The company relocated to new premises in 1967 and the building remained vacant with minimal maintenance undertaken. C. Krogh & Co Pty Ltd purchased the site in 1977 with the initial plan to convert the building into thirteen strata-titled offices with new services. Three of the ground-floor offices at the Wickham Street intersection end were

reconfigured into a cabaret restaurant which expanded into the first floor. Over time the remaining culturally significant internal fabric was concealed. This adaptive reuse saved the building but effectively isolated the fabric from the creek (reinforced in the sub-division plan), internalised the activities and did not connect the narratives outlined in this study. The land associated with the 1913 warehouse (132 Flinders Street) was subdivided and sold.

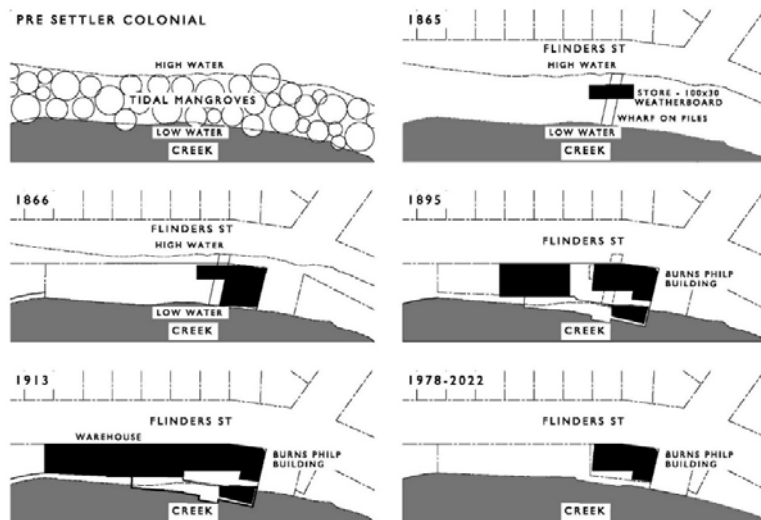


Figure 9. Diagrams of adaptation over time  
(Studio Tekton Pty Ltd).

### Re-crossing Narratives

The sale of the Burns Philp Building to Flinders Street Wharves Pty Ltd (FSW) in 2021 required a review of the place in the context of current heritage frameworks. The author was engaged by FSW to undertake a Conservation Management Plan and Heritage Impact Statement. This suggested a connection between the Burns Philp Building and Townsville's first wharf and store and the 1-acre Crown Allotment issued in 1867. This paper has clarified these relationships. There are important narratives connected with the Burns Philp Building and place encompassing 108-132 Flinders Street. These include narratives associated with: 1) people and businesses (Towns, Black, Burns and Philp; Burns, Philp & Co Ltd); 2) pastoral expansion; 3) port development; 4) shipping and lighterage; 5) the Pacific Islander labour trade; and 6) and the impact on First Nations peoples and the landscape.

Identification of the rich history connected with this site raises the question of whether a client or landowner would be willing to engage with these narratives in an adaptive

reuse, informing interpretive material or even guiding projects not yet undertaken? FSW have expressed an interest in engaging with these narratives, while limited by commercial constraints. However, the Burns Philp building site represents only one third of the total place. Townsville City Council is the owner of the balance land which has operated as a public car park until it closed recently to allow for the construction of the East End Boardwalk. This 5-metre wide, 280-metre long structure across the Ross Creek frontage (including the Burns Philp site) is an important piece of infrastructure to reconnect Townsville to the creek. In moving rapidly to undertake the boardwalk, Council has yet to consider the heritage opportunities that the place offers. While this research will not affect the form of the boardwalk itself, it can potentially inform interpretive material to be incorporated after construction. More importantly, this research puts on the public record the narratives associated with this place and the settler colonial founding of Townsville. This is important in the context of selective consciousness when recalling settler colonial heritage. The question of whether Townsville City Council would be open to engaging with the material identified is not addressed in this study. However, Council has shown a willingness to engage with complex and difficult narratives previously. The Jezzine Barracks and Garabarra (Kissing Point) redevelopment 3.4 kilometres north of Ross Creek was a joint Townsville City Council, State and Federal Government project opened in 2014. This project illustrates how a range of complex narratives can be addressed. The redevelopment includes interpretive material, artworks and an “ethno-botanical walk” while also addressing more traditional nineteenth-century heritage fortifications. Some of the material incorporated in this project directly applies to Ross Creek where settler colonial settlement started in Townsville. The redevelopment shows that Townsville City Council is willing and capable of engaging with multiple and difficult narratives. This paper identified collaborations between key individuals at critical times in the evolution of Townsville. It is an opportune time to undertake another collaboration to ensure the rich historical narratives are no longer selectively overlooked but become a part of Townsville’s collective consciousness.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, The Venice Charter (1964), [www.icomos.org/en/participer/179-articles-en-francais/resources/charters-and-standards/157-thevenice-charter](http://www.icomos.org/en/participer/179-articles-en-francais/resources/charters-and-standards/157-thevenice-charter), accessed 20 November 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *The Australia ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (‘Burra Charter’)* (Australia ICOMOS, 1979), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter*, 2.



- <sup>4</sup> Queensland Department of Environment and Science, Certified Copy Entry in the Queensland Heritage Register for the former Burns, Philp & Co Ltd Building, Place ID 600914, State Heritage Place Reference: CC0334, 28 April 2022, 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Paul Walker and Amanda Achmadi, "For Export: Buildings for Colonial Commerce in the Asia Pacific," in *Fabrications* 31, no. 3 (2022): 6-7 DOI: 10.1080/10331867.2022.2121528.
- <sup>6</sup> The organisational approach without an emphasis on a country or hierarchy is a key aspect of Walker and Achmadi, "For Export." This approach is evident from 1877 in correspondence from Burns to Philp, with both men noted as "Managing Directors" in annual reports after the registration of Burns, Philp & Co Ltd.
- <sup>7</sup> Charles Price, Notebook, *Language of the Townsville area ("Coonambela")*, Royal Commonwealth Society, RCMS 291 (1885), <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-RCMS-00291/1>, 46-47, accessed 1 November 2022.
- <sup>8</sup> Michele Bird and Nicolaas Heijm in Conjunction with Bindal and Wulgurukaba Aboriginal Parties, *Cultural Heritage Report, Indigenous Cultural Survey and Impact Assessment, City Port Precinct Project, Ross Creek ('Galginga') for Port Of Townsville Limited*, September 2013, 63.
- <sup>9</sup> George Elphinstone Dalrymple, *Report of the Proceedings of the Queensland Government Schooner "Spitfire" in Search of the Mouth of the River Burdekin, on the North-eastern Coast of Australia and of the Exploration of a Portion of that Coast Extending from Gloucester Island to Halifax Bay, Part II* (Brisbane: TP Pugh's Printing, 1860), 32.
- <sup>10</sup> Dalrymple, *Report of the ... "Spitfire,"* 37.
- <sup>11</sup> James Morrill, *Sketch of a Residence among the Aborigines of Northern Queensland for 17 Years* (Brisbane: Courier General Printing Office, 1863).
- <sup>12</sup> Dorothy Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to a Golden Land: Townsville to 1884* (Townsville: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1984), 26-27.
- <sup>13</sup> Helga Griffin, *Frontier Town: A History of Early Townsville and Hinterland 1864-1884* (Townsville, Queensland, North Queensland History Preservation Society, 2014; original thesis, 1983), 22.
- <sup>14</sup> Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to a Golden Land*, 37.
- <sup>15</sup> Townsville Survey T118.1, Museum of Land, Mapping & Surveying, Queensland Department of Resources.
- <sup>16</sup> Ronald Parsons, *Fleet List of Burns Philp & Company Ltd* (Woodville: Australasian Maritime Historical Society, 1972).
- <sup>17</sup> Burns to Philp, 29 December 1874. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 8583 OM65-32/6, 3/2, John Oxley Collection, State Library of Queensland.
- <sup>18</sup> Gibson-Wilde, *Gateway to a Golden Land*, 132.
- <sup>19</sup> "The Great Fire at Townsville," *The Week* (Brisbane), 13 October 1877, 22. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/page/21028126>, accessed 15 August 2022.
- <sup>20</sup> Burns to Philp, 15 October 1877. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 8583 OM65-32/6, 3/6.
- <sup>21</sup> Burns to Philp, 15 October 1877. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 8583 OM65-32/6, 3/6, 3/7.
- <sup>22</sup> Burns to Philp, 3 November 1877. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 9207 OM 90-44/1.
- <sup>23</sup> Burns to Philp, 28 November 1877. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 9207 OM 90-44/1.
- <sup>24</sup> Queensland Deed of Grant No 46226, Country of Elphinstone, Parish of Coonambelah, Town of Townsville, Dated 20 May 1881.
- <sup>25</sup> Ken Buckley and Kris Klugman, *The History of Burns Philp: The Australian Company in the South Pacific* (Sydney: Burns, Philp & Co Ltd, 1981), 298.
- <sup>26</sup> Burns to Philp, 17 June 1884. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 8583 OM 65-32/12 3/978.
- <sup>27</sup> Burns, Philp & Co Ltd, Private Reports, 31 March 1884, 1888, 1894. Sir Robert Philp Papers, Box 8584 OM 65-32/4.
- <sup>28</sup> Harry Perry, *The Memoirs of the Hon. Sir Robert Philp K.C.M.G.* (Brisbane: Watson, Ferguson & Co Ltd, 1923), 139.
- <sup>29</sup> Walker and Achmadi, "For Export," 1.
- <sup>30</sup> The Northern Miner (Charters Towers)m "Messrs Burns, Philp & Co Ltd's New Premises Flinders Street, Townsville," 14 November 1895, 4. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/79200162?searchTerm=1895%20the%20northern%20miner%20burns%20philp>, accessed 13 March 2022.
- <sup>31</sup> John East, *An Edwardian Architect in Brisbane: The Work of Claude William Chambers, 1889-1914*, [www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwibnbTXr4P8AhVMc94KHZEYB9EQFnoECA8QAQ&url=htt](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwibnbTXr4P8AhVMc94KHZEYB9EQFnoECA8QAQ&url=htt)

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<sup>32</sup> Perry, *The Memoirs of the Hon Sir Robert Philp*, 98.

<sup>33</sup> McCredie Architects Consulting Engineers, *Proposed New Premises for Messrs Burns Philp & Co Ltd, Townsville*, Queensland State Archives Item PR2637084/2. This is a copy of an original provided by the Burns Philp archive in 1993. The original is now missing.

<sup>34</sup> Townsville Daily Bulletin, "Over £50,000 Damage in Burns Philp Fire," 24 January 1949, 1, 2 & 4. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63455101?searchTerm=townville%20daily%20bulletin%20january%2024%201949#>, accessed 13 March 2022.

# Port Kembla BHP Steelworks, Australia: Post-war Immigrant Histories of Architecture, Urbanism and Heritage

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## **Abstract**

*Following BHP Steelworks redundancies in the 1980s and 1990s, shops, banks, service storefronts, even Public Bars, which lined Wentworth Street in Port Kembla, have for decades vacated the premises such that in 2019, except for the site of the Red Point Artists and café the scene was of an abandoned place. Interviews with participants that had worked at the Steelworks tell of a vibrant, busy and crowded Wentworth Street in the post-war period, lined with immigrant businesses and enterprises. This paper will approach the urbanism of Wentworth Street and Port Kembla from the lens of post-war immigrant history. It argues that such a lens reveals the links between the urbanism of Wentworth Street, its transition to vibrant culture and to neglected street, directly to the Port Kembla BHP Steelworks.*

*The paper explores this immigrant perspective in two ways, firstly outlining a history of transnationalism and transculturalism resulting from the sheer numbers of immigrants to Port Kembla; and secondly, looking at that urban environment via the lens of works by immigrant cultural producers, the children of immigrant workers at the Steelworks.*

## **Port Kembla: BHP Steelworks and Wentworth Street**

This paper examines the links between the post-war urbanism and urban history of Wentworth Street and the BHP Steelworks in Port Kembla, Australia from a perspective of immigrant labour and immigrant making. In the 1960s Wentworth Street, the main street in Port Kembla, a suburb in Wollongong, was thriving economically. Its buildings and facilities were re-invigorated by new “tastes” – new food tastes, new architectural and aesthetic traditions, and new socio-cultural activities and orientations – transported from Europe by the thousands of immigrants arriving and settling in Port Kembla and Wollongong. Six decades later, in 2020, in an aspiration for a new future,

a nascent “creative industry” and a few “boutique enterprises” of Wentworth Street tend to turn away from the Steelworks, not as a quietened or passive site that is promoting itself as integral to a “greening” environmental future, but a particular reorientation away from its machinic, industrially productive but polluting history. Immigrant labour is also absent from the new agenda and from local memory or recollections of the past. Immigrant history in relation to local narratives tends to be limited and compressed to the immigrants that actually experienced it, rather than as shared local history. Like the industrial steelworks skyline that hovers in visual proximity to Wentworth Street, this paper attends to history as a gap between selective local narratives and the immigrant contribution to and making of the nation that can too often be intermittently erased from critical areas of research.

We learn about diversity in streets in Woodcock’s work on Sydney Road, a proposal for multicultural planning in Sandercock’s early work, and the various ways that migration shaped Australian cities in a recent anthology of essays.<sup>1</sup> Beynon’s 2009 essay on new aesthetic housing traditions that altered the appearance of streets in Richmond (inner suburb of Melbourne) brings an architectural and heritage investigation to this area.<sup>2</sup> A problem with Port Kembla is that such empirical evidence of signs, or the presence of immigrants, the urban street cultures that were integral to the vibrancy of Wentworth Street, has all but disappeared. In 1989 a team of eminent scholars led by James Jupp investigated Wentworth Street and it was the only regional site of interest in their study of ethnic urbanism.<sup>3</sup> The team found that Wentworth Street “is not ‘ethnic’ in the sense of Lygon Street in Melbourne, or Norton Street in Leichhardt, Sydney, where an overwhelmingly non-Anglo flavour predominates.”<sup>4</sup> Their report notes the street comprised four to five pubs, and that only nineteen of the 160 businesses in the street had an ethnic character, with seven Macedonian and Croatian, five Italian and three Greek. The team’s observation also recorded one “in every six [premise] was either disused, for sale, for lease, or not open to the public” and that the east, “more ethnic” part of the street, furthest from the steelworks, was the “most desolate and run-down part of the street.”<sup>5</sup> Despite this quantification of neglect and abandonment of Wentworth Street, and the BHP redundancies that had made media headlines, the researchers did not seem to appreciate the connection and impact on the urbanism and lack of “ethnic” character of Wentworth Street due to the loss of jobs or economy.

The research approach of this sociological team depends on “signs of ethnicity” as empirical materiality but is insistent in immigration research across many disciplines – anthropology, geography, architecture and urban history. It depends on fieldwork and actual immigrant presence as evidence of immigrant contribution. In a paper exploring the dual question of histories that are unwritten and/or unwritable, Mark Jarzombek formed the term “ethnographies of presentism,” questioning a dominant use of “ethnographic methods” in contemporary research which may overlook other questions of history. Here I deploy this term as a way of exploring the limits and scope to this approach in immigrant-focused research on urbanism and architecture. If the signs of ethnicity were absent from Wentworth Street in 1989, what are the risks to the immigrant history of Port Kembla? Indeed, in the above study, Wentworth Street was subsequently dismissed as a street with a concentrated ethnic presence. The underlying argument in this paper is that such research approaches produce a systematic bias which evolves into hegemonic perspectives of local history of place, and a consistent disavowal of immigrant contribution. And yet, ethnographic methods may also be used as a mode of resistance to the omission of immigrant architectural history altogether.

With a focus on immigrants as agents of the history of Port Kembla in the period 1945-1979, the paper provides a lens on architectural history as intersectional between industry, labour and immigration. The notion of the local is intersected firstly by the transnationalism and transculturalism that immigration, work and settlement entails, and secondly by a psychic or subterranean landscape hidden within the fabric of streets and industrial sites.

### **Brief Histories of BHP Steelworks and the Site of Port Kembla**

Industries of extractions, especially coal mining, were already altering the lands of the Illawarra escarpment in the early 1800s, later to be linked by railway to Port Kembla. Photographs of this early colonial period illustrate the massive clearing of cedar and other flora, the new dairy landscape marked by boundaries and fences, and a few farmhouses dotting this cleared landscape. Industry and economic exploitation was integral to this early era of colonisation. The 1817 Land Grants to five colonists was the precursor to fatal territorialisation of Indigenous lands. Cedar cutters cleared the forests; dairy farming drained the land of its fertile abundance; fences, borders, roads and railway carved up the continuity of topography; and tunnels, dredging and draining obliterated the flora and habitats of fauna. Hoskins Iron & Steel (HI&S) and Australian

Iron and Steel (AIS) purchased two major portions of land in the mid-1800s, on which the Kembla Steelworks was built. By 1883 networks of tunnels, chimney stacks and hoisting machinery physically materialised the operations of this industry, which along with a railway built to transport coal extracted at the escarpment of Mt. Bulli reveals the extent of the erasure of First Nations Country. The site on which the steelworks first opened in 1929, later to be purchased and expanded by BHP (1935), was *a priori* supported by infrastructure of territorial appropriation under British colonial power with land grants, roads, railway and the port, and now expanded to a major and more physically and economically dominating strategy and industry.

The so-called Illawarra Garden of waterways and creeks, coastal lakes, estuaries and lagoons that for thousands of years sustained thriving entrepreneurial Indigenous communities/Dhawaral peoples, was destroyed. Added to this destruction of country and livelihood was the control, exploitation and eradication of the Aboriginal peoples. A Wodi Wodi woman interviewed on a Radio National ABC programme noted that it was not called Port Kembla by her ancestors, but Kembla Warra.<sup>6</sup> Critical to Indigenous independence was the site of Wongwongorong (a hill named Red Point and later renamed Hill 60).<sup>7</sup> Wongwongorong was surrounded by water on three sides, with access to two lagoons and one large lake, in addition to three off-shore islands.<sup>8</sup> In the 1920s this site comprised built housing and Aborigines were netting fish which were sold directly to non-aboriginal residents. In 1942, despite official protest letters, independent economy and legal structures, this Indigenous settlement at Wongwongorong was evicted by the Central Illawarra Council.<sup>9</sup> Many moved to the huts provided at Coomaditchie Lagoon, and Coomaditchie Reserve survives to this day.<sup>10</sup> The Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council proposes that any narrative about the Aboriginal peoples in Wollongong should start with Hill 60 as the most significant place – as both ancestral site of the dreaming and as a place of forced eviction.<sup>11</sup>

Narratives focusing only on “culture and identity” can too often diminish how industry, economy and political aspirations are entangled with civic urbanism. In Port Kembla militant and bureaucratic strategies of colonisation are co-productive with mining, steel manufacture, cedar cutting and agricultural industries including dairy farming – and are foundational to the history of Wentworth Street, Port Kembla. Kembla, meaning plenty of wild fowl, was territorially and radically altered into Port Kembla. From a planning perspective the Five Land Grants *a priori* implemented an (il)legal/unceded appropriation of lands which determined the future histories of the sites, and the

embedded power structures that continue to impact on the lives of all peoples.<sup>12</sup> To narrate this via a historiography of progress, wealth and the actions of industrialists is to bracket out how this history is contingent on the subjugation of other human subjects. The aim is not for a totalistic historiography but to examine fragmentary intersections of contested histories across multiple actors that effect place and architectures.

In 1945, BHP was one of the biggest industrial corporations, and gained membership on the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council (CIPC), thus facilitating an active participation and role in the national immigration programmes in the post-war period.<sup>13</sup> Prior to 1949 the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) union opposed mass immigration, arguing that it would reduce work standards. In a momentous about-turn, the first Australian Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, supported by the FIA shift to the right end of its constituency, the FIA joined the agenda for mass immigration. Calwell negotiated directly between BHP and FIA, resulting in agreement to employ immigrants in the least attractive jobs, and to ensure all new employees joined the union.<sup>14</sup>

In 1945, following four decades since the 1901 Immigrant Restriction Act, the Australian population was more than 99% of Anglophone heritage. Mass immigration would amount to a total reorientation of the historical trajectory of Australian society, and yet as preeminent scholar on migration James Jupp consistently argues, Australian immigration has been strategic, planned and controlled. Following the recruitment of Displaced Persons (DP effective to 1953), the diminishing numbers from the United Kingdom and the so-called 'desirable' countries (Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia), as well as assisted passage agreements (Malta 1948; Netherlands 1951; West Germany, Italy 1951)<sup>15</sup> new source countries were needed. A massive immigrant labour recruitment campaign of the Australian government was for "single" "able bodied men" from southern Europe.<sup>16</sup> As advised by BHP, these immigrants, eager, less reluctant to undertake hazardous, dirty, risky jobs, best served for those labours that "Australians did not want." Industry interests forged new exploitative modes of production, economies of labour and new managerial methods as immigrants from southern Europe, with no English language skills, allocated a status as "unskilled labourer" were directed to work at the Port Kembla steelworks.<sup>17</sup> The impact on Port Kembla is revealed in the housing which grew from 700 in 1931 to 2000 by 1949, and continued to escalate exponentially.

In 1975 one estimate was that 20,715 workers were employed at the steelworks. Statistics on the number of redundancies varies: one source estimated workers would be reduced to 18,400 by the end of 1982 after the redundancy packages were accepted.<sup>18</sup> This means in the second half of 1982, 1550 steelworkers and 300 tradesmen were estimated to lose their jobs. It is a complex and unclear picture: other sources present data that in addition, around 7,000 workers lost their jobs between 1981 and 1983 as the steel industry encountered technological changes while responding to macro-economic challenges.<sup>19</sup> An official government document states that BHP's workforce was reduced by approximately 10,000 employees between May 1982 and May 1983.<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to know how effective the union (Federation of Ironworkers Union) was at this time. Was it a gradual process as different Sections of the Steelworks closed: No 1 merchant mill was first shut down, then No 2 Merchant Mill, The 36 Inch Mill, the Tin Mill? Eventually, the Steelworks produced only slabs and coils.<sup>21</sup> Some workers were transferred to other sections; others took voluntarily redundancy.<sup>22</sup>

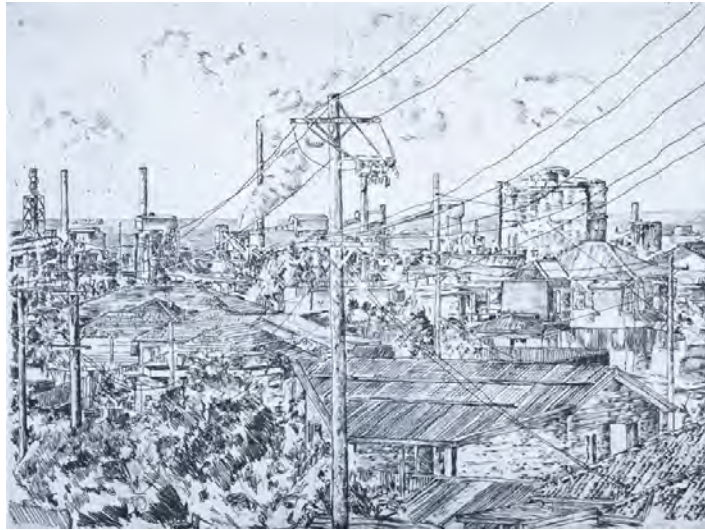
The magnitude of the massive losses of jobs led to out-migration of immigrant workers and their communities, depleting residents in Port Kembla and resulting in the closure of businesses in Wentworth Street.<sup>23</sup> Unemployment was higher in the non-English speaking workers, and not all could afford to live elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> Such statistics were further detailed by the recollections from participants interviewed for this project.<sup>25</sup> Participant views reinforce the unfair processes of job cuts. One participant views the strategy as “ethnic cleansing” in the steelworks. He describes how workers were herded into and held captive at the fields of Kembla Grange Golf Club while the union officials laid out the situation. Only two to three people were of Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, he states, in contrast to 130 people from the Tin Mills production unit, 80% of whom were of Macedonian background. People who had worked in BHP for over 20 or 30 years were subjected to processes of physical and medical tests to legitimate the pathway for their redundancy, he says. For him and many others it was a terrifying prospect – in their 20s, 30s and 40s they worked a demanding shift-work regime at the steelworks – while in the 1980s many, in their 50s, watched their work futures become non-existent.



### **Local Urbanism: “My Backyard”<sup>26</sup>**

In “Building a Culture: Architecture and Art in the Illawarra,” pencil perspective drawings and documentation sketches by Hardy Wilson of a homestead, an iconic image of colonial architecture, sets a scene referred to abundantly by academic and independent architectural historians as an origin of Australian architecture.<sup>27</sup> The chapter’s author, Joseph Davis, ends with a reference to the woodcut prints, “My Backyard” and “Cultured Landscape” by Riste Andrievski, an artist who grew up in Cringila, looking upon the steelworks not only as a monumental image of industry and nation building, but also as a monstrous scale of “the hell his father has experienced.”<sup>28</sup> Like Andrievski, the playwright Bill Nescovski wrote three major works about the destructive consequences of life in Cringila for immigrant families, before his own life ended abruptly at the age of 26 due to cancer.<sup>29</sup> Andrievski and Nescovski are the children of the immigrant workers at BHP Steelworks.

Many, a large majority of the able-bodied young immigrants who entered the steelworks, were married but their families – wife and children – remained at the homeland, while enough funds were accumulated to pay for their migration.<sup>30</sup> The distance and separation caused a brutal disruption to family which continued into subsequent generations. Andrievski and Nescovski were separated from their fathers. Many others were separated for years, and arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. They grew up in Port Kembla immersed in its vibrant but chaotic urbanism and often violent culture. As artists, their distinct works in visual art and literature, are both outside and inside the context, and thus offer an alternative lens to socio-spatial histories tying industrial space to the domestic space of the home and to the urban space of the street.



**Figure 1.** Riste Andrievski, *Industrial Urban Landscape*  
(reproduced courtesy of the artist).

Andrievski's early works (Figure 1, *Industrial Urban Landscape*) capture the proximity of the industrial urban landscape "as if in the backyard" of Cringila where he lived. His early etchings of Wentworth street draw our attention to the architectural hybridity of the street, its steep topography rising to the east, the cars that fully line both sides and, in subtle ways, the people that are integral to its character and urban culture (Figure 2). These works present a realism but their black-and-white patchiness captures an emotive force – of the dirt and grubbiness, the foreboding discharge from the BHP chimneys that is like hail or rain – images of the precarity and uncertainty of the realities.

Neshkovski's first play, *Say Goodbye to the Past*, is a comic-tragedy set in a suburban home in Port Kembla. Its main protagonist, Ilinka, is a Macedonian Australian woman in her mid-60s who has raised two children in Australia. Her husband "Dimche," who worked in the steelworks, has died and her children have left home and assimilated into Australian society. The play, however, opens onto a different imaginary of Ilinka's past life, when in her homeland, Macedonia, both she and her husband were actors in the theatre. In the play Dimche pays her frequent 'visits' during which together they act out scenes from their former roles in classic dramas as actors. The play points to important aspects of the connection between the steelworks, immigration and the urbanism of Port Kembla in the post-industrialisation era. Many of the immigrant Steelworks workers died before their time. This is not a subject that the participants enjoyed talking about, and if pressed to elaborate, they would lower their voice to a

whisper and tell for example about a woman on arrival in Australia after separation from her husband for five years, to find that he was killed in an accident at the Steelworks. Investigation of one cemetery in Wollongong indicates that a large number of men died often twenty years before their wives at prime adult age in their 40s and 50s. The realism of isolation is for Ilinka a threshold for the fictional reconnection to her dead husband, as well as to a time when literature and fiction were performed on the stage, deploying her professional skills and training, and not as a blurring between reality and fantasy within the material boundaries, the bricks and mortar, of a suburban home.<sup>31</sup>



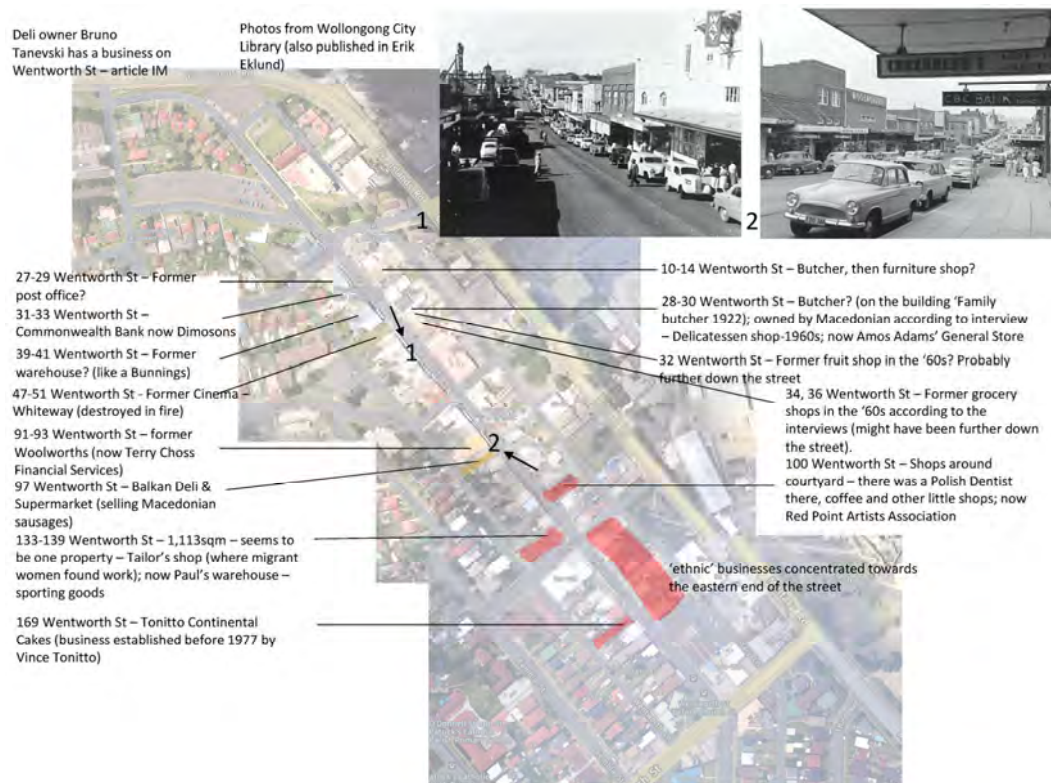
**Figure 2.** Riste Andrievski, *Life after Soladeratie*, Wentworth Street, Port Kembla (reproduced courtesy of the artist).

## Findings

In 1984 when The Macedonian Welfare Association was first established, it was located at 111 Wentworth Street. In 2019 it is one of the few facilities servicing immigrant communities that has remained in Port Kembla, located around the corner from Wentworth Street, on Allen Street. In the 1970s and the 1980s the population of Macedonian-Australians in the Illawarra escalated to about 20,000, and was supported by bilingual staff who worked at medical surgeries, pharmacies, travel agencies and grocery shops.<sup>32</sup> Similar to the history of other immigrant services it was the initiative and agency of a few Macedonian-Australian people, and namely Mendo Trajcevski who in 1983 submitted an application to the State Department of Youth and Community Services (YACS) seeking funding to service their community, the youth and the many who had been made redundant by the BHP Steelworks. Their client base is currently over 4000 and includes meal delivery and support for elderly,

including the 36 elderly who participate in programmes at the centre weekly.<sup>33</sup> On arrival in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s many of the now elderly Macedonian-Australian citizens were employed at the BHP Steelworks, many were made redundant in the 1980s, some moved to Warrawong or Wollongong, but in their weekly meetings, the facility became a hub of memories and histories of Wentworth Street, Port Kembla and BHP Steelworks (Figure 3).

In 2021 our research team organised two tours with participants who were past BHP workers. With the support of Bluescope one was an organised bus tour of the BHP Steelworks itself (20 participants), and after a brief lunch, the second was a walking tour of Wentworth Street (8 participants), following from the Collegion in the west to Tinotto cakes, in the east, two endpoints that bracket the multicultural narrative of Wentworth street in the 1960s and 1970s (Figure 3). The many pubs are noted, and recollections about the Steelworks Pub, their name for it (the Top Pub) is where many immigrant workers began their shift as others ended it, a punctuation and pause to the relentless physical and dangerous shift work. Thus at 5.30 to 6.30 a.m. – there was the smell of bacon, sausages and eggs – a meal prior to starting the shift at BHP. Wentworth Street was indeed likened to the red-light district in Amsterdam with brothels dotted along the street and a visible urbanism of sex workers. Yes, one reason was that the majority of the BHP immigrant workforce were single men (though many had families and children back in the homeland), for many, language was against them. Further discussion revealed that this was not a new activity in Port Kembla. Established as a port since 1883, in addition to dockworkers, Kembla was visited by sailors arriving on ships from many places all over the world, temporary visitors who sought out illicit pleasures as well as supporting illegal merchandise and exchange. Pubs, alcohol and sex work did not originate in the post-war period; the police and government restrained activity but while diminished it remains integral to Wentworth Street. The participants also whispered about all the dodgy crime and criminal businesses (drugs) that was rampant in the street – pointing to a pastel lemon restored/renovated elegant two-storey premise on the corner of Wentworth and Fitzwilliam Streets. The pubs established in late nineteenth century to serve then iron and coal workers, re-established their affluent business servicing steelworks workers, in the post-war period. The Top Pub is a heritage listed building, but remains neglected waiting to self-destruct.



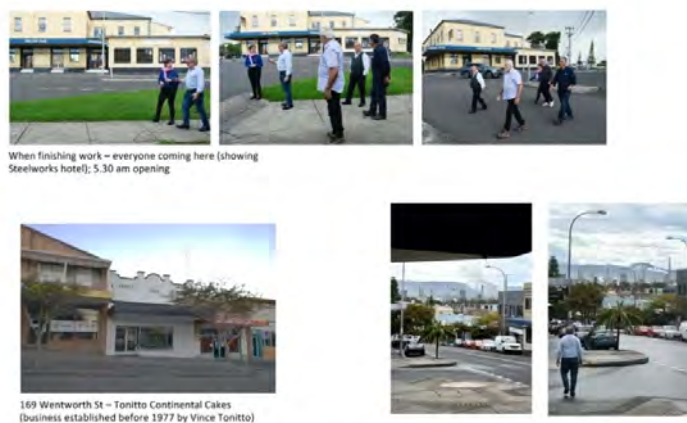
**Figure 3.** Map of Wentworth Street Port Kembla – annotations of recollections of past immigrant BHP workers referring to the 1960s and 1970s (image compiled by Mirjana Lozanovska and Alexandra Florea on Google map. Photograph 1: Wentworth Street, 1950, Arthur Cratchley Collection, P07/P07689. Photograph 2: Wentworth Street, 1961, Arthur Cratchley Collection, P09/P09056. From the collections of the Wollongong City Libraries and the Illawarra Historical Society).

For a street of 200 premises to have five or six banks is a physical and urban manifestation of the economic growth – the participants pointed to sturdy buildings of institutional architectural expression. BHP immigrant steelworkers borrowed and took out loans – for the construction of new housing, for new businesses, to save for children and social events. New types of food stores including a Burek Shop, a Delicatessen, a food store owned by people from Velušina, a fruit shop owned by people from Gavato, a grocery store and the Tinotto Cakes (the only one remaining, and where we ended our walk with an espresso and a cannoli; Figure 4). Hardware stores, tile shops, tailors and seamstress workshops, photographic studios on the upper levels provided for the necessities of the lives of immigrants beyond their subjugation at the BHP Steelworks. The current Red Studios enterprise has adopted the existing but unusual open U-shape urban model – set away from the street boundary with small shops and a landscaped area in the middle. Participants recalled

it as the place where a dentist of Polish descent, a bakery and coffee shops were located. These can be seen as a reinvigorating architecture and urbanism.

Neshkovki's play resonates with the absent cinema on Wentworth street. All the participants search for the place of the cinema - now a vacant lot. Their faces, some more elderly than others, light up when they describe an image of large numbers of people emerging from the cinema. Films of languages of the ethnic communities were shown in the cinema. In the 1970s Macedonian is the second most used language in Wollongong and Port Kembla. At this intersection of nostalgia and the now voided and abandoned street, the participants recalled that Wentworth Street was always crowded and was known for its social life and street promenading: "vrijat," they said, conjuring the buzzing of hundreds, thousands of insects. Port Kembla, they affirmed, was the best place to be at that time, better than Wollongong. There was not enough space in the buses, and people hung at the doorways, street life was vibrant. There was the annual billy cart race, but there were also street fights and street youth that attacked ethnic groups.

In the 1980s due to the redundancies by BHP Steelworks, many of the immigrants, by then with their families, left Port Kembla and Cringila.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 4.** “Walking tour” with past immigrant BHP Steelworks workers: narrating Wentworth Street Port Kembla (Photographs by Pia Solberg, MCCI).



### **Conclusion: Lost to History**

In a thought provoking presentation Mark Jarzombek outlined that history writing has traditionally deployed the use of published documents such that it raises a question about history that is “unwritable” as well as unwritten. These “unwritable” histories, and he used an example of a painting of a Mongolian emperor and its (inadequate) interpretations, he argued, provide different ways to understand the world, but are lost, or inaccessible to history. However, I would like to take up where he left off, and the implied criticism of “how to define orality” or what he called “ethnographies of presentism” by which my understanding is a criticism of histories that evolve from fieldwork, especially participant interviews.

I am equally critical of interviews as a favourite-of-the-month research methodology, especially when it is hardly critically analysed, historically evidenced or contextualised, and also when individual participant responses are rammed through digital programmes to ascertain what passes as quantitative data even if as few as ten participant responses were obtained. Research methodologies have their particular limits and shortcomings, and can be grossly misused. However, participant and oral histories can also provide significant thresholds for rethinking history and historiography, especially when major histories are omitted and systemic biases persist.

Local history, like national history, depends on ‘historians’ and how the historian reiterates vocalised and popular interests. How can a history of the urbanism of Port Kembla and its relation to the steelworks be written which does not dismiss the lives of those whose able bodies serviced the operation and endured the extreme conditions of the interior environments of the steelworks?<sup>35</sup> Oral history, as has been shown in the rewriting of histories, can be an act of resistance, a resistance to simplification as well as to obscurity of the histories of entire communities. Those same immigrant subjects became Australian citizens and contributed to the economic viability of Wentworth Street in Port Kembla in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. They, and their children, also created the vibrant liveliness of Wentworth Street that current nostalgia points to. Corporeally, ontologically and historically these subjects connect the steelworks to the civic space of the street as two entangled spatio-temporal environments and histories.

The post-war immigrant labour history of Port Kembla exposes the formative link between the transnationalism of immigrant labour recruited to work at the BHP

Steelworks and the socio-spatial transformation of Wentworth Street into a trans-cultural environment. Here I have intersected a normative conception of the “local,” “locality” or “local urbanism” with histories that were instrumental to such locality. Immigrant recruitment, arrival, labour and settlement in the post-war period is contingent on trans-national and trans-cultural forces and conditions. The facility/building of the Macedonian Welfare Association (MWA) becomes a significant metaphoric and literal space of difference in Port Kembla. Located on Allen Street, just off Wentworth Street, it is a place which has been continuously operating in Port Kembla (first on Wentworth Street, and then relocated/hidden around the corner in Allen Street). It is in this unrenovated building that many elderly women and men who had worked at the BHP Steelworks, lived nearby and frequented Wentworth Street, meet weekly.

Why do immigrant pasts tend to be “lost to history”? Is this a double erasure – firstly pre-emigration pasts, prior to becoming a migrant subject is all but eclipsed on arrival. Then after decades of contribution to the nation, and to the architectural and built environment, their making, contribution, reinvigoration of the local urbanism is again evaded from local narratives and the systemic bias within research approaches to national and local history. Research focusing on immigration can tend to omit formal archival research, and immigrant participants are often considered “hard-to-get to” in oral/research methods. Why? Potential participants are just around the corner from Wentworth Street and meet weekly, very keen to tell their stories. Do Australian scholars not undertake research beyond the English language? What about more formal archival methods and documents? There are many potential trajectories, land titles, businesses, immigration records. And local journal productions like the bi-lingual journal *Komnac / Kompas* initiated by the visionary Mendo Trajcevski and published by the Macedonian Welfare Association. He also supported *Wollongong's Migrant Heritage Places Study* (2007) comprising Meredith Walker’s invaluable report, “First Accommodation for Migrants Arriving in Wollongong Post World War 2.”<sup>36</sup> This document contains significant detail about the urbanism of Cringila on immigrant arrival and accommodation. Are these documents too difficult to access? Or can an open historiography direct the historian’s expertise and skills to alternative ways of knowing and knowledge as incomplete but examining multiple makers of history.

The MWA is precisely a continuing heritage place through practice, a spatio-temporal architectural manifestation; a receptacle of history. At the Macedonian Welfare



Association a potentially written history based on empirical, archival data and documentation interfaces with an “unwritable” history, as the site, the building and its interior space interact and are inscribed by stories, language, memories and a daily dual homeland.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> David Beynon, “Architecture, Multiculturalism and Cultural Sustainability in Australian Cities,” *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, 5, no. 2 (2009): 43-57.

<sup>3</sup> James Jupp, Andrea McRobbie, and Barry York, “Wollongong - Wentworth Street, Port Kembla.” In *Metropolitan Ghettoes and Ethnic Concentrations: Volume 2* (Wollongong: Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong, Working Paper 1, 1990): 162-63.

<sup>4</sup> Jupp et al, “Wollongong - Wentworth Street, Port Kembla,” 163.

<sup>5</sup> Jupp et al, “Wollongong - Wentworth Street, Port Kembla,” 163.

<sup>6</sup> Aunty Barbara Nicholson, on “Wentworth Street Port Kembla,” Radio National *Earshot*, Broadcast 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Anne Louise Rentell (Presenter), Claudia Taranto (Executive Producer), [www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/wentworth-street-port-kembla/11228828](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/wentworth-street-port-kembla/11228828) (accessed March 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Michael Organ, *Illawarra and South Coast Aborigines, 1770-1900*, Vol. 2 (Canberra: Report to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Organ, *Illawarra*: Appendix 2 & 3.

<sup>9</sup> Organ, *Illawarra*.

<sup>10</sup> Renee Regal and Lydia Sivaraman (Niche Environment and Heritage), Report “Hill 60 Reserve, Port Kembla, NSW: Conservation Management Plan and supplementary Report,” NSW Government Public Reserves, Management Fund Program, Wollongong City Council, 4 August 2015.

<sup>11</sup> John Peterson Heritage Consulting, “Concept Study for establishing a Heritage Centre of Human Migration,” a Report completed for the Port Kembla community investment fund by the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI) and the Illawarra Migration Heritage Project (IMHP), January 2020.

<sup>12</sup> It is important to not undermine the relationship between the myth of dairy farming and industry. See Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells, *A History of Wollongong* (Wollongong, NSW: University of Wollongong Press, 1997), 54.

<sup>13</sup> Constance Lever-Tracy and Michael Quinlan, *A Divided Working Class. Ethnic Segmentation and Industrial Conflict in Australia* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1988), 190.

<sup>14</sup> Lever-Tracy and Quinlan, *A Divided Working Class*, 172.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives of Australia: Secretary to Cabinet/ Cabinet Secretariat [I]. “A2700, Curtin, Forde and Chifley Ministries: Cabinet Minutes and Agenda, 1941-49; 538, British and Alien Migration to Australia,” 20 October 1943.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office. “A1066, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series with Year and Letter Prefixes, 1944-1948; G45/1/1, Migration. Australian Policy (Including White Australia Policy),” 1944-48.

<sup>17</sup> National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II], Central Office. “A1066, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series with Year and Letter Prefixes, 1944-1948; G45/1/1, Migration. Australian Policy (Including White Australia Policy),” 1944-48.

<sup>18</sup> Editor, “Port Kembla Steelworks: Redundancy Offer to Volunteers,” *Canberra Times*, 26 June

1982, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Julianne Schultz, *Steel City Blues: The Human Cost of Industrial Crisis* (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1985), 45-46.

<sup>20</sup> "Australian Iron and Steel Industry" In *House of Representatives Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration*, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, 1986, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Andrew Gillespie 24 March 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Andrew Gillespie 24 March 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Ian H. Burnley, *The Impact of Immigration on Australia: A Demographic Approach* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>24</sup> Lever-Tracey and Quinlan, *A Divided Working Class*, 193.

<sup>25</sup> Interviews with participants including the following: John Lacey, 8 December 2020; Michel Saliba, 9 December 2020; Riste Andrievski, 15 February 2021; Metodija Gjorgovski, 15 February 2021; Jovance Kantaroski, 15 February 2021; Nadia Colarusso, 16 February 2021; Dragan Grozdanovski, 16 February 2021; Borjanka Temelkovska, 16 February 2021; Andrea Uzinovski, 16 February 2021; Iraklija Janevski, 17 February 2021; Tihomir Jovanovski, 17 February 2021; Mijal Sajdovski, 17 February 2021; Olga Sajdovska, 17 February 2021; Francesco Frino, 22 February 2021; Boris Dimitrievski, Gjorgi Ginoski, Trene Gjorgievski, Pavle Koloski, Kiro Markovski, Sisoja Poposki, Trajce Rudevski, 24 March 2021 (MWA workshop); Jose Acosta, Ramazan Akkoc Jose Jara, Alberto Navarrete, Jorge Papagallo, Carlos Orellana 5 April 2021 (Men's Shed workshop); Andrew Gillespie, 24 March 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Riste Andrievski, "My Backyard," 1995 (view of the Steelworks), 115 (opposite page).

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Davis, "Building a Culture: Architecture and Art in the Illawarra," in Jim Hagan and Andrew Wells (eds.), *A History of Wollongong* (Wollongong: The University of Wollongong Press, 1997), 217-30.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Davis, "Building a Culture," 228.

<sup>29</sup> Blagoja (Bill) Neshkovski [editor, Maurie Scott], *Three Plays* (Rockdale, NSW: Macedonian Literary Association, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Interviews with participants as listed above.

<sup>31</sup> Neshkovski's literary works written in the 1980s are informative about a very different era of Australian multiculturalism and the avant-garde forces in theatre as in the other arts. The play was not marginal or performed within an ethnic community setting, but was performed at a then 'avant-garde' theatre. Ilinka was played by Faye Montgomery and Dimche by David Ives, Sasho (the son) was played by a recent NIDA graduate, and the Director was Des Davis (none are of Macedonian Australian background). Bill Neshkovski was posthumously awarded a Special Award for distinguished contribution to Australian literature in the 1991 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. If the arts have always been part of Port Kembla, as one RN interviewee claimed, how diverse are the current versions, and how is the diversity of the arts legacy of Port Kembla integral to current identity and/or heritage reclamation?

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Verica Sajdovska (Macedonian Welfare Association of NSW Inc), 10 September 2020, 12 July 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Macedonia Welfare Association of NSW Inc.

<sup>34</sup> See Robynne Murphy, *Women of Steel*, a film that tells the story of the fourteen-year campaign and case against BHP-AIS, the longest running sexual discrimination case, from 1980-94, and its win led to a change in workplace law. Robynne Murphy, *Women of Steel* (ABC Television, 2020).

<sup>35</sup> See Andrew S. Johnston, *Mercury and the Making of California: Mining, Landscape, and Race, 1840-1890* (Colorado: University Press, 2013) for a powerful history on architectural history, industry and their intersection with histories of race.

<sup>36</sup> Meredith Walker, "First Accommodation for Migrants Arriving in Wollongong Post World War 2" *Wollongong's Migrant Heritage Places Study* (2007). See also M. Walker and J. Peterson (ed) & Illawarra Migration Heritage Project Inc., *Every Story Counts: Recording Migration Heritage: A Wollongong Case Study*, (Wollongong, NSW: Illawarra Migration Heritage Project Inc., 2015).

# The Trouble with Harry: Seidler's Tall Urban Design Legacy in Melbourne

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## **Abstract**

*Despite the wealth of publications on Harry Seidler's life and works, some aspects of the architect's career remain relatively unknown or under-appreciated. This paper points the architect's contribution to urban design through lesser-known high-rise projects designed for the inner city of Melbourne.*

*The chronicle of Seidler's jobs in Melbourne speaks more of an unsuccessful office unable to convert major prospects into realised outcomes than of the commercial projects and landmarks for which his work is widely acclaimed. Over 40 years, Seidler conceived several high-rise projects for Melbourne's Central Business District, but apart from the notable exception of the heritage-listed Shell House, those projects remained unbuilt.*

*At the core of Seidler's scarce professional success in the second-largest Australian city, there was a problematic relationship that developed with local culture and city planning authorities. Seidler's conflict with Melbourne erupted on the occasion of the planning approval of Shell House, surging in contrast to the rise of an overreaching and somewhat still pervasive post-modern urban design culture in the Victorian city.*

## **Introduction**

Harry Seidler (1923-2006) is one of the most celebrated Australian architects. Almost everything has been said or written about his work and the prolific longevity of his practice. From an international perspective, Seidler represents the pinnacle of the Australian variant of high modernism,<sup>1</sup> and there is plenty of coverage of his remarkable personal and professional life as an Austrian-born immigrant and pupil of the late Bauhaus culture that spread to the New World.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the ample literature available, some aspects of Seidler's career still deserve attention. Following the trail of Seidler's acquaintance with Oscar Niemeyer and journey to Brazil, Philip Goad has shown how current interest among academic scholars is far from exhausted.<sup>3</sup>

More avenues may be found by approaching Seidler's work from disciplinary angles that expand from the cult of the personality or the Bauhaus lineage of modern architecture. A fruitful approach could follow the ramifications of Seidler's work in allied disciplines, as shown by Paolo Stracchi for the construction and engineering aspects of Sydney's Australia Square and MLC Centre.<sup>4</sup> Another avenue may insist on aspects of urban history, which I propose to explore here through the case of high-rise projects designed by Seidler for Melbourne, outside of his Sydney home ground.

Seidler's tall buildings flourished from a remarkable capacity to integrate commercial design with contextualism, a skill that, as Gevork Hartoonian puts it, earned him the position of a "towering architect" in the collective memory of Australian architects,<sup>5</sup> a position undoubtedly due, above all, to the tectonically articulated and uniquely site-sensitive landmark tall buildings that Seidler designed in Sydney.<sup>6</sup>

But Seidler proved to have considerable skill in winning and delivering tall commercial buildings across Australia and overseas, and the results, for such a typologically restrained class of buildings, are remarkably consistent and on par with the Sydney examples.<sup>7</sup> Seidler's approach to high-rise was singular and unconventional but never eccentric nor arbitrary to the point of compromising commercial efficacy. It combined functional compliance with contextualism, formal invention with structural expression, and the creation of public space with the integration of passive environmental design. Design qualities of this kind are not easy to find among the countless commercial towers of the twentieth century – and one could easily show how such lack of variety and inventiveness extends to those of present day.

In 2017, because of such rare design qualities, Shell House, the old headquarters that Seidler designed for the oil multinational in Melbourne in the 1980s, was awarded Victorian heritage significance. The curved commercial tower of Shell House is a fitting counterpoint to Melbourne's otherwise predictably orthogonal streetscape. On the grounds of such formal exceptionalism, the building is recognised by local architects, the media, the public and heritage authorities as a city landmark.



**Figure 1.** Shell House, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne (1985-88).  
Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates  
(Photographs by Giorgio Marfella).

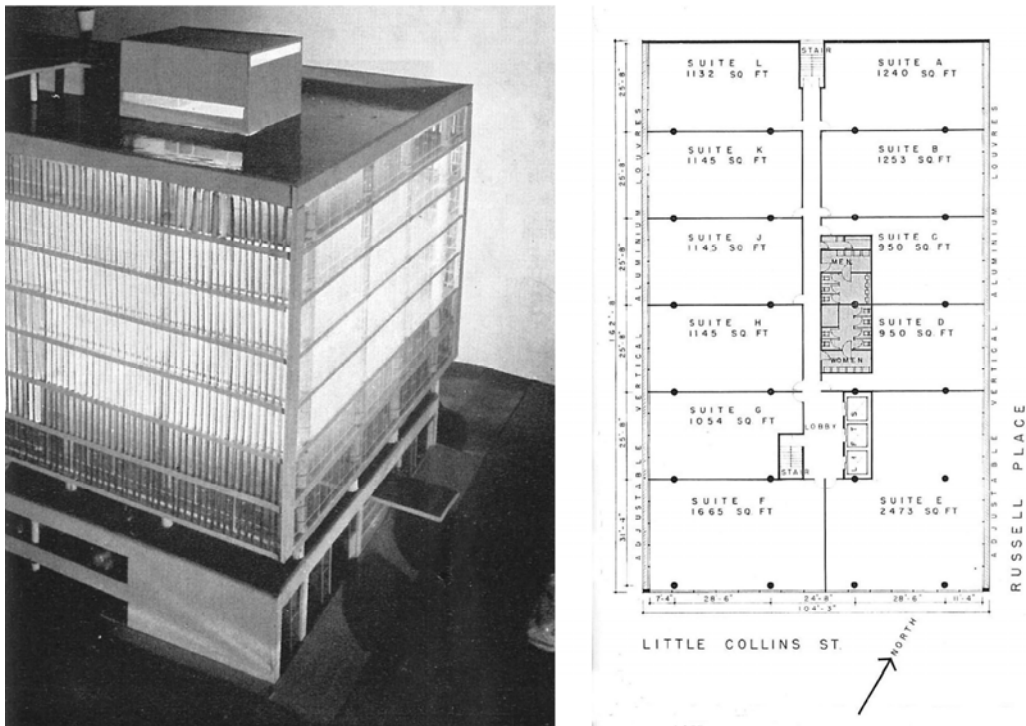
Although Seidler's office has left other built works in Victoria,<sup>8</sup> Shell House is the most significant one and the only commercial project that the Sydney-based architect was able to build in Melbourne's city grid.

In such context, Shell House is a remarkably precocious and somewhat odd example of heritage success. Historical records show that the project was, in fact, opposed by planning authorities for the same reasons that, three decades later, would underpin its heritage recognition.

Some Melbournians may find it tempting to misconstrue Shell House as the romantic anachronism of a Sydney architect rivalling against Melbourne's *genius loci* and *Zeitgeist* of the 1980s, a narcissistic last hurrah of modernism shouted at the zenith of the collective city-rejuvenating mood set in motion by local postmodern circles. However, leaving aside *a posteriori* speculations, the original vicissitudes of Shell House are engrained in a more substantial and prolonged history of conflict between the Sydney architect and the Victorian city.

The planning dispute between Seidler and the City of Melbourne for Shell House was not an isolated incident. The dispute was a chapter in a series of episodes in which Seidler was drawn, at times unwillingly, into Melbourne's urban history via polemics, planning challenges, and plans remained on paper.

A telling sequence of mishaps transpires from the planning records of major tall building projects that Seidler designed over 40 years in Melbourne's Central Business District. Although not necessarily comprehensive, an abridged chronicle is significant enough to confirm the existence of a troubled relationship. With the benefit of hindsight, the struggles of the modern architect in the Victorian capital expose some idiosyncrasies of postmodern urbanism, casting an opportunity to reflect on trends of high-rise development and attitudes towards modern heritage that persist in contemporary Australian cities.



**Figure 2.** Model view and plan of Fuller House, 200 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (1955; unbuilt).  
Architect: Harry Seidler (*Architecture and Arts*, September 1955, copyright Penelope Seidler).

### Debut on the Grid: Fuller House

Seidler's first significant project in Melbourne dates to 1955, when he was commissioned, in collaboration with University of Sydney lecturer and engineer Peter

Miller, to design Fuller House, a ten-storey office block at 200 Little Collins Street. The periodical *Architecture and Arts* described the project as “revolutionary” for placing elevated office space over three podium levels of parking space.<sup>9</sup> Office floors were served by a central core of lifts and services, an innovative configuration for a Melbourne office block of the times, and the glass facades on the eastern and western elevations were protected by adjustable aluminium sunshades. The all-concrete fire-resisting structure, furthermore, proposed an unconventional – and somewhat optimistic – “top-down” construction approach, by which the client would have been able let the top commercial floors whilst the podium car park was still under construction.<sup>10</sup>

Fuller House was ahead of its time. The project had to challenge the local built-form controls of the Victorian Uniform Building Regulations (UBR), which prescribed a height limit of “one and one third times the width of the street.”<sup>11</sup> Seidler asked permission to erect the building to a height of 99 feet, seeking an additional height justified for lift machinery and stair canopy above a flat roof. Despite receiving consent from the City of Melbourne to proceed with the scheme, Seidler’s project of Fuller House never went ahead.

The design of Fuller House was a precursor of design features bound to become part of Seidler’s future signature high-rise offices and possibly a source of influence on innovative commercial office building trends that some Melbourne architects incorporated soon after. One year later, Bates Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) submitted a planning application for a speculative building owned by the Australian Mutual Provident Society located at 406 Lonsdale Street that, when completed in 1958, was the first building in Melbourne to be built with elevated floors entirely devoted to car parking. Soon after, BSM also designed the RACV Building in Queen Street, completed in 1961, which was the first office development in Melbourne to combine a mixed program of office space and hotel accommodation with a tower sitting on a podium of public facilities.<sup>12</sup>

Facades with adjustable sunshades found scanty fortune in Melbourne’s post-war office boom, although fixed aluminium sunshades were ostensibly used in Melbourne by BSM for ICI House (1956-58) and by Stephenson and Turner for the Electrolytic Zinc Company Building at 390 Lonsdale Street (1957-59).

### **Freestanding Visions**

In the following two decades, Seidler had more job opportunities in Melbourne that remained unbuilt. In the meanwhile, the built form controls of the inner-city had changed, overriding the height-limit prescription of the UBR. Melbourne had adopted its first planning scheme, based on the principle of site density development, also known as plot ratio.<sup>13</sup>

In March 1965, at the annual conference of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA), Seidler intervened directly in the debate that accompanied this moment of regulatory transition. He took the opportunity to state his staunch support for modern planning principles, like plot ratio controls, that encouraged freestanding high-rise developments:

In our cities, individual pieces of real estate, however unfortunately located or shaped, are considered sacrosanct. Multi-storey buildings are erected, covering entirely such sites. ... The result of the usual restrictive rules is almost invariably grotesque building bulk. ... There surely can be no worse nightmare than so called modern buildings glued up against each other along a canyon street.<sup>14</sup>

According to Seidler, the urban design principles that best suited modern architecture were site consolidation, freestanding sculptural forms and generous public open space. It was only through the large-scale project that a coherently modern view of the city could be envisioned, in contrast to the traditional approach of 'piecemeal' urban development of the historical city:

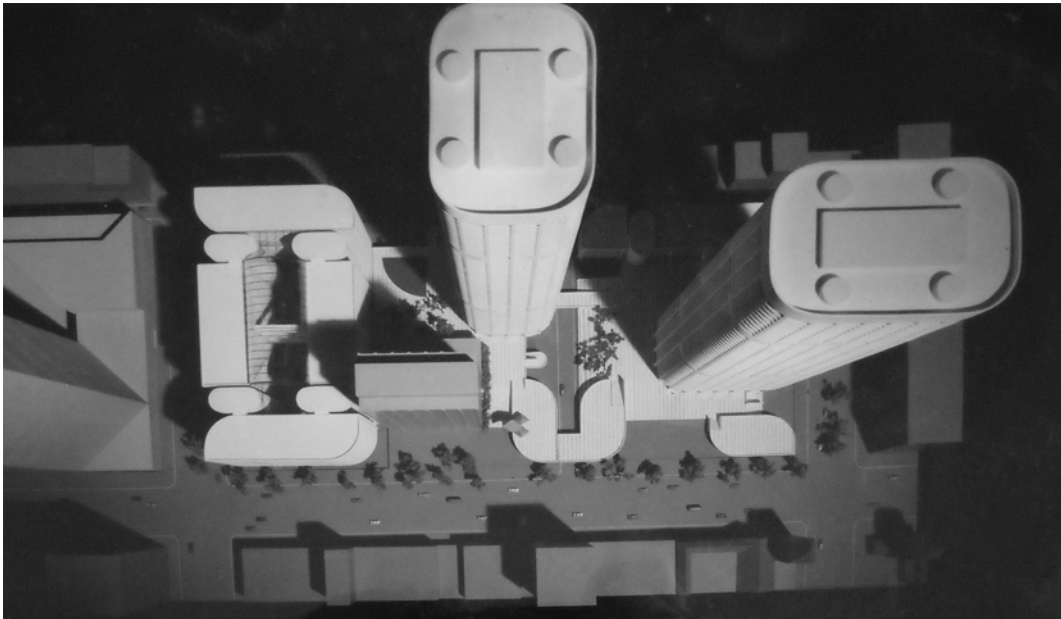
Both from a rational and aesthetic viewpoint, modern architecture can only begin to express itself in the freestanding building, which affords logical planning and structure. Above all, true architecture can be born as freestanding sculpture in space, with the relationship of individual buildings and the spaces created between them of equal if not higher, aesthetic importance than the building themselves.<sup>15</sup>

Seidler faced two significant opportunities to realise his urban design manifesto in Melbourne, but in both instances, plans remained unbuilt. In the late 1960s, he designed a complex with two freestanding towers for the Chevron Hotel and Offices in



St Kilda Road, one of his earliest projects to incorporate an assembly of curvilinear and quadrant shapes.<sup>16</sup>

In the early 1970s, Conzinc Riotinto of Australasia (CRA) engaged his office to design a major redevelopment on the southern side of Collins Street, in a site bounded by Exhibition Street, Flinders Lane and George Parade. The CRA project contemplated the erection of several free-standing buildings and public open spaces, planning to expand and surround the existing tower of the CRA Building – originally designed by Melbourne-based architect Bernard Evans and completed in 1961. After one year of difficult negotiations with the city's authorities, a first stage of the CRA scheme for the erection of a 55 storey-high office tower was approved in 1974.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 3.** CRA Redevelopment Project, 200 Collins Street, Melbourne (1971-74; unbuilt).  
Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates  
(Pier Luigi Nervi Archives, Rome, photographer Max Dupain, January 1972, copyright Penelope Seidler).

Seidler's CRA project, however, never proceeded. A profitable justification must have been difficult to justify for such a large project in the uncertain economy of the mid-1970s. Making matters worse, proximity with the delayed project of Collins Place (I.M Pei with BSM, 1971-81) must have dampened optimism for success with a new block-buster in Collins Street.

### The Nauru House Polemic

The prospects of realising Seidler's urban design vision of free-standing sculptural high-rise redevelopments diminished significantly in Melbourne after the mid-1970s once the obstacle of stagnant economic conditions compounded with the local cultural change that nursed public opposition against tall building developments. The new public sentiment coalesced in Melbourne with organisations such as the Collins Street Defence Movement,<sup>18</sup> and resonated with some local architects who were not shy to voice fierce antagonism towards modern high-rise developments.<sup>19</sup>

In the debate that developed between modernist versus postmodernist architectural circles in the 1970s, a polemic was sparked in Melbourne concerning the design of one tall building project: Nauru House. Despite having no role in the design of Melbourne's Nauru House, Harry Seidler was unjustly hauled into a controversy that incorrectly questioned the authorship of one of his most noteworthy tall building projects in Sydney, the MLC Centre.



**Figure 4.** Left: MLC Centre, Sydney (1972-78). Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates. Right: Nauru House, Melbourne (1972-77). Designers: Civil and Civic with Perrott Lyon Timlock and Kesa (Photographs by Giorgio Marfella).

Nauru House was a 50-storey high office tower commissioned for a site on the eastern end of Collins Street owned by the Nauruan Government's Phosphate Royalties Trust.

The project was developed by Lend Lease and built by Civil and Civic on the design and documentation of Melbourne-based architects Perrott, Lyon, Timlock and Kesa. Nauru House was a centre-core square office tower built with precast concrete construction methods, planned in an octagonal floor plate with single-span edge beams supported by large columns on chamfered corners. Melbourne's Nauru House presents some similarities with the general arrangement of the Sydney MLC Centre, although at close observation differences of detail and structural configuration between the two buildings become apparent.

In 1976, the official journal of the Victorian RAIA Chapter, *Architect*, published a scathing review of Nauru House, describing it as a “monster building,” a “hunk” that was simply extruded from an “octagonal (or hexagonal) plan that just keeps rising.” According to the anonymous reviewer, the tower was like an unsought “gift” that gave “nothing to [Melbourne] save a large immutable blob, unnecessary extra accommodation.”<sup>20</sup>

In September 1977, the harsh criticism voiced by the Victorian Chapter journal escalated further, this time drawing Seidler's MLC Centre into question. Architect and former RAIA president Neil Clerehan questioned the attribution of Nauru House's design, remarking on its resemblance to Seidler's MLC Centre project in Sydney. Clerehan, however, did not merely criticise Nauru House for its apparent lack of originality. He went as far as claiming that both buildings, including the MLC Centre, were in fact two versions of one identical concept conceived by the draftsmen of Lend Lease / Civil and Civic. Both buildings, Clerehan argued, came into existence without any input worthy of architectural authorship.<sup>21</sup>

The polemic soon spilled outside the Victorian reading circle of architectural periodicals. One month later, Melbourne's local newspaper, *The Age*, published an article picturing Nauru House and MLC Centre side-by-side under the headline “Who's the father of these twins?” The article amplified the allegations expressed by Clerehan in *Architect*, suggesting that the real architect of both buildings was in fact Christopher Kludicki, a former employee of Civil and Civic.<sup>22</sup>

Two months later, following the righteous indignation expressed by Seidler, the Victorian Chapter of RAIA was forced to distance itself from Clerehan's disparaging commentary given through the official journal of the Institute. In the following issue of

*Architect*, the Chapter gave a public apology to Seidler, accepting “unreservedly” and “unconditionally” that the MLC Centre in Sydney was “solely designed by, and constructed under the supervision” of Harry Seidler and his Associates.<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 5.** Shell House, Melbourne (1985-88), views from Spring Street and Flinders Lane. Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates (Photographs by Giorgio Marfella).

### **A Blank Canvas for Shell**

These unsettling polemics anticipated a trail of difficulties that Seidler continued to face in Melbourne through the 1980s, culminating in publicly voiced polemics and disagreements with the City of Melbourne.

In the early 1980s, the Victorian planning authorities had implemented a new set of postmodern-inspired built-form controls.<sup>24</sup> The new controls promoted street alignments, towers setback on podiums, infill of residual open spaces, elimination of blank walls and the addition of compositional features introduced with the scope of preventing façade monotony.

The new controls were inevitably at odds with Seidler’s resolve to continue designing sculptural towers in public open space. Seidler refused to accept and align with the rising postmodern ethos, and disputes surfaced immediately with the planning application of the project for the Shell headquarters in Spring Street.

The design of the S-shaped building was officially commissioned to Seidler by Gegana, a developer company controlled by the Grollo Group.<sup>25</sup> The building was, however, a custom-designed response to a brief explicitly developed by Shell, the prospective anchor tenant. At the time, Shell needed new and larger headquarters after the company vacated the small owner-built block of Shell Corner, a building designed by the San Francisco office of Skidmore Owings Merrill and erected in 1960 at the corner of Bourke and William Streets.

Harsh opposition to the planning application for Shell House came from the City of Melbourne, specifically from the Urban Design Consultant and the Aesthetics Advisory Panel (AAP). Due to the site's prominence at the corner of the Hoddle grid, the assessors of the application found that the curved slab with a side core and ground floor open plaza was unsatisfactory and in need of a major redesign. The Panel acknowledged the necessary curved form imposed by the subterranean presence of Melbourne's railway loop below the site, but attacked the project on subjective aesthetic grounds, describing it as "selfish in concept" and "ungainly" for erecting tall blank walls along boundaries.<sup>26</sup>

Following such negative feedback, the project underwent some modifications. Notably, a built-up landscape platform along Flinders Street was included to address pedestrian comfort issues raised by the wind engineer.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, Seidler's design for Shell survived essentially intact after the Victorian Planning Minister exercised power to overrule opposition from the City of Melbourne, thus allowing the tower to be built in line with the initial vision of its designer.

### **Sunset Clause: Grand Central**

Galvanised by the success with Shell House, Seidler unleashed a public polemic against postmodern-inspired planning controls. In 1988, Seidler even took the local polemic to an international audience at the World Conference of the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, where he specifically criticised those of the City of Melbourne, which he considered reactionary and anachronistic:<sup>28</sup>

... authorities in Melbourne, Australia, in their objections to a large city building ... quote, verbatim, the recently implemented San Francisco plan and insist that this incredibly reactionary set of new rules imported from the

United States be adopted, such as, prohibiting buildings with flat roofs or any blank walls, and calling for “a generous use of decorative embellishments.” To demonstrate what benefits are offered in return, these decorations are even allowed to protrude outside the zoning envelope!<sup>29</sup>

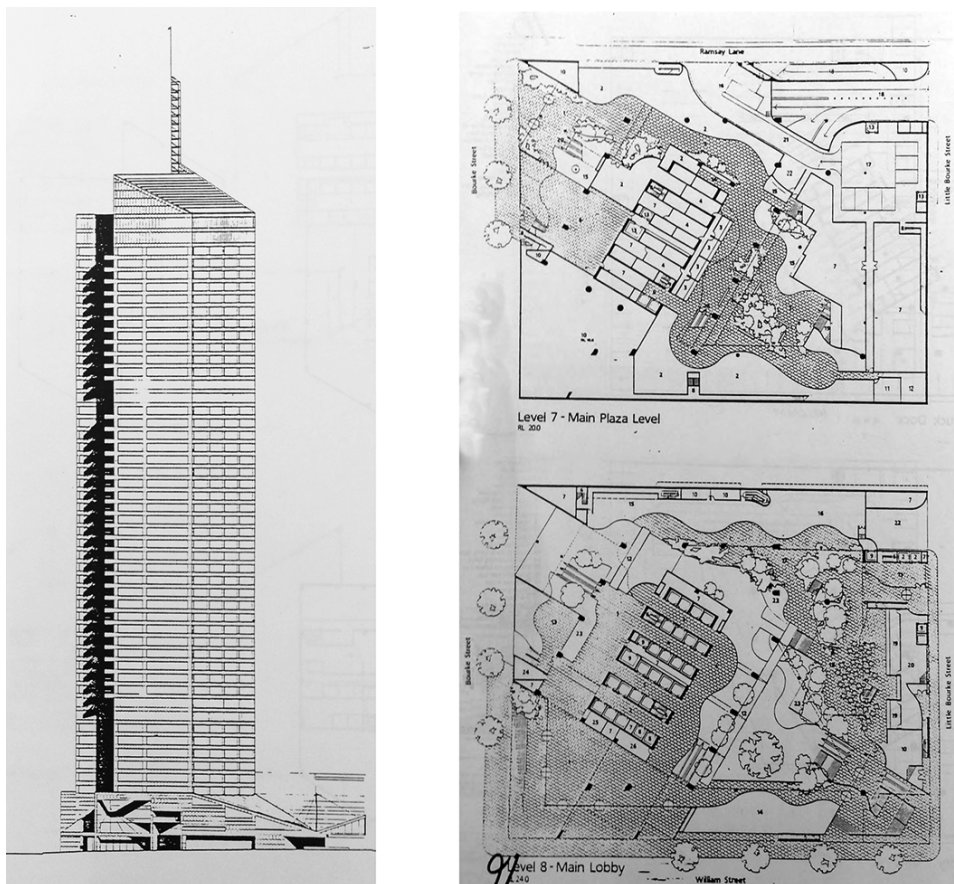
Soon after its completion, Shell House received public acclaim and peer recognition,<sup>30</sup> but Seidler could not repeat a similar success for his next Melbourne project: Grand Central.

Grand Central was one of the largest tall building developments conceived in the city during the 1980s. It was commissioned by Lend Lease and contemplated redesigning an entire block at the corner of Bourke and William Streets. The brief required an office tower that would surpass in height and size any other surrounding tall structure, namely the nearby towers of BHP House, AMP Square, NAB House, Marland House and Bourke Place. The proposal for Grand Central was presented to city authorities in 1989. The site was to be developed with a planning-compliant plot ratio of 12, equalling over 90,000 square metres of gross floor area. The program included 68,000 square metres of net lettable office space in a tower and 7,000 square metres of public space, which included retail, restaurants, a theatre, video conferencing facilities and professional suites in a five-level podium building. The tower of 57 floors was 213 metres high and terminated with a spire reaching 250 metres at the tip. The plan of the tower was an irregular parallelogram ostensibly rotated in relation to the city grid. The typical floor plate was formed by two staggered trapezoids linked by a central service core with four lift groups.<sup>31</sup>

In many regards, the project was in line for size and ambition with the ensemble of high-rise commercial buildings completed in Melbourne in the early 1990s, also known as the ‘Big Six’, and a general trend of urban rejuvenation with ‘mega-buildings’ that is typical of global commercial trends that spread in most Australian and North American cities in the 1980s.

While the large development of Grand Central was never seen as a problem per se by local planning authorities, the architectural design features and compositional repertoire proposed by Seidler became the target of fierce opposition from local authorities.

The design was vehemently opposed by the Urban Design Unit (UDU) of the City of Melbourne, and primarily so on mere aesthetic grounds. While Seidler had taken steps to prevent the nuisance of highly reflective surfaces from the tower with low-reflective polished grey granite, the UDU dismissed the outcome by defining the tower as “dull” and “sinister.” In response to the architect’s incorporation of a podium in line with the City’s planning desiderata, the local authority responded with a lengthy list of concerns about the design of the podium façades on Bourke and William Streets.



**Figure 6.** Grand Central, Corner of Bourke and William Streets, Melbourne (1989). Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates (City of Melbourne Archives, Public Record Office Victoria. Copyright Penelope Seidler).

Objections were raised as a deliberate attempt to guide Seidler into a reappraisal of his modern compositional vocabulary. According to the commentary of the Urban Design Unit, parapets should have been stepped rather than sloped, and “greater definition” should have been brought on elevations, suggesting features foreign to Seidler’s commercial city design language, such as “corner treatments,” “use of

punched windows,” inclusion of “vertical elements to break up” and “detailing around openings ... to provide greater interest.”

Among these and other recommendations to the office of the Planning Minister, the Urban Design Unit proposed a “sunset clause” that was motivated as an “incentive for [the developer] and their architects to move quickly to finalise.” The clause was intended to act as a conditional trigger for the release of the permit “on the understanding that these issues will be addressed and if they are not addressed within a period of two months, the permit automatically lapses.”<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding their reluctance to support Seidler’s design, the UDU expressed explicit support “in principle” for the entire redevelopment on the site with a “landmark” project. In that context, the same authorities did not object to the demolition of several existing modern office buildings on the site, namely ACI House, Shell Corner and Hume House.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, one of these three modern buildings had remained vacant once Shell moved into Seidler’s new building in Spring Street.

SOM’s Shell Corner and the other structures on the block were consequently demolished in 1989 in the hurried preparations for a development that never followed. In 1992, during the real estate bust and recession that followed a frantic bull-market period of redevelopments in the city, commercial vacancy rates soared in Melbourne. Lend Lease decided to defer Grand Central, leaving an empty city block in the core of the CBD and causing the loss of some of the best modernist office block exemplars of the post-war period.<sup>34</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In retrospect, Seidler’s career, if measured by the projects commissioned for Melbourne’s inner-city, is at odds with the prolific success of built works for which the Austrian-born architect is well known in Australia and overseas. Ultimately, the troubled relationship between Seidler and Melbourne derived from a clash about built-form controls. Significantly, this problematic relationship exploded above all in the 1980s for Shell House, becoming a quintessential example of the culture wars that accompanied the passage from modernity and postmodernity.

Furthermore, Seidler’s projects for Melbourne allow us to reflect critically on the value of the alternative urban outcomes envisaged by his unbuilt visions. Although Seidler



conceived several unbuilt projects in different cities,<sup>35</sup> Melbourne was possibly the most significant ground of his unrealised dreams. This imaginary Melbourne would have been sealed by Seidler's proposal for Grollo Tower, the non-plus-ultra unbuilt Australian skyscraper, a 600-metre-tall skyscraper sited over the eastern railway yards.<sup>36</sup>

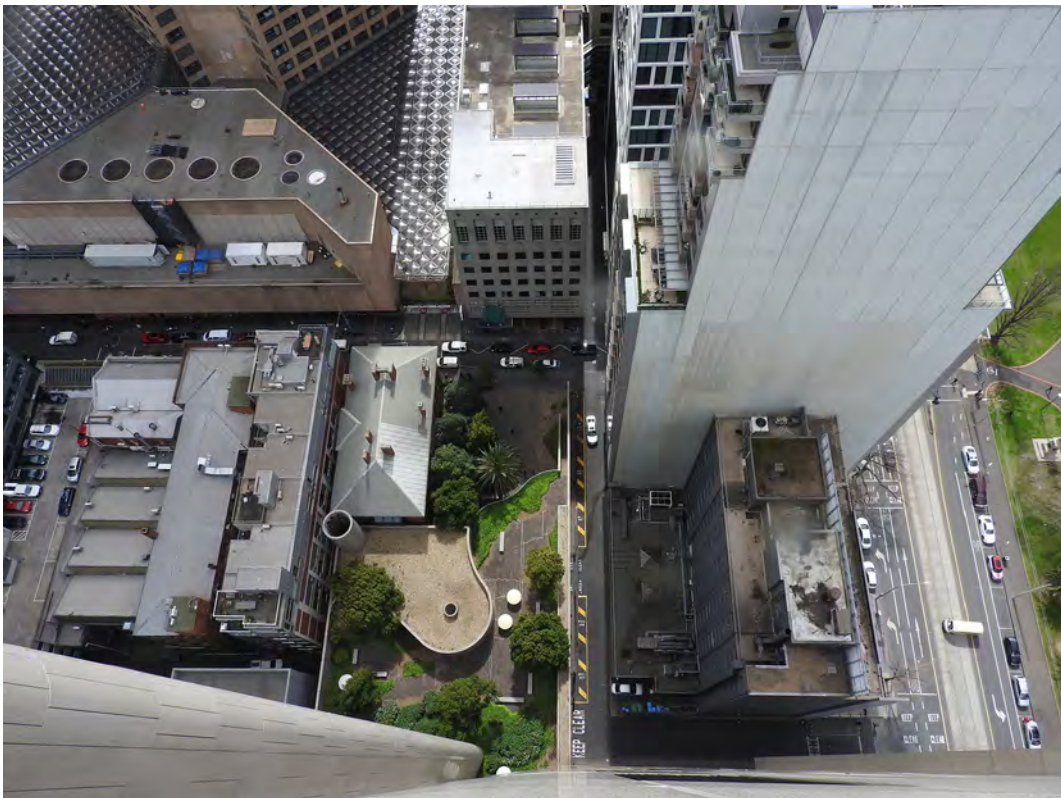
Some contemporary commentators may find the missed outcomes as regret, others as relief, like "bullets gratefully dodged" as Elizabeth Farrelly puts it for several late twentieth-century unbuilt proposals for Sydney and curated as exhibits by Robert Freestone for the exhibition *Unrealised Sydney* at Sydney Living Museums.<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 7.** Grollo Tower, Melbourne (1995), photomontage of model. Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates (Reproduced from Sharp, *Harry Seidler: Selected and Current Works*, 121. Photomontage by Eric Sierins, April 1995. Copyright Penelope Seidler).

Nevertheless, the conflictual story of Seidler's in Melbourne brings to light another facet of significance. It allows us to expose some idiosyncrasies that characterised the passage from modernity to postmodernity in the government of Australian cities. In particular, Seidler's vicissitudes in Melbourne show how that passage was implemented quite destructively by some postmodern planning authorities, who mistook the prospect of a city-wide rejuvenation project also as pretext to unleash an anti-modernist aesthetic bias.

The case of Grand Central is the most eloquent in this sense. Some Melbournians may rejoice for dodging the bullet of a block-busting tower misaligned with Melbourne's city grid. Others may be relieved to discover that they averted the more sinister bullet shot by the poor taste of planners who wished to force faux historic features at the foot of a Seidler-designed landmark. At any rate, most will anguish for losing some of the best post-war office buildings in the process.



**Figure 8.** Shell House, Melbourne, view from parapet over Flinders Lane public open space. Architect: Harry Seidler and Associates (Photograph by Giorgio Marfella).

Such a formalist argument might seem moot today if it was not for some lingering implications for the present. The implications support an ongoing viewpoint that still condemns the destructive mechanisms of inner urban development as a problem inherited primarily from the modern phase of Australian urban history. This viewpoint, I argue, is a useful pretext for those who endorse piecemeal infills with the jamming of skinny or closely packed towers in the leftover interstitial open spaces of inner cities, like in the case of the Flinders Lane concourse that Seidler envisaged for Melbourne at the rear of Shell House.<sup>38</sup>

Notwithstanding the limitations of modern city planning inherited in the last century, the urban design hostility that lingers on against Seidler's modernist legacy of sculptural towers surrounded by public open space is a convenient alibi that distracts from a much more troublesome task. The task of calling into question how the mechanisms of destruction commenced in modern times were only amplified once they fell into the hands of the still-flourishing postmodern generation of urban designers engaged to fix the mistakes of their antecedents.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> The monographs on Harry Seidler are numerous. Here I refer above all to Peter Blake, *Architecture For The New World: The Work Of Harry Seidler* (Sydney, New York, Stuttgart: Horwitz - Wittenborn - Karl Kraemer, 1973); and Philip Drew and Kenneth Frampton, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992).
- <sup>2</sup> Alice Spigelman, *Almost Full Circle: the Life of Harry Seidler* (Blackheath, NSW: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2001); and Helen O'Neill, *A Singular Vision: Harry Seidler* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> Philip Goad, "New World: Harry Seidler, Brazil and the Australian City," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 31, no. 1, (2021): 54-84.
- <sup>4</sup> Paolo Stracchi, "Pier Luigi Nervi and Harry Seidler's Australia Square Tower: Italian Structure, Australian Design," *Construction History*, 34, no. 1, (2019): 103-28; and "The Ghost of Pier Luigi Nervi in Martin Place: the Italian Contribution to the Design and Construction of the MLC Centre and CTA Building in Sydney," *Construction History*, 36, no. 2 (2021): 165-88.
- <sup>5</sup> Gevork Hartoonian, "Harry Seidler: A Towering Architect," *Architectural Theory Review*, 11, no 1, (2006): Editorial, VI-VII.
- <sup>6</sup> Gevork Hartoonian, "Harry Seidler: Revisiting Modernism," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 20, no. 1, (2011): 30-53.
- <sup>7</sup> A selection of tall building projects is contained in Peter Murray (ed.), *Harry Seidler and Associates: Towers in the City* (Milan: Tecno, 1988).
- <sup>8</sup> Seidler also designed two civic buildings that still stand in Melbourne's outskirts: the Waverley (now Monash) Civic Centre, Glen Waverley (1982-84), the Ringwood Cultural Centre, Ringwood (1978-80) and the Monash Gallery of Art (Waverley Art Gallery, Wheelers Hill, 1990).
- <sup>9</sup> "Revolutionary Office for Melbourne," *Architecture and Arts*, 25 (September 1955): 38-39.
- <sup>10</sup> "Revolutionary Office for Melbourne," 38.
- <sup>11</sup> Public Record Office of Victoria (PROV), City of Melbourne, VPRS 8945/P2, unit 191, Building and Town Planning Committee, minute no. 55/4176.
- <sup>12</sup> "Royal Automobile Club of Victoria," *Architecture in Australia*, 50, no. 3 (September 1961): 92-93; and "Club Premises and Offices," *Architecture Today* 3, no. 7 (May 1961): 17-20.
- <sup>13</sup> PROV, City of Melbourne, VPRS 8945/P2, unit 196, Building and Town Planning Committee, memorandum of the Town Planner, subject: Central Area Planning Scheme 1964, 27 September 1965.
- <sup>14</sup> Harry Seidler, "The Problem of Piecemeal Development," *The Age*, March 29, 1965, 17.
- <sup>15</sup> Seidler, "The Problem of Piecemeal Development," 17.
- <sup>16</sup> Dennis Sharp (ed.), *Harry Seidler: Selected and Current Works* (Mulgrave, Vic; North Ryde, NSW: Images – Craftsman House, 1997), 238.
- <sup>17</sup> PROV, City of Melbourne, VPRS 8945, unit 204, Building and Town Planning Committee, Application no. M.C.C. 2314, 1974.
- <sup>18</sup> National Trust of Australia (Victoria), *Collins Street Report: A Report by the Urban Conservation Committee of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) on Suggested Planning*

*Policies and Guidelines for Collins Street* (Melbourne: National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1978).

<sup>19</sup> The articles and reviews of Norman Day, the architectural critic of *The Age*, are representative of the antagonism against modern tall buildings in Melbourne of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

<sup>20</sup> "Nauru House: A Gift," *Architect* 4, n. 40 (March 1976): 15.

<sup>21</sup> Neil Clerehan. "A Tale of Two Houses: Nauru and Wood and MLC too," *Architect* 4, no. 49, (September 1977): 7, 9.

<sup>22</sup> "Who is the Father of these Twins?" *The Age*, October 21, 1977, 17.

<sup>23</sup> "Correction and Apology to Mr Harry Seidler," *Architect*, 4, no. 50 (November 1977): 7.

<sup>24</sup> City of Melbourne and Victorian Department of Planning, "Interim Central City Planning and Design Guidelines," in *Melbourne Central City Development Manual* (Melbourne: Victorian Department of Planning, 1982), part C.

<sup>25</sup> PROV, City of Melbourne, VPRS 8945/P2, unit 218, Building and Land Use Committee, application no. DP83/0074, 14 April 1983.

<sup>26</sup> PROV, DP85/0303, 16 September 1985.

<sup>27</sup> Dr William H. Melbourne, wind engineer, in conversation with the author.

<sup>28</sup> "Architect Opposes City Planning Edict," *The Age*, April 6, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Harry Seidler, "A Perspective on Architectural Directions," in *Second Century of the Skyscraper*, edited by Lynn S. Beedle (New York: Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, 1988), 165.

<sup>30</sup> Shell House received several awards soon after completion: the BOMA Award for Design in 1989, ASHRAE and ACEA awards for mechanical design and the RAIA Commercial Architecture Award in 1991.

<sup>31</sup> PROV, City of Melbourne, VPRS 8945, unit 244, City Development Applications Committee, application n. DP/002, 6 February 1989.

<sup>32</sup> PROV, DP/002, 6 February 1989.

<sup>33</sup> PROV, DP/002, 6 February 1989.

<sup>34</sup> The parcels consolidated at corner of Bourke and Williams Streets were then left in a state of underdevelopment and underuse until the early 2000s. RP Data, Melbourne Cityscope, map 19, properties 50-55 [1987-1999].

<sup>35</sup> See for example Landmark Tower, Brisbane (1985) in *Towers in the City*, ed. Murray.

<sup>36</sup> Harry Seidler and Associates, "Grollo Tower (Project)," 1995-2000. Available at <https://www.seidler.net.au/?id=31>.

<sup>37</sup> Elisabeth Farrelly, "'Bullet Gratefully Dodged': Failed Proposals that Saved Sydney from an Even Worse Fate," 31 August 2022. Available at <https://architectureau.com/articles/unrealised-sydney/>.

<sup>38</sup> Several online and newspaper articles give coverage of the controversial proposed redevelopment of the rear of Shell House with an additional 32-storey office tower. See, for example, Clay Lucas, "'Plonked on a Plaza': Skyscraper Plan puts Spotlight on Heritage Laws," *The Age*, 5 April 2021. See also letters by citizens in "Planning Minister, Admit you have Made a Mistake," *The Age*, 18 December 2021. Available at [www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/planning-minister-admit-you-have-made-a-mistake-20211217-p59ii9.html](http://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/planning-minister-admit-you-have-made-a-mistake-20211217-p59ii9.html).

# **Intensive Boundaries and Liminality: What Drives Melbourne's *Suburban Sprawl***

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## ***Abstract***

*The dominance of protective dispersal then freeway building in 1950s and 1960s Melbourne planning reflects a view of its suburbs as an undifferentiated sprawl, with little internal agency, difference, nuance, cultural or visual texture. It is seen as primarily determined by demands of Melbourne's CBD, and is assumed to spread in almost magic fashion: landscape one minute, 'suburbia' the next. For varied reasons this view is consolidated in planning imagery, responding to concerns at commuting and transport distance, disappearing food-producing land near the city, and concerns at raising population density. The result is urban form perceived constantly through liminality and outer boundary conditions: extensive borderlines. This suited urbanism that dealt with cities through quantification and circulation routes. This paper argues the dynamics of Melbourne's suburban development come not from concentric spread but from the steady, sequential emergence of nodal suburbs, themselves major generators of commercial, industrial and transport activity.*

*The original determinants for these suburban nodes were (i) the inability of Melbourne suburbs to remain in walk-to-work scales; (ii) the means to commute lowering urban density – initially through train and tram, and later cars commuting; (iii) these nodal suburbs' breaking of the long arterial road system that shaped Melbourne's early suburban form till the 1880s, largely by developing off or away from these arteries; (iv) the imagery of clustered institutional buildings with increased mass and expression beyond those of surrounding suburbs; (v) the specialisation of tributary suburbs as a*



*residential hinterland, not for Melbourne the collected city, but for each of these localised nodes; and (vi) each suburban node gained a series of standard assets in making it an urban focus.*

*These nodes form part of a series of intensive boundaries: more nuanced and individually distinctive. Intensive boundaries also encompass the miniature urban forms and specific urban models emulated in suburban nodes.*

## **Introduction**

In the 1950s and 1960s Melbourne planning schemes affirmed a view of its suburbs as an inherently consistent and uniform *sprawl*, with little internal agency, difference, nuance, or cultural or visual texture. Framed at the Cold War's height, Melbourne's 1954 plan<sup>1</sup> focused on civil defence and dispersal of industry as a protection against attack by unspecified enemies. Melbourne's 1969 plan<sup>2</sup> focused on transport corridors, and how to traverse Melbourne's large *suburbia*, using a generalised freeway grid drawn over its entirety, as fast as possible. In each plan suburbs were cast as an *undifferentiated sprawl* originating from around a colonial CBD, now compressed and towering. This CBD that has become an increasingly distant form for most Melbourne dwellers, experienced, if at all, at the end of long commutes. Melbourne's suburbs, of far less density than those of Los Angeles or New York,<sup>3</sup> urban realms widely consulted when Melbourne's suburban spread is considered, were assumed to spread in almost magic fashion: landscape one minute, 'suburbia' the next. The raw 'fringe' of recent housing tracts is, in many senses, suburban form at its most dramatic: the instant when it is conquering or burying landscape assumed to be in either permanently and homogeneously natural condition, or vital food-producing land. This image is in a tradition going back to one at the outset of major suburban development in London: George Cruikshank's 1829 *The March of Bricks and Mortar*,<sup>4</sup> or Elizabeth Gaskell's 1853 novel *Cranford*:<sup>5</sup> suburbs conceived as dynamic, menacing *extensive boundaries*. For varied reasons this view of sprawl and menacing outer front, *suburban liminality*, consolidated in planning imagery, crucial to concerns over infrastructure provision, commuting and transport distance, disappearing food-producing land near the city, and concerns at apparently declining population density compared with Australia's national average.<sup>6</sup> The result is urban form perceived constantly through liminality and outer boundary conditions: *extensive borderlines*. This may have been

reinforced by Melbourne mapping, which from round 1900 depicted travel times and distances through suburbs as a web of 50 or so concentric circles around the central business district, and after 1954, for some years, the outermost of these circles paralleled much of the city's designated western boundary.<sup>7</sup>

This also suited urbanism that dealt with cities through quantification and circulation routes, as a kind of social, political and economic plumbing where people, goods and fluids could be transported as quickly as possible. This paper, however, argues the dynamics of Melbourne's suburban development come not from concentric spread but from the steady, sequential emergence of *nodal suburbs*, themselves major and decentralised generators of commercial, industrial and transport activity. These have, since the nineteenth century, continued to replicate, each usually with five or six ancillary or *tributary suburbs* developing radially around each. Melbourne's suburban development was generated from eighteen to twenty of these nodes pre- World War II, and as its suburban population increased from 1.1 million in 1940 to the present 5.15 million, so these train-based nodes increased in number, though at a much slower rate, to around 33 today.

### **Intensive Boundaries and Liminality**

Cities evolve within spatio-temporal zones and are bounded by natural and artificial margins, that can be described as extensive borderlines. These include physical and geographical limits as well as technical and political processes of land use that include development and design of the built environment. They reference explicit conditions and specific identities.<sup>8</sup> However, other well-defined zones are not bounded by spatio-temporal frontiers but by intensive boundaries.<sup>9</sup> Intensive zones are more nuanced and rarefied than extensive ones. These can be understood as zones of intensity, that occupy the overrun between explicit territories. They include the highly differentiated morphogenetic processes and discrete architecture and urban qualities of the city, rather than a state of equilibrium that land-use planning anticipates. Liminality summarises the spatial, qualitative and material effects within thresholds and precincts, that arise between or across more 'even' urban conditions, or once more stable urban conditions that are no longer operational. Liminal urbanism is also transitional, emergent conditions that absorb the incompatible variables and forces in a city.

### Urban Emulation and Nodal Suburbs

In Australia urban emulation is the importing of visual images – often impressionistic – of desirable overseas precincts and use of these images as an urban planning instrument.<sup>10</sup> It was by then an established Australian way of handling cities and had often produced good or satisfactory results since Australia's early settlements incorporated visual imagery of other cities that made valuable contributions to urban life and amenity. Urban nodes use an earlier form of Melbourne urbanism: urban emulation of desired forms, usually from overseas sources, but also in varying degrees imaging and functioning as smaller CBDs. From 1860 to ca 1900, Melbourne builders and developers grew adept at compressing and imaging desired urban precincts overseas: Venice and the theatre districts of London and Paris especially. From there it was relatively easy to rebuild, in suburban settings, the accumulated typology and functions of central Melbourne buildings and their imagery of density, at generally (town halls excepted) smaller scale. Originally these clustered along major arterial roads and tramways, centring on the central city and reinforcing its pre-eminence. But this pattern began changing after seaside resorts with intended self-sufficiency developed from around 1860 (St Kilda, Brighton) and had largely transformed into a series of varyingly independent nodes by 1910-20. By then only two or three long tram extensions from Melbourne's inner areas – Brunswick-Coburg, Kew-Balwyn, Elsternwick-South Caulfield – spreading almost purely along arterial roads, extended Melbourne's earlier arterial pattern of commercial or administrative precincts.

The original determinants for these suburban nodes were (i) the inability of Melbourne suburbs to remain in walk-to-work scales; (ii) the commuter suburb as a new ideal; (iii) the means to commute spectacularly lowering urban density – by train and tram, and later cars; (iv) these nodal suburbs' breakage of the long arterial road system that shaped Melbourne's early suburban form till the 1880s, largely by developing off or away from these arteries; (v) the imagery of clustered institutional buildings with increased mass and expression beyond those of surrounding suburbs; (vi) the specialisation of *tributary suburbs* as a residential hinterland, no longer focused on Melbourne the collected city, but now on each of these localised nodes; and (vii) each suburban node gaining a series of standard assets – building types and visual density – all components of an urban imagery.

Outside the scope of detailed examination here, this nodal tendency also affects other cities accused of uniform urban 'sprawl': in Greater London these would include



Croydon, Stratford, Ealing, Richmond-Kingston, all around earlier villages outside the earlier walled city. In Los Angeles County they include Pasadena, Anaheim, Santa Monica, Burbank, Long Beach, Beverly Hills, Hollywood and San Bernardino. These suburban nodes continue to evolve. Similarly, Melbourne's older suburban nodes have all been rebuilt, refocused, or transformed themselves, often three times over. After 1960, Melbourne's newbuild shopping malls both paralleled and competed with older railway-generated nodes: Chadstone vs Oakleigh, Werribee vs Werribee Plaza for example, Northland vs Preston-Reservoir; Knox City competes with both Dandenong and Ringwood. Eastland-Ringwood, Frankston and Broadmeadows Town Centre are the only direct fusions of 1960s-90s malls with an earlier railway node. Away from the railway nodes, these shopping malls have offered greater schematic simplicity and institutionalised private transport at the appropriate moment, but lack the urban bulk, range and activity routinely part of nodal suburbs on the older Melbourne pattern: the churches, hospitals, night life, eating and socialising, local government, economically more marginal retail, and residential areas in the nodes' central fabric.

These nodes form part of a series of *intensive boundaries*: more nuanced and individually distinctive. Intensive boundaries also encompass the miniature urban forms and specific urban models emulated in suburban nodes. But all are well inside Melbourne's *extensive borderlines*, its perimeter. If they are near an edge, as Sunshine, Dandenong, Broadmeadows and Epping all were, they are not at the borderline for long, each generating several surrounding suburbs that rely on it for retail and administration.

### **1969 Melbourne Transport Plan**

With rising car ownership after World War II, Melbourne was ready to increase its suburban area radically, breaking from its pre-war pattern which had largely kept suburbs to within ca 1.5-2 kilometres walking distance of railway stations or tram lines. Melbourne's 1954 Metropolitan Planning Scheme (MPS, 1954) saw Melbourne as a kind of Cold War air base, where, with some optimism, factories and its other crucial urban components were to be dispersed like aircraft to reduce strafing damage from unnamed but clearly dark forces.<sup>11</sup> The Melbourne Transport Plan (MTB, 1969) largely abandoned this airfield dispersal theme, seeing Melbourne's physical spread away from railways and trams as already accomplished. It now focused on how to deal with (or live with) 'suburban sprawl' and large travel distances that had been left to buses, cars or trucks. This 'sprawl' was read as the uniform and unplanned reproduction of

detached housing, credited with little or no perceived societal variance, internal agency or dynamics, and measurable largely as an area to be traversed at speed. Neither plan brought much ideology to bare: it was generalised Cold War in 1954, and a mind's image of American freeway-city as urban *maturity* – an urban emulation – in 1969.



**Figure 1.** Proposed freeways, Melbourne Transport Plan 1969  
(Drawn by Gargano and Nazareth).

The 1954 and 1969 plans still assumed Melbourne would be served commercially and in much of its administration from a single urban core, its old CBD, but its population was assumed to be spreading largely uncontrolled through still more concentric circles away from that CBD. In transport these plans focused on travel time and volumes, and the size of traffic routes necessary to accommodate them. With the perimeter now equal as a determinant to Melbourne's CBD, and with an arterial commuting already covered by earlier roads, suburban railways and trams, *new* transport routes were not obliged to have especially clear destinations or termini, and they did not. In this new planning, just traversing *expanses* became sufficient *raison d'être*. So, Melbourne's Transport Plan of 1969 proposed a distributive *grid* of freeways, evenly carrying *movement* this way and that across many suburbs, and endless in its circulation and character. It resembled the broad grid of main roads through and around the unfolding Milton Keynes in England (1967 ff.), and in Australia contemporary town planning – the University of Melbourne, for example, stressed British New Towns as a central paradigm.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, Melbourne's 1969 plan proposed one city rail loop to distribute suburban commuters through a marginally increased CBD area, two other rail extensions to reinforce the arterial commute, and then 86% of its budget for 510

kilometres of freeways and another 520 kilometres of further “highways and arterial roads.”

These programmes compare with the 670 kilometres of freeways planned for Los Angeles County by 1960 and the 851 projected for it by 1964. Melbourne’s planned network would serve a projected population of 3.8 million in 1985, 54% of Los Angeles’ County’s projected 1970 population.<sup>13</sup> The freeways were mapped out and sat in dotted lines on Melbourne’s street directories for some years, subsiding in Rupert Hamer’s term as Victoria’s premier and resurgent in Jeffrey Kennett’s term (1992-99) – in those days performative individualism was saluted in transport as everywhere else. Most of the planned freeways were without a substantive end destination though named for a broad region (*Peninsula*), a small town in the general direction (*Healesville*), the general direction itself (*Eastern, South-Eastern, Western Ring Road*) a named interstate highway intended for connection (*Hume, Prince’s*) and one notable person (*Monash*). Graeme Davison saw it as the “most expansive and expensive freeway scheme in Australia’s history,” and Melbourne’s new shopping malls, based broadly on those in Victor Gruen’s *Shopping Towns USA* (1960),<sup>14</sup> seem carefully sited as far as possible from existing public transport nodes, announcing that cars would supplant public transport.<sup>15</sup> Wilbur Smith of New Haven, Connecticut, who devised a ring-road freeway used to remove two large ghetto and several older districts in that city (1962-70), was chosen as the 1969 Melbourne Plan’s major road engineering consultant. Smith’s urban demolitions and use of freeways for demographic change was lacerated – in 1969 – by the architectural historian and New Haven native Vincent Scully.<sup>16</sup>

*Melbourne 1969* was in essence a transport plan, and drawn up entirely by transport agencies and consultants, projecting quantitative demographic burdens onto an otherwise undefined carpet of ‘suburbia’. This reflected a long-developing stereotyping of Australian suburban life. The freeway network, set out in an abstract grid, was intended to *cope* with suburbs rather than actually engage them, and to make getting out of them, around or through them, bearable. Nuancing differing suburban identities and other suburban differences – even socio-economic differences – were not in the equation. The 1969 plan’s one transport mode intersection – a railway line through one of the freeways toward the famously train-free Doncaster-Templestowe and a left-over from Melbourne’s 1929 plan – was progressively abandoned between 1976 and 1984; others to Monash University, Waverley Stadium and Knox City never commenced:

only the freeway grid remained. This could in part be attributed to urban planning theories that focused objectively on movement of numbers and services, and cast cities as circulation and streets as pipes or channels. There were other more loaded perspectives besides. To this day, Melbourne's car and truck-based future was continually credited to people in mid-band or outer suburbs 'voting with their feet' or showing their 'love affair with the car' – basically affirming car advertisers' hopes rather than just coping with carefully inadequate public transport. In 1970-71 Victoria's state government considered ending all off-peak train services and abandoning trams as well. In this perspective the only suburbs that deserved routine identity or cultural recognition, so thinking went, were those in the inner 5-kilometre radius and a few outer Suburbs of the Discerning (Eltham, Warrandyte, Research, Mount Eliza, Mount Martha).

### **Liminality and Boundary Urbanism**

Even in these years the concentric circle visualisation of Melbourne's structure remained as strong as ever: aerial photography joined in, emphasising the towering CBD amid a carpet-expanse, a sprawl, of *everything else*. Legal maps showing urban administrative and designated growth areas even reinforce this concentric geometry, especially as, in recent years, it has been realised this suburban carpet is swallowing arable land in the relatively small food-growing areas once available round Australian cities.

And what need to 'allow' the suburbs agency and internal dynamics? By the 1960s, they were given a visual and political dimension in Robin Boyd's widely read generalisation of 'the Australian suburb' (1952, 1960), and not only cast as 'the present popular mess' visually, but routinely deemed a social, political and even spiritual swamp of complacency, conservatism, insularity and stagnation.<sup>17</sup>

This imagery was part of a line that emerged with others in the 1920s, but the message was clear enough. None of it was then deemed of value – from the average house design to suburban activity to the cars, the shops, the merchandise. This Australia was indeed a realm you would be best to whisk through at 60 miles per hour *en route* to – somewhere else. In contrast Robin Boyd provided an odd urbanism populated by beings who evidently, as *Europeans* did, glided from high-rise towers to the 'old city' across parkland and back again. This may have applied to Boyd's own suburb of South Yarra (where he lived as far as possible from the public transport

routes in the area), but how this was to be enacted in a city already 45 kilometres in diameter defies imagining.

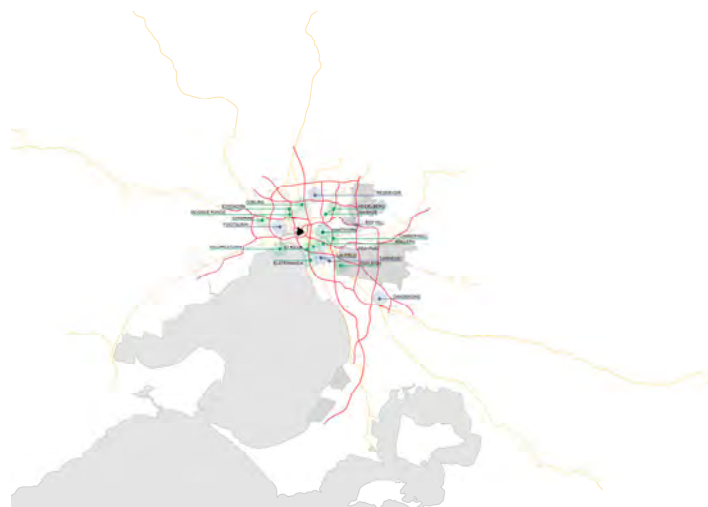
Much in these issues and enactments derives from a sense that Australian suburbs appeared almost by magic: one minute, the essential *landscape* was there, the next, a blanket of ghastly suburbs had seemingly spread over everything. Newspaper coverage of suburban expansion invariably uses boundary images to show the suburban 'wave', setting aerial or telescopic-lens views of roofing set against paddocks or open hillsides respectively. Much of this derives from earlier English reactions to London Metroland and American reactions against post-war 'suburbia' in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>18</sup> Robin Boyd's influential commentaries on Australian *suburbia's* deficiencies seem to draw heavily on the latter, and Boyd's *The Australian Ugliness* (1960) was among the first Australian books to use telescopic-lens photography to pile up new and treeless stacks of housing.<sup>19</sup> Though compressive imagery, its real message was of sameness and an absence of valuable spirit or soul. The sprawl model was easily explainable by economics and a sustained belief in the CBD as an enabling magnet. But the persuasive image of suburbs' magic, inevitable apparition is in significant part behind the strange lack of agency, belief and texture they gain in 1960s urban strategy, in and outside Australia. In contrast the actual emergence of nodal suburbs – and the smaller networks of suburbs that develop around them – have a different character altogether.



**Figure 2.** Nodal suburbs and rural edge  
(Drawn by Heyworth and Nazareth).

### Liminality and Infrastructure Space

In several cases Melbourne's nodal suburbs are small settlements in Melbourne's former rural edge that grew up into suburbs: Preston-Reservoir, Brighton, Dandenong, Heidelberg, Lilydale, Ringwood, Frankston, all developed this way. While their outskirts merged with surrounding suburban areas, they often kept something of their earlier town form, as in wide main streets, war memorial tree groves, long-standing local businesses serving rural or agricultural roles, agricultural high schools, rural or regional industry such as timber milling, lime or plaster processing, and brick pits. As each consolidated the Melbourne suburban area, they did so not by being swallowed in a radiating suburban wave but in spreading tributary suburbs that eventually bordered those of a nearby node. So Oakleigh, spreading residential areas through Murrumbeena, Hughesdale, Huntingdale, Clarinda and East and South Oakleigh, linked up with outlying residential suburbs serving other nodes. Jordanville, Holmesglen, Ashwood and Glen Iris were all linked to the southern spread of Camberwell's sphere. In turn, Camberwell, spreading eastward into East Camberwell, Canterbury, Surrey Hills, linked up with Box Hill and four of its tributaries: Box Hill South and North, Surrey Hills and Mont Albert. At Melbourne's current outer edge, Mernda, South Morang, Wollert, Doreen, Arthur's Creek, and Yarrambat have all been influenced by the node, Epping, for a many years a rail terminus. In the west, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Hoppers Crossing, Point Cook, and Truganina have all been affected by Werribee and its suburban rail terminus. In the south, Devon Meadows, Five Ways, Clyde, Skye, Cranbourne North and South, have all been shaped by Cranbourne, the current rail terminus.



**Figure 3.** Nodal suburbs and commuter nodes  
(Drawn by Heyworth and Nazareth).

As the railway link suggests, suburban node formation is shaped primarily by railways pulling the focus of suburban centres away from arterial roads leading to Melbourne's central city. Hawthorn central was the first: though its town hall was on the Burwood Highway leading into central Melbourne, its 1881 railway runs 250 metres to the north, drawing Swinburne Technical College that way and spreading the main body of its shopping strip a kilometre north along Glenferrie Road, at right angles to the arterial highway but past and around the railway station. Camberwell, Heidelberg, Elsternwick, Prahran, St Kilda, Malvern, Moonee Ponds, Coburg, Sunshine and Williamstown all had shopping and administrative precincts running at right angles to their main arteries and away from them, creating, in effect, miniature centres that were no longer 'wayside' but now geometrically placed to spread radially, even if the surveyors' prevailing street pattern was still a grid. A second group formed nodal cores that slanted away from the nearest railway at an angle or spread south or north from it. Box Hill, Oakleigh, Footscray, Reservoir, Caulfield, and subsumed country towns such as Dandenong, all did this and so began forming their own grids on angle, again into miniature versions of the Melbourne CBD. Several were twin nodes, usually with a transverse shopping street away from the artery and an intersections node where several angled streets came together: Caulfield-Carnegie, Heidelberg-Ivanhoe, for example, or Moonee Ponds with its long transverse shopping strip and its multi-point road junction joining it, and its extension in Essendon Central, one railway station to the north. These geometries, though often small or basic shifts, immediately established each node as a distinctive precinct or system, obvious points where tributary suburbs could cluster and in turn spread outwards.

These suburban nodes had different magnetism. Several originally had a large factory or grouped industry close to the node core, as with Footscray and its chemical works, abattoirs and rope factory. Box Hill had its brick pit and hosiery factory, Williamstown its boatbuilding yards, Sunshine its agricultural machinery works, Dandenong with its stockyard and then car, truck and food processing factories. Some had education as a magnet: Hawthorn had a large technical college by 1920; Caulfield and Coburg were teacher training centres by 1960. Broadmeadows had nine schools and colleges within a kilometre of its Town Centre. Hawthorn had six large schools around its nodal centre. The new public hospitals were crucial after World War II especially: Box Hill, Footscray, Frankston, Dandenong, Preston, all had major hospitals; Heidelberg gained three. These all attracted doctors, nurses, ambulance depots and other medical

servicing. All nodes had cinemas – usually two or three – drawing people in from tributary suburbs, and parliamentary offices, bringing people in with their higher grievances. Much of the population using these nodes either commuted to them as well or commuted to the CBD.

The rise in car ownership was the first big challenge to these nodes' early form. In 1939 Australian figures sat at one car or truck per 7.8 people, making public commuting quite sustainable. By 1969, however, the ratio had closed to one for every 2.3 people, and is one per 1.6 today, often forcing public transport into survival mode.<sup>20</sup> The new shopping malls functioned like the commercial parts of earlier 'railway' node form, though they often became surrounded by huge car parks rather than drawing on surrounding and existing built form, as the older 'railway' nodes did. The car parks, however, also pulled these new commercial nodes off major arteries in much the same way railways had pulled commuter nodes away from artery roads earlier. In each case the sense of these nodes being independent of the city was reinforced. At Monash University in the early 1970s, for example, it was common among students to think of 'the city' in shopping or cinema not in Melbourne's CBD but at Chadstone mall or its nearest railway node, Oakleigh. Southland shopping mall, set exactly halfway between two distant railway stations in true motorised mall fashion, was still right away from its nearest highway artery. Significantly, it beat Roy Grounds' National Gallery of Victoria to the annual bronze medal for architectural design that year: 1969.

But the malls found it hard matching the older railway nodes on several counts. They generally lacked local government centres, though both Doncaster and Knox City built municipal centres next to their shopping malls. Banks and some post offices went into the malls. But their high rents blocked smaller, often interesting but less wealthy shops and 'small' proprietors from settling there. Restaurants were also limited in the malls for the same reason. Multiplexes supplanted suburban cinemas in the malls, but the parliamentarians, doctors and lawyers, all staples of the older commuter nodes, largely stayed put. So did the real estate offices and till recently, most of the local press, who had easier access to factories. Malls made no provision for religious buildings – or local libraries, generally.

## **Conclusion**

These node suburbs, arguably as distinct from the generally more formulaic malls, form the intersections and shifts of *intensive boundaries*, and these give an intricate



texture and grain to the supposedly consistent and automatic urban sprawl in all manner of encounters and shades. Most importantly, they suggest the spread of Australian cities in middle-band and outer suburban areas has a radically different pattern of emergence and spread than is generally believed. They include distinctive morphogenetic processes, they focus distinctive cultures of specific regional areas, and distil or select the distinct architecture and urban qualities of the central city. Till recent years they differed in not being medium or high rise, so their emulation of urban form focused on churches, cinemas, town halls and municipal offices, which all had central city counterparts fairly close in scale. In recent years, though, urban emulation had spread into programs for high-rise buildings, mostly using apartments rather than offices as the vehicle. Box Hill specifically planned nine apartment and office towers several years ago and now has eleven; Moonee Ponds, Glen Waverley and Heidelberg have all gained similar groupings.

Given the parallels in London, Los Angeles and other cities, it would now be interesting to trace correspondences in node formation through other Australian cities. Arguably, all Australian state capitals and Newcastle have them, while Canberra gained its suburban nodes, perhaps unexpectedly, through the application of modified British satellite cities.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, *Melbourne and Metropolitan Planning Scheme* (Melbourne: Government Printer, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 1954), esp. "Civil Defence." This followed Patrick Abercrombie, Lord Latham and John Forshawe, *County of London Plan* (London: County of London, 1943-44), and Sydney's similarly related *County of Cumberland Plan*, initiated by William McKell's Labor government, and published in 1948. This scheme's descriptive map was divided into living, industrial and greenbelt regions, much as in the London scheme, but apart from nominating central Sydney as the County Centre, made no specific recognition of the city's emerging *nodal suburbs*, among them Hurstville, Burwood, Bankstown, Manly, even Parramatta. In the scheme's key map, all are simply grouped as unnamed living areas in with the more general fabric of private suburban streets. Melbourne's at least recognised suburban nodes in highlighting several suburban areas for development as 'centres': Footscray, Preston, Box Hill, Moorabbin and Dandenong, all established as nodal suburbs by 1954. The Melbourne plan was followed by Gordon Stevenson's 1955 Perth-Fremantle plan (Perth: Government Printer, 1955), another that effectively encouraged road development and is seen as giving no special prominence to suburban centres, preferring as universal system of plot ratios and fairly strict control of residential density.

<sup>2</sup> *Melbourne Transportation Plan* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1969). A commentary is in Liam Davies and Ian Woodcock, "50 years on from the Melbourne Transportation Plan: What can we Learn from its Legacy?," *The Conversation*, 9 December 2019. As its name indicates, the plan focused on transit from one part to another. Its projected freeway net showed the freeways and their link to existing highways out of Melbourne but did not show a link to any commercial, administrative foci or even to agreed industrial zones. As Davies and Woodcock

argue, the scheme was a road plan rather than even a comprehensive transport plan. It made no engagement with or specifications for the development of suburban centres, though it cited the 1954 plan as covering other areas.

<sup>3</sup> New York currently has 11,234 people per square kilometre; Los Angeles County has 940 per square kilometre, with significant concentrations of density in all its clearly nodal suburbs: Long Beach, Pasadena, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Burbank, San Bernardino, etc. Melbourne recently averaged 453 people per square kilometre, less than half that of Los Angeles county, but greater than Adelaide, Sydney Perth and Canberra (404, 400, 317 and 173 respectively). [www.population.net.au/melbourne-population/](http://www.population.net.au/melbourne-population/), accessed 30 December 2022. The US figures are from the US Census Bureau at 6 November 2018, via Wikipedia.

<sup>4</sup> George Cruikshank, *Going out of Town – or, The March of Bricks and Mortar*. From his *Scraps and Sketches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London, 1829), showing suburbs on the march from Islington toward Hampstead, literally in battalion rows scattering cattle and terrifying ancient trees in their path.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford* (London, 1851-53), first published serially in Charles Dickens' *Household Words*, modelled on Knutsford Cheshire, the village setting is threatened throughout by the onrush of railways, immigrant Irish labourers and the Manchester suburbs that were expected to follow, creating a wave or suburban *front*. In general perceptions the front and perimeter indeed become suburbs' offensive weapon, as defining as the sprawl is in generalising suburbs' internal character.

<sup>6</sup> Liam Davies has observed that population densities in outer suburban areas are not significantly less than in many of Melbourne's inner suburbs, The balance has been maintained to a degree through double- and triple-density home unit conversions, originated in Box Hill-Nunawading in the early 1980s, which have produced, along with new pressure on older suburban infrastructure (gas, electricity and water), a drastically increased car storage density and the rise of carriage-sweep front yards as a standard middle and outer suburban carry-over.

<sup>7</sup> Between 1954 and the 1960s, when it was challenged by the freeway grid proposed in the 1969 Transport Plan.

<sup>8</sup> M. DeLanda, "Extensive Borderlines and Intensive Borderlines," in *Borderline*, ed. Lebbeus Woods and Ekkehard Rehfeld (Vienna and New York: Springer, 1999), 78.

<sup>9</sup> DeLanda, "Extensive Borderlines and Intensive Borderlines," 78.

<sup>10</sup> Conrad Hamann and Ian Nazareth, "Provenance – Emergence, Emulations and Disjunctions in Urban Melbourne," in *Proceedings of the 14th Australasian Urban History Planning History Conference 2018* (Melbourne: UHPH, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> See, esp., the "Civil Defence" section of the 1954 MMBW Plan. Given its legacy in thinking from the 1944 London plan, and its implementation during the Cold War, the emphasis is hardly surprising. The New Towns planning that dominated post-war Australian training also had a large part of its formation in Britain's re-armament and dispersed factory programme of the late 1930s, which used open farmland, outer suburbs in Liverpool and other Midlands and Northern cities, and Welwyn Garden City (pharmaceuticals). "Dispersal" itself was a term for placing war assets – aircraft primarily – in irregular or spread-out patterns or on satellite airfields rather than in easily attacked lines at major bases, as previously favoured.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Fox, who studied Town Planning at the University of Melbourne in the late 1970s, recalled the dominance of British New Towns planning in that period: correspondence Conrad Hamann, 1978-79. Two leading figures in Canberra's satellite cities programme, Lord Holford and Sir John Overall, were major shapers of Britain's New Towns program previously, and Gordon Stephenson, formulating Perth's 1955 plan, had worked on London's 1944 plan previously.

<sup>13</sup> Sebastian Gurciullo, "Deleting Freeways: Community Opposition to Inner Urban Arterial Roads in the 1970s," *Provenance: The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, 18 (2020), <http://provenance.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/provenance-journal/provenance-2020/deleting-freeways>, accessed 31 December 2022. US figures are from various sources including the US Census Bureau listed above, and maps of projected and completed freeways in Los Angeles County measured by scale.

<sup>14</sup> Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York: Van Nostrand, Reinhold, 1960).

<sup>15</sup> For example, Chadstone (1960) was placed exactly halfway between two railway lines, with no direct bus route from the nearest railway stations or from the Oakleigh node. Southland

(1969) was placed exactly halfway between Highett and Cheltenham stations on the Frankston line, a mile (1.6 kilometres) from each, though it has now been accommodated collectively with a new railway station opposite. Northland (1966) was placed three miles from both the Preston and Reservoir railway nodes.

<sup>16</sup> Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), discussing Smith's Oak Street Connector to the nearby I-95 freeway and his proposed ring road through New Haven centre. These were used to remove ghetto regions, though they were only half-completed. For Smith, see [www.bae.edu/188759/WILBUR-S-SMITH19111990](http://www.bae.edu/188759/WILBUR-S-SMITH19111990), accessed 31 December 2022. Smith was subsequently hired to plan Brisbane's freeways.

<sup>17</sup> Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home: How Australians got to Live the Way they Did* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1952), esp. "The suburb was...", pp. 3-6; and more generally in *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1960).

<sup>18</sup> Boyd seems to have been affected, particularly, by American critics of 'suburbia' and social conformity and collectivism, as with David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reul Denney's *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1950), or William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

<sup>19</sup> 'Arborophobiaville' especially, included in *Australia's Home's* 1970s editions.

<sup>20</sup> These figures are drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Car Census*, begun in 1955, and from state and federal yearbooks.

# From Rambling to Elevated Walkways: Piecemeal Planning Histories in National Parks

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## **Abstract**

*From the late nineteenth century, ramblers, trampers and bushwalkers have been instrumental in the creation of national parks. Their advocacy combined interests in nature conservation with recreational pursuits, heralding the two competing and often contradictory purposes of national park estates. In Australia, protected wilderness areas were invariably repositories of sacred sites linked by networks of walking pads across landscapes shaped by millennia of Indigenous occupation. From the mid-twentieth century, new infrastructure was required in national parks to cater for the growth in tourism. In Australia, the state-based system of "national" parks resulted in an uneven approach to both the creation of protected areas and the design of infrastructure for the hosts and guests. This approach was in marked contrast to the United States, where the Mission 66 program – approved by Congress in 1955 – resulted in a decade-long programme of expenditure on infrastructure that established the reputation of their national park system, and ensured a systematic national approach.*

*This paper examines the piecemeal history of planning for bushwalkers in Australian national parks through a comparison of competing interests – the minimal needs of the self-sufficient Rambler with infrastructure that caters for diverse tourism experiences. Australian case studies illustrate a contested but changing approach to planning for pedestrians in protected areas, from the making of tracks by volunteers and depression-era work gangs to elevated walks through forest canopies. A historical analysis highlights the changing attitudes to tourism and conservation challenges, now informed by greater knowledge of ecology and the belated recognition of Indigenous ownership and pre-colonial land management regimes. Threats to the biodiversity in protected areas suggest that*

*a planning approach, which combines multiple disciplines and interests, will increasingly elevate both the bushwalker and tourist in their experience of nature.*

**Introduction: “The Tremendous Danger in the Alienation of all Lands for Industry”<sup>1</sup>**

The early history of Australian national parks owes much to adventurous recreational bushwalkers exploring unsettled Indigenous landscapes. The search for scenery, the therapeutic benefits of nature and the want of vigorous exercise coincided with the settler’s increasing interest in native flora and fauna. By the late nineteenth century, recognition of these values in remnant landscapes led individuals and associations to lobby governments to protect areas of so-called “wilderness.”<sup>2</sup> This was particularly evident in colonial settler states where landscapes shaped by Indigenous stewardship had been cleared rapidly by settlers.

The protection of Australian landscapes largely followed the example set in North America.<sup>3</sup> Proclaimed in 1872, Yellowstone National Park represented a significant victory for environmental protection, but this first in the creation of national parks was rationalised and promoted as a reserve for recreation. Almost two decades would pass before the movement extended to Australia, with the National Park, south of Kamay, or Botany Bay, declared in 1889 (renamed the Royal National Park in 1954).

John Muir’s lifelong advocacy for national parks in the United States was inspired by walking and climbing expeditions across Sierra Nevada and Yosemite Valley and effected through environmental publications and political lobbying. Likewise in Australia, the direct experiences of bushwalkers were integral to the establishment of the early national parks. Associations of enthusiasts lobbied governments for the expansion of protected lands and management plans to improve conservation and visitor infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

Consistent themes emerge around the protection of scenery, its vulnerable flora and fauna and the recreational potential of parks. The dual purpose of national parks – for both recreation and conservation – continues to create different types of challenges for planning of infrastructure, however the primary purpose of the first Australian national park was recreation. It included a deer sanctuary and a dam on the Hacking River for boating, with imported swans.<sup>5</sup> Many of these themes were apparent in 1906 when the Queensland Secretary for Public Lands argued before Parliament for the preservation of places that, “may not, from a purely timber point of view, be desirable to conserve,” but “from a climatic or scientific point of view” might “become popular resorts ... for those who desire to take a holiday... and know that they

will get pure air, good scenery, and country life.”<sup>6</sup> Wary of the opposition his scheme might attract, he added, “I do not wish it to be understood that... I have any scheme up my sleeve for asking for a large sum of money for developing these parks.”<sup>7</sup>

In Australia, the term “national park,” first used prior to federation, is in fact a misnomer that complicates a uniform narrative of policy or planning. Unlike in the United States, each Australian state and territory gazette and administer their own national park estate.<sup>8</sup> The federally administered Parks Australia is also responsible for six national parks and 60 marine parks.<sup>9</sup> The creation of national parks has therefore been fragmented historically and spatially, reliant on politicians balancing public interest in landscapes set aside for recreation with other demands on lands of high conservation value.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 2020s, the national park estate varied considerably in area across the state and territory borders: from 8% of Queensland to 42% of Tasmania and 20% nationally.<sup>11</sup> In this same decade, planned increases in the protected areas, such as the international 30 by 30 movement, aligned with state agendas to increase the area of protected lands to mitigate threats to biodiversity.<sup>12</sup> The *Threatened Species Action Plan*, announced in October 2022, is part of the Australian Government’s attempt to align with this international target.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, state-based administration has been uneven, and dedicated national park services were relatively late in formation. The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS), for example, was created in 1975 through an amalgamation of the National Parks Branch of the Department of Forestry with the Fauna Conservation Branch of the Department of Primary Industries.<sup>14</sup> National Parks and Wildlife Service in New South Wales arose from a similar administrative background in 1967.

This paper compares two Queensland national parks – both proclaimed in the early decades of the twentieth century – to examine the evolution of walking tracks across different periods and in different regions. Histories of Lamington National Park and Carnarvon National Park elicit contrasting approaches to visitor infrastructure, reflecting changing concepts of protection, leisure and technologies. Our focus is on the origins and design of the walking tracks. Who planned the walking tracks, for what purpose, and how has their design adapted to changing concepts of leisure and conservation?

The paper is based on preliminary research for a proposed larger study of infrastructure design in Australian national parks. This terrain is complicated by incomplete Indigenous histories of

these places compared to settler and administrative records, which provide evidence of the planning decisions. Yet prior to their dispossession, Aboriginal people used and maintained networks of paths that connected camp sites, resource sites and sacred places. Explorers, timber-getters and recreational walkers followed these paths, some formalised as national park walking tracks, but most remain unrecorded. Despite Lamington and Carnarvon being named after British peers, the numerous Indigenous toponyms in each park are one register of their Aboriginal histories.

**Lamington National Park: “The Scenery in this Area is Second to Nothing in Australia”<sup>15</sup>**

Lamington National Park was gazetted in 1915 to preserve the subtropical rainforests and landscapes over the McPherson Range, located on the Queensland/New South Wales border just to the west of the Gold Coast. This mountainous area of 20,6000 hectares covers a large area of the Wangerriburra clan estate. Dispossession of the Wangerriburra and neighbouring Yugambah clans began in the 1840s. While not the first national park in Queensland, Lamington is perhaps the most significant in the history of protected areas because of its three principal advocates – Robert Collins, Romeo Lahey and Arthur Groom – who were instrumental in establishing state legislation and the broader national parks movement in Queensland. The well-documented history of the Lamington Plateau, and its journey to national park status, highlights the ideas and advocacy leading to protected landscapes, and ongoing questions about the requirements of visitors.<sup>16</sup>

Robert Collins (1843-1913), who grew up in the northern foothills of the ranges at Mundoolun Station, served as the local member for the region in the Queensland Legislative Assembly between 1896 and 1898.<sup>17</sup> Corresponding with advocates of the US national parks movement – he had visited Yosemite in 1878 – Collins campaigned within parliament for recognition and protection of the uncleared McPherson ranges and used his presidency of the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland to promote their scientific value. He introduced the Queensland Governor Lord Lamington to the scenic landscapes in 1899, which was renamed the Lamington Plateau after this tour.<sup>18</sup> In 1906, after much lobbying by Collins, the Queensland Parliament passed an *Act to Preserve State Forest and National Parks*.<sup>19</sup> Collins continued to campaign for a national park across the Lamington Plateau until his death in 1913.

The Lahey family owned the very successful Canungra sawmill, in the northern foothills of the ranges. In his early twenties, Romeo Lahey’s extended walks through the ranges inspired his plans for a national park that protected the subtropical rainforests. He lobbied the Minister for

Lands to create a much larger national park than had been proposed by Collins. In a precocious use of visual media, Lahey traversed the ranges with a camera in 1913, using the glass slides in townhall meetings across the electorate to persuade locals to support his petition for the National Park.<sup>20</sup> With 521 signatures, the state declared 42,000 acres a national park in 1915.<sup>21</sup>

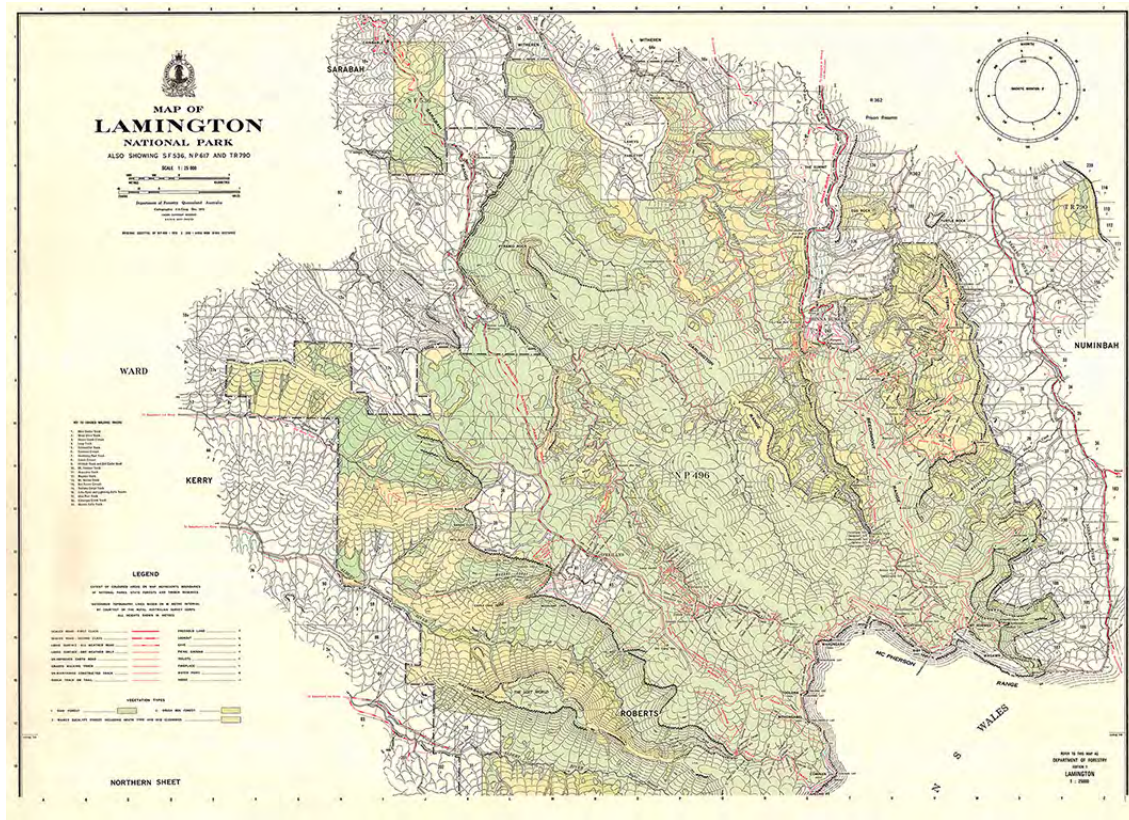
The ranges had initially been considered “too rough and inaccessible for a national park.”<sup>22</sup> Lahey’s engineering background and local knowledge were put to use in planning walking tracks and designing roads to reach the park. With Arthur Groom, Lahey formed a company in 1933 that established lodgings at Binna Burra, an isolated parcel of freehold land in the national park.<sup>23</sup> The rude local timber buildings would become one of two well-known “resorts” within the park. During the building of Binna Burra, Lahey plotted and surveyed “his graded walking-tracks,” which guided the Binna Burra guests to the scenic features.<sup>24</sup>

In 1936, the state government announced funding for walking tracks and access roads to national parks across southern Queensland.<sup>25</sup> By the end of the year many future tracks had been plotted out in Lamington National Park. Lahey had crawled in and out of thicket gullies, up and down waterfalls and along the mountain ridges in his trial surveys. In 1949, Groom recounted:

Romeo’s sympathies were with the old people who were beyond the stage of scrambling and crawling over dizzy heights and down into tangled depths. ... the newly graded walking-tracks would enable the active to go further afield in their scrambling: and the walking-tracks would let the old people wander slowly through the bushland of fern and giant forest and brilliant bird and passing wildlife.<sup>26</sup>

Lahey designed the tracks to have a gradient not greater than 10% – a decision that would ensure accessibility of the walkways for decades. Having noticed that the Canungra dairy cows were comfortable traversing the foothills of the range, he decided a ratio of 1 in 10 was the maximum incline for tracks suited to a range of walkers.<sup>27</sup>





**Figure 1.** Department of Forestry Edition 1 Map of Lamington National Park, 1975, showing location of O'Reilly's and Binna Burra leases, guest houses, camping areas, access roads and 19 graded walking tracks identified via a numbered key. Hachured topography at 40 metre intervals demonstrates rugged landscape profile (Queensland State Archives).

From 1936 to 1945, Lamington accounted for just over half of the state's National Park budget, much of it directed from stimulus programmes during the depression years.<sup>28</sup> In 1938 relief workers were engaged in building tracks to lookouts and scenic features in Lamington National Park and they also completed construction of the arterial graded track between Binna Burra Lodge and O'Reilly's Guest House.<sup>29</sup> At the opening of the latter, one government official raised concern about overdevelopment of the parks – evidently more related to his concerns for return on expenditure than the impact of infrastructure.<sup>30</sup> Park expenditure peaked between 1938 and 1940, resulting in “over a hundred miles of graded pathways” before the war affected labour supply and reduced funding.<sup>31</sup>

The benefits of such investment were evident in 1939 when a party comprising of 50 walkers from the National Parks Association set off to showcase Lamington's newly constructed network of graded walkways. The *Brisbane Telegraph* celebrated that the expedition included “many novices with ages up to 60,” on a trip that, until recently, could only have included

experienced bushwalkers. The new walkways not only broadened the accessibility of the track to walkers of different ages and levels of experience, but the “advanced walking track systems,” were anticipated to reduce the journey time from two days to five hours, while still allowing for “lunch on the track and plenty of time for sightseeing.”<sup>32</sup>

Usage declined during World War II, and the park reportedly fell into disrepair – due in no small part to the 1942 establishment of the Canungra Jungle Training Centre, located on the edge of Lamington National Park. With the blessing of the Park’s trustees, the Army used parts of the park for intensive training exercises.<sup>33</sup> More than 100,000 trained at Canungra, known to many as “the greatest centre of planned discomfort in the world.”<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 2.** Left, posing on a walking graded track, Lamington National Park, no date (National Library of Australia obj-146202316-1). Right, graded walking track through grass trees, Lamington National Park, no date (Queensland State Archive).

By 1946, over 160 kilometres of tracks linked scenic locations within the park.<sup>35</sup> Lamington’s honorary ranger called for even greater investment in road infrastructure, accommodation and paid rangers. Anticipating resistance from the bushwalkers, he wrote:

This may cause quite a stir among some, especially dyed in the wool hikers who frequent the park annually. Thousands of tourists will be invading Australia in the near future. They expect amenities offered by other countries, which cater for tourists.<sup>36</sup>

This discussion touched on many of the issues that had long been in play regarding the complex balance between the need to develop and protect, as well as the tensions between public and private interests. It also recognised the difficulty in introducing measures that would satisfy various types of park users, including scientists, bushwalkers and tourists.

After the war, Lamington National Park continued to grow in popularity with the network of tracks expanding to 360 kilometres. Popularity threatened overuse and degradation, presenting an enduring challenge of maintaining the network of tracks and signage in the mountainous region subject to high and intense rainfall. In September 2019, the historic Binna Burra Lodge was destroyed in a bushfire, a grim reminder of new threats to sub-tropical rainforests, a vegetation type classified by the absence of fire.

#### **“Infinitely Better than Anything to be Seen in the Blue Mountains”<sup>37</sup>**

Located in Queensland’s southern central highlands, the landscape and extensive sites of the Carnarvon Ranges and its 130 kilometre-long sandstone gorge are highly significant to the Bidjara and Garingbal people. Their country is known as the “home of the rivers,” and the extensive well-preserved rock art within the Carnarvon gorge further registers its significance as a focal cultural meeting place.<sup>38</sup> The dispossession of Bidjara and Garingbal/Kara Kara people began in the 1860s with the expansion of pastoral stations in the region.<sup>39</sup>

Although gazetted in 1932, at 750 kilometres from Brisbane, Carnarvon National Park remained isolated until post-war growth in car ownership improved roads to the region. Beginning with protection of the scenic gorge, the park progressively expanded to its current area of 300,000 hectares. From the late 1930s, the gorge attracted scientific expeditions that examined the natural history and tourist potential of the landscapes, which included extensive Aboriginal rock art. Unlike Lamington, the first recreational bushwalkers in Carnarvon were part of expeditions organised by institutions and the state, who reported their encounters to garner public interest in the remote park. The Royal Geographic Society of Queensland’s expedition in the 1930s was presented via illustrated lectures to the public to promote tourism.

The scenery and vegetation were declared to exceed anything to be found in the Blue Mountains, with one well-travelled member of the party claiming it “compares favourably with



anything he has seen elsewhere.” The party described encounters with Aboriginal cultural artefacts like those found in Europe, Asia or Africa. Some, they reported, had already been vandalised or removed by earlier visitors.<sup>40</sup>

With few amenities, the Country Women’s Association constructed a visitor’s hut in 1947, with accommodation and cooking facilities for visitors, and thereafter guides escorted tourists through the gorge. In 1950, the *Central Queensland Herald* reported, “In the rugged country of the gorge it is necessary at times to do some walking, but the views revealed to the climber make the effort worthwhile.”<sup>41</sup> Access to the park, however, was somewhat inhibited by the poor condition of roads leading to it. In 1950, accounts emerged of 200-mile journeys taking more than 12 hours to drive, due largely to obstacles and poorly defined tracks.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 3.** Members of the 1965 ministerial expedition walking across the dry bed of Carnarvon Creek in Carnarvon Gorge section of the park (Queensland State Archive).

The gorge and ranges were mapped in the late 1950s, recording many Aboriginal toponyms and identifying the significant art galleries. An expedition to the park in 1965 included the Tourism Minister John Herbert, experts in the natural sciences and commercial



representatives from transport, tourism and publicity. Photographs from both the 1959 and 1965 expeditions indicate that little infrastructure beyond unsealed gravel roads existed, and the party trekked with backpacks through dry riverbeds and visited the rock art galleries.

By 1973, pre-existing Indigenous paths were formalised and actively maintained as links between art galleries and developed facilities. In 2005, the increased amenity offered by a day-use facility and private campgrounds near the park led to a substantial increase in visitors to Carnarvon Gorge. High visitation led to unintended erosion of the relatively soft sandstone by visitor traffic, as well as more deliberate acts of graffiti and vandalism.



**Figure 4.** Members of the ministerial expedition to Carnarvon Gorge Section in 1965 at the Art Gallery (Queensland State Archive).

To protect the fragile artwork and terrain, in the 1980s Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service constructed boardwalks to control the route taken by an increasing number of visitors, and to reduce the temptation to touch the rock art. As archaeologists have noted, the boardwalks also “assisted in preventing the cumulative effect of dust from visitors disturbing the surface and its impact on the rock art preservation.”<sup>43</sup> The measures were not entirely protective, as demonstrated in 2018 when plastic wood decking on a boardwalk in Carnarvon’s Baloon Cave ignited during a bushfire. This caused an explosion that irreparably damaged the adjacent

rock art.<sup>44</sup> Marketed for its durability, cost and sustainability, the recycled plastic and wood decking was promoted by the Parks Service for structures because of its low maintenance compared to traditional timber decking. Subsequently, prominent archaeologists called for these kinds of materials to be removed from sensitive rock art locations globally.<sup>45</sup>

### **Boardwalks**

The first walking tracks in national parks were planned to connect scenic places – walls of rock art, waterfalls, groves of Antarctic beech and vantage points for a sublime view. Changing landscapes between destinations provided a scenic journey, and both the path and lookout were essential to attracting a range of visitors. Not all national parks however provided gently graded tracks to their destinations. Miles Dunphy and fellow bushwalkers, for example, opened tracks in the Blue Mountains that were impassable without ropes and ladders, unaware of the well-trodden paths of the dispossessed first Australians.<sup>46</sup> As popularity of the parks grew after World War II, park administrators were required to balance accessibility and risk.

Over the twentieth century, infrastructure for walkers in Australia's national parks expanded from lookouts and paths to more elaborate structures including boardwalks and elevated walkways. Both costly and more conspicuous than the graded tracks, the elevated walks add variety to visitor experience, traversing wetlands and inaccessible terrain. Boardwalks are increasingly built to protect the landscapes from erosion, soil compaction and the introduction of plant pathogens through ground contact. Improving on Romeo Lahey's 10% gradient, more recent boardwalks also seek to improve universal access, and can serve as a form of passive control system. Despite the perceived long-term benefits to visitors and environments of a boardwalk intervention, this type of infrastructure is challenging to construct without disturbing the host ecosystem. Fire-prone landscapes and the reintroduction of cultural burning raise questions about the design briefs.

The 1987 Treetop Walk at O'Reilly's Guest House, in Lamington National Park, represented a new type of walking infrastructure for protected areas. Removed from the often challenging orienteering of the early enthusiasts, the elevated track has become the blueprint for similar types of infrastructure that alter tourism experiences of landscapes.<sup>47</sup> While the early walkways sought to manage the conflicting demands of the adventurous bushwalker and leisurely tourist, these more recent projects seek to appeal to the destination tourist – in some examples, improved accessibility may be part of the design rationale. The popularity of elevated walkways has resulted in an expansion of the type for protected areas around

Australia – notably, the Donaldson and Warn-designed Valley of the Giants Treetop Walkway in Walpole, Western Australia. Completed in 1996 at a cost of \$1.8 million, the project represents a more ambitious and considered architectural solution to traversing the canopy. More recently, the \$24 million skywalk in Kalbarri National Park was designed by Eastman Poletti Sherwood Architects and opened in 2020. The Kalbarri skywalk represents a considerable escalation of investment and infrastructure to attract nature-based tourism to the region.<sup>48</sup>

### Planning Visitor Experience

As with almost any intervention in a protected landscape, these projects bring about their own sets of concerns, amplified by the growing popularity of national parks, their value as reservoirs of biodiversity and recognition as Indigenous cultural landscapes. Balancing these inherently conflicting purposes of national parks is a consistent theme across the history of the movement and will continue to challenge park administrators, conservation advocates and traditional owners alike in years to come.



**Figure 5.** Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa National Park, 2020  
(Photograph by Timothy O'Rourke).

Belated recognition of Australia's Indigenous ownership and stewardship of the land in national parks began to influence planning and management in the 1980s. Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa National Park was handed back to the Anangu traditional owners in 1985. Despite the Anangu request to "Please Don't Climb" in the 1990s, many thousands of tourists climbed Uluru until



the track worn into the rock was finally closed in 2019. The fenced-off entry to the track is a reminder that the planning and construction of walks in national parks is still as much about controlling guests as it is about heightening their experience.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Arthur Groom, *One Mountain After Another* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1949), 189.
- <sup>2</sup> Recognition of Aboriginal use of fire to manage Australian landscapes indicates how little of the continent was not affected by these regimes. See Bill Gamage, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2011).
- <sup>3</sup> Yellowstone, and its value as a tourist attraction, was cited as a precedent in the 1906 Parliamentary debates surrounding the establishment of the National Parks Bill in Queensland. Queensland Parliament. 1906. "Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)." November 7, 1906. [https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1906/1906\\_11\\_07\\_A.pdf](https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1906/1906_11_07_A.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> For example, the effective advocacy of bushwalker Myles Dunphy for national parks in New South Wales: Richard Gowers, "Dunphy, Myles Joseph (1891–1985)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dunphy-myles-joseph-12446/text2238>, (published first in hardcopy 2007) (accessed 23 July 2022); and P. Adam, "Royal National Park: Lessons for the Future from the Past," *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 134 (2012): B7-B24.
- <sup>5</sup> Adam, "Royal National Park," B8.
- <sup>6</sup> Queensland Parliament, "Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)." November 7, 1906. [https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1906/1906\\_11\\_07\\_A.pdf](https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/1906/1906_11_07_A.pdf).
- <sup>7</sup> Queensland Parliament, "Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)." November 7, 1906.
- <sup>8</sup> The US National Parks Service set a high standard in planning and design in the post-war period. See Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
- <sup>9</sup> Parks Australia funds Kakadu, Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Norfolk Island and Christmas Island National Parks, as well as the Australian National Botanical Gardens in Canberra.
- <sup>10</sup> Many of the larger coastal national parks along eastern seaboard have histories of sandmining or logging – on K'gari/ Fraser Island it was both. See, for example, Paul Sattler, *Five Million Hectares: A Conservation Memoir 1972-2008* (Mt Cotton, Qld: The Royal Society of Queensland, 2015), 17.
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- <sup>45</sup> Garcia, "It Was like a Huge Bomb."
- <sup>46</sup> Jim Barrett, *Narrow Neck and the Birth of Katoomba* (Glenbrook, NSW: Jim Barrett, 1996), 33-41.
- <sup>47</sup> "O'Reilly's Tree Top Walk," Scenic Rim, [www.visitscenicrim.com.au/canungra-and-beechmont/attraction/oreillys-tree-top-walk/](http://www.visitscenicrim.com.au/canungra-and-beechmont/attraction/oreillys-tree-top-walk/) (accessed 29 July 2022); and "Experience World Heritage Under Your Feet," O'Reillys, <https://oreillys.com.au/walking-tracks-at-lamington-national-park/> (accessed 29 July 2022).

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# The Planning of Socialist Urbanity: The New City of Kukës in Albania

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## **Abstract**

*After the end of the Second World War, Albania stepped into one of the harshest dictatorships in Europe during the twentieth century. The communist regime led by Enver Hoxha soon implemented large modernisation and industrialisation schemes, transforming the entire territory into a vast construction site. Among those modernisation processes, the exploitation of the huge water network to produce hydroelectric energy was one of the regime's main objectives, to supply electricity to the entire country by 1971. Thus, between 1960s and the 1980s, the Drin River, one of the main rivers in Albania, was deeply transformed into a source of hydroelectrical power. After the construction of the hydropower plant "HEC-Vaut të Dejës," the hydropower plant "HEC-Drita e Partisë" followed on the upper part of the river and with its dam forming the reservoir that nowadays is called Lake of Fjerza. The filling of the reservoir caused the flooding of the old citadel of Kukës, submerged by the creation of the new lake. As consequence, to reiterate and imprint the ideal of a new classless society, the communist regime planned to build from scratch the new city of Kukës, hence reflecting in its urban planning and architecture the socialist ideology. Through the analysis of archival sources and literature on the case study, and the extensive documentation collected during recent fieldwork activities, the paper aims to explore how the entanglement of architecture and urban planning took part in shaping the new socialist urbanity in one of the most remote mountainous areas of Albania.*

## **Introduction**

The onset of modernity came to the small Balkan country of Albania at the dawn of the end of the Second World War. The construction works implemented before and during the Italian Protectorate and, earlier, King Zog I's modernisation efforts, fade by comparison with the huge socialist modernisation interventions put in place by Enver

Hoxha from November 1944. The construction of socialism in a backward and peasant country such as Albania in the first decades of the twentieth century called for an extensive transformation of the landscape. Land reclamation of marshy areas, the establishment of new urban and rural residential centres, and the transformation of main water resources into sources of hydro-electrical power stood as the cornerstone of the regime's ambitious modernisation plans. However, among those, the urbanisation of the countryside was probably the most important task of the Albanian Labour Party, which sought to create a new agrarian-industrial society out of a population composed of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup> Conceived as a process involving not only the relocation of the population, but also, and especially, the development of rural and urban areas, urbanisation was a declared project aimed to bridge the gap between urban and rural contexts,<sup>2</sup> that went in parallel with the industrialisation of the country. In this context and under Soviet-type central planning, new urban centres were established as focal points for economic development, encompassing both agricultural and industrial centres, and providing housing and service facilities for workers.<sup>3</sup> Associated with copper mining, the new city of Kukës, located in the north-east mountainous territory, can be considered the most significant urban planning intervention, reflecting in its urbanity and architecture the Albanian socialist aspiration.

### **Supplying Electricity: The Exploitation of the Drin River**

By the end of the 1980s, the Albanian territory was constellated by hydroelectrical and thermal power plants. Nevertheless, the major hydro-electrical exploitation reflecting also the most impressive, dammed works on a river, occurred in North Albania. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the Drin River, which with its length of about 160 kilometres is the longest river flowing in the Albanian territory, was dammed and deeply transformed into a source of hydro-electrical power. The hydro-power scheme on the Drin River comprised five hydro-power stations in Skavica, Fierza, Koman, Vau i Dejës and Shkodra, and, still today, the chain of artificial reservoirs created by the dams in Fierza, Koman and Vau Dejës supplies water to the three large hydropower plants of the Drin cascade. After the construction of the hydropower plant "HEC-Vaut të Dejës," which started in 1967, the hydropower plant "HEC-Drita e Partisë" followed in 1971 on the upper part of the river and with its dam formed the reservoir, the artificial Lake of Fierza. The filling of the reservoir caused the flooding of the old town of Kukës and 28 other villages located in the gorge of the Drin River, out of which eight were totally submerged and 20 were partially submerged by the creation of the new lake.<sup>4</sup>

### The Youngest Town of Socialist Albania

The first documents on the establishment of the new city of Kukës date back to 1956 when the Bulgarian architect Dimo Angelov and the Albanian Zija Ftera were appointed to identify a possible location for the relocation of the inhabitants of the old town of Kukës, located in the far north-east of the country, to be flooded by the water of the new reservoir. Angelov and Ftera took into consideration some aspects such as the topography of the land, the wind exposure, the proximity to sources of potable water, and the vicinity to the future new artificial lake. The administrative-territorial centrality also competed as an important factor, as well as the proximity to mineral resources and to agricultural areas.<sup>5</sup> Five years later the Council of Ministers issued the Decision no. 152, on 2 June, in which it decided the location where the new city would rise.<sup>6</sup> The chosen zone is the plain area near the rural village of Ramhasë, indicated with the letter "A" in the sketch of the project idea attached to the project proposal (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The proposals for the location of the new town of Kukës for the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 152/1961 (AQSH, F. 499, D. 548, v. 1961).

Moreover, the Decision appointed the Ministry of Construction to the drafting of the masterplan by November 1961, and the new buildings had to be built accordingly. Almost one year later, 22 July 1962, marked the beginning of the construction works of the new city, located 3 kilometres from the old town. Practically, it was also the beginning of a parallel life for the inhabitants, who slowly moved to the new mass housing complexes that were under construction, while still benefiting from the administrative and socio-cultural services in the old town. The urban planning of the new Kukës had to mirror the societal changes of the population due to the growing mining economic production activity of the region. The masterplan had to consider three important activities of the new Albanian society: *punë*, *banim* and *pushim*, i.e., to work, to dwell and to rest.<sup>7</sup> The masterplan designed by the architect Misto Mele in November 1961 structured the residential area into seven housing blocks (*kvartall*) and indicated the administrative and socio-cultural buildings, leisure and retail buildings, green areas, the road network, and a small marina on the shore of the lake south of the site that “remained on paper.”

However, despite the effort to rush the construction of the new town, still in 1969 a letter from the First Secretary of the Party Committee of the district, Izet Dyrmishi complained that the main issue was the slow housing construction pace and the lack of qualified local technicians and professionals promptly available to face any construction problem.<sup>8</sup> The report underlined that, since the beginning of the new town’s construction works, only 272 apartments were built. It urged to increase the construction pace in view of the flooding of the old town planned for the year 1978, by building 1,500 apartments to house 7,500 persons within six to seven years.<sup>9</sup> However, until 1969 most communal, administrative and socio-cultural services were still located in the old town, practically forcing the already displaced inhabitants to deal with difficult living conditions. De facto, the *lagjes nr.1*, i.e., the first housing block, started to be built in 1962 (Figure 2), was only completed in late 1973 and the urban studies for the construction of the second housing block (*lagjes nr. 2*) only ended in 1971 and its construction continued throughout the year 1973.<sup>10</sup> To give an idea of the construction workspace, Thomai et al reported that:

According to the information contained in a minute from the Directorate of Civil Constructions of the Ministry of Construction from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1973, to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1976, the state construction companies had to build 876

apartments, while 200 apartments [were built] with voluntary contributions. From this, until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1974, a total of 667 apartments were under construction ...<sup>11</sup>



**Figure 2.** The first housing block (lagje nr. 1) under construction in the new town of Kukës. The graffitied words “Lavdi P.P.SH.” on the wall means “Glory to the Albanian Labour Party”; P.P.SH is the acronym of “Partia e Punës e Shqipërisë” (Courtesy of Arkivi Qendror Teknik i Ndertimit, AQTN, Fototeka, v. 1964).

To accelerate the displacement of the communal, administrative and socio-cultural services, in 1974 architects Faik Alimehmeti and Antigoni Zoto were appointed to draft the masterplan of the city centre and of the housing block no. 4. Alimehmeti and Zoto proposed three design variants considering:

... the creation of an urban complex with the best possible living comfort [to be achieved] through the right placement of the housing against the best exposure, the direction of the prevailing winds, as well as the supply of daily service departments; [the use of] 1973’s design-types; ... the creation of outdoor [resting and leisure] spaces and playgrounds for children and for adults; the achievement of compositional requirements through the juxtaposition of [different] long housing complexes with different housing design-types and buildings composed of a single housing design-type.<sup>12</sup>

In 1978, the old town was finally flooded, and the displacement of the population concluded. However, as can be observed from the scenes of the brief documentary titled *Kukësi i Ri*, produced by *Kinostudio "Shqipëria e re"* in 1977, construction works in the new town could not be considered completed.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the *youngest town*<sup>14</sup> in Socialist Albania with no private houses, but collective mass housing, was growing, slowly outlining a new urban landscape and industrial city life in the mountainous district of Kukës (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** The skyline of the new town of Kukës (Courtesy of Arkivi Qendror Teknik i Ndertimit, AQTN, Fototeka, v. 1974).

### **Shaping a Socialist Urbanity**

The case study of the construction of the new socialist city of Kukës demonstrates how urban planning was a practice that had no roots in Socialist Albania. As Mëhilli notes, with no professional city planners, for more than three decades after the end of the Second World War, the chaotic construction and planning of cities and villages were the consequence of “an uncertainty about where urban planning belonged.”<sup>15</sup> Albania had to rely on foreign literature and codes and borrow construction technology from the East Bloc.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, because the regime considered architecture and urban planning secondary to industrial plans, a professional and theoretical debate was absent. Only in the second half of the 1970s, the debate around the role of urban planning and architecture started to gain interest although always remained



subordinated to production and economic purposes in relation to the industrialisation of the country.

Through the examination of the documents and drawings emerges how, since the very beginning of the urban planning of the new town of Kukës, the idea of creating an urban environment for a new classless society was pivotal for the Party. The masterplan had to synthesise the new society's actual and prospective needs, considering all the material, societal, cultural and economic aspects of the socialist life.<sup>17</sup> The subdivision of the residential zone in smaller areas defined as *kvertall/kuartall* or *lagje* (housing block) was conceived to simplify the housing complexes' construction and to frame them organically within the masterplan. In Socialist Albania, housing and urban planning were understood as a means to reshape the material and social conditions of the population, providing them with dwellings and public social spaces as well. In Kukës' housing block, the space between the buildings was designed as shared green courts, playgrounds and pedestrian circulation; each housing block was also provided with its own kindergarten.

Furthermore, the housing construction constituted the significant aspect that characterised this masterplan. The increasingly mining industrial vocation of the region emphasised by the regime's economic investments slowly changed the daily work and family life of the population and affected the housing planning of the future town. At the architectural level that meant the designing of standardised apartment buildings. The masterplan foresaw different type-designs of housing complexes in the seven blocks forming the residential area of the masterplan that still today are clearly recognisable in the urban matrix of the contemporary city.

To briefly conclude, the construction of the *Youngest Town* of Socialist Albania lasted more than 20 years and continued to be a construction site also in the last decade of the dictatorship. The new city of Kukës was among the 41 new urban centres established in a supportive role for the regional and national economic development.<sup>18</sup> As for new towns in other countries of socialist Eastern Europe, the layout was similar among these new urban centres, providing planned residential and services facilities for the workers involved in the economic activities. Nevertheless, the establishment of the new city of Kukës stands in Socialist Albania as the most mature effort of shaping a *socialist industrial urban experience*, in terms of spatial and architectural novelty, in one of the most remote and mountainous areas of the country. It can be considered

the last ambitious attempt, in terms of architectural and urban planning, to materialise the socialist ideology and the Albanian aspiration to a classless society by manufacturing a modern urbanity, at the dawn of the last decades of the regime.

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### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Derek R. Hall, “Albania,” in Andrew H. Dawson (eds.), *Planning in Eastern Europe* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 36.

<sup>2</sup> Arqile Bërzhholli and Perikli Qiriazhi, *Albania: Profilo Geografico* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1988), 64.

<sup>3</sup> Dean S. Rugg, “Communist Legacies in the Albanian Landscape,” *Geographical Review*, 84, no. 1 (1994): 63. See also Sivignon Michel, “Tirana et l’urbanisation de l’Albanie,” *Revue de géographie de Lyon*, 50, no. 4 (1975): 333-43; and Derek Hall, “New Towns in Europe’s Rural Corner,” *Town & Country Planning*, 55, No. 12 (1986): 354-56.

<sup>4</sup> Report “Mbi vlersimin e objekteve ekonomike, administrative e social-kulturore që përmblyten si rezultat i krijimit të Liqenit Kukësit nga diga e H/Centralit të Fierzës. Nevojat dhe fondet për ngritjen e objekteve të reja në qytetin e ri të Kukësit, masat për stabilizimin e populates që përshin zona e ekspansjonit liqenit,” Executive Committee of the People’s Council of Kukës District, 15 April 1969, Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror (AQSH), F. 495, D. 32, v. 1969, fl. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Report “Mbi vendosjen e qendrës së re të qytetit të Kukësit,” 4 September 1956, AQSH, F. 499, D. 941, v. 1956, fl. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 152, “Mbi caktimin e vendit të ri për ndertimin e qytetit të Kukësit,” 2 June 1962, AQSH, F. 499, D. 548, v. 1961, fl. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Faik Alimemeti and Maksim Mitrojorgji, “Fytyra e re e qyteteve dhe fshatrave tona,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta*, 3 (1974): 10.

<sup>8</sup> Letter no. 179, 21 April 1969, sent by the First Secretary of the Party Committee (Kukës district) to the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania (PLA) and attached Preliminary Study (Secret), AQSH, F. 14/APSTR, D. 28, v. 1969, fl. 3-4. See also Gjergj Thomai, Fatlinda Struga, Iva Mëzezi and Nerxhana Tallushi, *Kukës – Zhvillimi Urban 1945-1990* (Tirana: FLESH, 2021), 150.

<sup>9</sup> AQSH, F. 14/APSTR, D. 28, v. 1969, fl. 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> Report “Mbi punën e bërë dhe problemet që dalin për përballimin e përmblytjes që sjell krijimi i liqenit të H/Centralit të Fierzës,” AQSH, F. 14/APSTR, D. 577, v. 1973, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Thomai et al, *Kukës – Zhvillimi Urban 1945-1990*, 170.

<sup>12</sup> Thomai et al, *Kukës – Zhvillimi Urban 1945-1990*, 174-75.

<sup>13</sup> “Kukësi i Ri,” 1977, AQSHF, [www.aqshf.gov.al/arkiva-kerko-1.html?movie=409&category=2&title=KUKESI%20I%20RI&screenwriter=&description=](http://www.aqshf.gov.al/arkiva-kerko-1.html?movie=409&category=2&title=KUKESI%20I%20RI&screenwriter=&description=)

(accessed 25 July 2022). See also Gazeta Dita, *Shpërngulja nga Kukësi i Vjetër për në Qytetin e Ri*, YouTube video, 18:58, posted by “Gazeta Dita,” 22 February 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgrKMJJTaQ&t=978s>.

<sup>14</sup> “The Youngest Town,” *New Albania*, 6 (1976): 23.

<sup>15</sup> Elidor Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017), 162.

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<sup>16</sup> Technicians and professionals borrowed and translated technical terminology from the Soviet literature. Hence, for instance, in the Albanian documents one read *kuartall* or *kvartal* (housing block), *tipizimi* (typification) and *projekt-tip* (type-design).

<sup>17</sup> Faik Alimemeti and Maksim Mitrojorgji, “Fytyra e re e qyteteve dhe fshatrave tona,” 9.

<sup>18</sup> Dean S. Rugg, “Communist Legacies in the Albanian Landscape,” 63-64.

# Reimagining West Sumatra's Architectural Identity: Is the Pointy Silhouette Enough?

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## **Abstract**

*Since the New Order era, the Indonesian government, at both the national and the local levels, has advocated traditional architecture as a display of the country's cultural richness and diversity. In West Sumatra, the traditional house known as the rumah gadang has become an essential signifier of identity representation, especially since it possesses a bagonjong, a unique saddle roof with pointy horn-like ends that distinguishes it from other traditional architecture in the country. In local identity politics, the bagonjong is an essential feature of identity representation. It leads to extensive reproduction as replicas or silhouettes, both in the vernacular and modern design languages. With the current government's mission to preserve the identity imagining of the area and with the plan to incorporate this imagining into the tourism industry, traditional architecture regains its significance in the community, to be preserved, even rebuilt, despite the many questions surrounding its motivations.*

*This paper scrutinises the position of traditional architecture in the current identity politics of the local government of West Sumatra. It traces the socio-political background that led to the 'bagonjongisation' of the government buildings in the area and how the imagining is manifested in a contemporary context. This paper also investigates the opposing voices to understand the contestation of identity representation in West Sumatra. It intends to*

*contribute to the discussion of the identity politics dynamics at the local government level in Indonesia and emphasises that identity construction is not an innocent process of cultural preservation, as it is openly narrated.*

## **Introduction**

Indonesia's identity imagining has long been dominated by the presence of cultural narrations and artifacts, from which the country derives inspiration for its national identity imagining. Diversity, which once posed a threat of disintegration to the country, is now seen as a wealth and potential asset. The urge to preserve the disappearing traditional culture, including its architecture, then came to the fore, especially since the time of Indonesia's second President, Suharto. Alongside his ambitious *pembangunan* (development) through a series of *Repelita* (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun*, or Five-Year Development Plan), he highlighted culture and tradition as unifiers of the diverse country and as a remedy for the intricate social problems of the time.<sup>1</sup> Culture also became the main tool for creating a national image and orchestrating a sense of pride and belonging in the country, despite the underlying agenda of pacifying people amidst the oppression and inequality of his order.

Suharto pushed to search and "inventorise (*inventarisasi*) traditional practices, in part through a process of rediscovery."<sup>2</sup> Not only displaying traditional architecture through the initiation of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), which was highly criticised due to the then severe national economic conditions, he also ordered regional governments to gather information about traditional cultures, beliefs and practices under the supervision of the Department of Education and Culture.<sup>3</sup> Further, he spread a traditionalist view by pushing regional governments to revive the presence of traditional culture at the local level, which was then widely translated as incorporating traditional roofs into the designs of local government buildings. This uniformised how local authorities represented their identity, creating traditionalist waves – or New-Historicists in Kenneth Frampton's terminology – that promote "the tradition-modernism mixture that leads to kitsch."<sup>4</sup> The long enactment and heavy reproduction of this regulation have shifted how local government understood identity representation, as this method is still widely practised and hitherto considered the 'right way,' even long after the end of the authoritarian era.

Similarly, in Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra, the peculiar shape of the bagongjong roof, a traditional saddle-shaped roof with sharp upward-pointed ends,

dominates the skyline of the primary arterial road where government and public buildings are located. With their massive scale relative to the buildings, the presence of these roofs is visually significant, if not overpowering. Interestingly, although its literal traditionalisation has been criticised, the pointy silhouette is still considered crucial in the identity imagining of the area. But how and why is it important? Whose identity is being represented by the presence of the bagonjong? Who directs this identity translation? What is the motivation for continuing to present this shape and silhouette in the public sphere? Is this symbol enough to make people feel that they 'belong' to a local cultural community?

This paper discusses the identity politics dynamics in Padang, West Sumatra, by looking in particular at how local identity is imagined by local stakeholders, including architects, academics and the government, and how this imagining is manifested in built forms. The paper begins by discussing contemporary identity translation at the national scale, which includes the urge to return to the so-called 'authentic' culture and tradition of the country. It continues by analysing the dynamics and contestation among layers of identities and local characters in Padang, briefly outlining the history that led to this traditionalist trend in the area to understand how and why the perception of identity grows and is nurtured. The next part investigates the opposing voices that problematise the extensive reproduction of certain cultural artefacts and analyses the problems that this reproduction entails. The paper concludes with a discussion of the intersection of local identity politics and its contemporary architectural manifestation and the question of 'being local' in the twenty-first-century context.

### **The Contemporary Traditionalisation of Identity**

Indonesia's national identity narrative has been dominated by the glorified story of local culture and tradition. This direction was seen rather literally in architecture in the 1970s when the New Order directed identity representation towards the adoption of traditional shapes and decorations.<sup>5</sup> Various regulations were enacted to ensure the use of traditional roofs and decorations as semiotic symbols in public and government building designs, and regional governments had no other option but to implement them. The impact of this regulation is rather long-lasting and massive. The enduring and repeated reproduction has shifted the perception of cultural identity representation, particularly for the people at the government level. Attaching traditional roofs and decorations to a building has been considered the 'good' and 'right' way to display local architectural identity. According to our interviews with current regional decision-makers in Indonesia,

the presence of these roofs and decorations is still considered a ‘must,’ and they expect the design translation to be easy to see and visually recognisable, if not literal.<sup>6</sup> Although they were unsure whether any current regulation directed this identity representation, they echoed the need to display this representation for the public as part of their duty to preserve the local culture. This shows that New Order traditionalism persists and the similar glorifying narrative behind this ongoing practice lives on.

In the era of President Joko Widodo, the cultural preservation agenda has been pushed towards economic purposes. Attempting to lessen the national economy’s dependency on oil, gas and coal exports, Widodo aims to attract new tourism investments, making local culture one of the main attractions. The emergence of the terms ‘*Nusantara*’ and ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ gave momentum to the re-packaging of traditionalism in architecture.<sup>7</sup> Behind the benign intention to preserve disappearing cultures and traditions, tourism is narrated as one of the reasons why local people should preserve their culture. The latter’s potential to be commodified is highlighted as it can become a source of income for the locals, and people’s dependency on this source of income is expected to motivate them to preserve their culture.

Although the terms ‘*Nusantara*’ and ‘Nusantaran Architecture’ reappeared in the national discussion relatively recently, in the 2010s, the Nusantaran narrative has often been used by people in the regional government to glorify their culture.<sup>8</sup> Linking local culture to the Nusantaran narrative somehow evokes a sense of pride and ownership, although they realise that the ‘imagined’ Nusantaran culture they glorified is not the one they are currently living in. Despite this distance between the ideal and reality, the urge to revive what they can claim as ‘theirs’ persists, and it needs to appear in a concrete form in the public sphere, especially through architectural design. A cyclical pattern thus emerges as the more this representation is reproduced, the more familiar the public is with it and the more it is further reproduced due to over-familiarity.

### **Identity Politics: National Plan, Local Implementation**

Before *Reformasi* in 1998, power was centralised in Jakarta, and the country was governed authoritatively under the pretext of national unity. The central government heavily controlled local politics, including local identity politics.<sup>9</sup> At the time, the only recognised identity was the one constructed and approved by the central government, creating what Kathryn Robinson terms the “authorised versions of what constitutes

authentic cultural traditions, an important aspect of which is the differentiation of presumed discrete cultural groups.”<sup>10</sup>

After Reformasi, a new democracy emerged in Indonesia, with wider political participation.<sup>11</sup> In the context of the central-local relationship, decentralisation was implemented in Indonesia and marked by “the rise of the local.”<sup>12</sup> Decentralisation gave authority to the local governments at the city level to define and direct themselves, including what and how to present their local identities. With this new liberation, new forms and varieties of local identities mushroomed, including identities that were previously not considered ‘official’ by the political regime.

In line with this, the law on village government was also in place, recognising varieties of almost 75,000 village identities in the Indonesian archipelago. Unlike the uniformised village government that followed the model of the *desa* (village) in Java during the New Order era, Reformasi allowed the other local form of village governance to flourish. This included Nagari, the smallest administrative unit in West Sumatra, which was revived and became another form of West Sumatran local identity.<sup>13</sup> A movement called ‘the return to Nagari’ (*kembali ke Nagari*) exemplified the strength of the reconstruction of local identity in the democratic era. What made Nagari different from other Java-based model villages was its local custom (*adat*) and religion (Islam), which became two foundational values of the Minangkabau people. Nagari’s *tungku tigo sajarangan* philosophy also based village governance on three pillars: the knowledgeable, the religious leaders and the *adat* leaders. Aside from this philosophy, Nagari was also traditionally acknowledged for its particular ornaments. The policy to uniformise Indonesian villages has caused the disappearance of these ornaments due to prolonged lack of use and made the knowledge and skills associated with this symbol fade away. With decentralisation, the Nagari movement and the recent tourism boom, local stakeholders now have the authority to revive this culture, even though only a few Nagari remain who inherited the knowledge and skills.

This illustrates the significant changes in how identity politics were imagined and implemented post-Reformasi. Referring to Ruth and David Collier’s perspective on Paul A. David’s path-dependency theory, Reformasi can be seen as a ‘critical juncture’ that entirely flipped and redirected the way local identity was constructed and imagined.<sup>14</sup> People’s liberation from the suppressing authoritarian regime allowed local governments to break free from the identity mould. Interestingly, not all directions taken after this



critical juncture were distinct from those imposed by the previous authoritarian regime. However, with the post-Reformasi freedom allowing local governments to construct identity representation based on how they understand their local culture, any contemporary representation of local identity relies heavily on the preference of people in power at the regional level. In other words, any new identity representation built post-Reformasi represents local governments' inclination in their identity politics.

### **Minangkabau's Local Identity and the Strong Passion for Tradition in West Sumatra**

As mentioned earlier, in the context of West Sumatra, the Minangkabau's identity comprises *adat* and Islam. Although they fuse harmoniously in contemporary society, merging the two into one cultural identity of the tribe was far from easy as it involved prolonged civil conflicts that cost the lives and wealth of its people. The Padri War (1803-37), which involved the Padri (Islamic group), the Adat (traditional group) and the Dutch, became the critical juncture of the Minangkabau's identity imagining. After the war, the Padri's and Adat's leaders reconciled their visions and initiated the wisdom of '*adat basandi syara', syara' basandi Kitabullah*', translated as 'tradition founded upon Islamic norms, and the Islamic norms founded upon the Qur'an.' This reconciliation led to the discussion of identity among the Minangkabau people. This fusion was written in Tambo (Nagari's historical record); during the writing, the Dutch chose the *rumah gadang*, with its bagonjong roof, as the representative of the Minangkabau culture. This decision was followed by the incorporation of the rumah gadang's silhouette into coins and other aesthetic objects. This was the starting point for the rumah gadang's and the bagonjong's status as prominent icons of West Sumatra Province.<sup>15</sup>

Not long after the country's independence in 1945, there was strong dissatisfaction with Sukarno, Indonesia's first president, and his centralised and authoritarian government. Some of West Sumatra's local activists voiced their disapproval of Sukarno's *Nasakom* or '*nasionalisme, agama dan komunisme*' (nationalism, religion and communism) and started to resist the central government.<sup>16</sup> On 15 February 1958, Ahmad Husein, one of the key people of this movement based in Padang, formed *Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (PRRI), the Revolutionary Government of Republic Indonesia, as the counter-power of the official central government. Seeing the PRRI as a separatist movement that threatened the country's existence, the central government mobilised its army to West Sumatra to purge this illegal organisation and anyone connected with it. This incident was recorded as the biggest military aggression in the history of the

Indonesian army.<sup>17</sup> This aggression caused a considerable number of victims, mostly from the PRRI side. The killings extended to local people with no direct connection with the PRRI. Many innocent people were killed during the aggression, and some became victims of torture, robbery, rape and massacre.<sup>18</sup> The recorded number of dead, injured and lost victims in the entire West Sumatra during the PRRI incident (9,080 people) was double that of the victims in the fight against the Dutch aggression (4,730 people) in the same region.<sup>19</sup>

The PRRI incident brought the Minangkabau people to the lowest point as they lived under terror.<sup>20</sup> This caused a big exodus out of West Sumatra, with people changing their children's names to more Javanese-like names to disassociate themselves from the Minangkabau.<sup>21</sup> This unprecedented event caused a severe rupture in the social fabric of the Minangkabau people. When the conflict eased off, the first West Sumatra Governor, Kaharoeddin Dt. Rangkayo Basa, who was in power from 1958 to 1965, tried to revive people's sense of identity and belonging to the region by bringing symbols of the tribe back into the public realm. He initiated the construction of the new West Sumatra Governor's office, which incorporated Minangkabau cultural representation. The initial design for the building was created by Biro Oerip, the oldest architecture bureau in Bandung, West Java.<sup>22</sup> Following the modern architecture trend of the time, the building was designed "prioritising technology, functionality, man-made comfortability, anti-ornament and symbol, elitists, and did not have the value/ element of the traditional architecture of the region."<sup>23</sup> Dissatisfied with the design, the governor hired a recent Institut Teknologi Bandung graduate, H. Syamsul Asri, to adjust it and add the element of Minangkabau traditional architecture. After a discussion with Miral Manan, a Minangkabau humanist, the governor decided to incorporate the bagonjong roof in place of the concrete deck roof of the initial design. This four-storey building became the first modern building to use the Minangkabau traditional roof in the region and the first to use Minangkabau traditional carving in the interior. This building, which is now called Rumah Bagonjong, was the pioneer that successfully set the trend of using traditional roofs as an architectural identity representation in West Sumatra and was once considered "the most magnificent (*termegah*) governor office in Indonesia" (Figure 1).<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 1.** The West Sumatra Governor Office, or Rumah Bagonjong, was the first modern building that adopted a Bagonjong roof in the region (Photograph by Rr. Diah Asih Purwaningrum, 2022).

Employing a traditional roof subsequently became a popular method of conveying identity through architecture in the region. Because this was considered successful in reviving the sense of pride and belonging of the Minangkabau people in the aftermath of the PPRI incident, the second governor, Harun Zain, encouraged his staff to build their offices using the bagonjong roof. The third governor, Azwar Anas, who was in power from 1977 to 1987, issued a circular letter requiring all government buildings to incorporate the bagonjong.<sup>25</sup> This initiative aligned with Suharto's traditionalist movement, and Anas' strategy was thus approved and appreciated by the central government. West Sumatra became the first province outside Java to receive the Charter of Parasamya Purnakarya Nugraha for its successful development. For this reason, Anas was praised not only for fixing the central-local government relationship that was damaged post-PPRI but also for reviving the local honour and pride of the Minangkabau people in their culture. His time as governor was considered the peak of regional development in West Sumatra as it marked the end of the discrimination against the Minangkabau people and opened a new era for the West Sumatra province.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 2.** The pointy skyline on one side of Jalan Sudirman street, Padang, as the governmental street corridor (Photograph by Rr. Diah Asih Purwaningrum, 2022).

### **A New Expression of Identity**

With the trend of using *bagonjong*, the skyline of Padang's Jendral Sudirman street, where government offices are located, is full of massive roofs with pointy edges on both sides (Figure 2). Although no-one in today's government may have read Anas' circular letter, this practice has become a habit and has been considered the 'appropriate' way to build government offices.<sup>27</sup> The new Regional Police Headquarters building is an interesting case as it did not incorporate a *bagonjong* in its initial design. However, a small *bagonjong* was later added to the drop-off canopy after governor Irwan Prayitno criticised the absence of the Minangkabau identity symbol (Figure 3).<sup>28</sup> The urge for a literal representation of *bagonjong*, in this case, was the governor's, whereas other stakeholders involved in the construction of the building did not feel the same need to visually present the *bagonjong* as part of the façade. This shows that, in line with Lawrence Vale's argument, some leaders imposed the direction of the country's or a region's representation.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 3.** The new Regional Police Headquarters of West Sumatra. Bagonjong roof was added to the drop-off roof as requested by the governor (Photograph by Rr. Diah Asih Purwaningrum, 2022).

It is also important to note that there is contestation in local identity imagining. Although it was suggested by the governor, the bagonjong trend in Jendral Sudirman street did not continue when the new city hall was built, away from the governmental street corridor. The design for the city hall adopted the *kajang padati* roof, another roof shape for Minangkabau traditional houses (Figure 4). Unlike the bagonjong, this gable-like roof is visually less ‘catchy,’ lacking sharp pointy ends. Incorporating this roof can be seen as a rebellion against the bagonjong stream in official identity representation. The modification to make the roof smaller than the building’s width and put a frame outside the roof offers an alternative translation modernising the otherwise traditional look. Some might appreciate the effort to make the look more contemporary, but others who are used to more literal translations may not enjoy the modification. Among those, some have called it a ‘superman’ roof because it puts the frame, which should be inside, outside.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 4.** The new city hall incorporates the Kajang Padati roof shape (Photograph by Amalinda Savirani, 2022).

Another example, the West Sumatra Grand Mosque, also represents the new translation of architectural identity in the region (Figure 5). Although the architect's inspiration was the Islamic Holy Black Stone (*Hajar Aswad*) story, its resemblance to the pointy bagonjong is the basis for considering it one of the identity buildings of West Sumatra. Having become used to seeing a dome as a signifier for a mosque, people initially questioned the design for its peculiar shape. However, the five jurors managed to convince the local government of the contemporaneity of this building, justifying it as a balance between the Minangkabau tradition (through its bagonjong-like form and traditional lattice decorations) and Islamic philosophy (through the Hajar Aswad story). The government agreed to build it through a massive investment of 330 billion rupiahs (22,000 USD) over 12 years (2007-19).<sup>31</sup> This shed light on the contestation of representations as part of local identity politics dynamics. It showed that despite being the decision-maker, the local government's choices might be influenced by the persuasion of other stakeholders with different interests.

Some people appreciate the mosque as it becomes the icon of the province, despite the massive cost of its construction.<sup>32</sup> Yet, for some others, the necessity of another mosque in this area is questionable as there are already two on this very block. Maintaining and occupying the building is another issue because few people want to visit for everyday prayers due to the long walk from the parking lot to the *wudhu'* and prayer area. The passer-by might choose a smaller mosque to pray in given that it will require less time.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, to ensure that the mosque is utilised, the government set up various events that 'coerce' civil servants into taking part, such as *Absen Subuh* (daily morning prayer)



and *Subuh Mubarakah* (monthly morning preaching).<sup>34</sup> The government plans to formalise these events by issuing a circular letter, with consequences for employees who disobey it. This phenomenon shows that creating a mosque as an icon is one thing, but making sure that it is needed is another issue. Yet, regardless of the problem, the grand mosque is currently seen as exemplary in transforming and contemporising the *bagonjong* in the region. This building is also considered one of the country's most successful designs that innovatively abstracts and modernises the traditional form. Interestingly, public acceptance of this building is primarily due to the pointy silhouette that has become a familiar design language for the Minangkabau people.<sup>35</sup>



**Figure 5.** The West Sumatra Grand Mosque is an identity building that becomes a new icon of the province (Photograph by Rr. Diah Asih Purwaningrum, 2022).

### **Opposing Voices and Questions about ‘Bagonjongisation’**

This incorporation of the *bagonjong* into the design has been criticised. The first criticism concerns the *bagonjong*'s cultural misfit in Padang. The *rumah gadang* is an identity house for a clan located in the *darek* (highland) area, which is considered the birthplace of the Minangkabau people. With the *rantau* (migration) tradition, people moved from the *darek* to the *peisir* (coastal) area and developed new livelihoods away from their home clan. As the *rumah gadang* is the symbol of the home clan, it belongs in the *darek* area, not in the *peisir* – hence, not in Padang.<sup>36</sup> The *rantau* or *peisir* area itself has its own type of house, the *kajang padati* house. The city hall design incorporating the *kajang padati* roof can be considered part of this critique by showcasing the ‘appropriate’ traditional element for Padang as the *rantau* area.

Aside from cultural fit, the rumah gadang – and, thus, the bagonjong – is a type of home. Therefore, appropriating the bagonjong for offices or other modern functions is deemed improper by some. Additionally, in the cultural community, the rumah gadang is not built as a sole architectural object since it is related to long cultural processes, rituals and customs, community engagements, the identity of the clan and so on. Roxanna Waterson argues that traditional architecture is a product of complex historical and cultural weaves, and the form it takes relates primarily to local people's rituals and the community's social customs, not aesthetics. Traditional houses have a robust social and symbolic function, and every part possesses cultural meaning for the inhabitants. She emphasises that "ritual functions are inseparable from the house's identity."<sup>37</sup> Further, Barry Dawson and John Gillow underline that traditional architecture was built "to cope not only with the climate and the natural hazards of the land but also with the intangible realms of animistic mythology."<sup>38</sup> The absence of this layer of spirituality would leave a void in the people's attachment to their cultural tradition as the traditional house itself "is not always primarily, or even at all, a place of residence" but more a ritual site of the clan and family.<sup>39</sup> Within this framework, the question of whether it is still called rumah gadang if it is built without the presence of the cultural process becomes valid.<sup>40</sup>

The presence of the bagonjong roof in the rantau area is also questioned for its fit with the natural context. The high-pitch roof is deemed inappropriate for strong coastal wind.<sup>41</sup> Kajang padati's lower pitch roof, conversely, is seen as more reasonable in the coastal area. The wall decoration is also different, and kajang padati's lattice wall is perceived as more suitable for the coast, whereas the rumah gadang's solid carved wall is apt in cold-weathered areas.

Another criticism pertains to the fact that West Sumatra is a disaster-prone area because of its position on megathrust lines. The major earthquake in 2009 was a wake-up call for the community to promote safety in building construction. After the disaster, people began to develop an awareness of the necessity of strengthening their houses.<sup>42</sup> The destruction of many modern bagonjong roofs in the event created concerns about the safety afforded by a massive roof with a complicated structure that can be vulnerable if not well maintained. The trend of adding such a roof on a building entrance poses another danger as it will block the main exit if the structure collapses during earthquakes. For this reason, during the post-earthquake reconstruction, some buildings abandoned their bagonjong.<sup>43</sup>



Looking at who built rumah gadang houses in the past, it is evident that only wealthy families could afford to construct this identity house due to its pricey material, the construction process, the rituals that preceded and followed and subsequent maintenance. In the South Solok area, for instance, many rumah gadang were built and are owned by people with royalty names such as Datuak. This reflects the broader trend in the country, whereby the traditional houses selected as the identity building of a region usually represent the elites' palaces or residences. Identity representation in the country is thus dominated by a certain social class, representing those who can pay for shaping and decorations for their house. This, therefore, begs the question of whether the bagonjong constitutes a commonality of the Minangkabau community. Furthermore, the excessive presence of the bagonjong on the city skyline also leaves some minor ethnicities unrepresented. Consequently, other communities of different ethnic groups, such as the Chinese and Nias people, expressed a negative sentiment as they felt disturbed by the dominance of the representation of the Minangkabau identity in urban spaces. Some even consider the use of the bagonjong on many buildings to be excessive and a significant waste of money.<sup>44</sup>

Despite 'bagonjongisation', local regulation does not require the presence of a bagonjong on façades. Padang's building code (Chapter 65) states that the construction and development of buildings in the city "may use traditional symbols and elements" to strengthen the local characteristics of the buildings, and the symbols must be suited to the local culture and consider "the appearance and fitting of the building with its environment."<sup>45</sup> In this case, the building code does not explicitly mention particular traditional elements that must be presented on a building's façade. This, therefore, should provide an opportunity for Padang's government to be more inclusive and explorative in its architectural identity representation.

Architects and architecture academics in Padang also voice their objection to 'bagonjongisation' in architectural design. All our interviewees agreed to incorporate the Minangkabau identity signifier into a building and emphasised the importance of 'localising' architecture by presenting elements and symbols of the Minangkabau culture. What is difficult, however, is deciding what can be called a 'representation of the Minangkabau culture.' For some, using the bagonjong as an inspiration is still acceptable as long as the translation involves transformations, modifications and abstraction processes and is hence not literal.<sup>46</sup> However, other interviewees underlined the need to move on from relying on the bagonjong and start delving into other cultural resources

in the area for inspiration (e.g. wall decorations, traditional fabrics, traditional headpieces).<sup>47</sup> The translation can also be distinct from the original pieces, probably following what Charles Jencks termed as ‘the enigmatic signifier,’ which allows people to develop various interpretations of a building.<sup>48</sup> In the interviewees’ opinion, it becomes the architects’ responsibility to search for alternatives in representing identity, despite difficulties since some clients expect the literal bagonjong on their buildings.

Despite expressing a rejection of the common practices in the area, these statements still portray traditional elements and decorations as the ‘only’ source of ideas to localise buildings. Culture remains a synonym for tradition, therefore the discussion that follows perpetually returns to the traditional representation and has not touched on modern and urban culture, with its problems, which has become part of West Sumatran people’s everyday lives. This is a common ‘trap’ in Indonesian identity discourses as the position of the ‘authentic’ culture is still considered prominent in representing regional identities. The perspective is debatable because identity discourses in the present time should also represent the contemporaneity of culture and the social-political complexities in urban contestation. Therefore, it is reasonable to move on from the dominance of the bagonjong and, further, from the overarching cultural and traditional perspectives that are limiting rather than deliberating.

### **Closing Remarks**

This paper discussed the domination of the bagonjong in identity imagining in West Sumatra. The paper briefly analysed the beginning of this trend, including who initiated it and the socio-political context that allowed it to flourish. The long history of making the bagonjong the icon of the West Sumatra region proves that collective identity imagining is a long and intricate process. The bagonjong trend in Padang shows that a cultural identity seen as pre-existing has multilayer complexities as an underlying background that is constantly constructed and deconstructed. From the colonial era to the present, the initiation of the bagonjong trend was very political, making the bagonjong itself a political tool.

The history of the bagonjong trend proves that power plays a significant role in identity contestation. Just like ‘history is written by the winner,’ people in power have the privilege to decide how identity should be represented. Although they are driven by complex socio-political tensions, the leaders’ preferences might heavily influence how identity is constructed, whether for a region or even for a country. This orchestration demonstrates

that no identity is pre-given. Identity representation, especially collective ones, involves an intricate internal and external contestation; it is not singular and cannot be flattened or simplified.

In the case of Padang, the Minangkabau culture dominates the look of the architectural identity representation. Despite the simmering but persistent opposing voices, the bagonjong trend lives on. Its reproduction continues in public places, and a new method was developed to transform and modify the original shape. The issue of identity in Padang is rather sensitive as prolonged exposure to this pointy silhouette has caused local people to develop an attachment to it, making it part of their identity imagining. Because of their strong connection with the bagonjong, some people are somewhat resistant to other identity representations. This, then, ignites a further discussion: if the literal translation of identity is what people need, should architects offer other forms of translation for the sake of the development of the architectural discourse? Is it architects' and academics' duty to 'educate' people in the government and the broader public to not champion the literal translation of identity?

This paper does not aim to draw a definitive conclusion on the complicated story of the Minangkabau's identity imagining. Instead, it seeks to provoke further discussion, especially on how to make contemporary identity imagining more inclusive of marginalised people and escape the restrictive box of the traditionalist framework.

## Endnotes

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# Dystopia, Climate Change and Heritage Conservation in the Late Nineteenth Century

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## Abstract

*The architectural conservation and restoration movements emerged in the Western world in the mid-nineteenth century, in part as a reaction to the acceleration of visible aging of buildings caused by the Industrial Revolution and associated changes in air quality. At the same time, Enlightenment ideals established at the end of the eighteenth century reinforced the relatively new idea that a building could have a single author and a fixed state.*

*A new drive towards 'restoration' – the return of a building to a glorified singular past state – led William Morris in 1877 to establish the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), whose manifesto marked the dawn of the age of conservation and essentially prohibited any interference with old buildings. What emerged was a debate between those who favoured "scraping" (restorationists, e.g. nineteenth-century French architect Viollet-le-Duc) and those who were "anti-scrape" (conservationists, e.g. nineteenth-century English architecture writer John Ruskin and architect William Morris).*

*Recent scholarship in English and eco-critical studies by Jesse Oak Taylor, Philip Steer, Heidi Scott and others has drawn attention to anxieties about climate change that began early as the mid-nineteenth century and became widespread by the turn of the twentieth, as manifest in Victorian-era English-language literature. Little has been written about the influence of such anxieties on architects at the time, although John Ruskin's lecture "The Storm Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" (1884) is possibly the first public lecture explicitly hypothesizing anthropogenic climate change.*

*This paper examines Ruskin's later writings, the writings and architectural works of William Morris and the writings of other early members of SPAB including Thomas Hardy, to examine to what extent the "do-not-touch"*

*model of conservation can be interpreted as an early reaction of alarm about climate change.*

## **Introduction**

The architectural conservation and restoration movements emerged in the Western world in the mid-nineteenth century, leading to the establishment of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) by William Morris and others in 1877. The SPAB Manifesto marked the dawn of the age of conservation and essentially prohibited any interference with old buildings, entreating readers:

... to put Protection in the place of Restoration, to stave off decay by daily care... and otherwise to resist all tampering with either the fabric or ornament of the building as it stands... in fine to treat our ancient buildings as monuments of a bygone art, created by bygone manners, that modern art cannot meddle with without destroying.<sup>1</sup>

Morris, like John Ruskin before him (and Augustus Pugin before him) was notoriously nostalgic for the Gothic and the rustic, eschewing other contemporary nineteenth-century aesthetics and the new drive towards 'restoration,' or what Morris called 'scraping' buildings of their visible age.

In fact, the need to take a position on whether or not to 'scrape' was new to the nineteenth century, as buildings accumulated visible patina exponentially faster in the wake of the Industrial Revolution with its associated changes in air quality in cities and near factories. Morris and Ruskin, among other nineteenth-century writers, have traditionally been read as fuelled by anxieties about urbanisation and industrialisation largely on moral, social and cultural terms – i.e., upper-class Victorians experienced unprecedented existential uncertainty about their place in the world as they were confronted with more and more foreign cultures and new ideas about science and the origin of man.

While Victorian anxieties were moral, social and cultural, Victorian literary and ecological scholars have also recently reread many texts within the new context of the Anthropocene and have argued that there was also a real anxiety and concern about literal climate change. The actual markers of long-term, irreversible climate change

would not yet have existed, but those markers had many harbingers that some Victorians at least thought they recognised. In the words of British literary scholar Heidi Scott:

Early [industrial era writing] is especially interesting as an Anthropocene study because its writers had little scientific grounding for their apprehensions, so their prolepses are staked in radically indeterminate signs, such as pollution, warmer climates and weird weather patterns.... Romantic and Victorian climate prophets worked in advance of science, and used their acute senses and well-tuned imaginations to articulate the present and future of industrial ontology.<sup>2</sup>

Just as scholars of Victorian literature have repositioned both a wide variety of realist fiction, as well as science fiction, from the nineteenth century as evidencing anxieties about anthropogenic climate change, this paper argues that the birth of the modern Western heritage conservation movement can also be considered in such terms – while not discounting moral, cultural and ethnocentric motivations.

One text that has received attention in recent years is John Ruskin's lecture "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" (1884), which is arguably the first account of manmade climate change but which, like many of Ruskin's late-in-life writings, has been discounted as a serious or scientific text until recently because of its religious and moralistic overtones. However, much of Ruskin's lecture was devoted to his meticulously recorded observations of the sky taken over 50 years, primarily at a distance from the city. He quoted from his own diary entries, including one from 1875, in which he wrote of the ominous cloud cover and wind that it was:

... the plague-wind of the eighth decade of years in the nineteenth century; a period which will assuredly be recognized in future meteorological history as one of phenomena hitherto unrecorded in the courses of nature, and characterized pre-eminently by the almost ceaseless action of this calamitous wind. While I have been writing these sentences, the white clouds above specified have increased to twice the size they had when I began to write; and in about two hours from this time – say by eleven o'clock, if the wind continue, - the whole sky will be dark with them, as it



was yesterday, and has been through prolonged periods during the last five years.<sup>3</sup>

During his lecture, Ruskin presented his own dramatic paintings of the sky above his home in the Lake District in 1880, blown up by means of a projector and elaborate lighting scheme to the scale of the walls of the lecture room, creating an immersive experience for his audience.

Contemporary ecocritical scholar Jesse Oak Taylor was perhaps the first to posit explicitly that Ruskin's lecture is *equally* scientific and moralistic: in his 2018 essay "Storm-Clouds on the Horizon: John Ruskin and the Emergence of Anthropogenic Climate Change," Taylor wrote, "Ruskin's argument is ... not simply that anthropogenic climate change was occurring, but also that it was a distinctly moral and spiritual problem in addition to being a scientific or material one."<sup>4</sup> More recently, art historian Nicholas Robbins, considering both Ruskin's lecture and the images with which he accompanied it, has described Ruskin's climate crisis as traversing "politics, art, and the environment... [merging] Ruskin's aesthetic conception of nationalism ... with what Brian Day calls his 'moral ecology'."<sup>5</sup> Robbins has pitted Ruskin against another contemporary painter, Whistler, in that Ruskin's worldview, according to Robbins, required the body to be open and connected to the environment, whereas Whistler depicted bodily and artistic autonomy from context and nature.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout his career, Ruskin was preoccupied with the continuum of history and the interconnectedness of lives across centuries, writing in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) – specifically in the Lamp of Memory – that buildings "belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us."<sup>7</sup> As Taylor writes, "The Anthropocene is at once an entirely novel phenomenon, and one in which the past exerts unprecedented force upon the future."<sup>8</sup> Ruskin was poised to recognize climate change – or, alternately, to foresee it – because of his ecological way of thinking, continuously connecting past with present and future, and one life with all those adjacent to it.

What Taylor does not point out is that Ruskin's ecological, Anthropocene way of thinking must necessarily have coloured his attitude towards buildings and conservation; the SPAB Manifesto, which Ruskin is believed to have influenced

strongly, was published just two years after that diary entry in which he coined the term “plague-wind.”

In a chapter in the collection *Ruskin’s Ecologies*, I have argued that despite the fact that Ruskin is remembered largely as an anti-scrapper due to his association with SPAB, earlier in life, in *The Seven Lamps*, he had embraced the idea of spoliation and even hinted at a model I liken to contemporary radical adaptive reuse interventions in which the new architecture is bold and honest about its contemporary origins – and therefore extends what he considered to be the “life” of the building.<sup>9</sup> By the time he wrote “The Storm-Cloud” lecture, Ruskin was evidently more fatalistic in describing what he called the “malignant quality of wind, unconnected with any one quarter of the compass,” and he was perhaps less optimistic about what nineteenth-century architects might do with older building stock.<sup>10</sup>

Much of my chapter for *Ruskin’s Ecologies*, which I called “The Afterlife of Dying Buildings,” focuses on Ruskin’s ideas about life and death – both of plants and of buildings. He was concerned that the lifespan of buildings was shortening – because of the folly of the restoration camp, among other practices with which he disagreed, but also because of the changing climate – which of course also comes back to the follies of man. In “The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century,” Ruskin warned that “you may perhaps have to roof, if not wall, half London afresh before we are many years older,” explicitly because of pollution, which he conflated a bit with climate change while also describing climate change in terms similar to how we now understand it, as something that happens consistently over decades.<sup>11</sup> Although the conservation movement could not save buildings from industrial-era pollution, Ruskin’s urgency to protect buildings from the folly of restoration seems to go hand-in-hand with his anxieties vis-à-vis the inevitable fallout of industrialisation. The founders of the SPAB revered what Ruskin in *The Stones of Venice* called “time-stains” – which were largely the work of pollution, and yet at the same time Ruskin was afraid that pollution would destroy half of London’s buildings in his lifetime.

The SPAB manifesto is credited primarily to William Morris. While Morris was not as prolific a writer on the subject of man’s moral turpitude and the sad fate of British architecture as Ruskin was – and few were – he strongly embraced pastoralism and also wrote of buildings in terms of life and death. In the manifesto, Morris wrote that architectural restoration perversely sought to “strip from a building this, that, and the

other part of its history – of its life that is – and then to stay the hand at some arbitrary point, and leave it still historical, living, and even as it once was.”<sup>12</sup> Morris demonstrated a similarly ecological way of thinking about past architecture, present man and future generations in his 1884 lecture “Architecture and History,” delivered to the SPAB and focusing on the evils of Restoration. He wrote:

... the untouched surface of ancient architecture bears witness to the development of man’s ideas, to the continuity of history, and, so doing, affords never ceasing instruction, nay education, to the passing generations, not only telling us what were the aspirations of men passed away, but also what we may hope for in the time to come.<sup>13</sup>

While Morris’s main topic was Restoration, he was also consistently put off by industrialisation and capitalism, and his novels – in particular his eco-socialist utopian novel *News from Nowhere* – have been read as sympathetic with some of Ruskin’s ideas in his “Storm-Cloud” lecture. Morris’ socialist visions were grounded in the belief that capitalism would never permit ecological equilibrium.<sup>14</sup>

As a novelist, Morris explored alternative realities through time travel – both between the nineteenth century and a heavily romanticised version of medieval times, in *A Dream of John Ball* (1887), and between the nineteenth century and an imagined utopian future, in *News from Nowhere* (1890) – in both cases he uses the time travel as a framing to critique the nineteenth-century urban, capitalist, industrial society which troubled him. The framing device of *News from Nowhere* is a dream on the part of the narrator, William Guest, who dreams of a utopian land where citizens are happy to share the mostly agrarian labour equally, where fossil fuel consumption is significantly reduced, and which has significant aesthetic resonance with Morris’ romanticised vision of medieval England.

When Guest’s pseudo-time travel begins, he does not at first realise he is still in London and remarks upon the absence of “smoke-vomiting chimneys” and of the “sound of rivetting and hammering.” Notably, he remarks upon the buildings he sees that, “The stone was a little weathered, but showed no marks of the grimy sootiness which I was used to on every London building more than a year old.” He goes on to contrast the eco-socialist society’s buildings against those of the Victorian era, calling the former “alive, and sympathetic with the life of the dwellers in them,” with the

implication that buildings in his own day are instead dead or dying.<sup>15</sup> Although Morris' SPAB Manifesto positions Restoration and a lack of good craftsmanship as the major threats to old buildings in his era, his novel makes clear his anxieties about the fatal effects of industrialisation on buildings.

When William Guest wakes up in his own time in his bed in Hammersmith, Morris briefly echoes Ruskin's "storm-cloud" language, as realisation dawns on Guest like "a black cloud rolling along to meet [him], like a nightmare of [his] childish days."<sup>16</sup> Morris shared much of Ruskin's horror at the direction mankind was taking by the late nineteenth century, although Morris's aesthetic and socialist solutions remained largely superficial – for instance, Nowhere's inhabitants still dig for coal. Morris offered no way out besides a fantasy of an alternate reality which is at least as nostalgic and backward-looking as it is progressive and forward-looking. In his own present day, the best solution he had was the "cease-and-desist" as laid out in the SPAB Manifesto. As Heidi Scott puts it:

If Ruskin's diabolical vision was a call to action, Morris seems to have heeded it with his wishful prophecy of a pro-social but anti-technological Good Anthropocene.... however, the 'romance of stasis' inherent in the Green Movement obscures the steep challenges of the Anthropocene's damage to Holocene climate equilibrium.<sup>17</sup>

*News from Nowhere* is just one example of Victorian CliFi, or "climate fiction," which imagines an alternative reality in the future catalysed by the inevitable collapse of the fossil fuel-dependent economy. Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872) and W. H. Hudson's *A Crystal Age* (1887), like *News from Nowhere*, offer up the optimistic possibility of a return to idyllic pastoralism after the collapse, while Richard Jefferies' *After London, or Wild England* (1885) and H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), among other late Victorian apocalyptic fiction, suggest that humanity will reach a point of no return – both morally and ecologically.

While science fiction was on the rise, the bulk of Victorian fiction is notable for its realism – its attention to the details of daily life. In the mid-century, industrial novels like Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849), Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854) and much of Charles Dickens' body of work explored the increasing social and class divide created by the industrial revolution, including graphic descriptions of factory conditions,

child labour and the soot of the cities. In 2016, Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh argued in *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* that Victorian realist fiction was so fixated on the details of the daily that it in fact glossed over the nonhuman, geological time and the catastrophic.<sup>18</sup> However, it was precisely the attention to the daily details of weather over 50 years that allowed Ruskin to notice (or to believe that he noticed) a change in climate.

In addition to John Ruskin and William Morris, another early and active member of the SPAB was the prolific Victorian realist novelist Thomas Hardy, who had a short-lived career as an architect before the success of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), the first of his many novels set in the fictional agrarian district of Wessex, England. Hardy's novels are for the most part notoriously bleak, portraying the hardships of rural life, especially in an increasingly industrialised world.

Humanities scholar Philip Steer has called many of the characters of Hardy's tragic novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) "climate refugees of a kind, caught between hostile climates and the environmental wreckage wrought by agribusiness."<sup>19</sup> Hardy's nostalgia for England the way it was before he knew it is nowhere more evident than at the end of *Tess*, when the police arrest Tess for murdering her rapist, at Stonehenge, where she has sought temporary refuge. Tess's paramour exclaims, "Older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles!" when they realise where they are.<sup>20</sup> Like Ruskin, Hardy could be called an ecological thinker by way of his emphasis on the connections between generations, between present-day characters and the built artifacts of the past, and between the human and the nonhuman, with farm animals often acting as near-protagonists.

In an essay on "The Climates of the Victorian Novel" (2021), Steer argues that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) is Hardy's novel which most clearly shows the difference between weather – a local and fleeting phenomenon – and longer-term climate and "the extent to which capital mediates the experience of both," and the patterns he notes are present in many of the Wessex novels' plots.<sup>21</sup> The recurring plot is that a poor farmer is destroyed by a catastrophe in the weather or a related fluke, while a farmer with more money, credit or prospects can afford "a longer-term view, overlooking the real-time fluctuations of weather and instead acting in accordance with the known stability of the climate."<sup>22</sup> Although Hardy ultimately comes down on the side of believing in long-term climate stability, his work is permeated by an anxiety about

small-scale catastrophes and the lack of protection from them for many of his characters.

Together, Ruskin's, Morris' and Hardy's writings suggest that the anxieties that led to the founding of the SPAB – and the conservation movement as a whole – extend to anxieties about the material fate of the climate and of man's place in his environment, quite literally, in addition to all of the canonical Victorian anxieties about the waning of the British empire, the origins of humanity and rapidly changing mores. Following Ruskin's and Morris' language, the birth of the heritage conservation movement in England was largely about extending the "life" of the building in an ecological sense, both materially and metaphorically.

So, why is this reframing of the advent of the conservation movement important to the way we practice architecture today? I believe this reframing, in conjunction with Ruskin's early-in-life ideas about the vitality of buildings as carried on through the hands of many generations of workmen, might help us also to reframe how we think of the conservation of culturally dominant heritage today, to ease some of the associated strictures and to embrace the ability to build on older buildings and foundations boldly with the mark of the modern day, while preserving and maintaining what Ruskin and Morris saw as the inherent life and spirit of the original.

## Endnotes

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<sup>15</sup> William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1893 [1890]), 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> Morris, *News from Nowhere*, 304.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, "Industrial Souls," 606-7.

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<sup>19</sup> Philip Steer, "Reading Classic Novels in an Era of Climate Change," *The Conversation*, May 22, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/reading-classic-novels-in-an-era-of-climate-change-75843>.

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<sup>21</sup> Philip Steer, "The Climates of the Victorian Novel: Seasonality, Weather, and Regional Fiction in Britain and Australia," *PMLA* 136, no.3 (May 2021): 374.

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# North Korean Aesthetics within a Colonial Urban Form: Monuments to Independence and Democracy in Windhoek, Namibia

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines two high-profile commemorative spaces in Namibia's national capital, Windhoek, designed and constructed by North Korean state-owned enterprise Mansudae Overseas Projects. These commemorative projects illustrate the complex and evolving intersections between public art, architecture and urban form in this post-colonial context. They show how sites designed around heritage and collective identity intersect with urban space's physical development and everyday use. The projects also illustrate the intersecting histories of three aesthetic lineages: German, South African and North Korean. This paper will show how these commemorative spaces embody North Korean urban space ideas while also developing new national symbols, historical narratives and identities within Windhoek's urban landscape as part of independent Namibia's nation-building. The monument's 'Socialist Realist' aesthetic signals a conscious departure from the colonial and apartheid eras by the now-independent Namibian government.*

*This paper extends prior research focused on the symbolism of Mansudae's monumental schemes by analysing these monuments' design, placement, public reception and use within Windhoek as they relate to the city's overall development since Namibia's independence in 1990. By documenting the form, location and decision-making processes for the Mansudae-designed memorials in Windhoek and historical changes in their spatial and political context, the paper explores the interaction between North Korean political ideology and design approaches and Namibia's democratic ambitions for city-making. The paper's mapping analysis spatially compares the sculptural, architectural and urban design strategies of Mansudae's additions to Windhoek's City Crown (2010-14) to*



*Pyongyang's Mansu Hill Grand Monument (1972-2011), and Windhoek's Heroes' Acre (2002) to Mansudae's earlier National Martyrs Cemetery outside Pyongyang (1975-85).*

## **Introduction**

Independent Namibia has embarked on the project of nation-building in its capital, Windhoek, through the construction of several monumental projects. These memorial spaces, designed and constructed by North Korean Mansudae Overseas Projects in their signature Socialist Realist aesthetic, are a deliberate and conspicuous departure from the surrounding urban fabric and its colonial and apartheid landmarks. This paper examines how these North Korean aesthetics and ideas about urban form have been translated and deployed to rewrite national history in Windhoek's post-colonial urban and political context. The paper presents an original mapping analysis to compare the sculptural, architectural and urban design strategies of Mansudae's additions to Windhoek's City Crown (2010-14) to Pyongyang's Mansu Hill Grand Monument (1972-2011), and Windhoek's Heroes' Acre (2002) to Mansudae's earlier National Martyrs Cemetery outside Pyongyang (1975-85).

## **North Korea and Africa**

After World War II, the African continent was swept by a wave of decolonisation as territories agitated for independence from their European colonisers. Ghana was the first African nation to obtain independence in 1957, and Namibia, entangled in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, was the most recent in 1990. During this time, the Cold War saw the Soviet Union and the United States manoeuvre to exert their political, economic and ideological influences in Africa, frequently delaying or subverting African nations' independence in their attempts to seed Soviet socialism or American democracy.

After World War II, numerous African nations developed ideological alliances with North Korea. The Japanese occupation of Korea ended in 1945, and the United States and the Soviet Union divided the country. Reunification of the Korean peninsula failed, and in 1948 the North and South formed separate governments. In the south, the Republic of Korea was supported by the Western allies, with Seoul as its capital. The northern Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), with Pyongyang as its capital, was supported by the Soviet bloc. With the help of the Soviet Union, Kim Il

Sung, returning from exile, became the leader of the Democratic People's Republic and led the North Korean invasion of South Korea from 1950 to 1953. The Korean Armistice Agreement of 1953 ended overt hostilities between North and South while reinforcing Korea's division by creating a new demilitarised border zone.

Kim Il Sung promoted North Korea as an anti-imperialist stalwart to Africa's emerging leaders, presenting the Juche ideology of self-reliance, self-sufficiency and self-defence, and supplying African liberation movements with arms, military advisers and ammunition.<sup>1</sup> The DPRK's image as an agent of global anti-colonialism, defying the West despite its small size and limited economic power, appealed to many newly independent African nations.<sup>2</sup> The DPRK assisted the anti-apartheid and independence movements in South Africa and Namibia by running training camps for the ANC and SWAPO in Angola.<sup>3</sup> The regime has remained active on the African continent with trade agreements, arms deals and illicit ivory trafficking, circumventing international sanctions.

North Korean state-owned design firm Mansudae Overseas Projects has developed twenty large-scale monuments across fourteen African countries between 1980 and 2014, ranging from colossal sculptures to museum complexes and memorial cemeteries. The projects exert the DPRK's soft power, earning significant foreign income and cultivating ideological and trade alignments with African governments. This paper explores these alignments through the case of Windhoek, Namibia, where Mansudae developed several monumental projects. These projects have unmistakable representational similarities to North Korea's post-war monuments. The paper will explore how Namibia's urban, social and political contexts, different from the DPRK, have influenced the monuments' public use and reception.

### **The Urban Histories of Pyongyang and Windhoek**

Modern Pyongyang has been compared to Germania, Hitler's imagined future for Berlin,<sup>4</sup> a bombastic cityscape designed by single authorship under authoritarian control, a totalitarian spatial expression of a nationalist political ideology. Windhoek, on the other hand, is a city shaped by successive colonial occupations, each of which cultivated an affinity to values and systems from different faraway geographies. These layered and overlapping allusions to distant cultures of political power have been encoded into the urban form and architectural aesthetics, and in the ways the urban environment is produced.

Pyongyang, founded in 1122 BC, was the seat of successive ancient Korean kingdoms and is one of Korea's oldest cities. The city was destroyed and rebuilt twice in recent history, during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, rebuilt under Japanese occupation, and again by US aerial bombardment during the Korean War. The full-scale physical destruction of the city and its complete evacuation after the Korean War produced a tabula rasa in which the newly established DPRK, initially with enormous financial and material aid from its 'fraternal' socialist allies,<sup>5</sup> could fashion a new capital city. This new city could be planned without obstruction from private property ownership or historic structure and function, resulting in a typical modernist superblock design with wide boulevards intended to separate residential districts rather than to accommodate traffic flow.<sup>6</sup> Pyongyang was rebuilt as a reflection of socialism and the victorious self-determination representative of the new North Korean nation.

Present-day Pyongyang has approximately 3.25 million inhabitants, and is situated on the Taedong River, 109 kilometres inland from the Yellow Sea, separating the Korean Peninsula from China. The city's modernist urban form is ordered around visual and physical axes. The natural topography is employed as a stage-set, assembling symbolic and narrative connections between monumental sites, the most important of which are on elevated terrain. Many of the city's public buildings are situated along these urban axes. The city's most important visual axis extends from the Mansu Hill Grand Monument across the river to the Party Foundation Monument.<sup>7</sup>

Windhoek's urban form has been shaped and added to by successive colonial powers and imperial political ideologies. Archaeological evidence dates settlement at Windhoek to 5200 BC, likely by nomadic hunter-gatherers.<sup>8</sup> Windhoek was founded in 1842 and in 1890, claimed as the capital of German South-West Africa. After World War I, South-West Africa was administered by the League of Nations and became a mandated territory administered by South Africa. Despite pressures by the United Nations from 1946 onwards, South Africa refused to cede control over South-West Africa. Windhoek was spatially transformed to reflect apartheid's social engineering ideologies, using modernist town planning. The city was racially segregated, using planning laws, systems and infrastructures to encode this into the urban form permanently. In 1990, after a protracted conflict, Namibia gained independence, and Sam Nujoma, of the South-West Africa People's Organisation (Swapo), was elected president. Namibia's political climate has been called "post-liberation democratic

authoritarianism,” a one-party dominated state with the former militant liberation movement intolerant of political challenges or views dissenting from official “patriotic history.”<sup>9</sup> Present-day Windhoek has approximately 431,000 inhabitants.

With independence, Namibia’s project of crafting a new national identity began. Nujoma, having visited the DPRK several times before and after independence, considered the North Korean aesthetic suited to a non-Western expression of modernity, anti-colonial national autonomy and strong leadership,<sup>10</sup> signalling a conscious departure from the colonial and apartheid-era landmarks and monuments that remain prominent in Windhoek. In examining their formal antecedents and distinctly North Korean ideas about urban space in Pyongyang, two Mansudae projects in Windhoek, the City Crown and Heroes’ Acre, will be discussed. The memorial projects in Windhoek, grounded in North Korean political ideology, develop new national symbols, historical narratives and identities while situated in a post-colonial urban form and stratified socio-political context.

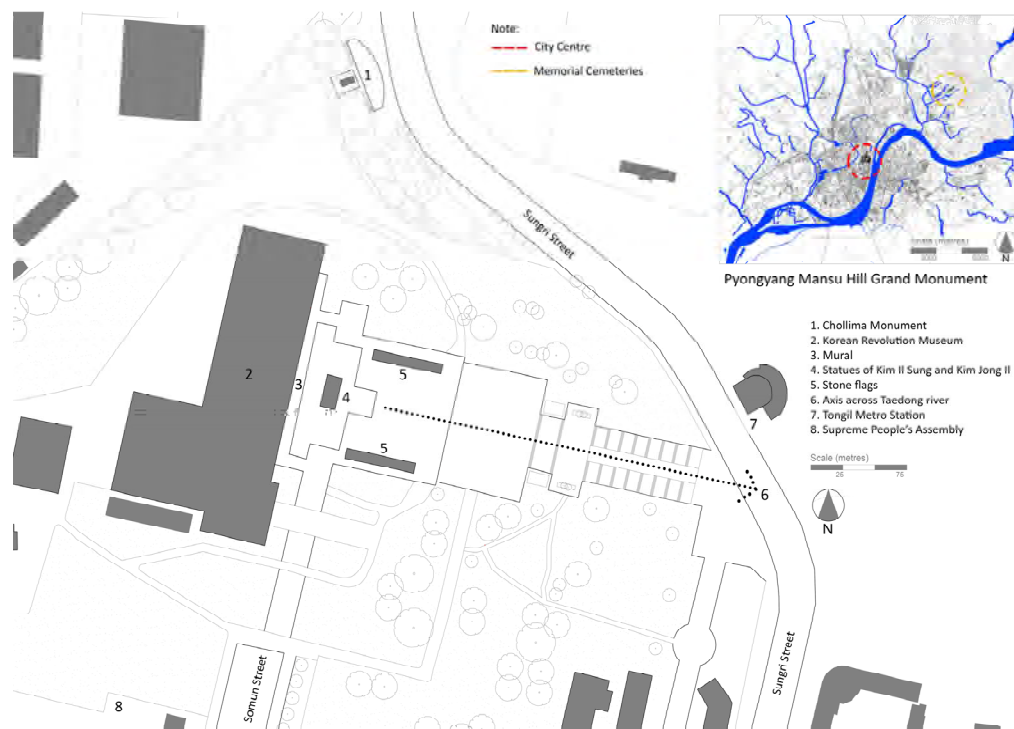
### **Pyongyang’s Mansu Hill Grand Monument and Windhoek’s City Crown**

Pyongyang and Windhoek have distinctly different urban forms. Their significance as capitals in relation to their country is also different. Pyongyang is a metonym for North Korea, central to its mythology and history.<sup>11</sup> Culture, nature and politics form a dialectic narrative central to constructing political ideologies such as the *Juche* philosophy.<sup>12</sup> Kim Il Sung stated that “Pyongyang must be a model for the whole country in all the ideological, technical and cultural spheres, so that it can give foreign visitors a complete picture of the development of our country.”<sup>13</sup>

Although unequivocally the largest and most modern city in Namibia, Windhoek does not claim a similar primacy in the national imagination, where identity politics are tied to, and contested by, non-urban land ownership. Windhoek’s pre-colonial settlement is poorly researched and rarely acknowledged, and the city’s colonial occupations have left behind multiple, often antagonistic and contradictory claims to the city. This colonial history relates unevenly to various geographic regions of the country, creating asymmetries in the capital city’s symbolic and cultural importance to different Namibian groups.

Both Pyongyang’s and Windhoek’s urban forms display the state’s exercise of power through memorial landscapes. In the DPRK state panopticism is exercised and

reproduced comprehensively by setting up clear spatial and social hierarchies ordering the individual and society and reproduced in urban space. The uniquely simultaneous construction of Pyongyang has allowed these spatial manifestations of state control to be constructed without compromise. This differs from Windhoek, where the city's piecemeal growth over time is rooted in different colonial planning ideologies, private property ownership and historic functions. Mansu Hill acts as the symbolic and panoptic centre of Pyongyang. The space links the city to the physical and spiritual presence of its author Kim Il Sung, "architect of the capital and choreographer of the fatherland's landscape."<sup>14</sup>

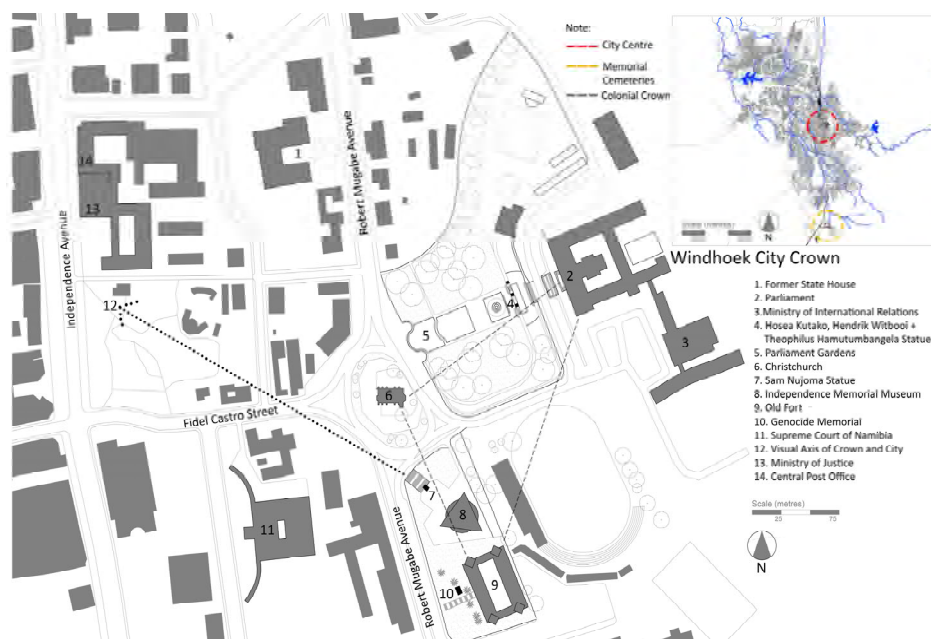


**Figure 1.** Pyongyang's Mansu Hill Grand Monument  
(Drawing by Stephanie Roland).

The Mansu Hill Grand Monument is a memorial complex at the northern corner of the central Chung-guyŏk district of Pyongyang. The site is the set-piece of central Pyongyang, book-ending Somun Street, a landscaped axis with features such as Hakdanggol Fountain Park and Mansudae Fountain Park, linking important public building complexes such as the Grand People's Study House, Pyongyang Grand Theatre and the Supreme People's Assembly (Figure 1, #8). Parallel Sungri Street, Korean for "victory," is Pyongyang's main traffic artery, along which public buildings like the Grand People's Study House, the Mansudae Art Theatre, the Pyongyang

Schoolchildren’s Palace, Department Store No. 1, Children’s Department Store and showpiece residential tower blocks are located.<sup>15</sup> North of Mansu Hill is the Chollima Monument, built in 1961 (Figure 1, #1). The 34 metre tall column bears the bronze sculptures of a man and a woman on the mythical winged horse of North Korean legend. The male worker holds the Red Letter issued by the Central Committee of the Worker’s Party of North Korea, while the peasant woman holds a sheaf of rice.<sup>16</sup>

The Grand Monument was built in 1972 for Kim Il Sung’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, featuring his bronze likeness, and was refurbished in 2011, adding a twin statue of his son Kim Jong Il (Figure 1, #4). The enormous Korean Revolution Museum (Figure 1, #2), with a 70 metre wide and 12.85 metre tall mosaic depicting Korea’s holy site, Mount Paektu, form the backdrop to the 22 metre tall bronze statues (Figure 1, #3). The statues are flanked by two sculpted stone flags with 5 metre tall sculptural clusters, one representing the anti-imperialist Japanese struggle and the other the socialist revolution,<sup>17</sup> framing an expansive plaza (Figure 1, #5). The monumental flags “establish[.] the holy triad of leader, nation, and state.”<sup>18</sup> Symmetrical landscaped stairs lead up to the plaza from Sungri Street, creating a visual axis across the Taedong river to the Workers’ Party Foundation Monument (Figure 1, #6). The site is accessible via Tongil Metro station (Figure 1, #7).



**Figure 2.** Windhoek’s City Crown  
(Drawing by Stephanie Roland).

Windhoek's City Crown is a composition of the city's oldest buildings, a trio of centrally located administrative, religious and military buildings characteristic of the ideal German colonial city.<sup>19</sup> Windhoek's 'colonial crown' was expanded from the 1892 stone Fort (Figure 2, #9), built on a hill for surveillance of the surrounding town and countryside, to include the 1910 neo-Romanesque Christchurch (Figure 2, #6) and the 1913 Parliament and its accompanying formal gardens (Figure 2, #2, #5). These buildings, adapting Wilhelminian architecture into a local vernacular, SWA Veranda Style,<sup>20</sup> reminded European residents and visitors of a typical provincial German town.<sup>21</sup> The 'colonial crown' included a memorial, the 1912 *Reiterdenkmal* (Rider Statue), to German victory in the 1904-08 war. The war resulted in the genocide of the Herero and Nama people, and the *Reiterdenkmal* was erected on the site of the prisoner-of-war camps (Figure 2, approx #7). The statue has been interpreted as a symbol of settler culture and the genocide, simultaneously metonymic as the Herero name for Windhoek and iconic of tourism, highlighting Namibia's distinctive German heritage.<sup>22</sup>

The *Reiterdenkmal* was moved in 2009 and then finally removed in 2013,<sup>23</sup> making way for the Mansudae commissioned 40 metre tall Independence Memorial Museum (IMM) at the intersection of Fidel Castro Street and Robert Mugabe Avenue (Figure 2, #8) – re-named after two other nominally socialist national independence leaders. The IMM shares an elevated platform, accessed by wide stairs from the street, with a bronze likeness of Sam Nujoma symbolically holding the constitution out to Independence Avenue and the city below (Figure 2, #7). The Genocide Memorial (Figure 2, #10) is in front of the Old Fort to highlight the German military's problematic legacy. The addition of these new memorials, executed in Mansudae's signature Socialist Realist aesthetic, has been referred to as "breaking the [colonial] crown,"<sup>24</sup> a bold assertion of nationalistic self and explicit breaking with the past,<sup>25</sup> an "obliteration of history,"<sup>26</sup> "accentuating a multi-layered built environment and memory narrative"<sup>27</sup> and re-inscribing Windhoek's "hill of power."<sup>28</sup>

Windhoek's former State House, residence and office of the president (Figure 2, #1), was replaced by a Mansudae-designed and constructed complex in 2008, 5 kilometres from the city centre in the high-income suburban outskirts of Auasblick. The bunker-like 25 hectare State House complex, secured by a 2 kilometre long steel fence, was realised by expropriating about 50 privately owned residential properties.<sup>29</sup>

### North Korean Ideas about Urban Form in Windhoek's City Centre

The decision to add a new layer to Windhoek's City Crown, rather than creating a separate memorial site for independent Namibia, is informed by distinctly North Korean ideas about urban space, as illustrated in the earlier design of the Mansu Hill Grand Monument. Mansu Hill was the site of the colonial Japanese Heijō Shinto Shrine in the 1910s, which was burned down in 1945 after the Japanese surrender. The Chollima Monument, pre-dating Mansu Hill, transforms the mythical winged Chollima into a symbol of the reconstruction of society by the Workers' Party after Japanese occupation.<sup>30</sup> Despite the city's spatial destruction, the centrepiece of Pyongyang is deliberately anchored in symbols of North Korean history and culture pre-dating socialism.

Similarly, Windhoek's independent memorials, rather than creating a new set-piece for the city along Independence Avenue, sit in deliberate spatial and aesthetic tension with colonial landmarks. Following the DPRK's example of glorifying a state leader as a metonym for a nation and its independence, the towering Nujoma Statue is the centrepiece of the new City Crown, replacing the *Reiterdenkmal*, which stood on the hill for 102 years. Nujoma is referred to as the "father of the nation," echoing descriptions of Kim Il-Sung.<sup>31</sup> The site's historical significance as the location of the genocide concentration camps seems an afterthought. The smaller genocide memorial, a life-size bronze sculpture of a man and a woman breaking free from the shackles of colonialism, is mounted on a simple stone plinth without a formal access path on the sloping unkempt ground leading up to the Old Fort.

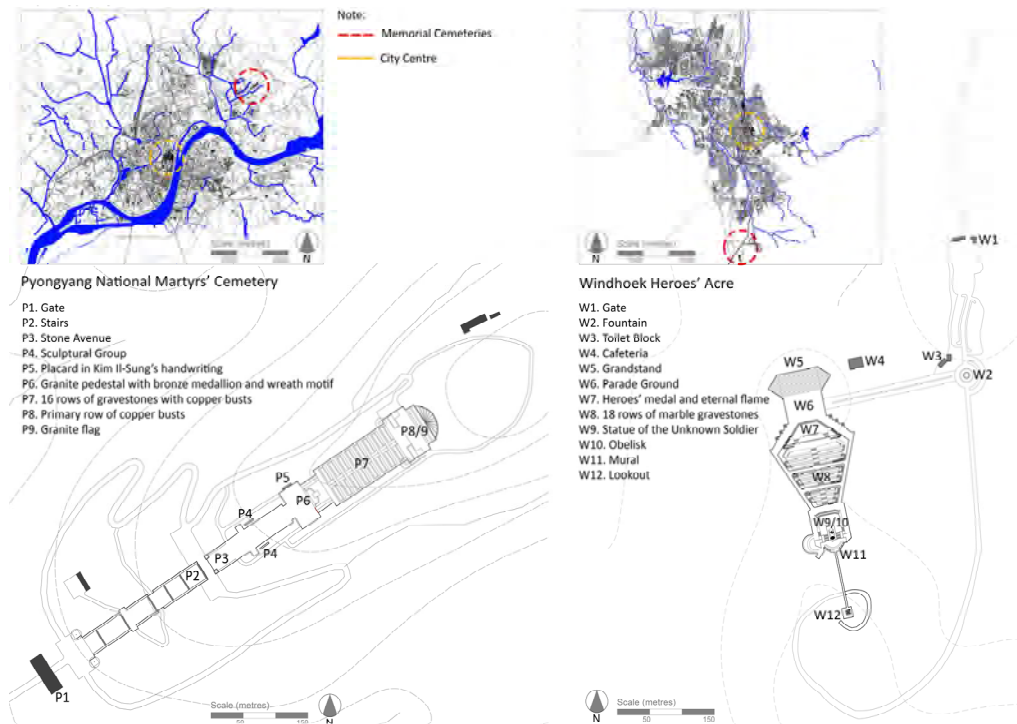
Windhoek's choice of site and genocide memorial, like Pyongyang's Chollima Monument, anchors Swapo's narrative of leading the liberation struggle against South African occupation with an earlier culture and history of resistance to German colonialism. The appropriateness of the memorial has been questioned, including the figures' victorious stance and strong physiques,<sup>32</sup> imitating its North Korean and Soviet socialist-realist antecedents, neither befitting a site of mourning nor resembling concentration camp inmates. The memorial's inscription, a line of the national anthem, "their blood waters our freedom," is associated with Swapo and the liberation struggle but does not mention the genocide.<sup>33</sup> Some argue that the current Namibian government, a majority of which is made up of people who cannot trace their ancestry to the events of the genocide, sees no significance in this history, choosing to rewrite this part of Windhoek's history to favour Swapo's liberation struggle narrative instead.<sup>34</sup>



Mansudae's additions to Windhoek's City Crown fit within an older lineage of constructing urban space in Windhoek, the colonial logic of importing a foreign architectural aesthetic and attendant symbolism rather than acknowledging local culture, materials and building expertise. The relocation of State House from its former location opposite parliament to a highly secured site in the suburbs, forcibly cleared of neighbouring properties, spatially dislocates the presidency both from the citizenry and the governing structures of a democratic state.

### **Pyongyang's National Martyrs Cemetery and Windhoek's Heroes' Acre**

The National Martyrs' Cemetery in Pyongyang was built in 1975 to commemorate the individuals who fought against the Japanese occupation of Korea. The National Martyrs' Cemetery occupies 30 hectares on the Chujak Peak of Mount Taesong, 12 kilometres northeast of Mansu Hill. Views from the cemetery extend to the landmark Ryugyong Hotel 12 kilometres southwest. The cemetery is accessed by a monumental 'Korean style' entrance gate (Figure 3, #P1), over 300 steps (Figure 3, #P2) up the landscaped hillside. At the top of the stairs is a wide stone avenue (Figure 3, #P3) flanked by sculptural groups of soldiers (Figure 3, #P4) and a placard in Kim-II Sung's handwriting (Figure 3, #P5). Terminating the stone avenue is a sloped granite pedestal with a large bronze medallion and wreath motif (Figure 3, #P6), the spatial gateway to the sacred ground of the cemetery. Behind this pedestal is the symmetrically terraced cemetery (Figure 3, #P7), ending in a central row of graves set against a sculpture of a large red granite flag (Figure 3, #P8/9). The graves are copper busts on marble pedestals, and the central row at the apex of the cemetery holds members of Kim II Sung's family.



**Figure 3.** Pyongyang National Martyrs' Cemetery and Windhoek Heroes' Acre (Drawings by Stephanie Roland).

Windhoek's Heroes' Acre, built in 2002, is located approximately 10 kilometres south of the city centre. This polygon-shaped war memorial occupies a sloping hillside like Pyongyang's Martyr's cemetery and is similarly accessed through a monumental entrance gate (Figure 3, #W1). A fountain with a carved sculptural column (Figure 3, #W2) directs movement to the memorial obliquely across a paved parade ground (Figure 3, #W6) with a stepped grandstand facing the cemetery (Figure 3, #W5). Bordering the plaza, the Heroes' Medal and eternal flame (Figure 3, #W7) replicate Pyongyang's symbolic spatial gateway to the cemetery (Figure 3, #P6). The Heroes' Medal is a new symbol for Namibia, derived from Pyongyang's bronze medallion, dedicated to all Namibians who sacrificed their lives for independence.<sup>35</sup> Rows of memorial tombstones (Figure 3, #W8) symmetrically flank stairs leading up to a tall obelisk clad in white marble visible from Windhoek's city centre, in front of which is the bronze statue of "the unknown soldier" (Figure 3, #W9/10). The two elements are surrounded by a curved relief depicting Namibia's freedom struggle from colonial occupation (Figure 3, #W11).

### **Heroes' Acre and Constructing a Political Lineage**

Heroes' Acre differs from Pyongyang's in including a grandstand for 5000 people, symbolically, if passively, incorporating a public audience. The monument's location outside Windhoek places it beyond the reach of most city residents who live in Windhoek's northeast and do not own private motorcars. Swapo supporters are typically bussed in for ceremonial events, ensuring commemorations at Heroes' Acre remain exclusive and laudatory.

Heroes' Acre spatially replicates many of the elements of Martyrs' Cemetery. The "unknown soldier" bears an uncanny resemblance to Sam Nujoma, its plinth inscribed in the former president's handwriting, opaquely placing him at the apex of the memorial. Pyongyang's Martyrs' Cemetery puts the Kim family in prime position, developing the Kims' political narrative of a familial lineage of rulers. The first seven interments at Heroes' Acre were of colonial resistance leaders,<sup>36</sup> similar to the City Crown in grounding Swapo's narrative of resistance in earlier history. Most of those subsequently interred at Heroes' Acre have been Swapo politicians. Their arrangement at Heroes' Acre, below the "unknown" soldier, produces independent Namibia's political aristocracy. The burial space of Heroes' Acre is larger than Pyongyang's Martyrs' Cemetery, with many of its 174 tombs unoccupied, which indicates that the project of constructing Swapo's political lineage has only just begun.

### **Public Reception and Contestation of Mansudae's Memorials in Windhoek**

The Nujoma Statue at Windhoek's City Crown has recently become the favoured backdrop to a series of peaceful protests by youth and gender rights activists calling for reforms to Namibian society on issues including sexual and gender-based violence, LGBTQIA+ rights, police brutality, colonialism, inequality and racism. Protest marches in Windhoek often travel along Independence Avenue, ending by delivering petitions to parliament. In 2020, the peaceful Shut It All Down protest, one of the largest post-independence youth protests, was attacked by police with tear-gas, batons and rubber bullets outside the parliament gardens.<sup>37</sup> Immediately afterward, a razor-wire fence was erected around the gardens, effectively removing public access to the city's oldest and best-maintained public park and parliament. Removing these spaces from the public's constitutionally enshrined right to protest has inadvertently contributed to the Nujoma Statue becoming a locus for protests. The statue has become a deliberate backdrop for youth protests over the patriarchal, moralistic, homophobic and historically revisionist stance of the Swapo government. Mansudae's monumental and

imposing works, not intended for reciprocal engagement with the public, have been appropriated in this instance by the exercise of the democratic rights of Namibian citizens.



**Figure 4:** LGBTQIA+ rights protest 2021  
(Photograph by Nicola Brandt, with permission).

## Conclusion

Although Pyongyang and Windhoek have very different urban forms, Windhoek's colonially rooted tradition of importing an architectural aesthetic and symbolism has been extended by the addition of Mansudae's works to the City Crown. Taking their cue from the Kim family's practice of memorialising their familial lineage, these new monuments glorify Swapo's liberation struggle and actively produce a new political aristocracy for Namibia. These new works, like their North Korean socialist antecedents, also anchor Swapo's historical narrative in local culture and history, pre-dating the movement and its political ideology.

Heroes' Acre, suited to Namibian traditions of grounding claims to belonging and land through the symbolic burial of leaders,<sup>38</sup> successfully echoes Pyongyang's Martyrs' Cemetery in creating a memorial space not intended for public use. The monument complex, located far from the city's residents, further minimises the chances of spontaneous democratic interaction through its admissions fees and armed guards patrolling the perimeter. The relocation of the State House from the city centre to the

suburban outskirts of Windhoek, also by Mansudae, and the recent fencing-off of parliament and parliament gardens, is indicative of the Namibian government's tendency of discouraging civic engagement and dissent by restricting public access to space. Unlike the DPRK, Namibia has enshrined democratic citizens' rights in its constitution, and Mansudae's additions to Windhoek's City Crown, contrary to their progenitors, have been appropriate as spaces of democratic expression.

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<sup>16</sup> Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang*.

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# **The Shape of Knowledge: University Campuses as Historic Urban Landscapes through Experiences of the University of Auckland and Politecnico di Torino**

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## ***Abstract***

*This paper interconnects the diachronic development of two academies at geographical antipodes: the University of Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, and the Politecnico di Torino, Italy, in sharing the apparent contradiction between the words “urban” and “campus” at the crossroads of urban design, modern architectural tradition and historic urban landscape, critically tied with contemporary debates.*

*Offering readings of selected sites for each campus that encapsulate socio-economic developments, urban and architectural morphologies, and cultural landscapes’ international reputations, the paper draws from a hybrid methodological approach that combines the global guidelines of the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape approach, focused on the preservation of the layers of heritage in the urban context, to the urban planning reading of programmes and achievements of the modern age in complex integration of urban history and academic physical spaces. In particular, it explores the contribution and influences of architects, urban planners, heritage conservation experts, decision-makers and community representatives within such developments.*

*The ultimate goal is to bring together historical and spatial inquiry towards a critical practice. On the one hand, it reveals a stimulating counter-history of a model university campus that is the site of cross-cultural exchanges rather than a colonisation template to be easily exported or imported. On the other hand, two antipodal university centres with endemic divergences – but comparable international appeal – appear as key representatives of the urban dimension and*

*history of their hosting cities with clear projects, shaping strategies according to opportunities, limits and contingencies.*

### **Introduction: Rationale**

There were two splendid ideals, one of a civic university, sited near city, library, art gallery, museum, closely related to the professional and commercial needs of the city as well as to the general educational and cultural requirements of the community. [...] On the other hand there was the ideal of an American campus, removed from urban noise and discord with an atmosphere contemplative, sedate.<sup>1</sup>

This paper investigates the multifaceted relationship between university campuses and cities as the realistic representation of an architectural form connected with the social history of its context.<sup>2</sup>

In the American tradition, the mainstream campus “trend” represented within the international literature begins with the conquest of a plot on which to distribute buildings “removed from the corrupting forces of the city.”<sup>3</sup> During the transition towards modernity, the term “campus” travelled back toward the old continent, where the ancient cloistered model was rooted. The experiment confirmed the myth of an elitarian planning model for academic communities, but also stimulated arguments amongst those who considered the campus as an “urban phenomenon.”<sup>4</sup>

Initiated within the University of Auckland (UoA) in Aotearoa New Zealand, this research explores its spaces, questioning if it could be read as an initially unexplicit urban planning project, since the “site row” allows the city and the university to relate permeably. Methodologically, the Politecnico di Torino (PoliTO), in Italy, offered an international counterpart as a web of urban blocks highly rooted within the historic and socio-economic ground of the city.

Intended as a first stage of a broader international project, this work concentrates on a binary case study comparison. Forming an architectural sample of comparison between two antipodes, we offer two freestanding readings composed of general analysis and three selected sites of focus, providing the opportunity to observe their diachronic development through modern and contemporary history.



### **The Historic Urban Landscape Approach: The Methodology**

Assuming an international perspective, this paper looks at the non-governmental recommendations of the Historic Urban Landscape approach, adopted by UNESCO in 2011, and defined as:

A methodology that seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions by taking heritage into account, intended to branch beyond the preservation of the purely architectural environment, focusing on the holos of tangible and intangible qualities, cultural diversity, socio-economic and environmental factors along with local community values and historic layering of cultural and natural values.<sup>5</sup>

This paper offers two layers of evaluation of the urban campus: (i) as a historic urban landscape – a storyteller of national socio-economic developments; and (ii) as a “common design problem,”<sup>6</sup> which in Auckland developed by anchoring along a “site row”<sup>7</sup> system while in Turin developed via urban polarities.

### **Auckland City Centre Campus: The “Site Row”**

The core of the Auckland campus shows a superimposition of layers of the pre-industrial, colonial and modern growth of Princes Street and Symonds Street, closely connected on one flank with the Auckland Central Business District (CBD) through historic Albert Park, and on the other to the rising of Symonds Street towards the sacred volcanic cone of Maungawhau (Mt Eden).

The first Auckland University College, an 1882 establishment by Act of Parliament comprising 95 students and four teaching staff,<sup>8</sup> was housed in a few disused government-owned or temporarily built “quaim ramshackle wooden buildings.”<sup>9</sup> The settlement was always influenced by a longstanding quarrel regarding the Old Government House (OGH) acquisition by the University, with the opposition supporting the wish for the Governor’s functions – and the capital – to return to Auckland.

Between 1908 and 1919, the University acquired additional old buildings in the area and land (the Metropolitan Ground or “cow paddock” adjoining the OGH Grounds). Here the campus was set in its original site when the new Arts Building (now known as the Clock Tower) opened, in 1926.

The construction marked the success of the first campaign to maintain the central seat (and the alignment with the OGH) on the premise that education should be accessible to workers employed in the town in the 1920s, considering the rapid growth of the enrolments.

The second wave of growth implemented a layout still visible today, the 1960 “Block Plan,” featuring signature modern buildings on the banks of the Symonds Street artery.<sup>10</sup>

Leading to it, much debate on how to accommodate the foreseen exponential academic boom of the post-war period had included some realistic outskirts possibilities – lobbied by commercial groups – as the University had bought some more outlying lands. The decision was to maintain the Princes Street location, as more convenient than the ground works needed at the newly purchased Hobson Bay plots and closer to the hospital for the Medical School.

With the 1962 abolition of the University of New Zealand, the University of Auckland became an independent institution and initiated a massive building programme that spanned three decades, focusing on increasing student facilities as residential, recreational and shared spaces. In 1965 the University was operating over 80 buildings, mostly set around the original location. Seven new buildings, in particular, are a signature of late New Zealand architectural modernism of the Block Plan: General Library, Engineering, Science, Student Union complex, Thomas Building for biological sciences, School of Architecture and Planning and Maclaurin Chapel.<sup>11</sup> By the end of this period (ca 1988, marked by the construction of the Waipapa Marae complex), the student roll accounted for more than 13,000 inscriptions.

In the 2000s, another building programme saw large-scale developments filling the interstices, adjoining and connecting multiple buildings. The new builds included the Kate Edger Information Commons and Student Commons, the Engineering Atrium and library wing, the seven-floor extension to the Science Centre and the large and striking Sir Owen G. Glenn Building for the Business School, and the Maths and Physics buildings were all completed before 2011.<sup>12</sup>

Today, the University of Auckland is the largest in New Zealand, hosting over 40,000 students across five Auckland de-centralised campuses, with two of them in the process of being decommissioned, with consolidation to the Princes and Symonds Street site.<sup>13</sup> The City Campus has become its historic heart, on which to implement ordinary and extraordinary maintenance and repair strategies encouraged by the guidance of local conservation

experts.<sup>14</sup> This approach guarantees attention to the materials and minimised waste of resources, both physical and tangible – the materials themselves – and cultural and intangible – the techniques, the designs, and the layers of history embedded in the fabric. Heritage conservation consultancy highlighted, for example, Old Government House, Old Arts Building, Student Union Centre, Alfred Nathan House, Maclaurin Chapel, Old Choral Hall, Kenneth Myers centre, the former Auckland Synagogue, and more.

More recent buildings have needed repairs as well, sometimes due to the use of less durable materials in the increasingly harsh Auckland weather and other times due to the difficulty of detailing the intricate space filling – some roofs being vulnerable areas, especially flat roofs, multiple-levels and wall-to-roof junctions in an environment where there is consistent rainfall during the year.

On some occasions, the conservation policies have fallen short against the new development dynamics, like in the case of the Maidment Theatre demolition, an integral part of the Student Union Building, and the School of Architecture and Planning Library abandonment, demonstrating a lack of cultural heritage conservation perspective.

The following sample represents three highly decisive moments of the UoA as an urban campus: OGH (pre-university city catalyst), the Old Arts Building (first purpose-built building of the UoA) and the Student Union Complex (a high-profile student facility building with a peculiar architectural value and relationship with the site).

#### *The Old Government House: The Core*

The OGH is highly cherished by the UoA, which has expressed its vision for the future of the building acknowledging the benefits and the responsibility for the *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship)<sup>15</sup> of this unique part of the nation's heritage in Auckland.<sup>16</sup> The building sits within a historic landscape of prime value (from its grounds to the extended Princes Street landscape, including the early fortification of Albert Barrack's Wall, the early colonial buildings and St Andrew's Church).

Built in 1855-1856 to house the first Governor of New Zealand after the 1852 Constitution Act, before the relocation of the Government to Wellington, in 1965.<sup>17</sup> It was the largest residence of its period. The architect, William Mason, was the first Superintendent of Public Works in New Zealand and established the first formal architectural practice in the country. The materials of the two storeys, "similar to large country houses in nineteenth-century Britain,"<sup>18</sup>

were mostly locally sourced and especially notable is the monumental kauri facade's elements fashioned to mimic a neoclassical masonry building, a feature that was criticised for being deceiving of its material's spirit,<sup>19</sup> but which is now considered a specificity for conservation strategies. Several proposals for the use of the OGH and its grounds as a prestigious seat of the University were made during both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, it was not until 1969 that it started hosting the senior staff common spaces and hospitality, temporary accommodation, a lecture hall in the former ballroom and events such as exhibitions.

Subject to maintenance and upgrading, the building has been modified for safety and response to disasters (like the 1916 fire, which destroyed the roof and upper storey) and to fulfil contemporary requirements. Unfortunately, some of these interventions have facilitated the loss of heritage qualities, and many of the later additions have deteriorated faster than the original parts.<sup>20</sup> To act on the decay of the materials, several programmes have been commissioned from experts between 2004 and 2016.

Despite its popularity and role as the spark of campus shaping, the building and its gardens appear somehow sleepy, under-utilised and under-maintained. A renewed vision could likely bring to light its potential, enhancing and implementing the conservation strategies already in place.



**Figure 1.** Old Government House entrance, 2015  
(Candida Rolla for Salmond Reed Architects).



**Figure 2.** Old Government House interiors, 2015  
(Candida Rolla for Salmond Reed Architects).

*The Old Arts Building and Clock Tower: The Symbol*

At 22 Princes Street, “still dominating any view of the University,”<sup>21</sup> is the iconic Old Arts Building. Designed by American-born, Australian and New Zealand resident Roy Lippincott and his partner Edward Billson, it was built in 1923-1926.

Lippincott, involved with the “Chicago School” of architects influenced by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, delivered several projects in Auckland, amongst which, in the university campus, are the Students’ Association building, the north-west wing of Choral Hall, the Caretaker’s Cottage and the Biology building, while in the broader city of Auckland, two main commercial buildings can be mentioned: Smith and Caughey’s Department Store building and the Farmers Trading Company Tearooms and façade renovation.<sup>22</sup>

The first major freestanding structure erected by the Auckland University College “was carefully sited: the prospect from Symonds Street, to the east, was impressive, while from the west side of Victoria Street the tower seemed a crown to Albert Park,”<sup>23</sup> effectively locking in the “site row” dynamic between Princes Street and Symonds Street, which the following era will develop further.

This design, so well-appreciated today, was criticized by the architect’s peers, especially the characteristic tower, accused of being “un-British and out of harmony with our national



character.”<sup>24</sup> The visually striking divide from the more usual English vocabulary of the surroundings (e.g. Old Choral Hall) aligned with the function of an Arts building, in the research of more expressive and progressive uses of form, as did the tributes to New Zealand’s native environment within the Art Nouveau decorative apparatus (stone flax seed pods, ponga fronds, kaka or kea, which generated use of the term “Māori Gothic” for its styling) built in prestigious local materials, especially the Mt Somers and Oamaru stone cladding.



**Figure 3.** Princes Street view of Clock Tower Building, 2021  
(Candida Rolla).

*The Student Union Centre and Maidment Theatre: The Brutalist*

The 1968 Student Union complex, a staple of New Zealand brutalist architecture, is a post-tensioned, precast concrete structure clad with aggregate panels and concrete blocks, with steel details and connections between elements that host students’ facilities and services in a filtering public space, designed for pedestrian routes from Albert Park to Symonds Street, and through later buildings.

It gained Warren & Mahoney a regional architecture award in the heritage category in 2001 for its quality of impressive late modern design, with its geometric arrangement which elevates circulation, access and open space to be more crucial than the buildings themselves, like the

two freestanding staircase bridges, framed in precast concrete columns and beams, which divide the main space into three, with the large open court spaces.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 4.** Student Union Building, 1999  
(Salmond Architects).

The U-shaped complex was disfigured when its northwest wing, the Maidment Theatre, was recently demolished. When in November 2016, the news of the theatre's destiny was revealed, public opinion most strongly opposed the proposed demolition. The Maidment had been closed for almost a year due to seismic concerns and the University had just then revealed management's scepticism about both cost efficiency and efficacy of the strengthening works required and the introduction of a redevelopment proposal, including a new performing arts facility.<sup>26</sup>

The 1976 building was a crucial centre for Auckland's theatre community, which released some comments in response, disagreeing with the "non-fit-for-purpose" definition, with scepticism towards the promise of a new venue. As of today, the building has been demolished, and the new performing arts facility is still waiting for funding to become available.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 5.** Maidment Theatre interiors, 1999  
(Salmond Architects).



**Figure 6.** Maidment Theatre demolition plot, 2022  
(Candida Rolla).



### **Politecnico di Torino: City Campus and Urban Polarities**

Turin urban landscape was the seat of the Kingdom of Savoy and the first capital of Italy; the city was also a keystone for the Italian post-war development strategies, culminating in the economic miracle of the 1960s. Perhaps all readers would have in mind the images of the iconic Lingotto Building with its large helicoidal ramp that runs up to the roof shaped like a car's testing track. It appeared in the British cult movie directed by Peter Collinson, *The Italian Job (Un colpo all'Italiana)*, of 1969.

The great moving force of mass motorisation embodies Italy's industrial progress and major social challenges, such as the south-to-north migration, from the agricultural sector. In 1959, planning strategies were conceived to adapt the urban structure to the massive workforce coming.<sup>28</sup>

In the same years, the city of Turin was also the stage of university protests for institutional reform; and the Politecnico, through the Student Association and the National Secretariat, initiated a series of self-organised conferences named "Facoltà di Architettura e Territorio" (Faculty of Architecture and Territory) on 5-7 May 1962.<sup>29</sup> These compelling debates demonstrated the need to reform the urban culture of architectural design through three key points: (i) the use of the term "territory" as a subject of ideological contention between architects and planners; (ii) the publishing, in that year of a famous article written for *Casabella* by a not even thirty-year-old Aldo Rossi exposing the "new problems" in designing Italian territories and his design proposal for the Centro Direzionale di Torino; and (iii) the conference venue, Valentino's Castle, the iconic seat of the Politecnico di Torino.

It is generally recognised by historians and critics that the crucial intellectual switch within Italian post-war discourse on the city dates back to the early 1960s.<sup>30</sup> A local debate arose around the "new dimension of the city" centred on the contrast between the *city-region* and the *city-territory*.<sup>31</sup> Both decentralisation strategies "continued to be conceived as a remedial practice for urban congestion,"<sup>32</sup> but while the *city-region* relied on economic plans elaborated by multidisciplinary groups, the *city-territory* was sustained by architects who reclaimed the importance of physical formations over regulations and codes. Amid this dispute sits the notion of *Centro Direzionale*, that is, a large-scale infrastructure of tertiary services situated between the city and its countryside, imagined as the most concrete materialisation of the new dimension of the city.

Amongst the different voices animating the debate of those years – Samonà, Quaroni, Aymonino, De Carlo and Tafuri – Aldo Rossi had the strongest argument in defence of the unity between architecture and urbanism, firmly convinced that only architectural forms could have successfully expressed such an experimental season. Rossi's critique emerged between the lines of his 1962 article and into the competition entry for the Centro Direzionale di Torino, a “radically urbanized architecture” consisting of a giant square ring – 300 meters long and 127 meters high – suspended on towering hollow columns and penetrated by the road's infrastructures, named by the authors “Locomotiva 2.”<sup>33</sup>

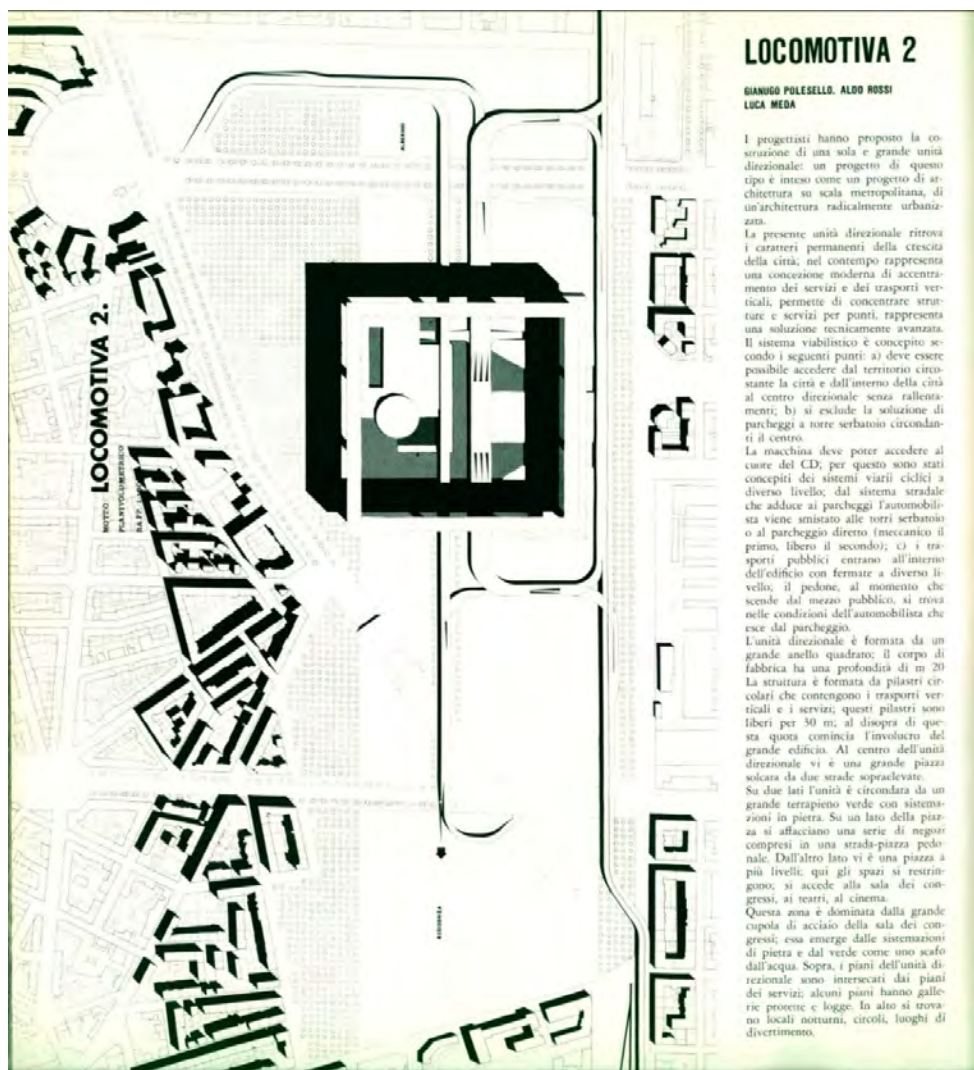


Figure 7. Locomotiva 2, design proposal by Aldo Rossi, Gianugo Polesello and Luca Meda (1962) for the Concorso per il Centro Direzionale di Torino (*Casabella*, no. 278, 1963).

With this project, the designers were affirming the permanence of everyday urban life, “the production of further actions and the adaptation to unpredictable events.”<sup>34</sup> Turin required a

civic polarity to connect economic power and production logic, struggling to recognise, acknowledge and emancipate the workforce, but the design was criticised and rejected for its rigidity and the inadequate sense of self-confinement.<sup>35</sup>

The Politecnico had been essential in this context of turmoil; the self-organised conference was the first of many initiatives – before and during the student occupations – which took place in Valentino’s Castle.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 8. Students protesting (Casabella, no. 287, 1964).

This site of historical transformations and episodic adaptations has been operating in the city as a *fatto urbano* (urban fact), as Aldo Rossi’s upcoming and successful theory about “the architecture of the city” (1966) describes this concept. Sometimes translated as “urban events” rather than “urban artefacts,” to emphasise collective will behind the object-form, Rossi’s *fatto*



*urbano* is the main constituent of the city and its partial nature, or the only concrete manifestation of the myth of continuity through which the city forms itself.<sup>37</sup>

*Valentino's Castle: A Monument and a Symbol, from the Royal Application School for Engineers to the Headquarters of Architecture*

A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997, the castle was purchased by the Savoy family in 1564 as a suburban villa overlooking the river Po. After substantial transformation in the hands of its royal owners, the nineteenth-century interventions determined frequent changes of use and a radical re-orientation of the symmetrical C-shaped composition, turned towards the city.<sup>38</sup> In 1859, it became the headquarters of the Royal Application School for Engineers. Since then, the building has been conditioned by the constant use of students, teachers, scholars, and researchers and several experiments of architectural transformation. This made it a constantly inhabited place and in 1906 it became the first seat of the Politecnico, identified by the university as one of the most present institutional agents in urban dynamics, and represented on the official logo.



**Figure 9.** Castello del Valentino, new main entrance, 2011  
(Candida Rolla).

For a time, the university authorities considered the idea of abandoning the castle for future expansion, but the outbreak of the First World War and the subsequent economic depression saved the historic site.<sup>39</sup>

Over the last 150 years, this striking monument of the historic city has involved a search for balance between conservation and active use, according to a vision that we could define as

“integrated conservation.” The main building saw the addition of different architectural bodies, which compatibly interact with the pre-existing but gradually take on a distinctly contemporary language, to form a real material and spatial palimpsest of ongoing architectural research and education, traditional for the Politecnico.<sup>40</sup>

The first significant addition was the 1869 construction of the “Chevalley sleeve,” designed by Prospero Richelmy and Edoardo Pecco, perpendicular to the southeast court tower and parallel to the course of the river. The sleeve rises to house the hydraulic engineering laboratories, with “the efflux tower and the turbine,” also exploiting the difference in altitude between the court of honour floor and the level of the quay along the Po.<sup>41</sup> The budding of spaces around the castle has continued over time, with the construction since 1890 of the “comb sleeves” buildings with new classrooms responding to the growing number of students and the offices of the academic departments. This part is characterised, as is the former, by the use of brick wall texture in continuity with the historical architectural language. During the Second World War, the castle was severely damaged by bombing and underwent the first cycle of important restorations in 1961, marking the official passage to the headquarters of the School of Architecture.<sup>42</sup>

In 1947 Ottorino Aloisio designed two new “orthophonic” classrooms in reinforced concrete, which today house the bar, the canteen and some computer labs. Due to the lack of classrooms and offices,<sup>43</sup> in 1991 the Politecnico commissioned Sisto Giriodi to design a new wing, which today contains the Central Architecture Library and offices. This intervention concludes the colonisation of the free spaces contextual to the Castle, according to a dialectical relationship “old/new.”<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 10.** Castello del Valentino in 2022, showing the Aloisio and Giriodi projects (Candida Rolla).

In recent decades, the Castle has been involved in conservation works of the monumental rooms (also made suitable from the services' point of view with innovative elements), intended for meeting rooms, and reception rooms and open to the general public in fascinating tours, while the nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions pose some problems of obsolescence of construction technologies and energy adaptation, whose resolution is faced according to sustainability criteria.

*Engineering Building: The Sober Monumentality of the Grand Modern Tradition*

Since 1939, the need of constructing new headquarters for the academic function encouraged modern, efficient, rational and economic solutions, like the complex Palazzo della Moda – presently known as Torino Esposizioni – by Ettore Sottsass senior and Pier Luigi Nervi, for the area south along the river Po, in line with Valentino's Castle. The industrial players operating in the city, however, pushed for the flat area of the former Stadium in Corso Duca Degli Abruzzi.<sup>45</sup>

On these premises, the new Engineering Building was inaugurated in 1958, in a functional pavilion-type layout obtained by the repetition of identical linear blocks connected by orthogonal longer volumes. Since technological innovation was the basis of this investment, some generous spaces were dedicated to applied research, in conversation with the city's industrial sector.<sup>46</sup> Symbolically, a precise sequence along the central axis was arranged from the Rectorate to the above-the-ground Aula Magna, passing through the Valentino's Castle-inspired *cour d'honneur*. This building introduced a precise architectural principle of

coexistence within the city: the highly functional comb-like structure – also derived from the world of production – overturns the typically closed city block and intersects with a ceremonial promenade producing a dense urban atmosphere accompanied by a sense of sober monumentality.<sup>47</sup> One of the most interesting experiments of densification in this newly invented urban block was coordinated by Roberto Gabetti in 1988, divided into three specific interventions thickening the interstitial spaces of the existing structure and its interface with the surrounding urban landscape in continuous transformation.<sup>48</sup>

*Ex-OGR and “Cittadella Politecnica”: In the Footsteps of a Simple Civil Architecture*

The urban nature of the Polytechnic of Turin university campus soon became inseparable from the planning instruments. While the university aimed to reach 40,000 students, the New Town Plan of the City of Turin (1987-1995) identified a strategic “urban transformation area” in the surroundings of the new Engineering Building. The adjacent lot, a disused railway area known as OGR (Officine Grandi Riparazioni), became the site for the expansion that would double the space available. With the 1994 project *Cittadella Politecnica* (Polytechnic Citadel), the university campus began operating as an urban regenerator. The main goal was to implement academic activities in a variety of spaces for students, teachers and researchers. At the same time, it became a place of exchange with cafes, libraries and common services open to the city. The first phase aimed at the recovery and conversion of existing buildings – former turneries and former forges used in the past for the repair of railway vehicles (the external shape of the shed-roofed blocks is fully maintained while their interior is completely re-functionalized and the in-between space excavated to create a public courtyard); the second completed the expansion with a multi-storey square ring that rises above the ground level on the two sides crossed by a major traffic artery. The architect and urbanist, Vittorio Gregotti, was just like Rossi, among the protagonists of the Italian debate of the early 1960s, which is the reason why this architectural form evokes the visionary proposal by Rossi-Polesello-Meda of 1962 for the Centro Direzionale di Torino, materialising it into radical (university) projects able to act as the main agent of the new territorial dimension.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 11.** Aerial view of Politecnico Engineering Building, 1958 ('Politecnico di Torino. Nuova Sede', Provveditorato delle Opere Pubbliche per il Piemonte, Ufficio del Genio Civile di Torino).

## Conclusions

It is not safe to extrapolate recent changes into the future: in other words, it is not clear which changes will be seen to be phases and which will prove to be trends.<sup>50</sup>

Considering the context of global crises involving cities, within the campus design literature, urban iterations have been relegated, more often than not, as a secondary appendage to a mythical tradition of planning experiments, or, with the explosion of campuses and multifunctional higher-education buildings, as experiments of the most followed “university trends.”<sup>51</sup> In this space lies the novelty of the present paper, which aims to encourage a discussion about the relationship between the city and campus through the lens of tangible and intangible heritage, as the international guidelines suggest.

The two case studies compared, Auckland and Turin, whether condensed in the reinforcement of a road axes system crossing a peculiar and evocative landscape (Auckland) or the strategic dislocation of urban polarities within the city social fabric (Turin), embody the metamorphosis of the university’s missions over time in response to the unique opportunities and restraints the city provides.<sup>52</sup> The reconquest of urban areas by campuses is a chronicle of complex



architectural interventions imagined to make a certain idea of the city survive while providing the spaces and services allowing the university to thrive.

This paper highlighted how the urban university campus represents a different archetype to the usual pre-packaged and pre-planned contemporary “trends”: it “conquers” the territory, produces dynamics, reconnects to historic facts and events, and acts as the theatre of historic urban landscape narratives. In both cases, the new image responds to the logic of the Historic Urban Landscape approach.

The Auckland City Campus story showcases strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the future enhancement of historic urban landscapes of international value and the consolidation of a sense of *kaitiakitanga* of this citadel of knowledge and its tangible and intangible heritage layers.

The ethos of the Politecnico’s case, well summarised by Carlo Alberto Barbieri, shows three strategic criteria of expansion: (i) densification of functions around excellent nodes of the territorial framework and mobility; (ii) enhancement of urban, environmental and landscape qualities or achievement of new ones; and (iii) implementation of widespread quality, environmental and landscape protection and regeneration. In such a view, the role of Politecnico is to “enable and develop Turin as a city in which the university is a strategic urban function, character, value and competitive and internationalization factor of the city.”<sup>53</sup> A possibility for future development of the present research is trying to translate these strategies to other urban city campus realities in different geographical contexts, or to focus on the different elements of historic urban landscapes, highlighting the effectiveness of the approach in consolidating the urban campus as a crucial element of symbiosis with the city development. If the urban university campus is *de facto* utilised to drive the development of the hosting city – a “trend” that reveals itself in different “shapes” internationally during the modern-to-contemporary era – then it would be useful that the institutional stakeholders focused on the social and environmental values, including proper heritage conservation strategies that can pivot on international tools and influences, harmoniously implementing knowledge in the existing city fabric.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland: 1883-1983* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1983), 239.

<sup>2</sup> The current research and this paper are the result of the shared work and reflection of the authors, with a transdisciplinary gaze. However, the section “Auckland City Centre Campus: The ‘Site Row’,” is

to be attributed to Candida Rolla; “Politecnico Di Torino: City Campus and Urban Polarities” to Marco Moro; and “Valentino’s Castle: A Monument and a Symbol, from the Royal Application School for Engineers to the Headquarters of Architecture” to Monica Naretto.

<sup>3</sup> From Paul V. Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Haar, *The City as Campus: Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO World Heritage, *The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape: Report of the Second Consultation on its Implementation by Member States*, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Avermaete and Cathelijne Nuijsink, “Architectural Contact Zones: Another Way to Write Global Histories of the Post-War Period?,” *Architectural Theory Review*, 25, no. 3 (2021): 350-61.

<sup>7</sup> Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*. Originally, the term “site row” referred to the debate about the campus relocation, in that instance “row” meant argument. This paper is utilising it as a play on the linear geometry of the campus.

<sup>8</sup> University of Auckland, *Main Campus Development 1987* (KRTA limited Engineers Architects Scientist Planners NZ), 8; and University of Auckland, “The University History,” “Key Developments 1883-2000s,” [www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/the-university/university-history/key-developments-1883-2000s.html](http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/the-university/university-history/key-developments-1883-2000s.html) (accessed 19 March 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> University of Auckland, *Main Campus Development 1987*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Julia Gatley (ed.), *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand’s New Architecture, 1904-1984* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008), 179.

<sup>12</sup> University of Auckland, “History of the University of Auckland,” [www.calendar.auckland.ac.nz/en/info/history.html](http://www.calendar.auckland.ac.nz/en/info/history.html) (accessed 19 March 2023).

<sup>13</sup> University of Auckland, “Key Developments 1883-2000s.”

<sup>14</sup> Salmond Reed Architects has been curating several maintenance and repair projects on the existing buildings of the University of Auckland campus.

<sup>15</sup> Kaitiakitanga is “duty of customary trusteeship, stewardship, guardianship, and protection of land, resources, or taonga.” *ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Value*, 2010, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Jasmax and Salmond Reed Architects for the University of Auckland, “Old Government House, Auckland: Conservation and Improvements; Application for Government Funding” (draft), November 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Jasmax and Salmond Reed Architects, “Old Government House,” 13.

<sup>18</sup> Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, “Government House (Former),” [www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/105/Government%20House%20\(Former\)](http://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/105/Government%20House%20(Former)) (accessed 20 March 2023).

<sup>19</sup> John Stacpoole, *William Mason. The First Colonial Architect* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1971)

<sup>20</sup> Jasmax and Salmond Reed Architects, “Old Government House,” 8.

<sup>21</sup> University of Auckland, “A History of the University of Auckland, 1883-1983: A Panorama of the University of Auckland”

[www.thebookshelf.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Sinclair/pg18\\_utview\\_m1\\_lblA%20Panorama%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Auckland.pdf](http://www.thebookshelf.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Sinclair/pg18_utview_m1_lblA%20Panorama%20of%20the%20University%20of%20Auckland.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, “Old Arts Building, University of Auckland”

<https://www.heritage.org.nz/list-details/25/Old%20Arts%20Building%2C%20University%20of%20Auckland>.

<sup>23</sup> Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*, 127-28.

<sup>24</sup> Conversation between Lippincott and the Education Department’s architect J. T. Mair reported in Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*, 127-28.

<sup>25</sup> Warren and Mahoney, *New Territory: Warren and Mahoney; 50 years of New Zealand Architecture* (Auckland: Balasoglou Books, 2005), 206, 207.

<sup>26</sup> Hannah Bartlett, “University of Auckland’s Maidment Theatre to Close for Good,” *News Talk ZB*, 2 November 2016, [www.newstalkzb.co.nz/news/national/university-of-aucklands-maidment-theatre-to-close-for-good/](http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/news/national/university-of-aucklands-maidment-theatre-to-close-for-good/).

<sup>27</sup> University of Auckland, “History of the University of Auckland.”

<sup>28</sup> See Città di Torino, Ufficio Tecnico LL.PP., “Il Piano Regolatore Generale della Città di Torino approvato con Decreto Presidenziale 6 Ottobre 1959,” *Atti & Rassegna Tecnica*, n.s., XIV, no. 3-4 (1960): 2-5; Carlo Olmo, *Cantieri e disegni, architetture e piani per Torino 1945-1990* (Torino: Allemandi, 1992).

<sup>29</sup> See “Torino. Monopolo e depressione culturale,” *Casabella*, no. 287 (1964): 24-27.

- <sup>30</sup> See Mario Ferrari, *Il progetto urbano in Italia: 1940–1990* (Florence: Alinea, 2005).
- <sup>31</sup> While the expression “*nuova dimensione*” was introduced by Giuseppe Samonà in 1959, the two alternative ideas are well documented via Italian architectural journals such as *Casabella*, no. 27 (1962). Among the recent contributions on this debate, see Francesco Zuddas, “The Eccentric Outsider: Or, Why Reyner Banham Dismissed Giuseppe Samonà’s Mega-Project for the University of Cagliari,” *Histories of Postwar Architecture* 1, no.3 (2019): 50-71.
- <sup>32</sup> Zuddas, “The Eccentric Outsider,” 60.
- <sup>33</sup> In collaboration with Gianugo Polesello and Luca Meda. The project is published in *Casabella*, no. 278 (1963).
- <sup>34</sup> Pier Vittorio Aureli, “The Difficult Whole,” *Log*, no. 9 (2007): 39-61.
- <sup>35</sup> Although no explicit mention appears in architectural specialised magazines, we could consider it more than a coincidence that the same year (7 July 1962) a huge mass of FIAT workers famously marched from the Mirafiori plant to the central Piazza Statuto, literally bringing the struggle from the factory to the city core.
- <sup>36</sup> These initiatives are accurately reported in Elena Dellapiana, “*Architettura e/o Rivoluzione*, up at the Castle. A Self-Convended Conference in Turin (April, 25-27, 1969),” *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, 1, no. 2 (2018): 1-16.
- <sup>37</sup> The suggestion of *urban event* is from Pier Vittorio Aureli, “The Difficult Whole,” 39. Rossi’s view on the architecture of the city is notably related to Padua’s Palazzo della Ragione: “I remarked on its permanent character before, but now by permanence I mean not only that one can still experience the form of the past in this monument but that the physical form of the past has assumed different functions and has continued to function, conditioning the urban area in which it stands and continuing to constitute an important urban focus.” In Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1982), 59.
- <sup>38</sup> The VI National Exhibition of Industrial Products (1856) is among the transitory occupations that instigated the overturning of the main front of the castle.
- <sup>39</sup> New buildings were designed, but never built, by Prof. Ing. Angelo Reyceud and later by the engineers Giacomo Salvadori of Wiesenhoff and Stefano Molli. See Giuseppe M. Pugno, *Storia del Politecnico di Torino: Dalle origini alla vigilia della seconda guerra mondiale* (Turin: Stamperia Artistica Nazionale, 1959).
- <sup>40</sup> Annalisa Dameri, *Il Politecnico al Castello. La Regia Scuola di Applicazione per gli Ingegneri al Valentino*, in Costanza Roggero, Annalisa Dameri (a cura di), *Il Castello del Valentino* (Torino: Allemandi, 2007), 73.
- <sup>41</sup> Vittorio Marchis, *Disegnare Progettare Costruire. 150 anni di arte e scienza nelle collezioni del Politecnico di Torino* (Torino: Fondazione Cassa di Ripsarmio di Torino, 2009).
- <sup>42</sup> La Facoltà di Architettura was established in 1929.
- <sup>43</sup> Dameri, *Il Politecnico al Castello*, 75-76.
- <sup>44</sup> Alberto Ferlenga, Eugenio Vassallo, Francesca Schellino (eds), *Antico e nuovo: architetture e architettura* (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2007).
- <sup>45</sup> On the architecture competition, in which take part various exponents of Italian modernism such as Giovanni Muzio and Adalberto Libera, see *60: il Politecnico di Torino e la costruzione della città nel Novecento : la sede di corso Duca degli Abruzzi nel sessantesimo anniversario della sua inaugurazione*, ed. Marianna Gaetani (Turin: Politecnico di Torino, 2018).
- <sup>46</sup> While general consultancy was entrusted to architect Giovanni Muzio, in collaboration with Carlo Mollino, the executive stage of the singular projects was in the hands of engineer Vittorio Bonadè Bottino, then in charge of the Plant Construction Section of FIAT after he had taken part in the Lingotto Building project.
- <sup>47</sup> A sizeable private donation from the Agnelli family was provided to complete the most expensive but also the most representative interventions.
- <sup>48</sup> See Roberto Gabetti, ‘Una protratta epoché’, *Zodiac*, no. 7 (1992): 184-89.
- <sup>49</sup> The same year of Rossi’s *L’Architettura della Città*, Vittorio Gregotti published the seminal *Il Territorio dell’architettura* (Milano: Feltrinelli 1966). On the season of 1970s university projects in Italy, see Francesco Zuddas, *The University as a Settlement Principle: Territorialising Knowledge in Late 1960s Italy* (London: Routledge, 2019). In late 1980s, when Gregotti was in charge of the New Town Plan of Turin and the project of Cittadella Politecnica, his office had just begun one of the first urban regenerations of Milan in the Bicocca university district remembered as “a simple civil architecture.” In ‘Gli enzimi dell’architettura’, *Domus*, no. 895 (2006).
- <sup>50</sup> Sinclair, *A History of the University of Auckland*.

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<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Coulson, Paul Robert and Isabelle Taylor, *University Trends: Contemporary Campus Design* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>52</sup> In Turin's case, the urban intervention strategy still in progress is coordinated by the Masterplan team of the Politecnico, also illustrated in Caterina Barioglio, Antonio De Rossi, Giovanni Durbiano et al, "Verso un'università della città: il caso studio del Masterplan per i campus del Politecnico di Torino," *Eco Web Town*, no.17 (2018):198-209.

<sup>53</sup> Carlo Alberto Barbieri, *Analisi dei sistemi territoriali: Ateneo e Città*, in Politecnico di Torino, *Masterplan di Ateneo. Processo per l'elaborazione di una strategia di Ateneo per lo sviluppo armonico e funzionale dei suoi campus in relazione al territorio*, V3/171221, 35, nota 2.

# Matemateāone – A Journey Beyond ‘Maori’ Architecture: Exploring a Te Māhurehure (Hapū) Approach to Architecture through Whakapapa

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## **Abstract**

*George Wēpiha Melbourne was one of the last Tūhoe (tribal iwi) whare tūpuna (ancestral house) architects. His works included: Kura Mihi Rangi, a wharepuni at Te Rewarewa Marae in Rūātoki, and Hiona (also known as Te Whare Kawana) at Maungapohatu, one of the most recognisable buildings in ‘Māori’ architecture.*

*At present, there is no comprehensive analysis of a hapū architecture. George Wēpiha Melbourne is of Te Māhurehure hapū, making his work a significant starting point in the study of architecture rooted in a hapū-specific context.*

*To explore the events that likely influenced George Melbourne’s works, this paper investigates a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure history through the socio-relational and geographic lens of a selected George Wēpiha Melbourne whakapapa line. From this position of shared identity, elements of a hapū-focused architecture will be stipulated, thereby allowing for the works of George Wēpiha Melbourne to be studied and presented accordingly in this paper.*

## **Whakatupunga: Introductory Cultivation**

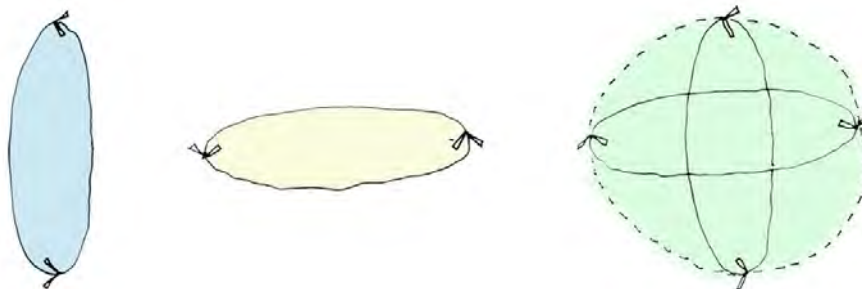
Matemateāone is a phrase specific to Tūhoe. It describes an affectionate relationship Tūhoe have with one another and their whenūa (a binary [spiritual and physical] relationship to a place). This paper investigates architecture from a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure kaupapa (approach) based on a specific whakapapa. Matemateāone grounds the position of this work within a Tūhoe dialect from the start, thereby allowing the boundaries of Te Māhurehure within this work to be organised by the selected whakapapa line presented in the “Ngā Paia/The Roots: An Investigation of a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure History through a George Wēpiha Melbourne Whakapapa” section of this paper.

Before a general outline of this paper is introduced, the terms Te Ao Māori, whakapapa, hapū, whare tūpuna and Māori architecture will be presented to ensure a greater level of shared

understanding. As there are many variations to these terms, the extent to which they are presented here is simply for the use of this paper.

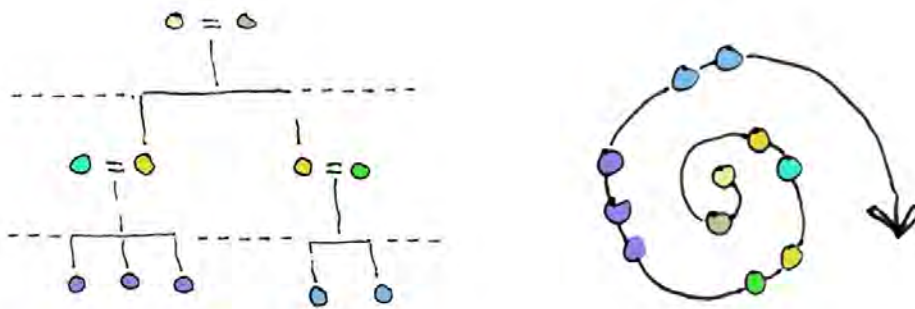
In her text *Māori Philosophy: Indigenous Thinking from Aotearoa*, Georgina Stewart (Ngāpuhi) perceives 'Te Ao Māori' in two senses. The first is the 'traditional Māori world' that Stewart describes as being the Māori world frozen in time by colonisation. The second sense is the Māori world that has and will continue to evolve under the influence of everything that has happened since colonisation.<sup>1</sup> Stewart's kōrero (discussion) is the cornerstone of how Te Ao Māori will be understood in this work.

Hirini Moko Mead (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tūhoe and Tūhourangi), in *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values*, affirms 'whakapapa' as an enduring element that connects all ecologies within Te Ao Māori.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Stewart describes whakapapa as a guide to world and human behaviours by viewing the world as a genealogical model that provides an ethical basis for the relationship between nature and people (whānaungatanga [kinship] and kaitiakitanga [guardianship]).<sup>3</sup> In *Tikanga Whakaaro: Key concept in Māori Culture*, Cleve Barlow describes whakapapa as the genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present. These bigger concepts of whakapapa provide context to the approximated English translations of whakapapa. Genealogy, for example, is not restricted to human lineage within a whakapapa context. Another translation of whakapapa is to 'lay on top of another' or 'stacking', which could suggest a vertical component, possibly referencing the Papatuanuku (earth mother) and Ranginui (sky father) separation narrative, which would affirm Barlow's position. Drawing from the above kōrero, this work understands whakapapa as an evolving spatial axis of socio-geographic connections.



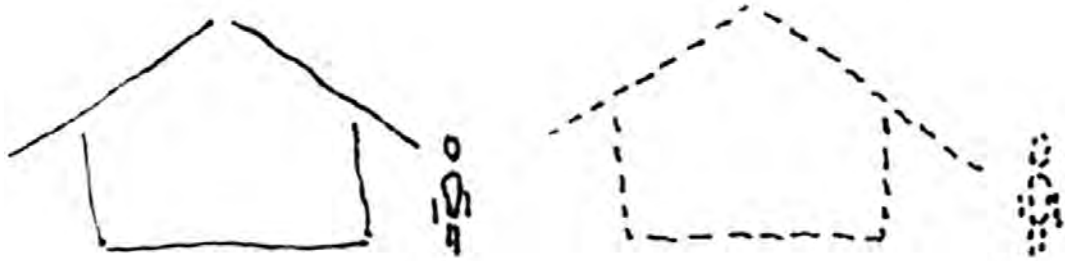
**Figure 1. Whakapapa.** From left, the blue illustration indicates ongoing Whakawhānaungatanga (kinship). The yellow illustration indicates Wā (place) specific to whakawhānaungatanga. The green illustrates Whakapapa in the context of this work (Whakawhānaungatanga + Wā): evolving spatial axis of socio-geographic connections (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

As this work is centred on a hapū analysis of architecture, the parameters of hapū must be outlined. Mead explains that a hapū generally consists of more than one whānau (family group), with whakapapa being the binding agent connecting the whānau units.<sup>4</sup> Mead goes on to say that hapū was used as a metaphor by our tūpuna for pregnancy which asserts all members of a hapū are born of the same womb.<sup>5</sup> Today, a hapū can be found within a hapū, sometimes due to political boundaries that intersect an iwi or hapū territory. In other cases, it is simply a result of population growth or migration from rural to urban centres. Leonie Pihama (Te Atiawa, Ngāti Mahanga and Nga Mahanga a Tairi) notes that the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process has favoured iwi, consequently marginalising hapū and whānau, and in doing so, giving more contemporary prominence, especially within mainstream environments, to iwi.<sup>6</sup> This work perceives hapū as a reconstitution of whakapapa at a smaller scale. The union between George Wēpiha Melbourne and Hinematiaro Te Purewa will define the hapū scope of this work. This union will be explained further in “Ngā Paia/The Roots: An Investigation of Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure History through a George Wēpiha Melbourne Whakapapa.”



**Figure 2.** *Hapūtanga*. Left: illustration of hapū genealogical representation. Right: illustration articulates hapū in the context of this work as it relates to whakapapa (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

The term ‘whare tūpuna’ will be understood both as an ancestral meeting house and an extension of the lived tūpuna (ancestor) of which the house is named. Though some whare tūpuna have carved elements, ethnographer Elsdon Best outlines an Io (Supreme being) narrative, stating that Whare-kura, a replica of the temple of the same name at Maraenui, Rangiparaui (the third heaven if ascending), was the first house constructed on Papatuanuku.<sup>7</sup> The decorative designs of Whare-kura were said to be painted not carved.<sup>8</sup> George Wēpiha Melbourne’s works are predominantly painted. Hence the definition of whare tūpuna within this work is anchored to suit.



**Figure 3.** *Talking to vs. Speaking to Whare Tupuna.*  
Solid line representation of “talking to” with dashed line demonstrating  
the reciprocal relationship between body and whare tupuna  
(Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Expanding on the above ideas of whare tūpuna, in *Speaking to and Talking about Māori Architecture*, Michael Linzey highlights that when “talking about” Māori architecture, we are standing in a European mindset.<sup>9</sup> However, when we are “speaking to” Māori architecture, we are coming from the position of the orator who is standing on a marae and is speaking to the whare tupuna.<sup>10</sup> Linzey expresses that “talking about” and “speaking to” are two distinctly different ways of understanding architecture. In “speaking to” a whare tūpuna is not like an ancestor, it is an ancestor.<sup>11</sup> Rau Hoskins’ (Ngāti Hau, Ngāpūhi) understanding of Māori architecture is anything involving a Māori client with a Māori focus.<sup>12</sup> Robin Skinner notes when discussing Māori architecture that Māori buildings tended to be understood as simple responses to the material, climate and society.<sup>13</sup> Deidre Brown (Ngāpūhi, Ngāti Kahu) grounds Māori architecture in a reputation founded on changing, rather than static, traditions, with multiple development strands that sometimes compete with each other.<sup>14</sup>

Prioritising a “speaking to” approach, Māori architecture will be understood as a physical genealogical manifestation experienced from a simultaneously reflecting and evolving Te Ao Māori. Hence Māori architecture is also both a building and a body. Brown’s whakāro (thinking), specifically “multiple strands of development,” aligns with Mead’s hapū kaupapa of multiple whānau units connected through whakapapa.

Finally, George Wēpiha Melbourne will be abbreviated down to “Melbourne” moving forward. All other persons with the name Melbourne will be stated in full. For example, James Melbourne.



At present, there is no comprehensive analysis of hapū architecture. This paper aims to demonstrate what a preliminary hapū architectural typology could be. Melbourne is of Te Māhurehure hapū, making his work a significant starting point in the study of architecture rooted in a hapū-specific context.

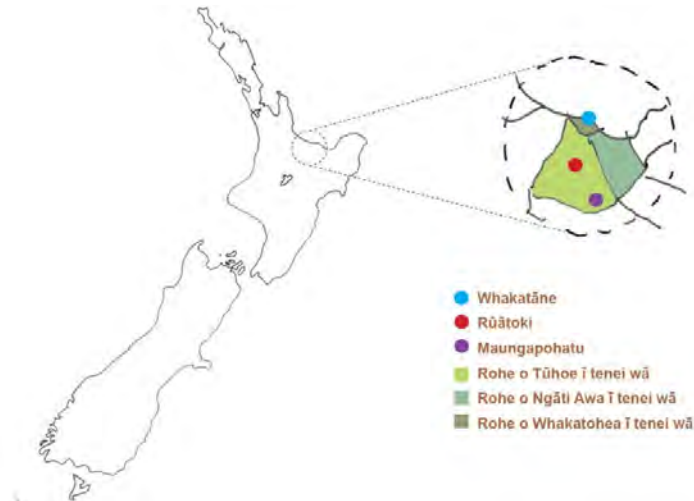
This paper will first aim to locate the reader. In “Ngā Paia/The Roots: An Investigation of a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure History through a George Wēpiha Melbourne Whakapapa,” a brief outline of selected events occurring in the Tūhoe rohe (region) at the time of Melbourne’s birth, upbringing, and culminating with his marriage to Hinematiaro Te Purewā, will be stated. Running in parallel to these events, Melbourne’s direct whakapapa from James Melbourne (father) and Peata Motoi (mother) through to myself will be presented. The primary focus of this section is to present the hapū parameters of this work.

“He Rākau/A Tree: The Intersection between Whakapapa and Architecture” begins by exploring the roles of “Tohunga Whakairo” and “architect.” Tohunga Whakairo will be discussed with specific reference to Melbourne’s whakapapa as outlined in “Ngā Paia/The Roots” and will outline Melbourne’s likely influences foreshadowing his design skill and processes. “He Rākau/A Tree” will conclude by introducing the architectural works of importance relative to the socio-geographic relationships celebrated in “Ngā Paia/The Roots.”

“He Wao/A Forest: A Hapū Architecture” aims to critically reflect on the works presented in “He Rākau/A Tree,” outlining a hapū architecture typology through the evolution of selected works by Melbourne. “He Wao/A Forest” will conclude by reflecting on how a Melbourne hapū kaupapa is situated with more recent architectural works in Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure.

Finally, “Whakatiputipu te Maunga/Raising the Mountain: Concluding Comments and Ongoing Work” will conclude the kaupapa of this work by reflecting on the work presented and possible challenges that lie ahead in future studies within this topic.

## Ngā Paia/The Roots: An Investigation of a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure History through a George Wēpiha Melbourne Whakapapa



**Figure 4.** Locating George Wēpiha Melbourne within Aotearoa – New Zealand (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Melbourne was born in 1867 in Whakatāne to James Melbourne and Peata Motoi. Melbourne's Whakatāne birth places Melbourne in a Ngāti Awa (iwi), and Ngāti Hokopu (hapū) territory, a neighbouring iwi with genealogical connections to Tūhoe.

James Melbourne and Peata Motoi married in Rūātoki (a district within the Tūhoe rohe) likely in early 1865. An account notes that Reverend Carl Volkner performed the marriage ceremony between James Melbourne and Peata Motoi.<sup>15</sup> Volkner, a German-born Anglican missionary, was stationed in Ōpōtiki in Whakatōhea (iwi) territory. In her text *Encircled Lands: Te Urewera, 1820-1921*, Judith Binney notes that Whakatōhea and Ngāti Awa knew Volkner was acting as an informant for the government.<sup>16</sup> Binney suggests that Volkner's two roles were in conflict, and as a result was warned not to return to Ōpōtiki following a visit to Auckland in February 1865.

Kereopa Te Rau of Ngāti Rangiwewehi (a hapū of the Te Arawa iwi) and Patara Te Raukaturi, representatives of Pai Mārire (Good and Peaceful) the movement were sent to Ōpōtiki in 1865 by Te Ua Haumene (Pai Mārire leader). Binney states that the teachings of Haumene were grounded in future liberation from colonial forces.<sup>17</sup> Te Rau and Te Raukaturi placed a kati (blockage) in the Ōpōtiki region with the aim of stopping Volkner's return. Volkner arrived back in Ōpōtiki on 1 March, and though Te Rau singled out Volkner, a collective decision was made by a rūnanga (self-governing Māori district council) to execute Volkner that same evening.<sup>18</sup>

Volkner's execution was taken as evidence of Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa and Whakatōhea political rebellion by the government.<sup>19</sup> Volkner's connection to Melbourne, through his parent's marriage, contextualises Melbourne's whakapapa in the wider events occurring in Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa and Whakatōhea rohe of the time.

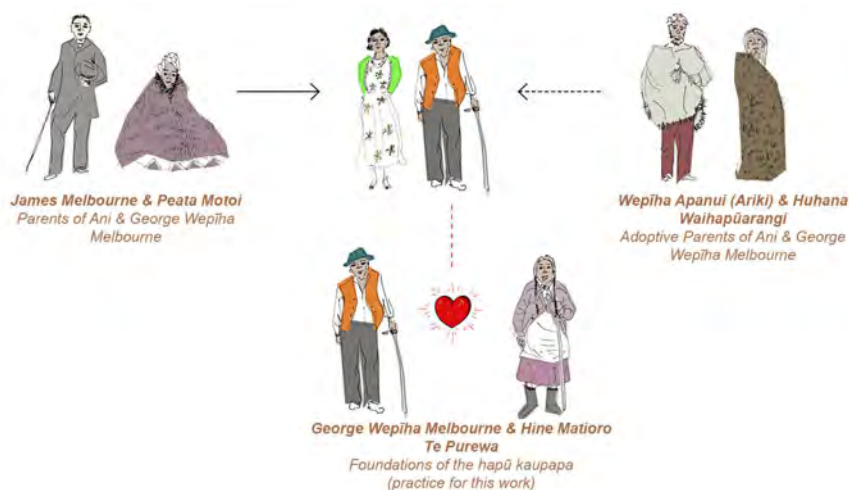
The death of James Te Mautaranui Fulloon, only months after Volkner's death, prompted a more aggressive response from the government. Fulloon was not only Governor Grey's personal interpreter, but he also had whakapapa to Tūhoe and was a cousin to Wēpiha Apanui, one of the last Ariki (high chiefs) and Tohunga Whakairo of Ngāti Awa.<sup>20</sup> Fulloon was promoted to captain in the military in 1865 following a government-sponsored visit to Whakatāne and Ōpotiki. Fulloon was searching for information on Te Rau but was unsuccessful. This led to more ambitious military plans for the Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe and Whakatōhea rohe by Fulloon, ultimately leading to his death. The government imposed martial law and set its forces to invade Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe and Whakatōhea rohe as a response.<sup>21</sup> Tūhoe insisted that they played no part in Fulloon's death as he was one of them.<sup>22</sup> The same can be said for Apanui and Ngāti Awa. The government's response overwhelmed Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa.

Focusing on Tūhoe, the 1866 land confiscations, as a part of the government's response, ignited a rebellion in Tūhoe that had not been seen.<sup>23</sup> Confiscated lands were taken without an understanding of how it would affect hapū. The Native Land Court became the new battleground where iwi and hapū were pitched against each other, dividing those loyal to the government and those termed as rebels. Melbourne's upbringing sits alongside the preliminary effects of the Native Land Court. Remembering that Melbourne was born and raised in Whakatāne, it is important to note that in 1866, a year before Melbourne's birth, most lands from Ngāti Awa hapū were also confiscated<sup>24</sup>.

Melbourne was roughly two at the time his father passed away in September 1869. Wēpiha Apanui, Ariki and Tohunga Whakairo of Ngāti Awa, and his wife Huhana Waihapūarangi, who was of Whakatōhea, whangai (adopted) Ani (Melbourne's sister) who was six at the time, and Melbourne as Motoi was unable to care for her children<sup>25</sup>. In discussions with Taiarahia Melbourne (Tūhoe), it is understood that Apanui and James Melbourne were very good friends.<sup>26</sup> Apanui was highly respected and had a lot of influence and power within Ngāti Awa politics.

In *Mātauranga Tūhoe: The Centrality of Mātauranga-a-iwi to Māori Education*, William Doherty (Tūhoe, Ngāti Awa) indicates that Pākeha traders of this time often married into local hapū. In doing so the trader adhered to the local Rangātira (chief) in exchange for protection. For the Rangātira there was an element of mana (balance) in sponsoring traders as they significantly impacted the economy and the occupational patterns of local hapū.<sup>27</sup>

Motoi was born in the Ngāti Tawhaki (hapū) area of Tūhoe (Maungapōhatu) and was a descendent of Paraheka, the younger brother of Taiwhakaea. Taiwhakaea was the Rangātira of the Taiwhakaea (hapū of Ngāti Awa). Motoi, therefore, has whakapapa to Ngāti Awa. The whakapapa of James Melbourne and Motoi to Apanui and Ngāti Awa indicates that though Melbourne and his sister were whangai, whakapapa is still present.



**Figure 5.** *George Wēpiha Melbourne preliminary whakapapa (social connections only)* (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Melbourne was given the name Wēpiha by Apanui because of a tradition that the eldest male child would take on his father's first name. Apanui also had a nephew from a younger brother, Te Hurunui, who took on Wēpiha Apanui's second name, thus becoming Te Hurunui Apanui. As a biological relative, Te Hurunui Apanui was the next Ariki of Ngāti Awa. This did not demote Melbourne. Having been given the name Wēpiha and the whakapapa relationship Melbourne had with Apanui through his parents, Melbourne's position could suggest that he likely played a vital role within Ngāti Awa at this time.

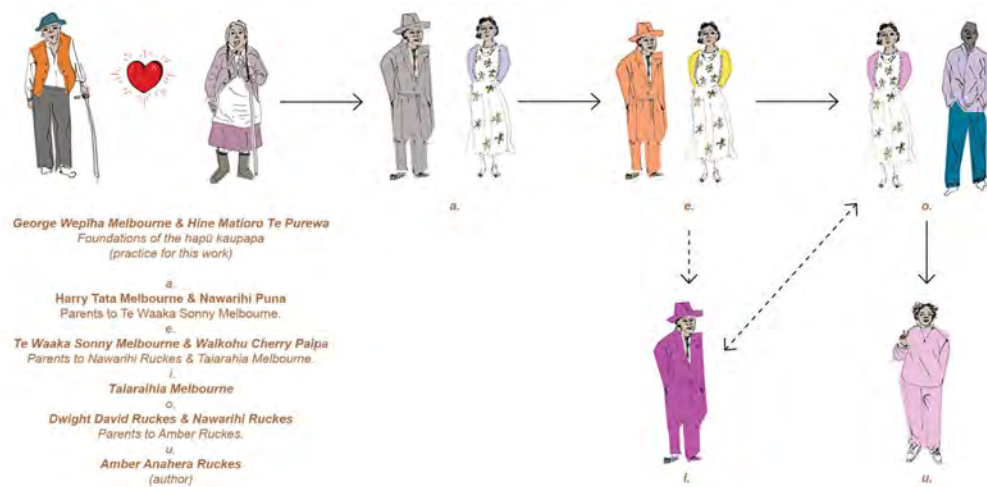
An acknowledgement of Melbourne's Tūhoe whakapapa and position within Ngāti Awa can be seen through his marriage to Hine Matoro Te Purewa. It is understood that some Tūhoe had joined the Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki-led raid on Whakatāne in 1869, two years after

Melbourne's birth.<sup>28</sup> This added to tensions between Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa. It is believed that the marriage of Melbourne and Hine Matoro Te Purewa was arranged under a Tatau Pounamu, a political marriage. The construction of a whare tupuna was often supported by a Tatau Pounamu.<sup>29</sup> A Tatau Pounamu would secure peace and end conflict between groups by connecting and or reaffirming whakapapa lines. Hine Matoro Te Purewa was of Tamakimoana (hapū) in Maungapohatu, and was the daughter of Te Purewa II, grandson of Te Purewa. Te Purewa is considered the prominent founding ancestor of Te Māhurehure from a Te Rewarewa marae perspective.<sup>30</sup> The union between Melbourne and Hine Matoro Te Purewa helped to solidify connections between Ngāti Awa and Tūhoe, thus aiding reconciliation between Tūhoe and certain Ngāti Awa hapū. This marriage affirms Melbourne's position within Ngāti Awa politics while also placing him in a prominent position within Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure respectively. Te Māhurehure is an extension of Tamakimoana which could suggest that it is a specific place that helps to reimagine the parameter of a hapū. In this instance Rūātoki (Te Māhurehure) and Tamakimoana (Maungapohatu). Whakapapa simultaneously blurs and redefines the boundaries of place due to its socio-geographic relationships, Matemateāone.

Melbourne's whakapapa places him at the forefront of pan-iwi, iwi and hapū relationships between Ngāti Awa and Tūhoe towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Te Māhurehure hapū parameters of this work are thus conditioned by the marriage between Melbourne and Hine Matoro Te Purewa. The following section will attempt to unpack these elements further by exploring architecture from the whakapapa as laid out above.

### **He Rākau/A Tree: The Intersection between Whakapapa and Architecture**

Wēpiha Apanui held the role of Tohunga Whakairo in conjunction with his Ariki position. Mead notes that an Ariki was expected to be able to build and/or negotiate the building of large houses such as storehouses, chief's houses, cooking sheds and canoes either through his own active participation or through organisational skills or economic power.<sup>31</sup> Tairahia Melbourne states that a Tohunga Whakairo played a crucial role in uplifting and maintaining hapū and iwi history, where a whare whakairo (carved houses) was reserved for telling, sharing and preserving knowledge. A whare whakairo is often named after an ancestor, hence whare tupuna as discussed earlier. Damian Skinner also expresses that a whare whakairo reflects history.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 6.** George Wēpiha Melbourne whakapapa – expanded research context (social connections only) (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

The Oxford dictionary defines the term architect as a person who designs buildings and in many cases also supervises the construction of that building. Though there are apparent similarities between the roles of Tohunga Whakairo and the architect, Mead, Talarahia Melbourne and Skinner all challenge the role of Tohunga Whakairo beyond the typical master carver definition. This suggests holistic teaching methodologies and influences should be considered relative to Melbourne's own training.

Under the influence of Apanui, and given Melbourne's position within pan-iwi, iwi and hapū politics between Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa, one can assume that Melbourne was exposed to a Tohunga Whakairo through Apanui. It is important to note that aspects of Apanui's Tohunga Whakairo skill were hereditary through the art of the whao, the carver's chisel.<sup>33</sup> The whao was a manual craft skill passed on from father to son and was accompanied by a sacred ceremony before the passing of the senior (Te Hoamiawaho, Apanui's father).<sup>34</sup> Melbourne was eight when Mataatua opened and was likely exposed to the construction process of Mataatua. In fact, it has been suggested that one of the Tatau Pounamu that was arranged under the construction of Mataatua was Melbourne's marriage to Hine Matioro Te Purewa. Though Melbourne's position has been certified, it is likely only a partial skillset was passed on to Melbourne through Apanui as no records currently suggest that the whao was passed onto Melbourne in this manner. Thus alternate methods of influence must be considered.



**Figure 7.** *Mataatua (Whare tupuna) depiction.* Mataatua, Whakatāne, opened 1875. Wēpiha Apanui acted as Tohunga Whakairo for this whare (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

A possibility for Melbourne might have been Tupapa-rau, a *Whare-wananga*, or house of learning located at Wairaka Heads in Whakatāne, Opihiwhanaungakore. Tupapa-rau was said to be where the history of the people of Mataatua waka (which includes Ngāti Awa) and other lore pertaining to their religion, including mythology, and anthropology was taught. Tairahia Melbourne notes one of the kawa (protocol and or prayer) of Tupapa-rau was in relation to Tiki, the use of weaponry. A possible extension of this can be explained by Hori Ropiha (Ngati Kahungungu) where the first of the three rakau (wood/timber) craft involved handling weapons and bird spears. The second rakau involved agricultural implements (working the gardens/quest for food), with the final rakau craft relating to the construction of buildings.<sup>35</sup> Wharehuia Hemara (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāpuhi) suggests that whare wananga were attended by sons of great chiefs and that only the most exceptional candidates were able to assimilate the corpus of kōrero tawhito (iwi history). Melbourne was well placed within Ngāti Awa to attend whare wananga.

Melbourne's Tūhoe whakapapa could have made Mairerangi, located at Te Hono between Rūātoki and Ruatahuna, another whare wananga option. Mairerangi followed similar tikanga and kawa to Tupapa-rau and was still in practice in 1915.<sup>36</sup> One of Mairerangi's pupils, Kokouri, was said to be well versed in Tohunga Whakairo, suggesting that Mairerangi was at least supportive of the craft of Tohunga Whakairo and whare construction.

This work also considers the development of the Whakatāne settlement, especially following the aftermath of Te Kooti's raids, as a possible influence on Melbourne's work. A Whakatāne

Built Heritage Study notes that the style of houses changed from small raupo whare in the 1870s to simple wooden cottages, including larger and grander villas and stucco bungalows.<sup>37</sup> Whakatāne soon became a popular holiday destination, which led to many homes being altered to create short-term holiday accommodations for visitors. Exposure to European tools and practices likely influenced Melbourne for several reasons. Firstly, Melbourne built a house, known as the 'Castle', for his family in Rūātoki. The Castle was the only house in Rūātoki at the time with four bedrooms, a large kitchen with a wood-burning stove and running water, and a veranda. The description of the Castle aligns closely with the modern architectural developments occurring in Whakatāne during this time.



**Figure 8.** *Castle Whare interpretation located at the base of Tairahia (maunga/mountain), Rūātoki.* Illustration is based on verbal description by family, typical villa plan during the 1900s in Aotearoa New Zealand, and an aerial photo map of the site from sometime around 1960, and prior to construction of the current dwelling (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Secondly, Melbourne's interaction with European culture reflects the change being recognised within Māori politics between the years 1890-1910. Māori were aware of the significance of European presence and power. The damage to the social and cultural structure was significant. Iwi, with once a diverse hapū structure, was now under the influence of the government. Hence Māori began to develop and define themselves based on both European and Māori cultures.<sup>38</sup> In the early 1870s, intense political and religious alignment saw various iwi groupings aspiring to establish their own identity.<sup>39</sup> Melbourne's first known work was not complete until 1908, putting his work in this age of transition.

Though Hiona was Melbourne's first work, this paper will focus on Kura Mihi Rangī, a wharepuni (sleeping house), located at Te Rewarewa Marae in Rūātoki to anchor a Te



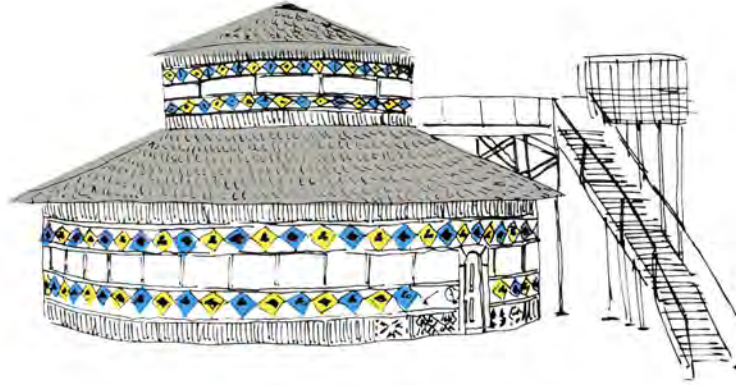
Māhurehure-specific architecture. Kura Mihi Rangi was Melbourne's second known work. Hiona however will be used as a reflective element in exploring a Te Māhurehure-specific architecture. Before outlining a hapū architecture typology, Hiona and Kura Mihi Rangi must first be located within Melbourne's whakapapa.

Melbourne's relationship with Tūhoe prophet Rua Kenana may have started from a political position. As Apanui had aspirations for peace, Melbourne's whakapapa and marriage connections to Maungapohatu presented Melbourne as a suitable candidate for managing Kenana. Another possibility might relate to alcohol. Though Kenana was initially against alcohol, regulating alcohol became his best approach to managing its impact on his community. Kenana could not establish a liquor licence due to the discriminatory laws pertaining to liquor at the time. Melbourne was half-English and may have been able to overcome some restrictions and possibly be able to support Kenana's liquor pursuits in some way. Melbourne's relationship with Kenana was significant, to the point that some accounts suggest Melbourne sold his mother's lands, likely in Ngāti Tawhaki hapū area, to raise the capital needed to help Kenana build his Maungapōhatu community.<sup>40</sup>

Kura Mihi Rangi is one of Hine Matioro Te Purewa's tupuna and is who the wharepuni Kuri Mihi Rangi is an extension of. Tamakimoana and Ngāti Tawhaki are neighbouring hapū and Te Māhurehure is an extension of Tamakimoana. As noted earlier, Hine Matioro Te Purewa's great grandfather is Te Purewa, founder of Te Māhurehure from a Te Rewarewa marae kaupapa. Though there are various complexities at play here with respect to hapū and personal relationships, it stands true that the Te Māhurehure hapū parameters of this work are highlighted, as mentioned, by marriage between Melbourne and Hine Matioro Te Purewa.

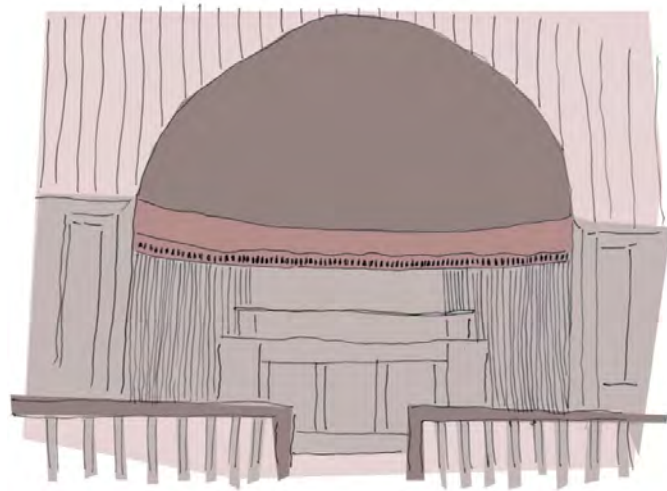
### **He Wao/A Forest: A Hapū Architecture**

Though Hiona is not named after a specific ancestor, relative to whare tupuna, Hiona is considered to be a whare tupuna for this work.



**Figure 9.** *Hiona depiction.* At Maungapohatu, completed 1908 (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Hiona's palisaded circular form is said to have been inspired by the late sixth-century mosque, the Dome of Rock in Jerusalem.<sup>41</sup> Although octagonal in base, many scriptural illustrations of the Dome of Rock depict it as circular. As a result of its circular nature, the floor plan of Hiona is more wandering than directional, possibly suggesting unity and/or continuity between the people of Maungapohatu and higher beings. It should also be noted that St Joseph's Church, the first church built in Wairakia, Whakatāne, in 1895 featured a domed element at its altar. St Joseph's may not have influenced the design of Hiona, but its presence deserves further consideration. Melbourne may have been involved or at least aware of the construction of St Joseph's for several reasons. Melbourne would have been familiar with the Wairaka area as that is where both Apanui and Waihapūarangi lived, as well as where his family home was located. Melbourne's position with Ngāti Awa politics also likely meant he would have been privy to the construction of a significant religious building within the area at this time.

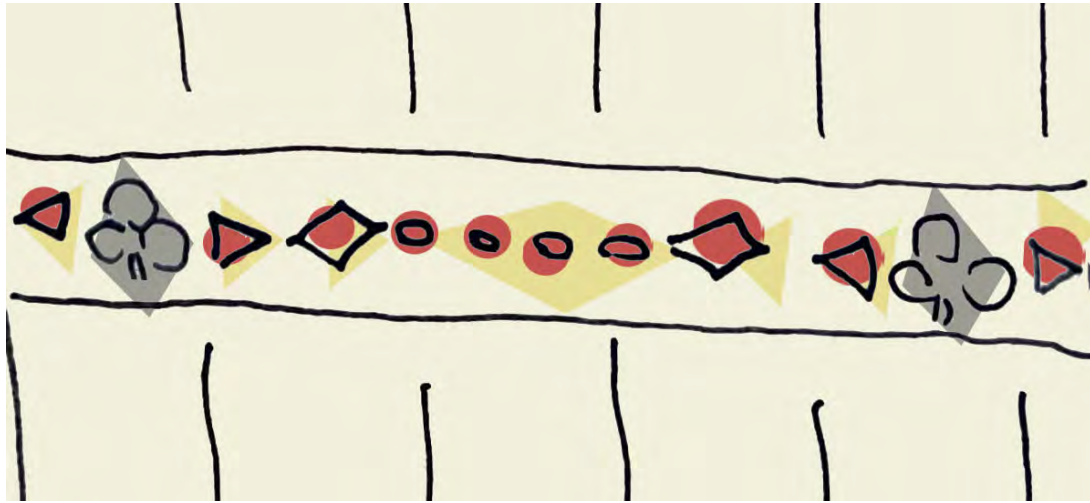


**Figure 10.** *St Joseph's Church depiction.* Wairaka, Whakatāne.  
Interior depiction of dome element at altar (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Another possible influence pertaining to the buildability of Hiona may be grounded through the construction of Victorian bay villas that were being built in Whakatāne at the end of the nineteenth century. The octagonal structural elements of the bay rooms can be seen in the structural elements of Hiona.

Hiona is also a departure from the singular level *whare tupuna* of Kura Mihi Rangi as it operates across two levels. The upper level of Hiona is reserved only for the Tumuaki (Leaders; Rua and his family). This pulpit-type feature is accessed from the outside, giving both levels separate entry and exit points.

Like Kura Mihi Rangi, Hiona features painted elements. The playing card motifs painted around Hiona's exterior can be viewed as mnemonic forms of biblical scriptures for those who could not read.<sup>42</sup> Rau Hoskins describes the repeating diamond and club pattern as acknowledging the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>43</sup> In a 1991 contemporary art exhibition titled *Te Mihaia Hou: Maungapohatu and the Prophet Rua Kenana*, oral accounts by Tamakimoana suggest that the clubs could also be interpreted as Tamakimoana principles of humility and willingness to serve others, just as clubs are the lowest suit in a deck of cards.<sup>44</sup> This thinking aligns with the kaupapa of Tāne Nui a Rangi, a *whare tupuna* at Te Māpou Marae, Maungapohatu. Tāne Nui a Rangi has playing card emblems painted on its ceiling, placing such patterning in a more familiar *whare tupuna tikanga* context.



**Figure 11.** Painted club element depiction on exposed ceiling panels of Tāne Nui a Rangi. Te Māpou Marae, Maungapohatu (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

The interior of Kura Mihi Rangi is an example of carving being transposed into figurative paintings. There are also no traditional tukutuku panels in Kura Mihi Rangi, instead, a modern vertical herringbone arrangement is used. A herringbone quality can also be seen in Hiona.



**Figure 12.** Kura Mihi Rangi depiction. Te Rewarewa Marae, Rūātoki, opened 1916 (Amber Ruckes, 2022).



**Figure 13.** *Kura Mihi Rangi interior depiction.*  
Te Rewarewa Marae, Rūātoki (Amber Ruckes, 2022).

Kura Mihi Rangi painted figures differed from Roger Neich's characterisation of northern Tūhoe whare, which were based on native trees and bird hunting scenes, as Kura Mihi Rangi features a portrait painting of Native Minister James Carrol.<sup>45</sup> Painted portraits must closely relate to the person or people they are representing. This suggests that Melbourne and Carroll crossed paths at some point, allowing Melbourne to support the painting of Carroll by Rehu Kerema, a local painter. Also featured in the figurative painting of Kura Mihi Rangi are marakihau figures. Māori artist Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine, Ngaituteauru) in her work "Digital Marae: Marakihau," describes marakihau, or taniwha, as a word specific only to carving. This comment by Reihana supports Kura Mihi Rangi as an example of carving transposed into figurative paintings. Melbourne was likely exposed to carving tectonics during his time with Apanui or through a whare wananga practice. Though no records suggest that Melbourne was a carver, Kura Mihi Rangi suggests that he could still work with craving practices in new media.

Kura Mihi Rangi was built and completed in 1916 by Tamakimoana, possibly suggesting that there may have been persons who had built Hiona that built Kura Mihi Rangi. Kura Mihi Rangi however was built to align with the Ringatu Church, not like Kura Mihi Rangi neighbour, Te Rangi Moaho, which was built for Kenana and his Ihiraia followers as at Te Rewarewa marae. Te Māhurehure has a diverse history that is symbolised by the two whare tupuna at Te Rewarewa. Hiona and Kura Mihi Rangi reflect this in Melbourne's work.

This duality can be challenging to navigate if the whakapapa is not clear. Melbourne's architectural works sit in an age of transition where the hybridisation of European and Māori

architectural practices from construction and materiality is evident. Though Hiona's form is less conventional than what has become the typical whare tupuna form, the painted features of Kura Mihi Rangī are more political. In conversations with Hori Utanuku (Tūhoe), Te Rewarewa is the closest marae to the Confiscation line and was consequently used as a dominant marae for hosting hui relating to Pākeha from 1916 onwards. This could explain the political nature of some of the painted elements of Kura Mihi Rangī.

Both works aspire to support their communities in attaining independence and to heal their communities during a time when Māori aimed to reclaim their identity in this new colonial landscape.

### **Whakatiputipu te Maunga/Raising the Mountain: Concluding Comments and Ongoing Work**

Te Uru Taumata in Tanēatua, a more recent build within Tūhoe, is New Zealand's first building to be built under the international Living Building Challenge. Co-design practices undertaken in this work might resemble elements of whakapapa as well. However, the hapū kaupapa in Te Uru Taumata requires further study. Additional work is required to develop the points presented in this paper. It is evident that there is space for architectural research based on whakapapa. There is, however, a limitation to this work currently. A Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure typology based on a George Melbourne whakapapa cannot be presented fully without another whakapapa and its associated works to reflect and define the work above while also highlighting the same in that work. For many talking to a whakapapa outside of their own, if it is not already published publicly, can challenge tikanga. Ongoing work will seek to further define a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure typology based on a specific George Melbourne whakapapa line relative to published whakapapa only. This suggests that the parameters of a Tūhoe and Te Māhurehure typology will alter as more study and more voices contribute to this area of study.

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>2</sup> Hirini Moko Mead, *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori Values* (Wellington: Huia Publishing, 2003), 209-11.

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<sup>4</sup> Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 214-18.

<sup>5</sup> Mead, *Tikanga Māori*, 214-18.

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- <sup>11</sup> Linzey, *Speaking to & Talking About*, 49-52.
- <sup>12</sup> "A Maori Approach," *Advance: Research with Impact*, Spring 2014, [https://www.unitec.ac.nz/sites/default/files/public/documents/unitec\\_advance\\_spring2014.pdf](https://www.unitec.ac.nz/sites/default/files/public/documents/unitec_advance_spring2014.pdf)
- <sup>13</sup> Robin Skinner, "The Whare in the Bush: Unpacking a Twentieth Century Tradition," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 18, no. 1 (2008): 56-73.
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- <sup>17</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 67.
- <sup>18</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 67.
- <sup>19</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 70.
- <sup>20</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 72.
- <sup>21</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 75.
- <sup>22</sup> Binney. *Encircled Lands*, 88.
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- <sup>25</sup> Melbourne, "Melbourne Whānau Whakapapa," 21.
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- <sup>28</sup> Sidney M. Mead, Layne Harvey, Pouroto Ngaropo and Onehou Phillis, *Mataatua Wharenuī: Te Whare i Hoki Mai* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017), 6.
- <sup>29</sup> Taiarahia Melbourne to Ruckes.
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- <sup>42</sup> Binney, Chaplin and Wallace, *Mihaia*, 41.

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<sup>45</sup> Neich, *Painted Histories*, 213.



# **Adaptive Reuse: The Case of Geelong's Westfield, where Architectural, Urban and Heritage Practices Intersect**

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## **Abstract**

*Westfield lies in the heart of Victoria's second city, Geelong. The transformation of an entire city block into a shopping complex stemmed from necessity, as the city entered the early phase of deindustrialisation. It involved the redevelopment of an entire urban block with multiple heritage buildings. The project was conceived 50 years ago when the city's defining wool industry experienced a significant decline following the 1970s global energy crisis and economic slump. This downturn left numerous industrial buildings in central Geelong redundant. This situation challenged the very identity of Geelong, as well as its raison d'être. While the transformation of the site raises issues to do with urban visioning, the adaptive reuse of multiple significant heritage buildings highlights the intersections and tensions between architectural design and heritage practices.*

*There is great potential in adaptive reuse to mobilise a critical understanding of the environment/city/economy based on engagement with earlier layers of historical development. This paper critically reviews the history of Westfield Geelong by considering the 1970s vision "City by the Bay," detailing the history of Brougham Street to understand the significance of the site and scrutinising the heritage strategy of facadism adopted in the realisation of Westfield.*

*Understanding how this development has redefined Geelong as a city is critical to now strategically rethinking a city facing rampant development. This paper argues that the criticality of heritage and adaptive reuse must be recognised, such that the architecture and its narratives can reveal the legacy embedded in the city's historic structures, be understood within the context of Geelong's fast-paced self-reinvention through architectural and urban transformations, and be a positive progressive force in the city's evolving identity.*

## Introduction

Many studies of adaptive reuse have brought to light how architects have salvaged and repurposed old buildings.<sup>1</sup> While multi-faceted benefits are considered and critiqued, little is said about the different scales of impacts, or how various practices of adaptive reuse can affect the sense of place. Further, little discussion and analysis recognises the tension between architectural, urban and heritage practice.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly evident in the case of facadism, as architects, urban planners and heritage practitioners seek to work progressively toward a more holistic and sustainable future using this instrument of adaptive reuse.<sup>3</sup>

The subject of this paper is a large CBD site in Victoria's regional city, Geelong, which involved the redevelopment of an entire urban block (or allotment) with multiple heritage buildings. The project was conceived 50 years ago when the city's defining wool industry experienced a significant decline after the global energy crisis triggered a global economic slump. This downturn left numerous industrial buildings in central Geelong empty and obsolete. This situation challenged the very identity of Geelong, as well as its *raison d'être*.

Westfield lies in the heart of Geelong's CBD (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> The opening of the shopping centre, in 1988, boasted that as a "true regional shopping centre [it] will provide the focal point for both shoppers and retailers."<sup>5</sup> Originally comprising a total 36,505 square metres (now 52,000 square metres), it introduced to the city a new sense of purpose as well as a contemporary urban experience. The transformation of an entire city block into a shopping complex stemmed from necessity, as the city entered the early phase of deindustrialisation. While the transformation of the site raises issues to do with urban visioning, the adaptive reuse of multiple significant heritage buildings highlights the intersections and tensions between architectural design and heritage practices.



**Figure 1.** Upper: site location in Geelong, Victoria (in red). Lower: from the intersection of Brougham and Moorabool Streets, looking southeast (Drawing and photograph by the authors, 2022).

This paper critically reviews the history of Westfield Geelong. It considers the vision “City by the Bay,” proposed by the City of Greater Geelong in the late 1970s/early 1980s; details the history of Brougham Street to understand the significance of the site; and scrutinises the realisation of Westfield to draw attention to how architectural practice dealt with heritage structures in the evolution of a new urban design concept. In the context of continued population growth and shifts to regional cities,<sup>6</sup> it is timely to undertake a critical appraisal of the radical transformation of Geelong’s heritage buildings. Understanding how this reading of heritage has redefined Geelong as a city is essential to strategically rethinking a city facing rampant development.<sup>7</sup> This paper argues that the criticality of adaptive reuse must be recognised, such that the architecture and its narratives can reveal the legacy embedded in the city’s historic structures and be understood within the context of Geelong’s fast-paced self-reinvention through architectural and urban transformations.

### **Westfield, Geelong: Setting the Scene**

The turbulent decade of the 1970s had a profound impact on the design, building and construction industries around the world as they were faced with a shortage of materials, energy and labour.<sup>8</sup> The accompanying economic slump also shut down Geelong’s wool industry. The magnificent wool stores at the city’s heart became vacant and their redundancy threw into question the city’s future viability. In both North America and Europe old buildings

had become resources. Heritage conservation campaigns surrounding the European Architectural Heritage Year (1975) and the American Bicentennial (1976) increased awareness for built environment professionals and the public around the possibilities of reusing obsolete buildings. “New uses for old buildings” became a common catchphrase globally. Projects in the global north (Europe and North America) such as San Francisco’s Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery, Boston’s Mercantile Wharf and London’s Covent Market, were held up as exemplary, for not only reclaiming old buildings but also for revitalising their local areas with a thriving economy.<sup>9</sup> These possibilities turned adaptive reuse into a creative phenomenon. The growing awareness and appreciation for old buildings also triggered a shift in architectural practice and thinking in Australia.

By the late 1970s, the building industry (including architectural practice) began to transform, as participation by historians, planners, landscape designers and engineers in architectural production grew. Urban conservation became a heated topic of discussion, as the heritage movement grew nationally.<sup>10</sup> The concept was defined, consolidated and guidelines for practice adopted as the Australia ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, known as the Burra Charter, in 1979.<sup>11</sup> The Burra Charter defined adaptation as “modifying a place to suit new functions without destroying its cultural significance.” This definition imposed constraints on the work undertaken on old buildings, prescribing greater attention to a building’s intrinsic and significant traits. In a sense, it showed how architectural and heritage practice in Australia understood and navigated ‘heritage’ values for an existing building. Working sensitively with old buildings presented an opportunity for a much-needed dialogue. The notion of ‘place’ emerged, as the Charter defined and outlined principles of conservation to also retain appropriate settings.<sup>12</sup>

Geelong, Victoria’s second city, began its process of deindustrialisation in the 1970s. Sitting on the shores of Corio Bay, the city flourished during the nineteenth century and again during the Second World War. Home to multiple industries, the city was known as the “wool capital” of Victoria from the mid-nineteenth century, built on high quality merino sheep, the product of the pastoral industry of the Western District.<sup>13</sup> Geelong’s woolstores and exchanges were strategically located for practical storage, logistics and export trade along the north shoreline, which functioned as industrial wharfs. The woolstores occupied a substantial area of the city’s urban blocks or allotments. The decline of the wool industry rendered these structures redundant. With their presence in prime city positions, however, they were recognised as building resources of great value. As Geelong needed to shift from its industrial past, the reuse of these structures become pivotal to (re-)defining the city’s identity. The reclaimed architecture served as the foundation for future visioning and repurposing.

The city block designated Allotment No. 9, the oldest city block towards the foreshore of Corio Bay, is bounded by Brougham Street on the north, Yarra Street to the east and Moorabool Street to the west (Figure 2). Our case study sits in this block: Westfield, occupying the entire urban block. Allotment No. 9 calls attention to the significant transformation of Geelong, as it sought to define itself in its 1981 vision “The City by the Bay.” This highlights one of the most transformative architectural interventions taken in the city, as it shifted its focus from industrial to commercial use.



**Figure 2.** Site location (in red) overlaid on Geelong’s 1838 map with allotment numbers. Derived from H.W. Smythe, Plan of the Town of Geelong, 1838 (VFRS 8168/P5, item Sydney G15: Geelong, Public Record Office Victoria).

### **Brougham Street, Geelong**

Brougham Street has been identified as significant for its historic buildings (Table A), and for its connections to the foreshore (Figure 3). Indeed, the place with Strachan’s Building has been identified as Geelong Woolstores Historic Area.<sup>14</sup> The Historic Area Statement of Significance (1980) states that:

The Geelong Woolstores Historic Area is one of remarkable coherence and integrity. Standing at the corner of Gheringhap and Brougham Streets, the row of woolstores stretches away to the east in a unified scene, unequalled in terms of intactness and coherence elsewhere in Victoria.



**Figure 3.** Geelong 1938, with Brougham Street clearly visible with its line of woolstores (Photograph by Charles Daniel Pratt, State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection, reference number H91.160/633).

The statement goes on to say that:

The Area represents an important aspect of the process of settling the land in Victoria. The consequences of industry created a new economy, a new landscape and a new way of life. In terms of the lives of all of us as inhabitants of an industrial nation, it is the most relevant period of our past, not only because it is the most recent, but because the specific changes wrought during the last century provide the foundation of our present society ...

This provides a clear context for the “City by the Bay” vision for Geelong. It acknowledges that:

Significant woolstore groups certainly exist elsewhere in Australia, for example at Pyrmont and Ultimo in New South Wales, but those structures do not match the group qualities of the Geelong woolstores and were not specifically erected for the storage, handling and marketing of wool.



Today the Geelong Club and only the facades of Strachan, Murray, Shannon woolstore complex, the Blakiston building and Power Station A remain along this stretch of Brougham Street (Figure 4, right to left). The National Wool Museum, in the former C J Dennys & Co woolstore, on the adjacent Brougham and Moorabool Street corner, was established in 1988 as part of the Australian Bicentennial celebrations – its adaptive reuse in situ is in marked

contrast to the neighbouring facadism. Next door, the Bow Truss Building (the Dennys Lascelles woolstore, built between 1910 and 1912 as an extension to the National Wool Museum building), taking up much of the block bordered by Brougham, Clare and Corio Streets and Gore Place, was demolished in May 1990, the State Government overriding the State's Heritage body!




Figure 4. Allotment No. 9 north elevation, Brougham Street  
(Drawing by the authors, 2022.)

TABLE A Historic buildings along Brougham Street.

Building	History and significance.
<p><b>A. Former Strachan, Murray, Shannon woolstore complex (H0596)</b></p>  <p>National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Victorian Heritage Database (Heritage Council Victoria, 1980), <a href="https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/68365">https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/68365</a></p>	<p>The Strachan, Murray, Shannon and Company woolstores stand at the corner of Moorabool and Brougham Streets, Geelong, on the site upon which pioneer merchant James Ford Strachan constructed his first bonded store in 1840. The building was the first stone masonry structure erected towards the foreshore. Continuous expansion, from 1896, 1898, 1900, 1906 and 1925, alongside the growth of Geelong's wool industry, evolved the structure into a major woolstore complex over 61 years. Each addition was noted for being “sympathetic to the initial design,” that is “a straightforward and popular composition for the late nineteenth century – simple brick facades interrupted by openings, relieved at intervals by projecting partitions and capped with a strong horizontal cornice and parapet itself interspersed with small pediments.”<sup>15</sup></p> <p>The four storey brick complex is stylistically unified from the 1889 section onwards to present an impressive austere Classical Revival structure of great streetscape and precinctural impact. The interior spaces are traditionally designed and the construction system is typical of the period.<sup>16</sup></p>
<p><b>B. Power Station A – State Electricity Company Building, 82-86 Brougham Street</b></p>  <p><i>News of the Week</i> (Geelong), 7 December 1911, accessed from GRS 2121, Geelong Heritage Centre Collection.</p>	<p>The building has a heritage overlay but is not included in Heritage Register.<sup>17</sup> 82-86 Brougham Street is an attached double storey brick parapet building with a high degree of integrity. The brick and render façade features unusual details displaying a Mannerist influence. The north façade is divided into vertical rectangular bays by double-height pilasters that extend through the full height of the entablature. The openings in the ground and first floor are pairs of double-hung sash windows. On the ground floor the windows have triple lights above and cream brick arches. Notable details on the façade include the central bay with recessed pediments and narrow Corinthian pilasters, patterned tilework, moulded string courses and keystones. Some openings on the ground floor have been bricked in. The side entrance is marked by a stepped parapet, corbelled walls and similar windows of a different scale. The original signage decorates the entrance. The east façade is also divided into rectangular bays but has large arches with keystones, darker brick pilasters and string courses.<sup>18</sup></p>



<p><b>C. Blakiston Building</b></p>  <p>Geelong Heritage Centre Online Collection, 1970.</p>	<p>The Blakiston Building is a handsome building that sits in between Power Station A and the Geelong Club. It served as a family transport and warehousing company from 1889 to 1989. Behind its stable was a tram shed. With trams operated in Geelong from 1912 to 1957 by SEC, the space behind the façade accommodated facilities for servicing trams.<sup>19</sup> The Blakiston Building signifies the remaining traces of Geelong's transportations and establishments.</p>
<p><b>OTHERS</b></p>	
<p><b>D. Geelong Club (built 1888-89)</b></p>  <p>National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Victorian Heritage Database (Heritage Council Victoria, 1980), <a href="https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/68193">https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/68193</a></p>	<p>The Geelong Club is of social, architectural and historic significance to the State of Victoria It was formed in the 1850s. The present building was designed by Charles Douglas Figgis, and constructed in 1888-89 by Messrs J C Taylor and Sons. It is a two-storey brick building in transitional Queen Anne style, with a steeply pitched hipped roof of slate with terracotta crestring. It has an elaborate and ponderous two storey balcony with entrance loggia and striking broken pediment. The Geelong Club is important for its associations with many prominent Victorian citizens, particularly the key figures of the wool industry in Geelong and the Western District in the nineteenth century. It represents the way of life of wealthy pastoralists and prominent citizens of country Victoria in the nineteenth century, providing an exclusive place to meet with men of similar backgrounds, dine, read the latest newspapers and journals, and play billiards and cards in a relaxed atmosphere.<sup>20</sup></p>
<p><b>E. The National Wool Museum</b></p>  <p>Dennys, Lascelles, Austin &amp; Co., <i>50 Years Selling Wool in Geelong 1857-1907</i> (Geelong: 1907).</p>	<p>The National Wool Museum is formerly Dennys Lascelles Wool Store, which possesses both architectural and historical significance for the State of Victoria. While its bluestone structure with cement rendered ornaments and a saw roof covered in slate was distinctive from the exterior, its interior was remarked as remarkable and innovative for its size and design. The south-facing windows of the saw roof provide adequate lighting and ventilation. Historically, the building reinforces Geelong as the centre of the Victorian wool industry.<sup>21</sup></p>
<p><b>F. The Bow Truss Building</b></p>  <p><i>News of the Week</i>, November 1911.</p>	<p>The Bow Truss Building built between 1910 and 1912 was considered revolutionary because of its "coat hanger" style roof which enabled the floor area on the top story to be open without the need for columns. Its complex structure was claimed as the largest flat-roof space in the world (almost an acre) that could flood natural lighting into its showrooms. The external cladding, which was reinforced concrete, was both structural and decorative with a simple Art Nouveau style. Though acknowledged and classified for its unique features in 1980, the building was demolished after its classification in 1990.<sup>22</sup></p>

Westfield Geelong demonstrates how the architecture and urban planning of a large urban block have been reconceptualised: from a thriving industrial hub to a contemporary commercial and retail use, that is from a site of production to one of consumption. It enables the researchers to consider, explain and articulate how one of the city's most historically significant urban blocks has evolved through time, highlighting how the "City by the Bay" vision



was partially realised over decades. It also demonstrates multiple scales of complexities as the work undertaken redefined the architecture and the city's fabric. Today only traces of the past persist.

### **The City by the Bay**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Geelong City Council and the Geelong Regional Commission proposed a vision to revive the city from its industrial decline. "The City by the Bay" vision ambitiously aimed to revitalise Geelong into a shopping and tourist destination.<sup>23</sup> One of the key components of "City by the Bay" was Bayside City Plaza, which became Westfield.

Bayside City Plaza, occupying Allotment No. 9, sat in a strategic position for the entire vision: it connected the foreshore of Corio Bay with Market Square, the city's economic heart, with its clusters of local stores. At this time, the concept of festival markets from America inspired Australian planning, which in turn shaped Geelong's ambition to reclaim this obsolete industrial precinct. Bayside City Plaza was to provide a pedestrian urban experience with the "hustle-and-bustle of shopping, landscaped public walks and 'people places'".<sup>24</sup> With the intention to create a pedestrian-centric area came the plan to develop a traffic-free zone in the CBD so that people could seamlessly navigate from the foreshore through the old woolstores to a revitalised city heart. A strategy to deal with the multiple existing buildings was needed. The redevelopment approach proposed to engage "a comprehensive recycling and redevelopment scheme" whereby the key woolstores between Malop and Brougham Streets would be transformed.

The proposal has particular regard to the scale of the City of Geelong and the heritage value of streetscapes in this area of the city ... particular attention has been paid to buildings of historical significance, notably in the retention and enhancement of the nineteenth century buildings in Brougham Street, which form a superb backdrop to the foreshore and identity for the precinct.<sup>25</sup>

These considerations more than hinted at a serious engagement with the existing built fabric and the heritage values.

In 1985, architects BPA Australia Pty Ltd and Perth-based developers Perron Group of Companies were commissioned to realise the project.<sup>26</sup> With sections already operating prior to Christmas 1987, Westfield was officially opened in April 1988. The fanfare claimed it to be the most modern shopping centre development in Victoria, housing "Target, Coles-New

World, Myer and Treasureway stores, a food court, a wide range of specialty shops and a 1100-vehicle carpark".<sup>27</sup>

This large commercial hub did revitalise Geelong as a city, but the shopping centre development raises other questions for the city. Economic needs usurped social, cultural and environmental perspectives. The flagged recycling of buildings, architectural interventions and relationships with the heritage buildings and urban fabric were nowhere to be seen. Westfield appears to comfortably occupy the whole allotment with even the streets subsumed. The transformation of allotment No. 9 shows the city's heritage quietly diminishing under the deceptively preserved streetscape on Brougham Street. It is from this point that the impacts of adaptive reuse must be considered, for it is here that the urban planning vision sits at odds with architectural and heritage practice.

### **Westfield**

Brougham Street defines the block's northern boundary. Here the adaptive reuse program of Westfield is revealed in its entirety. The facades of the former Strachan, Murray, Shannon woolstore complex, the Blakiston Building and the Power Station A (Table A) are the only architectural elements left standing, while the Geelong Club sits in splendid isolation. Each building signified a different chapter in Geelong's industrial and social history, from wool production to transportation and energy use.<sup>28</sup> The adaptive reuse component included contemporary modifications to the façades by making new openings or closing the existing. The parapets too were altered with new additions. These modifications were justified as finding compromises between preserving the old structures and accommodating the new use as a shopping mall.





**Figure 5.** Upper: mall interior; and lower: parking behind the historic facades (Photographs by the authors, 2022).

While “The City by the Bay” vision made clear its intentions to develop new architecture by recycling the woolstore complex, the new amenities of department stores, supermarket, specialty shops and car parking pragmatically replaced the redundant woolstore precinct with minimal consideration for retaining the original structures (Figure 5). In “Junkspace” Rem Koolhaas explains how the contemporary architecture of shopping malls and business centres devalues architectural contexts. Huge and full of absence, Junkspace follows no rules; it has no inherent order and no connections between its parts.<sup>29</sup> By gutting the old parts and erecting new structures behind the facades, the project effectively paid lip-service to the concept of adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

The schematic designs show extensive efforts to modernise the interiors for a commercial experience, with modern light fittings and store frontage. This strategy offered practical and controlled solutions, ensuring easy adherence to building regulations, OH&S and fire protection. Many practitioners view recycling existing obsolete structures as a challenge due to their potential uncertainty in structural integrity.<sup>30</sup> Pragmatic building conversion and rehabilitation drove Westfield to gut and construct new buildings behind the historic façades.

Through the developer’s lens, this design approach does respond to the objectives (i) to (iv) articulated two decades later in heritage overlay HO1638: Woolstores Industrial Heritage Area (2000):

- (i) To maintain the views to and from the Woolstores Industrial Heritage Area.
- (ii) To retain the streetscape qualities of the area which is dominated by three and four storey Victorian warehouses with varying street setbacks and minimal separation between buildings.
- (iii) To retain the special character of the area which includes a number of key nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial and industrial buildings.

- (iv) To retain the cohesion and integrity of this architecturally significant area.
- (v) To encourage the use of traditional construction materials in the area.
- (vi) To encourage the contemporary interpretation of traditional building design within the area.<sup>31</sup>

The retention of the buildings' skins preserved the general proportions, scale and character of the streetscape of Brougham Street; a trace of the city's historic area remained; the new project drew some value from the obsolete but did not develop new architecture by recycling the woolstore complex. Ironically the much-lauded pedestrian spine had to be supported by thousands of carpark spaces built behind the facades. (It is worth noting here that "The City by the Bay" project also foresaw car parking on the Dennys Lascelles 'bowstring' site.<sup>32</sup>)

The transformation of Allotment No. 9 has significantly affected the heritage values of place. The development raises major questions around the protection of heritage buildings, their role as urban fabric, as architecture, as historic and social documents, as purveyors of industrial narratives and exemplars of building technology. What eventuated was a combination of demolition and facadism. Facadism exemplifies an extreme compromise and an insensitiveness to heritage buildings and their typological character. The relationship between interior and exterior has been dismissed. The past forms of the buildings are ignored and replaced. The retained façades become the elements that serve the purpose of preserving a certain sense of place. Westfield adopts the materiality of the red bricks and the language of a by-gone era for its own expression. The heritage buildings have become purely decorative ornaments. As "the facade is the outward expression of the anatomy and organisation of the building," facadism "creates a tension between what is perceived and what is real." Robert Bargery argues that context is critical, that while buildings may contribute to townscape and/or streetscape, "Some facades do indeed have a public role that is more important than their private role as an envelope to the building behind."<sup>33</sup> Such rationality draws a line between urban, architecture and heritage practices.

Heritage perspectives encompass more than building preservation. Here the relationships to the entire historic environment, to place and setting, to social, industrial and cultural context are critical. The report on the design for Westfield Geelong elaborated on its processes for modernising architecture by demolishing the existing and constructing new buildings in response to building regulations.<sup>34</sup> In doing so they discarded the architectural qualities offered by each individual heritage building and dismissed the integrity of the whole site. The project failed to recognise the flexibility for use-conversion opportunities inherent in the woolstore complex, powerstation and tram depot. Instead the distinctive industrial character

of the precinct was obliterated by ‘bland’ commercial aesthetics (Figure 5). Adrian Regan makes clear that the plan was “to reinvent the city and its image, using the city’s waterfront and built heritage as a drawcard.”<sup>35</sup> The vision espoused in “City by the Bay” was modelled on then-fashionable international trends in inner-city redevelopment, Festival Markets and downtown shopping malls. This vision was meant to turn around the perception of Geelong as “a relatively uninteresting industrial centre” and mark its beginnings as a post-industrial city.<sup>36</sup>

This ambition to quash the existing recognised historical character by other uses<sup>37</sup> effectively erased any cultural value, meaning and memory beyond the street view. While the “City by the Bay” plan ‘recognised’ the heritage of the area, it is not clear that the value of the heritage was understood, nor what that actually meant in relation to the vision.<sup>38</sup> Bargery reminds us that history is inscribed in the built form, in architecture, in the 3D building, as well as in its uses, with social history etched into the fabric. Context, architectural unity and sustainability should be key considerations in any redevelopment.<sup>39</sup>

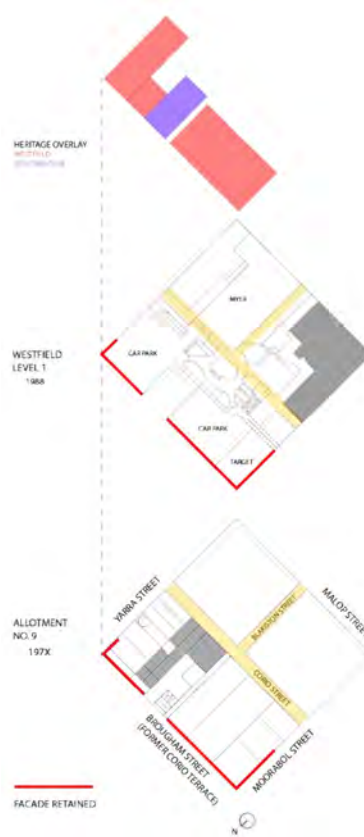
At Westfield there is no meaningful relationship between the new development and the adaptive reuse design. From the outset demolition and façade preservation had been on the agenda. As the project progressed the balance tipped in favour of more new construction to increase facilities. Commitment to heritage flagged. Even though height limits were kept to demonstrate respect for architectural character and incorporation of aspects from industrial architecture such as the woolstores’ saw-roofs, shown on the section, indicate intentions to assimilate the existing, the vision fell short (Figure 6). Unrealised in form and developed into carparks, the heritage buildings became street décor, with memories only retrievable through archival means.



**Figure 6.** Study of the design realised. Windows retained are blocked (blue) or infilled with bricks (orange). Only the woolstore complex’s top row of windows (cyan) maintain views to the street. Openings (yellow) were made as entrances/exits for carparks (Drawing by the authors, 2022).

Beyond the treatment of historic buildings, the redevelopment of Allotment No. 9 raises further issues in relation to urban planning, the city grid and the street layouts on a micro-scale. Here too what was needed was meaningful translation and coexistence with the old. While facadism

on Brougham Street maintains parts of the historic elevation, the streets behind it have disappeared. Corio and Blakiston Streets were enclosed to accommodate the intended pedestrian spine to allow people to navigate up to Malop Street and Market Square. These enclosed streets can be read in two ways. On the one hand, the enclosure maximises the commercial space and embraces the retail core, which in turn prioritises “junkspace”<sup>40</sup> over any contemporary architectural atmosphere. On the other hand, the interior holds a suggestion of the city layout’s memory, as the arcade follows the trace of the old streets; and the entrances via Corio and Malop Streets and the walkways hint at the presence of the city’s old grid in the shopping mall’s floor plan (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Heritage overlay, façade preservation and traces of streets  
(Drawing by the authors, 2022).

Clearly the dialogue between urban planners, architects and heritage practitioners needs to be strengthened and far more creative if we are to be able to re-imagine our historic places going forward.

### **Re-setting Heritage**

While “City by the Bay” acknowledged that “The attractions planned must relate to Geelong, its history, its climate, its needs, foreshore topography and the existing buildings in the area.

Buildings worthy of preservation are to be retained, fully restored and integrated into the new concept”,<sup>41</sup> the realisation of the Westfield development represents a lost opportunity for Geelong.

In his assessment of the “City by the Bay” vision, Regan discusses Robert Ingpen’s depiction of the new Geelong, arguing that “Ingpen’s treatment of heritage shows how important the woolstores area’s historic streetscape was [to the] effort to create a new place for Geelong in the global urban hierarchy.”<sup>42</sup> Regan also raises an issue of criticism of such grandiose schemes to redevelop waterfronts to “create nostalgically themed products for tourists and shoppers out of spaces that were previously sites of work; turning history into a veneer which adds a unique selling point to commercial ventures.”<sup>43</sup>

While Regan charts the early failure of the “City by the Bay” plan, John Rollo and Yolanda Esteban provide a more holistic perspective in their piece, “The Promise of Vision-making a City: A Perpetual Journey.”<sup>44</sup> Rollo and Esteban document 22 visions in 42 years, design-based, community-focused and /or economic-driven.<sup>45</sup> They argue that, “The urban analysis of Geelong: ‘City by the Bay’ (GRPA 1975) was very thorough and the identification of the weaknesses and threats of a city in significant industrial transition enabled the Planning Consultancy to produce a strategy that is still highly relevant today.”<sup>46</sup> The “turning the focus of the city to the waterfront and developing adaptive re-use of the woolstores” more broadly have come to fruition since, for example the Waterfront Campus of Deakin University (1994) where more sympathetic and sensitive adaptive reuse strategies were employed by McGlashan and Everist.<sup>47</sup>

Westfield undertook similar processes to contemporary international exemplars, gutting the old and new construction to adaptively reuse the existing structures. However, unlike the American examples, Westfield fails to either connect to its setting or develop a richer architectural language. Ghirardelli Square (considered the first successful adaptive reuse project in the US) makes full use of its position, overlooking the bay of San Francisco.<sup>48</sup> The Cannery (the world’s largest fruit-canning plant converted into a mall in the 1960s, now containing 30-plus shops and restaurants) developed a new interior experience, while highlighting the industrial aesthetics and recreating certain elements.<sup>49</sup> Westfield exemplifies none of the transformative approaches adopted in these American examples.

We argue that approaches such as recycling, adaptive reuse and renovations should take advantage of what is already there. The adaptive reuse of old buildings is a creative step in

the evolution of a city. This sustainable urban heritage conservation approach considers the past as beneficial. Lack of connection is Westfield's downfall.

The redevelopment creates an interior with a new urban experience ignoring the existing industrial patina. The carparks, service bays and smooth, luxurious shopping mall atmosphere develop an alternate spatial character separate from its setting. This very aspect presents a problem for Westfield as it develops a "junkspace" in the middle of Geelong's historic woolstore precinct. For Geelong, the retail core became internalised and cut off from the rest of the city, whereas Allotment No. 9 had long played a historically significant role in the city. The creation of a mall that internalises the urban experience into a homogeneous block, raises questions about loss and appropriate use.<sup>50</sup> If adaptive reuse has demonstrated anything, it is that its criticality lies in finding the balance between the timely needs of function and the poetic narratives of the past.

Notions and understandings of being 'sensitive' to the site and its narratives have deepened as we have become more aware of the environmental benefits and values inherent in the architecture reused. Bargery writes simply that "... in future we should seek to avoid [facadism] by keeping more, not less, of the historic building".<sup>51</sup> Giovana Martino reflects that:

... adaptive reuse projects mean adjusting to new purposes, understanding the site, the relationship with the surroundings and neighbors, the flows that already exist, and the ones you want to achieve, the materials, the volumes, and above all, choosing either to establish a contrast between the old and the new or to create a gentle and delicate intervention.<sup>52</sup>

Westfield poses multiple questions as to how adaptive reuse can combine the perspectives of urban planning, architecture and heritage conservation in future projects. Geelong continues to re-invent itself on its journey of deindustrialisation. While it continues to see adaptive reuse as a productive approach, recent approaches in Geelong's Worksafe Building (2019) and the former Denny Lascelles Woolstore (2022) perpetuate the Westfield model rather than contemporary thinking about the environmental, social and architectural values of adaptive reuse.





**Figure 8.** Geelong's Worksafe Building (2019)  
(Photograph by the authors, 2022).

The 2019 Worksafe Building at 1 Malop Street (Figure 8), exemplifies a recent reclamation of a historic structure. However, much like Westfield, it gutted the interior before erecting a new structure above and behind the retained façade of the historic Dalgety & Co building.<sup>53</sup> Once again the streetscape and its historical narratives are being rewritten, posing critical questions around the direction of the city and its re- imagination.



**Figure 9.** Woolstore, 20-28 Brougham Street, Geelong  
(Photograph by the authors, 2022).

The 2022 Gurner Fender Katsalidis proposal for the woolstore at the former Denny Lascelles Woolstore (20-28 Brougham Street) (Figure 9) completely overwhelms the original building.<sup>54</sup>

The National Trust of Canada's 2022 conference, "The Heritage Reset: Making Critical Choices," may offer valuable deliberations for the City of Greater Geelong around embracing a fuller story and confronting exclusion, championing heritage conservation as climate action and overcoming systemic barriers to reuse.<sup>55</sup> As the city continues to interact with its remaining built legacy, it becomes more crucial than ever that the impacts of adaptive reuse designs are considered not only for new functions or for preserving the exterior aesthetics, but rather as part of the larger holistic landscape and context of the city. In doing so, heritage can become a progressive positive force for envisioning the city's new identity.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Peter A. Bullen and Peter E. D. Love, "The Rhetoric of Adaptive Reuse or Reality of Demolition: Views from the Field," *Cities* 27, no. 4 (2010): 215-224; Peter Bullen and Peter Love, "A New Future for the Past: A Model for Adaptive Reuse Decision-making," *Built Environment Project & Asset Management* 1, no. 1 (2011): 32-44; Peter A. Bullen and Peter E. D. Love, "Adaptive Reuse of Heritage Buildings," *Structural Survey* 29, no. 5 (2011); Kenneth Powell, *Architecture Reborn: Converting Old Buildings for New Uses* (New York: Rizzoli, 1999); Derek Latham, *Creative Re-use of Buildings* (Dorset: Donhead, 2000); Sally Stone, *UnDoing Buildings: Adaptive Reuse and Cultural Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Chris van Uffelen, *Re-use Architecture* (Braun: Salenstein, 2011); Françoise Astorg Bollack, *Old Buildings, New Forms: New Directions in Architectural Transformations* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2013); Graeme Brooker and Sally M. A. Stone, *Rereadings: Interior Architecture and the Design Principles of Remodelling Existing Buildings* (London: RIBA Enterprises, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> The practice of facadism continues apace, so much so that the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) is developing a new policy on facadism. Heritage Advocacy Committee, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> It was known as Bay City Plaza before being acquired by the Westfield Group in 2003; then as Westfield Bay City before the 2008 redevelopment. It is now advertised as "Westfield Geelong - your one-stop hub for shopping, fun & relaxation." [www.westfield.com.au/geelong](http://www.westfield.com.au/geelong), accessed 10 June 2022.

<sup>5</sup> *Bayside City Plaza – Geelong: Big City Shopping Comes to Town; Tenant Design Criteria* (Geelong, Vic: Coles Myer Property, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> Louise C Johnson, Sally Weller and Tom Barnes, "(Extra) Ordinary Geelong: State-led Urban Regeneration and Economic Revival: People, Place and Space," in *Ordinary Cities, Extraordinary Geographies*, ed. John R. Bryson, Ronald V. Kalafsky and Vida Vanchan (Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021); David S. Jones and Phillip B. Roös, "Geelong: Djilang – A Tapestry of Histories, Voices and Ecologies," in *Geelong's Changing Landscape: Ecology, Development and Conservation*, ed. David S. Jones and Phillip B. Roös (Clayton, Vic: CSIRO Publishing, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> City of Greater Geelong, *Heritage Strategy 2017-2021* (Geelong: s.p., 2017); Jones and Roös, "Geelong: Djilang."

<sup>8</sup> David Highfield, *Rehabilitation and Re-use of Old Buildings* (London: Spon, 1987); James Biddle, "Preface," in *Old and New Architecture: Design Relationship; From a Conference, National Trust for Historic Preservation* (Washington D.C.: Preservation Press, 1980); Edward John Barrington Douglas-Scott-Montagu, Baron Montagu of Beaulieu, "New Uses for Old Buildings," in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 129 (5296) (1981), 230-44; Elisabeth Kendall Thompson, *Recycling Buildings: Renovations, Remodellings, Restoration, and Reuses* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977); Anne Latreille, Peter Latreille and Peter H. Lovell, *New Uses for Old Buildings in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> *Re-using Redundant Buildings: Case Studies of Good Practice in Urban Regeneration* (London: H.M.S.O., 1987); Vittorio Gregotti, "Landmarks," in *Reconversions = Adaptations, New Uses for Old Buildings*, ed. Philippe Robert (Paris: Editions du Moniteur, 1989), 114.

<sup>10</sup> J. Lesh and K. Myers, "Stuck in the Past: Why Australian Heritage Practice Falls Short of What the Public Expects", *The Conversation*, 2 March 2021; <https://theconversation.com/stuck-in-the-past->

[why-australian-heritage-practice-falls-short-of-what-the-public-expects-152896](#). Accessed 3 June 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Australia ICOMOS. *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (1979), [www.icomos.org/charters/venice\\_e.pdf](http://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Place is defined as “site, area, building, or other work, group of buildings or other works of cultural significance together with pertinent contents and surroundings. This includes structures ruins and archaeological sites and areas.” Article 1, Australia ICOMOS, *Burra Charter* (1979).

<sup>13</sup> David Rowe, Pam Jennings and Wendy Jacobs, “Theme Five: Building Greater Geelong’s Industries & Workforce,” in *About Corayo: a Thematic History of Greater Geelong* (Geelong: City of Greater Geelong, 2021); Matt Novacevski, “The Post-Industrial Landscape of Geelong,” in *Geelong’s Changing Landscape*, ed. Jones and Roös; Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victoria, 1834-1890* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1962).

<sup>14</sup> The precinct was classified on 4 August 1980. “Strachan’s Building - Geelong Woolstores Historic Area,” Heritage Victoria, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/68365>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Cahir, “Former Strachan Murray & Shannon,” in *The Bay, Barwon and Beyond: Heritage Places of Geelong* (Melbourne: Heritage Council Victoria, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Heritage Victoria, “Strachan’s Building - Geelong Woolstores Historic Area.”

<sup>17</sup> See Geelong Schedule of Heritage Overlay. City of Greater Geelong, *Geelong Schedule of Heritage Overlay*,

[www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Consultation/attachments/8cc8e848d3a5d7e-C190%20-%2043\\_01%20Schedule%20to%20Heritage%20Overlay%20123%20pages.pdf](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/common/Public/Consultation/attachments/8cc8e848d3a5d7e-C190%20-%2043_01%20Schedule%20to%20Heritage%20Overlay%20123%20pages.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> “Electric Lighting and Traction Co.,” Heritage Victoria,

<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/18401/download-report>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Rowe, Jennings, and Jacobs, “Theme Five,” 238.

<sup>20</sup> “Geelong Club,” Heritage Victoria, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/1927>, accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>21</sup> “Dennys Lascelles Wool Stores,” Victorian Heritage Database, [http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/reports/report\\_place/536](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/reports/report_place/536), accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>22</sup> “Former Dennys Lascelles Concrete Woolstore,” National Trust Database, [http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/search/natrust\\_result\\_detail/68195](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/search/natrust_result_detail/68195), accessed 12 July 2022.

<sup>23</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay* (Geelong: Geelong Regional Commission, 1981).

<sup>24</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay, Geelong – City by the Bay. The Bay Link* (Geelong: Geelong Regional Commission, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> *Geelong Central Area Study: Preferred Strategy: Public Discussion Paper* (Geelong: Geelong Regional Commission, 1979).

<sup>26</sup> *Bayside City Plaza – Geelong*.

<sup>27</sup> *Bayside City Plaza – Geelong*.

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to: <https://garagemca.org/en/programs/publishing/rem-koolhaas-junkspace> and [koolhaas\\_preservation-is-overtaking-us.pdf](#).

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<sup>32</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay*, 58; Leith Young, “From the Archives, 1990: Fury as Historic Geelong Woolstore Demolished,” *The Age* (Melbourne), 26 April 2021,

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/from-the-archives-1990-fury-as-historic-geelong-woolstore-demolished-20210423-p57lsx.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Bargery, “The Ethics of Facadism: Pragmatism versus Idealism,” Cathedral Communications, 2005, [www.buildingconservation.com/articles/facadism/facadism.html](http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/facadism/facadism.html), accessed 4 July 2022.

<sup>34</sup> *Bayside City Plaza - Geelong. Tenant Design Criteria*.

<sup>35</sup> Adrian Regan, “Not Building the ‘City by the Bay’: Redeveloping the Geelong CBD, 1980 to 1993,” *Green Fields, Brown Fields, New Fields: Proceedings of the 10th Australasian Urban History, Planning History Conference* (Melbourne: UHPH Group, 2010), 507.

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<sup>37</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay*, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Bargery, "Ethics of Facadism."

<sup>40</sup> Rem Koolhaas, "Junkspace," *October* 100 (2002): 175-90.

<sup>41</sup> *Geelong, City by the Bay*, 62.

<sup>42</sup> Regan, "Not Building the 'City by the Bay'," 513.

<sup>43</sup> Regan, "Not Building the 'City by the Bay'," 514; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 85-87; Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 5; Michael Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> John Rollo and Yolanda Estaban, "The Promise of Vision-making a City: A Perpetual Journey," in *Geelong's Changing Landscape*, ed. Jones and Roös.

<sup>45</sup> Rollo and Estaban, "The Promise of Vision-making a City," 277.

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<sup>47</sup> Ursula de Jong, "Deakin Waterfront Campus", Paper presented at the TIA Conference, Department of Building and Environment, Danube University Krems, Austria, September 2007; and Ursula de Jong, "Positing a Holistic Approach to Sustainability," *Towards Solutions for a Liveable Future: Progress, Practice, Performance, People; Proceedings of 41st Annual ANZASCA Conference* (Geelong, Vic: ANZASCA, 2007), 76-84.

<sup>48</sup> *Re-using Redundant Buildings*; Gregotti, "Landmarks."

<sup>49</sup> Charles Moore, "The Cannery: New-old Market Place in the City," *Architectural Forum* 128, no. 5 (1968).

<sup>50</sup> Refer to Caitlin DeSilvey and Rodney Harrison, "Anticipating Loss: Rethinking Endangerment in Heritage Futures," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 1 (2020): 1-7.

<sup>51</sup> Bargery, "Ethics of Facadism."

<sup>52</sup> "Interventions in Pre-existing Architecture: Adaptive Reuse Projects by Renowned Architects," Archdaily, 2021, [www.archdaily.com/971532/interventions-in-pre-existing-architecture-adaptive-reuse-projects-by-renowned-architects](http://www.archdaily.com/971532/interventions-in-pre-existing-architecture-adaptive-reuse-projects-by-renowned-architects), accessed 13 July 2022.

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# “Beware the Snufflebust, My Son!”: Clough Williams-Ellis in New Zealand, 1947-1948

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## **Abstract**

*On a journey to see their New Zealand-based scientist daughter, Dr Charlotte Wallace (1919–2010), Clough Williams-Ellis (1883–1978) and Amabel Williams-Ellis (1894–1984) were initially reticent about their perceptions on New Zealand; however, this was not to last. During their visit, the Williams-Ellises travelled extensively and gave interviews. Speaking to a meeting of the New Zealand Institute Architects in Wellington, Clough was critical of the government’s state housing scheme, declaring that the houses were “just little bursts of sound, whereas they could have been linked up to make a tune.” Presumably, he was criticising the regularity of the suburban rhythm with its solitary houses siting on individual sites and a material palette that included the houses’ ubiquitous concrete tile roofs. The Assistant Director of Housing, Reginald Hammond, and the Minister of Housing, Robert Semple, were swift to react, with the minister declaring Williams-Ellis to be a “snivelling snufflebuster.” Others leapt to Williams-Ellis’ defence. The exchange was reported throughout Australasia. This paper discusses response to Williams-Ellis’ criticism in a locale where architectural visitors were rare, and where criticism from the home country was rarely welcome.*

In 1947 the British architect Clough Williams-Ellis (1883–1978) and his wife Amabel Williams-Ellis (née Strachey) (1894–1984) embarked on a tour of Australia and New Zealand for several months’ duration under the auspices of the British Council.<sup>1</sup> Well-known through their publications and media profile, the Williams-Ellises gave numerous talks and interviews while in the antipodes. This paper focuses, in particular, on comments Clough Williams-Ellis made on New Zealand state housing and the response this provoked.

## **In Australia**

The Williams-Ellises arrived at Freemantle on the S.S. *Antenor* on 28 October for a month-long visit of Australia.<sup>2</sup> Their forthright observations were reported. Amabel’s provocative statement that Australian women were over-worked and should restrict their housekeeping duties to 60 hours rather than to the 75 hours that they already undertook was widely published



in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> Clough lectured to the Victoria League in Adelaide, to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in Melbourne and to the NSW branch of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in Sydney.<sup>4</sup> He was critical of Adelaide's sprawling suburban development, which was in line with his future pronouncements on other development in the antipodes.<sup>5</sup> His verdict on the Sydney site was reported:

Sydney's Site Superb: Although he had not had a great deal of time to view the City of Sydney he was already satisfied that it possessed the finest site in the world. Stockholm and Venice paled into significance [*sic*] beside it. The city undoubtedly possessed a great future. Things can be done if enough people desire it and want to do it passionately enough. The Plan for Sydney development which is being prepared by the Cumberland County Council was only just in time. "Be bold," he said, "in your undoing, as well as in your doing." He would look forward to coming back to Sydney in the future to see its development even if at that time he should only be an astral body.<sup>6</sup>

In his autobiography, Clough wrote that they "whizzed around [Australia] for a few weeks seeing all the places and people that they possibly could, from academics and sheep-ranchers to tycoons and, of course, architects."<sup>7</sup> He added that upon departing Australia on 28 November, he delivered his verdict on Sydney:

But the country, as a whole, despite a quite inadequate group of first-rate technicians, I found most dangerously "un-planning" minded. Being asked by an enquiring reporter with pencil poised, on embarking at Sydney for New Zealand, for my reactions to "our great city and wonderful harbour," I replied, "Only if you undertake that whatever I say shall appear at unedited." That being promised, I dictated my brief valedictory message:

*By God what a site!*

*By man what a mess!*

And he kept his word – as subsequent press reverberations made abundantly clear.<sup>8</sup>

This present research has yet to locate this account in Australian newspapers, although his comment appeared in the New Zealand press shortly afterwards.<sup>9</sup> This barbed observation was obviously at odds with the earlier, more couched statement that he had made in Sydney,

which is quoted above. Comments voiced during the New Zealand tour would draw similar controversy.

### **To New Zealand**

The Williams-Ellises arrived in Wellington on 2 December on the *TSS Wahine*. While their journey was in part a holiday, an exploration of the distant region of the empire and an outreach to the architects and planners there, the principal reason for their journey was to visit their daughter New Zealand, Charlotte (1919–2009), who was due to give birth to twins in Hamilton.<sup>10</sup> Clough had recently stepped down from his brief Chairmanship of the Stevenage New Town Development Corporation – a position he found himself ill-suited to. The Williams-Ellises had two other children: Susan (1918–2007),<sup>11</sup> and a son, Christopher (1923–1944), who had died at Cassino. In 1945 Charlotte had married a fellow scientist, and New Zealander, Lindsey Wallace in London before moving to his homeland the following year.<sup>12</sup> Lindsey and Charlotte were both then working at the Ruakura Animal Research Station. Their twins were born two weeks prior to the arrival of their British grandparents.<sup>13</sup> After being welcomed to Wellington by Joe Heenan, the Under-Secretary of the Internal Affairs Department,<sup>14</sup> the Williams-Ellises quickly made their way northwards to their daughter and her family.

Clough and Amabel Williams-Ellis were also familiar names in New Zealand. He was an outspoken commentator on architecture and town planning and his publications were readily available.<sup>15</sup> She was a regular contributor to *The Spectator* and her views on various matters were frequently reported. Clough gave lectures on architecture and planning and both husband and wife gave radio talks, with Amabel speaking on the work of scientists in the “Broadcasts to Schools”<sup>16</sup> radio programme. In a land where visiting architects from abroad were a rare occurrence, Clough’s comments the country’s architecture would draw much interest.

### **In Wellington**

The Williams-Ellises returned to Wellington in late January.<sup>17</sup> Clough studied the proposed town plan for Upper Hutt, viewing that region from air and on the ground. The Mayor of Upper Hutt, E.W. Nicholas, reported that while it was impossible for Clough to report on the details of the scheme in the time available, he had expressed general agreement with the proposed plans.<sup>18</sup> Contemporary photographs indicate that Upper Hutt was then still a rural town, with little of the proposed works begun.

On 28 January the Williams-Ellises were given a civic reception by the Wellington Mayor, William Appleton, with the Prime Minister and the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Sir Patrick Duff, in attendance. That night, Clough spoke to the Wellington branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) where he made critical observations on the government's state housing. This programme, which paralleled British council housing developments, had constructed some 26,000 detached state houses across the country in addition to large housing blocks in Dixon Street, Wellington, and Greys Avenue, Auckland, and medium-size blocks planned for Wellington.<sup>19</sup> The morning press reported his comments:

The speaker said he thought that the State houses were good, but they failed by being peppered about – not integrated. They were a very good example of how variety can become tedious – lots of trouble to change the colour of the roofs, and the patterns, etc, to no real effect. With a little more care and ingenuity, the houses could have been linked up, and something more made of them.

“As they are today,” said Mr. Williams-Ellis, “they’re just little spurts of sound, whereas they could have been linked up to make a tune. They are, however, a treat to what had been going on up till the war, and the point from which you could build up something more suited to your climate and background...” Pisé would give a feeling of solidity; the aspect of not being here today and gone tomorrow, which a timber house tends to give you. A pisé house built from suitable soil near at hand rises like a lark from the furrow.<sup>20</sup>

It seems almost certain that the Williams-Ellises would have also seen the recent Hayes Paddock development in Hamilton when visiting their daughter.<sup>21</sup> Constructed between 1939 and 1945, this was planned as a garden suburb of more than 200 detached state houses.<sup>22</sup> There were other state houses erected in Hamilton and elsewhere as well.<sup>23</sup> Clough's survey of the Hutt Valley, perhaps, more strongly contributed to his perceptions of the government's housing scheme. It was later reported that at Lower Hutt he had seen “the rather dreary effect ... [of] the massing of new State houses in huge blocks across the valley and up into the hills,” which raised the ire of that city's Mayor, E.P. Hay.<sup>24</sup> The observations on state housing that he made to the members of the NZIA were reprinted throughout the country.<sup>25</sup>

### **A Snivelling Stuffbuster**

The following day, G.W. Albertson, the Director of Housing Construction in the government Public Works Department, retired after 40 years of government service.<sup>26</sup> This department



oversaw the government's state housing programme. His farewell function was attended by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Works, Robert (Bob) Semple (1873–1955), and the Assistant Director of the Housing Construction Department, Reginald Hammond. Semple could not resist making an oblique reference to Williams-Ellis' statement on state housing. Semple was quoted in the evening newspaper:

I am proud of the housing department... and I will defend it against all the snivelling stufflebusters in the world. There are some people in New Zealand who could never say anything decent about anybody. They were snivelling when they were born and they will be sniffing when they are put in their coffins. ... Notwithstanding all the trials and tribulations forced on people by international gangsters, I can say that New Zealand leads the world. It has done a good housing job as any other country in the world, if not better.<sup>27</sup>

Inevitably, Semple's spirited comment overshadowed Albertson's retirement, to the extent that the senior civil servant could justifiably have felt aggrieved. Semple was noted for his lively language.<sup>28</sup> A New South Wales-born miner, he emigrated to New Zealand about 1903<sup>29</sup> after being black-listed following strike action in Victoria. He was an active unionist on New Zealand's West Coast before moving to Wellington where he advanced his political career, becoming the Minister of Public Works between 1942 and 1949 in the First Labour government. He never lost his rumbustious manner and continues to be noted for his "sometimes extravagant rhetoric."<sup>30</sup>

### **The Response**

Semple's epithet, "snivelling snufflebusters," was familiar to many New Zealanders then. The expression "snufflebuster" is dated to Australia of the 1870s,<sup>31</sup> and in some quarters had become part of New Zealand speech. Semple is recorded as using the term "snivelling snufflebuster" from the mid-1930s onwards.<sup>32</sup> News services ensured that his comment created a minor media flurry throughout New Zealand and Australia, with much comment in the public opinion columns.<sup>33</sup> The leader writer in the Christchurch *Press* took exception to Semple's pronouncement:

Mr Semple cannot disgrace himself without disgracing the Government for which he speaks and the people who have lifted him high enough to make a spectacle when he falls. He has offended before, without being rebuked by his leader. The Prime Minister can undo, so far as it can be undone, the harm done by his vain

colleague's unruly tongue, and should undo it. It will be better for him to speak than for Mr Semple.<sup>34</sup>

Clough restated his views to a reporter from the Dunedin newspaper, the *Otago Daily Times*:

The State houses were much the best part of every New Zealand town and it was a pity that they were not more readily distinguishable. "They are a terrific boon to you. It is grand that they are so good when they might easily have turned out to be disastrous like some of our council houses at Home." The one drawback, he said, was in the matter of grouping. "I wish that as much care had been given to this matter as to the designing, but, no doubt, that will be attended to in future," he said. With careful use of colour grouping State houses could be made to play a much more important part in the planned growth, of the Dominion's towns and cities.<sup>35</sup>

A few days later, the leader writer in the *Otago Daily Times* added:

But if the Housing Department is ready to listen to criticism and to accept suggestions, it does not need to await the arrival of a distinguished overseas visitor. The tenant or the prospective occupant of a State house can supply these. It is desirable that the settlements should be pleasing to the eye and that the individual houses should be aesthetically satisfying, but in the present emergency it is of prime importance that the houses should be designed for speedy construction.<sup>36</sup>

On 1 February the Williams-Ellises left Dunedin for Stewart Island where Clough had been commissioned to design a house of rammed-earth construction for Amabel's second cousin once removed, Noeline Baker (1878–1958).<sup>37</sup> Returning to the South Island a few days later, he mused upon the neologism to a reporter:

Mr Semple suggests ... that I do not know much about New Zealand. That, to my regret, is unfortunately true though I am now repairing the deficiency most diligently in the hope that my knowledge may one day match my admiration.

I will confess indeed that I am still so ignorant that I don't even know what a "snivelling snufflebuster" is except that – in Mr Semple's opinion – I myself am

one. I have a great liking for vigorous sounding words that are new to me, and when they are abusive, as from its context “snufflebuster” would seem to be, I treasure them for suitable future use myself. But not of course until I have discovered the precise meaning, which consultation with several experienced seafaring men, who should I feel have known, has so far failed to reveal.

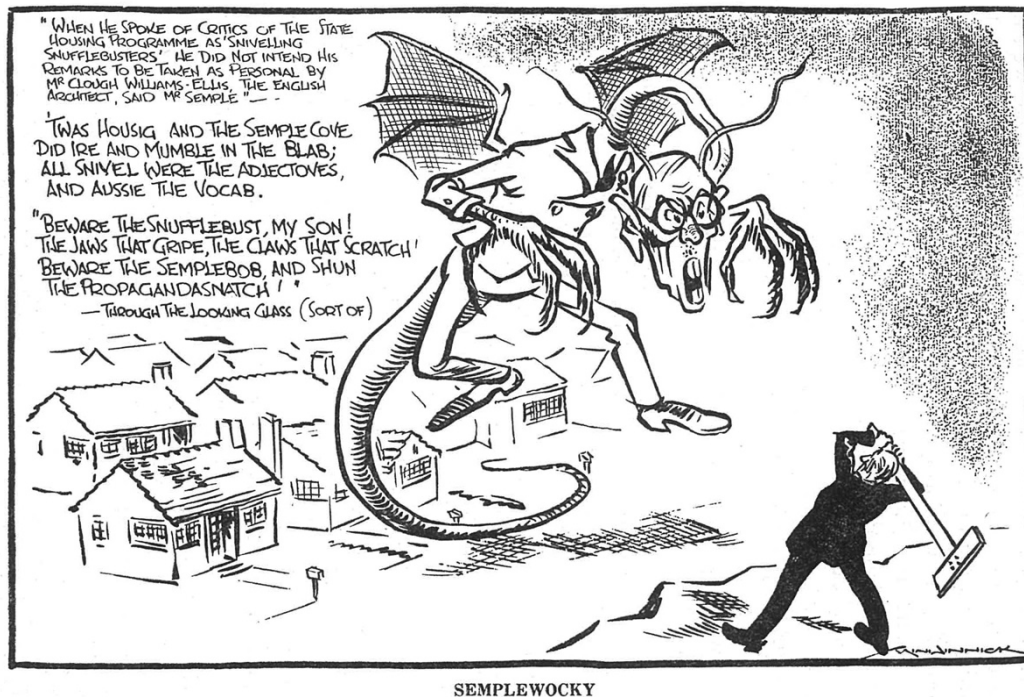
One cannot be too careful, for though quite possibly a perfectly proper expression for a Minister to use in reference to a visiting technician – against within his gates – it might not otherwise be thought good manners.<sup>38</sup>

He then discussed how his criticism was meant to be constructive and that – like government officials in the home country – Semple should remain receptive to helpful observation voiced by a subject expert:

The possibility of course remains that Mr Semple has himself been misreported as I feel sure that I must have been, for in striving to comment helpfully on his department’s impressive achievements, I have been scrupulous to be far more polite than I ever am at home. But there the ministers who invite my constructive criticism well know that I have only one interest, and that is to help them get any job of work done as well as it possibly can be done.

It seems a pity that Mr Semple should be so impregnably unreceptive and consequently unaware of ideas that, in contrast, I have found my brother architects and town-planners in New Zealand eager to discuss with alert intelligence and an open mind. Actually, I have said so much in praise of New Zealand’s admirable housing effort that I feared I was becoming rather a bore about it, all my friendly comments being inspired by the feeling that any country that could do as well as that, might well do even better, especially in such matters as grouping and harmonious integration.

And so you could and should, and no browbeating by anyone will ever make me say that you have already 100 per cent. perfection when you manifestly have not – any more than we have in England.<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 1.** Gordon Minhinnick, “Semplewocky” (*New Zealand Herald*, February 10, 1948, 8). Reproduced with permission of the *New Zealand Herald*.

Gordon Minhinnick (1902–1992), the cartoonist of Auckland’s politically centre-right *New Zealand Herald*, revelled in the controversy. Regularly making fun of the Labour politicians, he had often mocked Semple for his colourful language and particular hobby horses.<sup>40</sup> Minhinnick parodied Lewis Carroll’s poem from *Through the Looking Glass*, “The Jabberwocky” with a cartoon entitled “Semplewocky” (Figure 1).<sup>41</sup> Here Williams-Ellis was depicted defending himself, with vortal tee-square at hand, against a winged-monster with a face of Semple. However, unlike the monster emerging from the forest in John Tenniel’s illustration (Figure 2), Minhinnick showed the “Semplewocky” rising above a sea of uniform state houses. His parodying text read:

When he spoke of critics of the state housing programme as “sniffing snufflebusters” he did not intend his remarks to be taken his personal by Mr Clough Williams-Ellis, the English architect, said Mr Semple.

Twas housig and the Semple cove  
Did ire and mumble in the blab;  
All snivel were the adjectoves,  
And Aussie the vocab.

“Beware the Snufflebust, my son!  
The jaws that gripe, the claws that scratch  
Beware the Semplebob and shun  
The Propagandasnatch!”<sup>42</sup>  
– Through the Looking Glass (sort of)



**Figure 2.** John Tenniel's illustration of the Jabberwocky from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). Wikimedia Commons.

Gordon Minhinnick had trained as an architect which may further explain his particular interest in the housing programme. Prior to his full-time employment as a cartoonist, he was articled to Prouse and Gummer architects (later Gummer and Ford) for four years in the 1920s, and he had completed some architectural papers at Auckland University College.<sup>43</sup> The image must have appealed to Clough, who – perhaps flattered by the attention – included the image in his 1971 autobiography.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, when considered in the context of Minhinnick's

wider oeuvre, the cartoon must be seen as an example of his long-term opposition to Labour, and against Semple in particular.

### **Making Up**

On 9 January 1948, as he departed for Australia to secure steel supply, Semple unconvincingly claimed that he did not know of the comments that Williams-Ellis had made at Albertson's retirement function, and that his reproach was directed at critics of state housing generally:

My remarks were directed at critics within New Zealand. I was amazed to read the reply by Mr Williams-Ellis. He put up a straw man, for I was not referring to him. I take no exception to reasonable, rational criticism, and do not object to visitors offering suggestions on housing or any other scheme, for I realise that no scheme or individual is infallible. We have to improve things by trial and error, and any help is welcome. I am sorry if I wounded the feelings of Mr Williams-Ellis. After I saw his reply to me I read his original statement, and take no exception to it. I will not go into details as to just what a "snivelling snuffle-buster" means at this stage, but if Mr Williams-Ellis will call on me, I will try and [sic] enlarge his Australian vocabulary.<sup>45</sup>

Mr. Semple said that the blame for coupling his and Williams-Ellis' remarks lay with the Wellington morning newspaper.<sup>46</sup> In turn, Williams-Ellis responded:

Everything seems quite amicably settled now... I am glad it is not a quarrel between Mr Semple and myself, as that would be foolish. I am sure we would both be interested in each other's points of view. We were both quarrelling not with ourselves but with bad building and bad planning. I am looking forward to meeting Mr Semple.<sup>47</sup>

A week later the Williams-Ellises were hosted to afternoon tea with the Prime Minister, where Clough attempted to restore relations with Semple, who was then still abroad. "I await his return, and we will probably fall on each other's necks. It is obviously absurd for us to be firing bullets at each other when they are meant for other people. I hope that the things that have happened will turn out to be the basis of a firm and cordial friendship," he stated.<sup>48</sup> Presumably, Clough was well aware that his advice had fallen on unwilling ears.

### **Criticism of State Housing**

New Zealanders did not take kindly to criticism voiced by visitors from abroad. Nevertheless, such people were routinely asked of their opinions, and many made observations. Several visitors criticised New Zealand housing through this period: less than twelve months before the Williams-Ellis' visit, the editor of the *Statesman* of India, Ian Stephens, had been critical of the perishable building materials used in New Zealand,<sup>49</sup> and ten years later Nikolaus Pevsner would make, what would become, oft-quoted criticism of its suburbs in a BBC radio talk.<sup>50</sup>

Reporting Williams-Ellis' comments in 1948, a reporter in the *Southland Times* had observed the sensitivity of New Zealanders to comments made by visitors from the home country:

Criticism of the State houses are, however liable to rouse keen resentment from Cabinet Ministers and housing officials, who are extremely sensitive on this subject... Criticism [by Williams-Ellis] of the types of house and the effect of the scheme as a whole has been deeply resented. ... It is apparently from the experience of visitors to New Zealand that although New Zealanders, especially their Mayors, politicians and Government officials, are happy to bask in the warmth of any praise that may be offered, they are acutely sensitive to criticism.<sup>51</sup>

However, it may have been more complicated than this. Support for Labour was waning, and they would lose the election to the conservative National government in late 1949. Semple, who was then 74 years old, must have felt the burden of his years, which coupled with an awareness of growing opposition to his party, could have put him under some additional stress. It is possible this may have triggered the response he voiced at Albertson's farewell.

### **Williams-Ellis Reflects**

In March 1948, Clough Williams-Ellis underwent leg surgery in Wellington.<sup>52</sup> The Williams-Ellises were expected back in Britain on 22 May which suggests that they left New Zealand in early April.<sup>53</sup> Later, Clough would recall his antipodean sojourn in his 1971 autobiography, describing the controversies regarding his comments on Sydney town planning and on New Zealand state housing. He further recounted that he had recorded six radio programmes, "a sort of testament, a planning credo and commentary with special reference to New Zealand's many problems," which would be played after his departure from New Zealand.<sup>54</sup> "[I do not know] what was generally thought of my delayed legacy," he wrote, "but as the New Zealand architects, like the Australian, subsequently elected me to honorific status in their Institutes, I

conclude that they were mostly with me.”<sup>55</sup> In 1948 the Council of the NZIA accorded him the, then unique, status of “Corresponding Member.”<sup>56</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> “U.K. Visit as Bursaries,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, 1948, 2.
- <sup>2</sup> “Well-Known British Architect to Visit Australia,” *Construction* (Sydney) 59 (October 22, 1947): 4; “News Flash,” *News* (Adelaide), 28 October 1947, 3.
- <sup>3</sup> “60-Hr. Week Urged for Housewives,” *News* (Adelaide), November 5, 1947, 3; “Housewives Grumble Too Much,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), November 9, 1947, 7.
- <sup>4</sup> “‘New Town’ Planner,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), November 4, 1947, 3; “Clough Williams-Ellis to Lecture in Melbourne and Sydney,” *Construction* 59 (November 12, 1947): 3.
- <sup>5</sup> Margaret Forte, “Noted Town Planner Finds Adelaide Suburbs ‘A Tragedy’,” *News* (Adelaide), November 5, 1947, 2.
- <sup>6</sup> “Town Planning With Gusto: The Inimitable Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis: An Inspiring Address,” *Construction* 59 (19 November 1947): 6. Also reprinted in *Building and Engineering* 11 (November 24, 1947): 55, 57.
- <sup>7</sup> Clough Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams-Ellis* (London: Constable, 1971), 251.
- <sup>8</sup> Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 251.
- <sup>9</sup> “Building a Better Britain: The Aims of Her Town Planners, Explained by One of Them,” *New Zealand Listener* 18, no. 443 (December 19, 1947): 6; “Planning of Cities,” *Press* (Christchurch), February 12, 1948, 3. Richard Haslam would later cite Williams-Ellis’ comment on Sydney as summing up “the enlightened attitude he hoped to create, not only in Australasia, but in the Middle East and the Mediterranean...” Richard Haslam, “Wales’s Universal Architect: Sir Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978),” *Country Life* 174, no. 4483 (July 21, 1983): 130.
- <sup>10</sup> Amabel Williams-Ellis to Foss Shanahan, letter. January 23, 1948. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1. R18869979, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. File opened November 1947; closed 19 March 1948.
- <sup>11</sup> Susan would later spearheaded the production of Portmeirion ceramics.
- <sup>12</sup> “Farm Science: Progress in Britain Dominion Expert Returns,” *Te Awamutu Courier*, November 1, 1946, 3.
- <sup>13</sup> “Births,” *The Times* (London), November 22, 1947, 1.
- <sup>14</sup> “Famous Architect, Novelist Visit N.Z.,” *Northern Advocate* (Whangarei), December 2, 1947, 5; Sir Patrick Duff to Alister McIntosh, letter. December 5, 1947. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1. Heenan had recently managed tours of Eleanor Roosevelt (1943), Lord and Lady Mountbatten (1946) and Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery (1947). Rachel Barrowman, “Heenan, Joseph William Allan,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1998. *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4h24/heenan-joseph-william-allan>.
- <sup>15</sup> His recent publications included *The Adventure of Building* (1946), *An Artist in North Wales* (1946), *On Trust for the Nation* (1947), *Living in New Towns* (1947), and *Building in Cob, Pisé, and Stabilized Earth* (1947 reprint).
- <sup>16</sup> On these programmes, see [www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/201833297/sound-archives-broadcasts-to-schools](http://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/201833297/sound-archives-broadcasts-to-schools).
- <sup>17</sup> Amabel arrived on Monday 26 January, with Clough arriving the following day. Amabel Williams-Ellis to Foss Shanahan, letter. January 23, 1948. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1.
- <sup>18</sup> “Upper Hutt Visit: Town Planner’s Approval,” *Evening Post* (Wellington), January 30, 1948, 9.
- <sup>19</sup> On the programme at that time, see Cedric Firth, *State Housing in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1949).
- <sup>20</sup> “British Architect Criticises Failings in State Housing,” *Dominion* (Wellington), January 29, 1948, 8.
- <sup>21</sup> Hayes Paddock is only 2 miles distance from Ruakura.
- <sup>22</sup> Ann McEwan, *The Houses of Hayes Paddock, Hamilton* (Hamilton: Ramp Press, 2008).
- <sup>23</sup> McEwan, *Houses of Hayes Paddock, Hamilton*, 20.



- <sup>24</sup> “State Housing Scheme: Overseas Visitors Interested,” *Southland Times*, February 4, 1948, 6.
- <sup>25</sup> “State Houses ‘Little Bursts of Sound’,” *Northern Advocate*, January 29, 1948, 4; “Variety Tedious: Dominion’s State Houses English Architect’s View,” *Gisborne Herald*, January 30, 1948, 3.
- <sup>26</sup> “Director of Housing Farewelled After 40 Years of Service,” *Dominion*, January 29, 1948, 9; “Mr G.W. Albertson,” *Evening Post*, January 30, 1948, 6.
- <sup>27</sup> “Quick Work: House Every 20 Minutes: Homes for the People,” *Evening Post*, January 30, 1948, 8.
- <sup>28</sup> Laura Dooney, “PhD Research Highlights Unparliamentary Language in New Zealand,” *Stuff*, December 7, 2016. [www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/87193693/phd-research-highlights-unparliamentary-language-in-new-zealand](http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/87193693/phd-research-highlights-unparliamentary-language-in-new-zealand). Ruth Graham, “Withdraw and Apologise: A Diachronic Study of Unparliamentary Language in the New Zealand Parliament, 1890-1950,” PhD diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2016.
- <sup>29</sup> “Mining Life Contrasts,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 16, 1954, Herald magazine section 9.
- <sup>30</sup> “Mining Life Contrasts”; Len Richardson, “Semple, Robert,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s11/semple-robert>.
- <sup>31</sup> *The Northern Miner* (Queensland), February 19, 1876, 2.
- <sup>32</sup> “Mr. Semple’s New Phrases: Forceful Denunciation of Critics,” *North Canterbury Gazette*, August 18, 1936, 5; “Christchurch South By-Election,” [letter] *Press*, May 23, 1939, 5; “Minister 67 Does Hard Labour,” *The Daily News* (Perth), March 19, 1940, 18; “The Sniffing Snufflebusters [letter],” *Otago Daily Times* (Dunedin), July 26, 1941, 13; “Oh! Mr Semple,” *Waikato Times* (Hamilton), May 24, 1945, 2.
- <sup>33</sup> The news services were Associated Press (NZ), Australian Associated Press and Reuters. Items include: “Critic Assailed,” *Gisborne Herald*, January 30, 1948, 6; “Strong Reply,” *Ashburton Guardian*, January 30, 1948, 3; “Sniffing Snuffle-Busters: Semple Replies To Critics Of State Houses,” *Northern Advocate*, January 30, 1948, 6; “Mr Semple Snorts,” *Herald* (Melbourne), January 30, 1948, 2.
- <sup>34</sup> “Semple’s Temples,” *Press*, January 31, 1948, 6. A letter followed “Semple’s Temples,” *Press*, February 3, 1948, 2. This may have been written by the editor, Pierce Hugo Napier (Hugo) Freeth who was editor between 1932 and 1957.
- <sup>35</sup> “State Houses: ‘Best Part of Towns’: Architect’s Opinion,” *Otago Daily Times*, February 2, 1948, 4.
- <sup>36</sup> “State Housing,” *Otago Daily Times*, February 3, 1948, 4. John Rowley Moffett, who was the editor at that time was may have been the author.
- <sup>37</sup> They both shared common ancestors, Sir Henry Strachey (1736–1810) and Lady Jane Strachey (1738–1824), who were Noeline’s great-grandparents and Amabel’s great-great-grandparents. The house was later built with timber by a Scandinavian boatbuilder.
- <sup>38</sup> “Architect Replies to Mr Semple: ‘Snivelling Shufflebuster’ Not Understood,” *Southland Times* (Invercargill), February 7, 1948, 4. It is possible that the reporter was the newspaper’s editor and future editor of the *New Zealand Listener*, Monte Holcroft (1902–1993).
- <sup>39</sup> “Architect Replies to Mr Semple.”
- <sup>40</sup> He had frequently mocked Semple’s advocacy of the use of construction machinery over wheelbarrows and his frequent statements that people should “get their running shoes on.”
- <sup>41</sup> “Semplewocky,” *New Zealand Herald*, February 10, 1948, 8. See Gordon Minhinnick, *More Minhinnick: Cartoons from the New Zealand Herald* (Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1949).
- <sup>42</sup> Compare Carroll’s text:
- ’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outrabe.
- “Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!”
- Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Alice: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll* (New York: Bramhall House, 1960), 191.
- <sup>43</sup> Ian F. Grant, “Minhinnick, Gordon Edward George,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1998. *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4m55/minhinnick-gordon-edward-george>
- <sup>44</sup> Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 252.
- <sup>45</sup> “State Housing Critics: Minister’s Observations Not Personal: Mr Semple Explains,” *Ashburton Guardian*, February 9, 1948, 4. This Press Association report was reprinted throughout the country.

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<sup>46</sup> More correctly, a Wellington evening newspaper first made this connection. "Quick Work."

<sup>47</sup> "Planning of Cities," *Press*, February 12, 1948, 3.

<sup>48</sup> "It is Probably my Welsh Blood," *Evening Post*, February 19, 1948, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Ian Stephens, "Imperfect Paradise: A Stranger's View of New Zealand," *New Zealand Listener* 16, no. 396 (January 24, 1947): 7.

<sup>50</sup> "City Planning Urged to Avoid 'Suburban Chaos'," *Press*, August 11, 1958, 10; "Suburb is N.Z.'s 'Visual Horror,'" *Press*, November 14, 1958, 20; Nikolaus Pevsner, "The Ingratiating Chaos: Impressions of New Zealand," *The Listener* (London) 60, no. 1547 (November 20, 1958): 825-27. This was a transcript of Pevsner's radio talk that was broadcast on the BBC Third Programme on the evening of November 11, 1958.

<sup>51</sup> "State Housing Scheme: Overseas Visitors Interested."

<sup>52</sup> Clough Williams-Ellis to H.P. Jefferies, letter. March 13, 1948. "Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947," PM 59/3/316 Pt 1.

<sup>53</sup> "Court Circular," *The Times*, April 24, 1948, 6.

<sup>54</sup> These recordings will be the subject of further research.

<sup>55</sup> Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 254.

<sup>56</sup> This membership type was especially created for Williams-Ellis. Readers should be wary of interpreting this as a snub; at that time the institute's rules determined that Honorary Fellowships were awarded to non-architects only, so Williams-Ellis was elected an Honorary Corresponding Member. Ref. NZIA Executive Committee minutes 1946-1958, November 3, 1948, p. 111; November 17, 1948, p. 166. Item 48, NZIA Archive, Tapuaka, Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. However, a decade later British architects who visited – namely Sir Robert Matthew and R.I.B.A. President, Kenneth Cross – were made Honorary Fellows, as were Nikolaus Pevsner and the R.I.B.A. Secretary, Cyril Douglas Spragg. Ref. NZIA Executive Committee minutes, August 1958 7, p. 710. Item 48, NZIA Archive; *New Zealand Institute of Architects: Year Book 1959* (Wellington: NZIA, 1959), 85.

# **A History of Protest Memorials in Three Democratic East-Asian Capital Cities: Taipei, Hong Kong and Seoul**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines a range of grassroots protest memorials erected over the past 60 years within public spaces in the capital cities of three 'Asian Tigers': Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. These cities grew quickly as their polities rapidly democratized in the 1980s after long periods of foreign and local authoritarian rule. The paper explores the complex relationships between these memorials and their various urban settings, and how these reflect the wider evolution of political authority, social history and values in each host territory. Drawing on documentary research, interviews, discourse analysis and site analysis of over 20 projects, the paper examines two key aspects of the planning and design of grassroots memorials in Taipei, Hong Kong and Seoul. Firstly, it discusses how these memorials' designs communicate and critique the struggles of civil society against the cities' authoritarian rulers. Secondly, it analyses the kinds of sites where these grassroots memorials have been erected, which contrast with the cities' more prominent, government-endorsed commemorative sites. The paper identifies key formal types, commonalities and differences, and historical changes in the ways that citizens in each capital city have developed a post-colonial, post-authoritarian representation of local history through protest memorials in urban spaces.*

## **Introduction**

Protest memorials remember and represent civic protesters against governments. They are, by their nature, often unofficial. This paper examines the evolution of protest memorials installed in public settings in the capital cities of three East Asian territories: South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These are now three of the most democratic territories in Asia, which have thus witnessed the greatest efforts and opportunities to create memorials that communicate opposition to government. The paper draws on 22 memorial examples erected between 1961 and 2021. This sample and its analysis

draw upon 25 in-depth interviews with relevant activists and academics across the three cities, a detailed database of 65 democracy memorials compiled by South Korea's well-funded Korea Democracy Foundation, and a comprehensive set of fieldwork, analysis and mapping of the three cities' memorials over the past century.<sup>1</sup> The paper draws together a range of existing research by the author and others that have documented in detail the various individual memorials, their locations and their production processes, as well as media reporting on these sometimes ephemeral installations, and constructs from these an historical narrative about the development of memorials as a prominent, permanent form of protest in public spaces within capital cities.

As with many democracies, the development of democratic governance and freedom of expression in South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan has been recent, gradual and only partial. All three territories emerged from colonial occupation by Imperial Japan at the end of World War II. Hong Kong returned to British colonial rule, with significant civil liberties but limited political participation. South Korea and Taiwan, administered by the Republic of China, experienced several decades of dictatorship. These territories are also three of the four 'Asian Tigers' which have undergone extremely rapid, continuous industrialisation and economic growth since 1950. Rising standards of living and increasing international trade developed hand-in-hand with calls for greater democratic freedoms. South Korea's last dictatorship ended in 1987. In Hong Kong, it was only after the 1984 agreement that the territory would be returned to the People's Republic of China in 1997 that the territory's government began a gradual process of democratisation, and it was only in 1995 that its Legislative Council became fully directly elected. Taiwan was a dictatorship until 1996 and its ruling Kuomintang only first lost government in 2000. Because protest memorials in public settings require government approval, or at least toleration, these dates of first democratic governments provide key timepoints for the emergence and spread of protest memorials. However, in all three jurisdictions, a wide range of earlier protest activities against autocratic rule helped to precipitate democratic changes, and in each case memorials to those protests also began to emerge while the authoritarian governments were still in power.

The democratisation of these three territories progressed remarkably over the subsequent few decades. By 2021, the governments of Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan had become, respectively, the 85<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and eighth most democratic in the

world among 167 territories, and nineteenth, fourth and second among 28 territories within the Asia-Pacific. Before recent curbs by Hong Kong SAR's government, it had also ranked as high as seventeenth in the world in terms of civil liberties such as freedom of expression – significantly higher than the United States of America, which the memorial symbolism discussed in this paper shows to have provided a key exemplar for expressing liberty.<sup>2</sup>

The paper examines two broad sets of questions about protest memorials which link to earlier research about the increasing democraticness of public memorials.<sup>3</sup> The first relates to what range of memorial subjects have been expressed, when and how they have been represented. The paper's analysis identifies the emergence of four main types of memorial formats that have been used to convey the memory of protest, protestors and victims: commemorative cemeteries for anti-government activists who were killed; collective memorials to protesters; allegorical memorials where protest becomes associated with ideal figures and values; and memorials to individual domestic protesters. The second main research question is what kinds of urban locations have these protest memorials been erected in, and why. The latter issues influence what kinds of public engages with a protest memorial and how, and its spatial, thematic and chronological relationships to other memorials.

### **Protest Memorials Erected in Pre-Democratic Times**

The first major memorials to protests against South Korea's and Taiwan's earlier authoritarian rulers were erected while those territories were still dictatorships. The earliest pre-democratisation protest memorials were informal cemeteries where repressive governments had discreetly dumped the bodies of many anti-government activists they had killed. The first was to individuals executed as opponents of Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang during the 'White Terror' – martial law that lasted from 1949 to 1987. The latter, on the outskirts of Seoul, commemorated the victims of the 1960 student uprising against the corruption of South Korea's first post-war dictator, Syng-Man Rhee, on 19 April 1960. That protest had been triggered by the police killing of a high-school student during earlier protests against rigged elections. After April 19, Rhee resigned and fled into exile. The earliest formal protest memorial, erected in 1961 on the inner-city campus of Seoul National University (SNU), also commemorated that protest. In 1963, subsequent dictator Park Chung-hee, who ruled from 1961 until 1979, formally established and expanded the cemetery, commemorating the uprisings to help legitimate his own seizing of power after Rhee's

abdication. The cemetery centres on the 21-metre-high columns of the *April Student Revolution Monument*, flanked by relief sculptures from that time depicting the students' victory over Rhee, and focusing around an abstract statue group representing the 224 protestors killed.<sup>4</sup> A military coup d'état in December 1979 ousted Park and led to the imposition of martial law and closure of universities. A student uprising in the south-western city of Gwangju led to further killing of protestors on 18 May 1980, and their dumping in another informal cemetery. These gravesites were marked only with ephemeral banners and flowers until after democratisation began in the 1990s.

The third representational mode of protest is exemplified by a memorial depicting three crucified figures, erected in 1983 in Seoul on the site just outside the walled city's Namdaemun Gate where unrepentant Catholics were executed under Korea's Joseon Dynasty in the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> These victims are represented allegorically like Jesus, as martyrs.

### **Remembering Tiananmen Square**

Another allegory which gained associations with protest was liberty, and by extension democracy. In Hong Kong, the earliest large-scale civic opposition to authoritarianism involved protests against the Chinese Communist government's killing of democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, on 4 June 1989. On 19 June 1989, Hong Kong residents temporarily erected a replica of the Tiananmen protesters' own temporary plaster *Goddess of Democracy* statue, with two hands raising a flame of liberty, in centrally located Victoria Park, at a vigil for those killed, in what became an annual event. This and several other *Goddess of Democracy* statues subsequently created in Hong Kong also indicate affinity with the United States of America as a symbol of democratic values. No permanent site was found to permanently display this first version and it was dismantled.<sup>6</sup>

The crowd attending these vigils became larger with the approach of the handover of Hong Kong to PR China on 1 July 1997. Four weeks before that date, at the candlelight vigil in Victoria Park on the massacre's eighth anniversary, students displayed the 8-metre-high *Pillar of Shame* sculpture by Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, which depicts piled bodies writhing in pain. That work was originally developed for and displayed at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Summit in Rome in 1996, to commemorate unnecessary deaths caused worldwide by hunger due to the uneven

distribution of the world's resources. Other copies have been erected elsewhere to represent other massacres. After the vigil, students moved the sculpture to the Hong Kong University campus. Over the next year, it was relocated to six other university campuses in Hong Kong, before reappearing at the ninth anniversary vigil. In September 1998, the Hong Kong University Students' Union ran a poll to house the *Pillar of Shame* permanently at the union facilities on their campus, for which a majority approved. Apart from its display in Victoria Park for the ninth anniversary in 1999, the memorial then remained on the HKU campus until 22 December 2021, when it was dismantled and put in storage by the university administration.

In later years, several additional small-scale replicas of the *Goddess of Democracy* statue from Tiananmen Square were produced. This memorial format became a key token of student protest against the mainland Chinese government. A white fibreglass version of the statue was created in 2004. It was displayed at the twentieth anniversary vigil in 2009. It was subsequently moved to Times Square, a popular upmarket shopping mall in Causeway Bay which has a privately owned outdoor plaza surrounding its signature clock. After being seized by police for lacking the appropriate permit, the statue was brought to Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK PolyU) and displayed in its student union building.<sup>7</sup> In 2009 and 2012 other plaster versions were created, displayed in the same public locations and subsequently stored at HK PolyU and outside the June 4 Museum at the City University of Hong Kong. All were sponsored by the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, which organised the annual vigils.

In 2010, a Chinese-born New Zealand artist, Weiming Chen, created a different *Goddess of Democracy* statue in copper, more closely resembling its original inspiration, New York's Statue of Liberty, with one hand raising a flame and the other cradling a book which originally featured the cover text 'Liberty Democracy Justice Human Rights'. The statue was initially displayed at Hong Kong's Times Square and was seized by the police. The student union of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) applied to permanently locate the statue on their campus, and although the university administration initially refused, they eventually acceded to student protests. The same artist also created a large relief sculpture depicting the Tiananmen Massacre and showing the original *Goddess of Democracy* statue, erected at Hong Kong's Lingnan University in 2010.

Local government refusal and contestation of these unofficial installations of democracy memorials in public and quasi-public settings in Hong Kong have always been couched in terms of lack of official permits and potential risks to public safety. University administrators' opposition has been couched in terms of maintaining university's political neutrality. This shows they recognise the memorials' political symbolism. The proponents of these memorials argue that both kinds of official opposition constitute censorship. What these struggles highlight is that memorials erected in Hong Kong since 1997 to democracy protests that occurred in mainland China in the previous decade have precipitated protests over the restriction of liberties within Hong Kong itself since its handover to the People's Republic of China.

### **Commemorating Collective Domestic Protest in the Democratic Era**

In Seoul and Taipei, protest memorials generally represent protesters and their actions, not their ideals. In 1993, South Korea's democratic government enlarged and reconsecrated Seoul's April 19th Cemetery as a National Cemetery commemorating the 1960 revolutionary protests. A *Root of Democracy* sculpture was added on the street outside the cemetery. In 1997, the government also opened the May 18<sup>th</sup> National Cemetery, with a similar format, adjacent to the old unmarked Mangwol-dong Cemetery in Gwangju, and relocated the bodies there. This site's focal monument is twin 40-metre pillars flanked by sculptural groups depicting the young, armed participants of the grassroots uprising. Following South Korea's democratisation, several other memorials have also been erected to civilian protest against democratic governments. One from 1998 is to a department store collapse that resulted from corruption in the building approvals process.<sup>8</sup>

In Taipei's central Peace Park, the focal *228 Memorial Monument* (1995) commemorates the victims of 28 February 1947, when the military massacred thousands of people protesting against government corruption and violence. The park also contains a radio station commandeered by the protesters. In 1998 a plaque was installed where the '228' confrontation began, when an official from the State Monopoly Bureau struck a Taiwanese widow suspected to be selling contraband cigarettes, a police officer fired at angered bystanders, and one was killed. Taipei has numerous recent memorials that remember the suffering and murder of victims of the former undemocratic government, including a large memorial depicting a sunflower adjacent to the White Terror victims' rediscovered graves in Liuzhangli Cemetery (2003-15) and public memorials at a former execution site (2000) and a political prison



(2002-15). The White Terror memorial erected in 2008 directly opposite the president's office commemorates all opponents killed during Taiwan's 40-year martial law.

Within the past decade, numerous large-scale protests have occurred in Hong Kong directed against the territory's own government, its restrictions on elections, public expression, civic assembly and other civil liberties and the introduction of new extradition and national security bills. Hong Kong's shift away from democracy has precluded durable commemoration of those protests, but these events were, like the Tiananmen Square vigils that came before them, accompanied by temporary, unofficial memorials to the protests. They include *Umbrella Man* (2014), a 3-metre statue assembled from timber offcuts and holding up a yellow umbrella, key symbol of the Umbrella Movement seeking direct election of Hong Kong's chief executive. Umbrellas had been a key tool for protesters' passive resistance to police use of pepper spray to disperse crowds. In August 2019, a statue titled *Lady Liberty Hong Kong* was produced in just one week as part of extended protest actions against Hong Kong's proposed new mainland extradition bill. The 3-metre-high white statue represents a contemporary protester, and specifically evokes a female volunteer medic who had been shot in the eye and blinded with a bean bag round by police earlier that month. The statue held a folded umbrella in one hand, a raised protest flag in the other, and wore, like many protesters, a hardhat, goggles and filter mask to combat police tear gas and non-lethal ammunition. The statue's material costs were crowd-funded; the detailed sections of the hands and head were 3D printed, and various plaster body sections were separately produced by various artists, both to speed up the production process and to enable their easy and discreet transport. It was initially displayed at the CUHK campus, and was then carried in pieces and reassembled on 13 October on Lion Rock, a high, exposed granite bluff which is prominently visible from central Hong Kong. It was destroyed by vandals the following day.

The repeated use in Hong Kong of large statues as symbols of protest clearly reinforces the shared ideology between Hong Kong's protesters and those in Tiananmen Square: their common opposition to the government of the People's Republic of China.<sup>9</sup> Such protests and the organisations that led them have now been banned or pre-emptively shut down due to new laws in Hong Kong and mainland China. In December 2021, the administrators of Hong Kong's universities removed all protest memorials related to Tiananmen Square.

### Remembering the Comfort Women

Starting in 2011, another set of public statues was erected in all three territories as a form of collective civil protest directed against foreign governments, paralleling the *Goddess of Democracy*, but taking a representational rather than allegorical form. These memorials remember the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, the so-called 'Comfort Women', victims who protested against the Japanese government's lack of apology and restitution for their suffering under the large-scale system of sexual slavery operated in numerous territories under Imperial Japanese control during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and World War II. These memorials do not commemorate protests against the host territories' own earlier non-democratic governments, but protests against another government. They thus reflect the broadening of civic expression which their territories' democratisation had made possible. The first demonstration by living former 'comfort women' was held in Seoul on Wednesday 8 January 1992, on the occasion of a visit by Japan's then Prime Minister. The protest was then repeated every Wednesday, and a bronze statue was erected on the 1000<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, 4 December 2011, by which date, 66 years after the war's end, most former comfort women had passed away. The memorial is of a young seated girl in a traditional *hanbok* gown, depicting the women as they would have been at the time of their mistreatment, not as they appeared much later as elderly protesters. A second empty bronze chair next to the statue communicates the idea that other members of the public may join her; most protesters today are descendants or supporters of the actual victims. Like Hong Kong's Goddesses, it commemorates protests against another government. It sits opposite Seoul's Japanese embassy.

In the eleven years since, additional comfort women memorials have been erected in at least 50 cities worldwide.<sup>10</sup> Hong Kong's comfort women memorial was installed in 2017, on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Sino-Japanese war, also near the Japanese embassy. Like several in other cities, it depicted three seated young women of different races: Korean, Chinese and Filipino. It was removed in August 2021, ostensibly because it lacked an official permit. The theme is still commemorated by officially approved memorials in mainland China, where sexual slavery also occurred during Japanese occupation.<sup>11</sup> In Taiwan's capital, Taipei, there is a small museum commemorating Taiwan's comfort women, but their protests have only been commemorated in public through a temporary performance by a live model painted bronze. Taiwan's first permanent comfort women memorial was erected in its historic

capital city, Tainan, in 2018. Tainan was also capital of the Taiwanese Republic that was proclaimed as part of local resistance to Japan's conquest of the island in 1895.

The comfort women memorials, although they are privately funded and focused on one specific group of victims, more broadly communicate South Korea's, Hong Kong's and Taiwan's shared opposition to former Japanese colonial rule and subjugation – protesting victimisation in the past. But unlike the case of the student protesters, the protesting comfort women have not yet achieved the social change they seek. These comfort women memorials also represent ongoing opposition to the current Japanese government's recalcitrance in acknowledging those injustices and facilitating reparations. The statues are a performative protest of Japanese government neglect in the present.

### **Remembering Individual Protesters**

Protests against South Korea's authoritarian government continued after the Gwangju Massacre until 1987, when the torture and killing of student protester Park Jong-Cheol and subsequent mass anti-government protests precipitated the end of the last military dictatorship. Prior to democratisation, a memorial to another student who died from a fall when protesting in 1983 had already been erected in 1985 on the new outer-suburban Gwanak campus of SNU, but it had been destroyed by the police. It was rebuilt in the 1990s, after democratisation. A plaque to Park Jong-Cheol was installed here in 1991 and a bust added in 1997. In 1991, the memorial first erected in 1961 to the student protests on 19 April 1960 was also moved here from SNU's original inner-city campus. A black stele with explanatory text was added nearby in 2009. These were eventually joined by fourteen others forming a curated 'path to democracy' through the campus commemorating various individual protesters.<sup>12</sup>

Another statue in Seoul commemorates an individual anti-government protester. A memorial statue was erected in 2005 to garment industry worker Chun Tae-il, who had immolated himself in 1970 to protest the government's lack of action against the low pay and poor conditions endured by his fellow workers.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in Taipei, a statue was unveiled in 2012 to democracy activist 'Nylon' Cheng (Cheng Nan-jung), as part of a privately financed memorial museum built within the apartment where he had published the Freedom Era Weekly. In 1989, when police came to arrest Cheng for insurrection, he had committed suicide by self-immolation.<sup>14</sup>

A more recent protest memorial in Hong Kong that commemorates protests in mainland China was a bronze statue of Nobel peace prize winner Liu Xiaobo, who had participated in the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, been imprisoned for promoting democracy and died of cancer on 13 July 2017. It was unofficially installed by his supporters two weeks before the first anniversary of his death, outside Hong Kong's Times Square shopping mall, and then wheeled around on a trolley to several other locations in the inner city. Another memorial depicting Liu was unveiled on the first anniversary of Liu's death on a public plaza in Taipei's Xinyi shopping district, near the City Hall. Since Taiwan's democratisation, Taipei has only hosted one memorial recognising Taiwanese people's protests against their own government in pursuit of liberties.

The most recent memorial erected in Taipei, in 2021, protests the killing of an innocent victim of repression by Taiwan's earlier authoritarian government. It commemorates Dr Chen Wen-chen, a National Taiwan University alumnus teaching at a US university, who was on vacation in Taipei in 1981 when he was detained and interrogated and killed by the secret police for supporting Taiwan's democracy movement – not for actively protesting against it. But there are no memorials in Taipei's public places to democracy protesters themselves, their demands or their actions. It is the recent acts of erecting formal memorials to victims which are the acts of protest; and those actions only happened after democracy was already achieved.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Means of Remembering**

The representational modes of commemorating protest in the three Asian capital cities have varied. The oldest protest memorial discussed here, the 1961 memorial to student protests in Seoul on 19 April 1960, is an abstract obelisk above a relief sculpture that shows rows of students marching with banners. Most protest memorials erected since democratisation have been figurative. There have been three distinct approaches. The figurative sculptures at the April 19th Cemetery in Seoul (1963) and the New Mangwol-dong Cemetery in Gwangju (1997) generically represent groups of protesters. So do the comfort women statues. The model for the first one in Seoul in 2011 was the artist's daughter, and this form has been reproduced in many other cities. Hong Kong's *Umbrella Man* (2014) and *Lady Liberty* (2019) also generically represent protesters, although they also represent values. Many memorials erected since 1980 are statues or busts of specific individual protesters: Chun Tae-il, Liu Xiaobo, Nylon Cheng and many students on the SNU 'Path to Democracy'.

Hong Kong's *Pillar of Shame* (1997) ostensibly commemorates protesters, but it was designed for another theme – hunger – and actually depicts anonymous victims of shameful government action. Hong Kong's other Tiananmen memorials all symbolise the principle that the Tiananmen protestors, and by extension the Hong Kong protesters, were seeking: democracy. Those memorials all primarily pursued this through allegory or “mediated reference.”<sup>16</sup> The five *Goddess of Democracy* statues are copies of a copy of a copy. The Tiananmen ‘original’ was itself modelled on New York's Statue of Liberty, holding a flame aloft, which was in turn modelled on the Roman goddess Libertas. The CUHK *Goddess of Democracy* imitates New York's in carrying a book of laws. Her book's cover spells out democracy's key principles. The large sunflower on the 2015 memorial to the White Terror victims at Liuzhangli cemetery is also a symbol of democracy, particularly since Taiwan's 2014 Sunflower Movement, when students occupied Taiwan's legislature to prevent the then Kuomintang government's passing of a trade agreement with mainland China.

Taipei's recent memorial to Chen Wen-chen is, atypically, an abstract black mirror cube: partly to symbolize an interrogation room, and partly to convey the government's silence and the lack of clarity about how exactly Chen died.<sup>17</sup>

### **Places of Protest**

Many of the earliest locations of protest memorials were site-specific: Seoul's official April 19th Cemetery, and the places of unceremonious burial for killed protesters at Mangwol-dong Cemetery on the outskirts of Gwangju, in south-west South Korea, and the cemetery to victims of Taiwan's White Terror at Liuzhangli Cemetery on the outskirts of Taipei. These were all peripheral locations with low access and low public visibility, in contrast to most official memorials commemorating government-led actions such as the Korean War. One of the memorials to student protesters on the SNU Path to Democracy is site specific and peripheral, because it commemorates a student who fell while hanging a protest banner outside a campus building. Similarly, the 2021 memorial to Dr Chen Wen-chen is located in a carpark on Taipei's NTU campus where his body was found.

The comfort women statues in Seoul (2011) and Hong Kong (2017) were also site-specific, but very central, because the women they commemorated had sat facing those cities' Japanese embassies. These memorials were unauthorised and occupied

a public footpath and an elevated walkway, but they were tolerated because the host territories' governments shared the protesters' criticisms of Japanese inaction on the issue. These served as unofficial government protests about a foreign government. The Seoul memorial eventually gained official approval. Hong Kong's was removed in 2021.

Most other protest memorials in Seoul and Hong Kong have remained confined to the supportive setting of university campuses, because even after democratisation, there remains much conservative social and political opposition to installing memorials to democracy protesters in public places. Even within university campuses, pro-democracy professors have often had to overcome resistance from conservative administrators, and protest memorials have been attacked by conservative students.

As the three territories gradually developed democratic practices and norms, protesters have increasingly sought to place protest memorials in more public settings. The initial displays of Hong Kong's *Goddess of Democracy* statues and the Liu Xiaobo memorials in shopping areas in the centres of Hong Kong and Taipei gave them high visibility and publicity, but were not tolerated for long. The other locations where the Goddesses were displayed were also very central but consciously temporary, to accompany the vigils that occupied the city's largest, most accessible and flattest public space, Victoria Park. Until 2019, these memorials were tolerated as part of the civil protest of the vigils. Like the SNU campus memorials in Seoul, the longstanding locations of Hong Kong's *Goddess of Democracy* statues and the *Pillar of Shame*, inside the student union facilities on various university campuses, were somewhat less public, but until late 2021 they were doubly protected from government interference by the student unions' autonomy and the universities' stance of political neutrality and commitment to free expression. This trend towards publicising protest commemoration has dramatically reversed in Hong Kong since 2019, with the government's broad crackdown on dissent and anti-Chinese sentiment. In late 2021, the *Goddess of Democracy* statues and *Pillar of Shame* were all removed from Hong Kong's campuses.

## **Conclusion**

The earliest protest memorials in the Asian Tigers were to people killed in domestic protests against government oppression during dictatorships: Seoul's official April 19th Cemetery, and the cemetery to victims of Taiwan's White Terror on Taipei's outskirts.

As these polities have democratised, these memorials have received greater acknowledgment and stronger marking, but only in Taiwan have memorials to victims gained prominent city-centre locations. The oldest protest memorial in Hong Kong was to student protesters killed by another government, in the People's Republic of China. As South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan have democratised, the first and perhaps easiest subjects for civic protests, and subsequently commemorations of them, have been the evils of other governments: the comfort women (Imperial Japan) and the Tiananmen Square massacre (the still-ruling Chinese Communist Party, who still pursue greater control over both Hong Kong and Taiwan). The commemoration of citizens protesting their own government's actions comes later, if at all.

The first memorials in Taipei that criticised Taiwan's former authoritarian government only arose after its fall from power, and remembered citizens executed by the government, although those citizens were not necessarily vocal activists or even opponents. Taipei has hosted numerous large public protests both before and since its democratisation. But beyond the private memorial to Nylon Cheng in 2012, and the renaming of the street where he produced the *Freedom Era Weekly* as 'Liberty Lane', there are, as yet, no fully public memorials that recognise and remember these actions and actors. Taiwan only hosts protest memorials that remember, and demonstrate affinity with, protesters in other Asian territories: the comfort women in South Korea, and Liu Xiaobo in mainland China.

Those memorials highlight a recognised affinity and exchange of values and symbols among the citizens of the Asian Tigers. The *Goddess of Democracy* also indicates an affinity, through several translations, with the United States of America as a symbol of democratic values. Yet these commemorations of protest against the hosting territories' enemies, while generally grassroots-led, are in fact *dirigiste*, supporting the State.<sup>18</sup> They mostly represent patriotic action, and thus enhance patriotism and thereby support for their own governments, rather than challenging it. They have been tolerated because the host territories' governments shared the protesters' criticisms.

The promoters of protest memorials in all three cities have sought to display them in increasingly public, central locations, moving from the marginality and seclusion of cemeteries and university campuses to centrally located public parks, to confront sites of national government and of other nations' governments. Seoul's memorial to aggrieved garment worker Chun Tae-il is the rare case that has succeeded in

permanently marking the capital city with a symbol of democratic contestation. Both that memorial's subject and the struggles of its advocates show the public that the price paid for free expression of dissent can be very high.

## Endnotes

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<sup>10</sup> Orhon Myadar and Ronald Davidson, "Remembering the 'Comfort Women': Geographies of Displacement, Violence and Memory in the Asia-Pacific and Beyond", *Gender, Place & Culture*, 28, no. 3 (2021): 347-69.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Vickers, "Commemorating 'Comfort Women' Beyond Korea: The Chinese Case," in Mark Frost, Daniel Schumacher and Edward Vickers (eds.), *Remembering Asia's World War Two* (London: Routledge, 2019): 174-207.

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<sup>15</sup> Stevens, "Memorials, Public Space and Urban Design."

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# Otherness and Cultural Change on Marginal Sites: The Siting and Establishment of Daoist Temples in Australia

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## **Abstract**

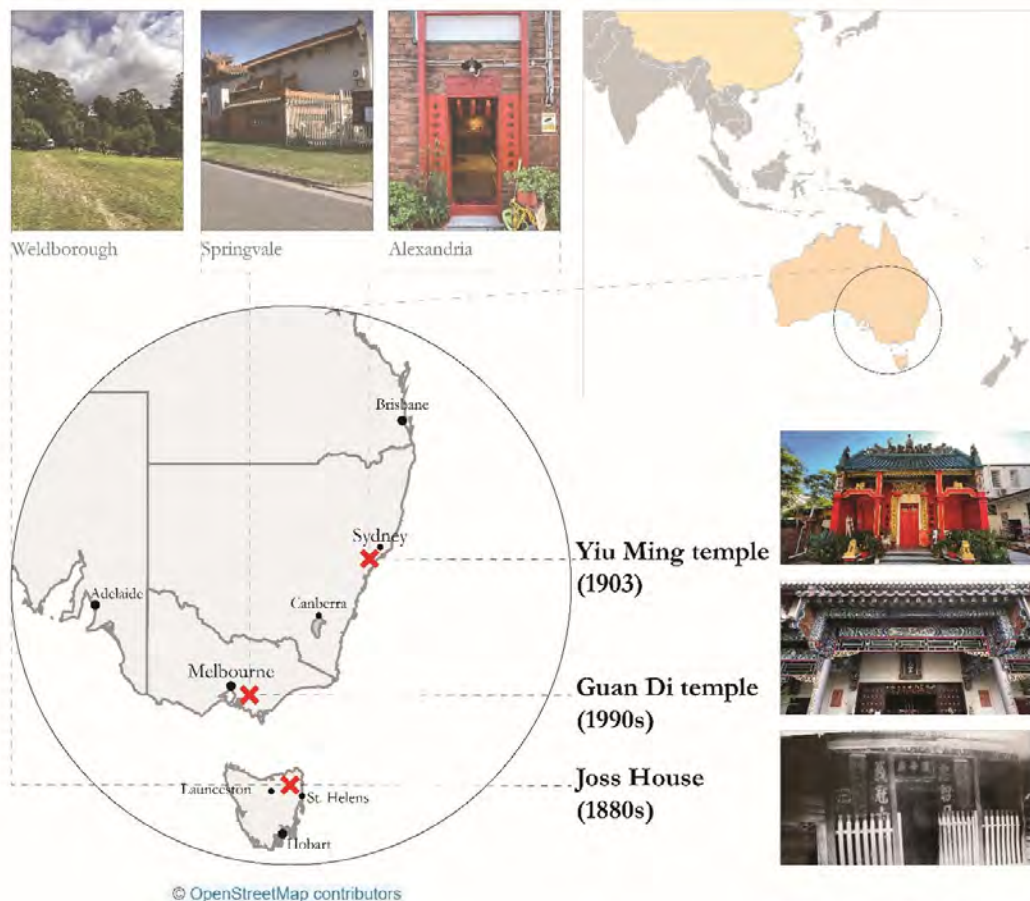
*Otherness relegates newly arrived migrants in Australia to the fringes and periphery of established territories. Whether the land allotted to them is on the outskirts of a town, or within industrial areas of a city, the prevailing attribute of these sites is their low significance and value to the existing population. Then, as migrant communities develop these localities, the identity of such areas is profoundly altered, particularly by the establishment of culturally and socially specific institutions. As examples, this paper draws comparisons between three Daoist temples in Australia: the Guan Di Temple (former Joss House) at Weldborough, Tasmania; the Yiu Ming Temple, in Alexandria, NSW; and the Guan Di Temple, Springvale, Victoria. They represent temples established in the colonial period, in the early years of Australia's Federation and in the late twentieth century under conditions of governmental multiculturalism respectively.*

*The paper will not focus so much on these temples as individual buildings, but rather investigate their influences on the urban morphologies of particular times and places, and how tracing these can provide a specific cultural history in relation to architecture and planning practices. Each of these buildings illustrates distinct tactics for occupying environments. These temples demonstrate how marginalised communities have been influential in developing or redeveloping the identities of surrounding areas. They are also illustrative of how the reassertion of marginalised cultural histories can challenge Australia's planning policies and practices.*

## **Introduction**

Expression of immigrant/diasporic identities is in some ways quite evident in the Australian built environment. Numerous examples of mosques, Buddhist temples, Orthodox churches and synagogues exist across the nation, as well as the houses,

business premises and community buildings of a multitude of cultural backgrounds. These buildings and their resultant streetscapes represent mixtures of symbolism, purpose and materiality derived from places of origin as well as their quotidian surroundings. However, despite an increase in recent scholarship on the subject,<sup>1</sup> these buildings are still largely seen as being outside Australia's central narrative. This marginal place in national self-identity tends to be echoed in the marginal locations of many such buildings, and in the cases of historical buildings and settlements, sometimes the erasure of their former presence. In historic instances, the complete disappearance of once substantial Chinese settlements in former gold-rush locations such as Ballarat is illustrative of this, while in contemporary instances, the locations of many of the religious and community buildings of cultural minorities on the peripheries of Australian cities, in industrial estates and fringe-rural land suggest the enduring othering of particular cultural representations in the built environment.

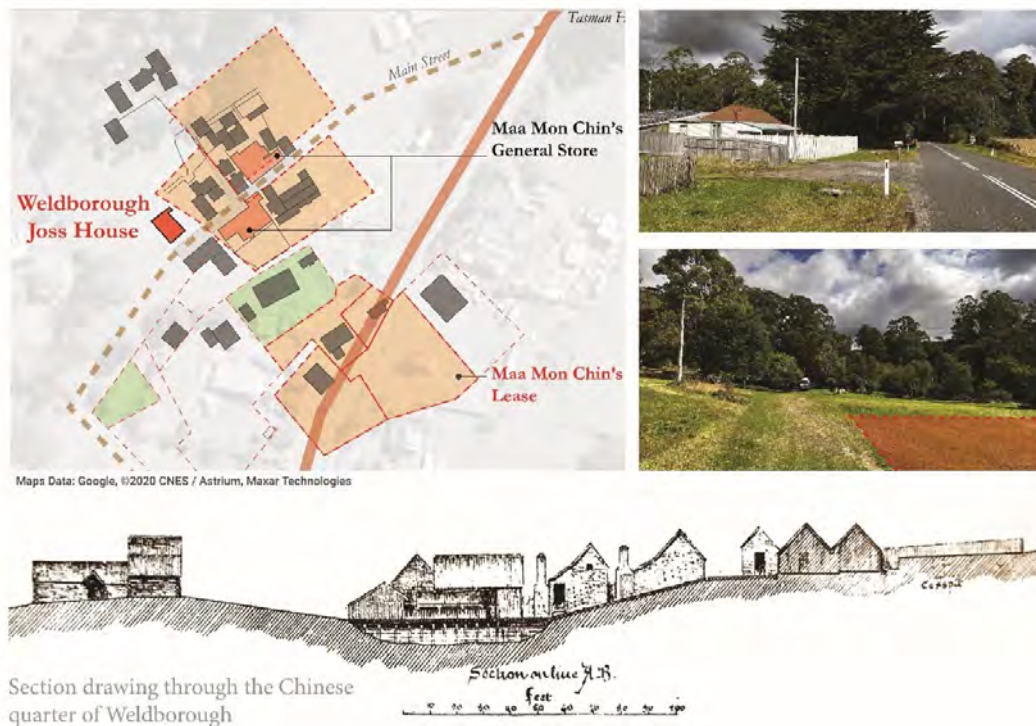


**Figure 1.** Figure 1. Australia context map showing the location of the three temples (Maps by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data; temple photographs by David Beynon, Freya Su and Van Krisadawat; and historical photograph of Weldborough Joss House from St Helens History Room, 1884).

There has been continuous Chinese settlement in Australia since the 1850s. Chinese-Australian buildings represent an interesting series of examples through which to understand this history. For this reason, this paper will concentrate on three Australian Daoist temples: the Guan Di Temple (former Joss House) at Weldborough, Tasmania; the Yiu Ming Temple, in Alexandria, New South Wales; and the Guan Di Temple, Springvale, Victoria. These temples were respectively established in the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century and the late twentieth century. As a result, they illustrate how such architecture was placed during conditions of late colonialism, assimilationist nationalism and governmental multiculturalism. Their architectures each represent the intersection of Chinese/Daoist identity (and more subtly the specific origins of their founders and users), as well as the social, economic and material contingencies of establishing minority institutions. In this context there is a confluence of cultural forces.

#### **Guan Di Temple (Joss House), Weldborough, Tasmania**

The Guan Di Temple (commonly referred to as the Joss House<sup>2</sup>) at Weldborough in northeast Tasmania, was built in 1880 as a simple timber structure to serve a small community of Chinese tin miners. Other tin-mining settlements in the region – Branxholm, Gladstone, Garibaldi, Moorina and Lefroy – had their own joss houses. However, Weldborough was the ceremonial centre and housed the region's largest Chinese settlement where Maa Mon Chin, the broader community's unofficial leader, resided. Following the decline of alluvial tin mining in 1888, both European and Chinese began to move away. As each temple closed, their ritual objects and plaques were moved to Weldborough until that Chinese settlement too was finally abandoned in 1934. Today all that physically remains at the Chinese settlement at Weldborough lies in a paddock off the main highway revealing only the shallow outline of the main street. However, the building has been partially reconstructed in Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, combined with a collection of artefacts from the North East's other former Guan Di joss houses. Fearing the loss of these objects when the last temple caretaker left, the contents of the Weldborough joss house were donated to the Museum in Launceston.



**Figure 2.** Map of the Chinese mining settlement in Weldborough and location of the Joss House (Map by David Beynon, Freya Su, Van Krisadawat, traced from 1904 and 1907 *Survey of the Chinese camp* (Tasmanian Archives: MIN226/1/17 and MIN226/1/20) with Google Maps aerial imagery; section drawing through the Chinese quarter of Weldborough by A. Mault, Tasmanian Parliamentary paper 156, *Sanitary Condition of Weldborough*, 1888-1889; and site photographs by David Beynon, Freya Su and Van Krisadawat.

### Yiu Ming Temple, Alexandria, NSW

Yiu Ming Temple, also known colloquially as Gaoyao miao, was built between the years of 1908 and 1909. Yiu Ming Hung Fook Tong, the community organisation that supported Gaoyao Chinese migrants arriving in Sydney, is known to have existed in some form or another since the 1870s and still operates today. It emerged from Chinese migrant settlements that grew around the marshy land around Sheas Creek in Alexandria. The majority of these migrants came from Gaoyao and Gaoming districts in southern China. Yiu Ming is a contraction of the names Yao and Ming. The pronunciation of Yao is closer to Yiu in the Cantonese dialect that was spoken in these districts. Later, they lived on Retreat Street and around the corner on Botany Road between Retreat Street and McAvoy Road in housing built by the proprietor of the nearby Waterloo Retreat pub.<sup>3</sup>

At the time the temple was built, Alexandria was already an established industrial town. Chinese market gardeners worked side by side with brickworks, fat processing works and tanneries. Between the wars, larger, modern industry expanded into and eventually pushed the market gardens out, eventually building over the marshes and Sheas Creek, forming a concrete canal for stormwater management. By the 1940s there were over 550 factories and only one market garden remained.<sup>4</sup>

After their market gardens vanished, the Chinese continued to occupy the land; possibly this was because of their gradual establishment of a perimeter and safe haven. At the time of the construction of the temple, Victorian era terraces were also built for the housing of the old, and for new arrivals from China. When Wyndham Street was closed off, strangers no longer passed through; only residents inhabited the street, allowing the easy identification and exclusion of strangers. Later, in the 1980s, a fence and gateway were built at the opposite entrance, further increasing the street's privacy and transforming it into a type of Chinese courtyard, an important social vernacular in Gaoyao.

The temple precinct now sits in a gentrified industrial landscape, surrounded by apartments, both in re-adapted industrial buildings and new developments. While the Joss House in Weldborough no longer exists in its original form, the Yiu Ming has survived due to its continuing relevance in the Gaoyao community and its well-established ties to nearby Chinatown and fellow contemporary temple Sze Yup Temple (Figure 7).





**Figure 3.** Map of Retreat Street and the location of Yiu Ming Temple (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data, with Google Maps aerial imagery).

### **Guan Di Temple, Springvale, Victoria**

In the mid-1990s, the Vietnamese-Chinese Teo Chew community in Springvale was entering its second generation; twenty years after arriving as refugees from Vietnam small businesses and organisations that had been established in the 70s were then experiencing a measure of success and financial security allowing for the possibility of a temple and community centre. \$2 million AUD was raised in 1996 via donations and grants.<sup>5</sup>

Constructing a religious and community centre would not be unwelcome in the industrial neighbourhood, given the proximity of similar typologies such as religious buildings and community organisations (Figure 4). The location also possessed favourable feng shui

qualities. The significance of its street number, 9, would not have been lost on the Teo Chew (9 is an auspicious number in Chinese culture).

Instead of demolishing the original warehouse, it was reshaped for their use, firstly by infilling the “shed,” which became the temple, split into an altar room and a place for ancestral plaques. Later it was joined by an extension for a kitchen and community use and external Chinese ornamentation and two gateways. The majority of altar figures, columns and ornamentation were imported from Vietnam and China, however, some didactic panels were painted by a member of their society. Works on the site were protracted, starting from 1996 and not ending until 2004.

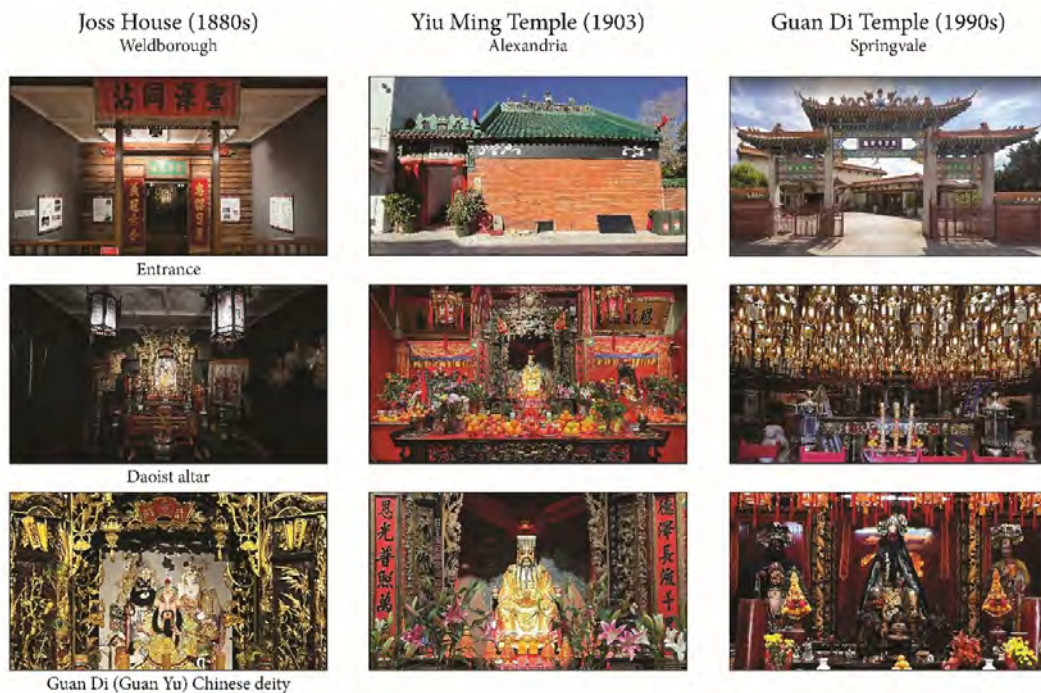


**Figure 4.** Map of Springvale's light industrial area highlighting religious and community buildings, and the location of Guan Di Temple (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data, with Google Maps aerial imagery; photomontages by Van Krisadawat, using photographs by David Beynon).



### Temple Comparisons

Daoism has its roots in the teachings of Laozi's exposition on the Dao. It is commonly practised in southern China in rural temples, or at home with door god altars, whereas larger monastic teaching temples were established in the urban centres of Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Nanyang and Shanghai.<sup>6</sup> Our three temples honour the folk hero Guan Yu, a warrior, often depicted with a red face who is revered as a fatherly figure with fierce protector instincts. He is known variously as Guan Di (Emperor Guan) or Guan Gong (Lord Guan) in temples within China and their diaspora countries. The temple vernacular comprises a temple and supporting community buildings. Service to the community and worship was indivisible. Both Yiu Ming and Guan Di in Springvale have halls, kitchens and sitting areas for loitering (Figures 3 and 4). Although we cannot say for sure how this spatial arrangement played out around the Joss House at Weldborough, it could very well have had communal facilities surrounding it.



**Figure 5.** Comparison of the three temples. Joss House is displayed at the QVMAG museum, Launceston, while Yiu Ming Temple and Guan Di Temple remain in-situ (Photographs by David Beynon, Freya Su and Van Krisadawat).

Each of three temples' founding communities originate from the same province in China. Although we do not know the exact location of Weldborough's Maa Mon Chin's village of origin, it is known he was from the same province as the originators of the other two



temples: Guangdong.<sup>7</sup> A majority of Australia's first Chinese migrants came from this southern province. The Cantonese are the majority population of Guangdong. The Teo Chew founders of the Springvale Guan Di Temple also have their ancestral origins in eastern Guangdong, though filtered through more intermediate diasporic family histories in Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Our investigation identified two major similarities: the Australian temples were constructed in peripheral areas, outside of the main (Western/White/Anglo) town, suburb or village, and they served as the social hubs of their respective communities – in the cases of the Alexandria and Springvale temple, they still do. However, we must explore the differences that stem from their temporal and social contexts.

The Joss House at Weldborough was built in the heart of a Chinese camp, about half a kilometre north of the main township. Both were settled at around the same time. All Nations, the sole mining corporation that employed 'celestials' (the pejorative term given to Chinese by white settlers of the time), gave them a lease to construct the camp on Crown land. In 1876, the entire area was little more than a surveyor's camp, but within ten years, the Joss House was built, along with 30 structures housing 91 Chinese residents.<sup>8</sup> Little of Weldborough remains now, and only the most tenacious explorers can find the location of the Chinese quarter.

In Alexandria, the Chinese have continuously occupied the Retreat Street precinct since the 1870s. Their continuing presence is perhaps due to its proximity to Haymarket, where they sold their produce and established a major centre for Chinese occupation. The land was otherwise an unusable, marshy swamp along Sheas Creek, a low-value place, used for the dumping of waste and sewerage. Although they were not the first to take advantage of the opportunity, in the 1880s, they soon became the majority. Settling in and around their crops, by 1890 about 100 Chinese lived in Retreat Street. Yiu Ming Temple was paid for by subscription and built between 1908 and 1910. It replaced a wooden structure that had previously housed an altar.<sup>9</sup> Between the wars, Chinese market gardens disappeared as bigger industry moved in, filling in the swamp, and claiming it for their own purposes.<sup>10</sup> Both the Joss House at Weldborough and the Yiu Ming Temple were established in a time of extreme social prejudice against foreigners. Muggings and murders of Chinese were not uncommon in and around Weldborough, often in full view of the local policeman.<sup>11</sup> In Alexandria, the 1891 Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling and Immorality targeted the Chinese in Retreat Street but

eventually found there was no basis for the investigation. At federation in 1901, the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act legislated discriminatory requirements upon Chinese entry into the country, such as the requirement for letters of recommendation and fingerprints. In this context, the tendency for relegating the Chinese population to undesirable precincts was understandable. And perhaps it is not surprising that the Chinese self-segregated; physically protecting themselves behind fences and gateways or congregating in numbers to provide some semblance of safety. However, it is not immediately clear why the Springvale temple is in an industrial area; built in a utopian time of multiculturalism, one would expect the temple to occupy a more celebratory site in the community. In planning terms, this is a subject that has been explored in the authors' previous papers, drawing on local histories of planners coming to terms with the needs for unfamiliar types of buildings as well as the political and social forces that have influenced their decisions.<sup>12</sup>

At Springvale, refugees from Vietnam were initially accommodated in the Enterprise migrant hostel in east Springvale and then spread out from there. Arriving from around 1976, in the early 1990s with businesses set up early on and now thriving, there was a desire to create a community organisation and temple. A warehouse stood on the temple site on Newcomen Road and was big enough to house not only a temple but also the Teo Chew community centre. The building was retained and the interior refitted. Noise and visitors had to be considered. In early religious temples around Springvale, southeast Asians experienced harassment and complaints from neighbours. It seems that multicultural acceptance did not extend past a specific sound barrier, and choosing a site in an industrial area meant these unpleasant exchanges could be avoided, as well as offering land that was relatively economical to occupy.

### **Urban Identities and Streetscapes**

The former Chinese settlement at Weldborough consisted of a number of buildings, including "a main street in which stood the two 'clan' stores, the joss house, the bandstand, and a number of fan-tan houses and 'week-end' dwellings, with the permanent homes of Maa Mon Chin and three part-Chinese families set behind the street."<sup>13</sup> As such, its Chinese identity was recognised both internally and externally/governmentally, with the physical separation between the settlement and the 'white' settlement of Weldborough acting as a clear delineation or boundary. While both the temple and its surrounding settlement had a relatively short life, from the founding of the temple in 1883 to its dismantling and its contents being removed to Launceston

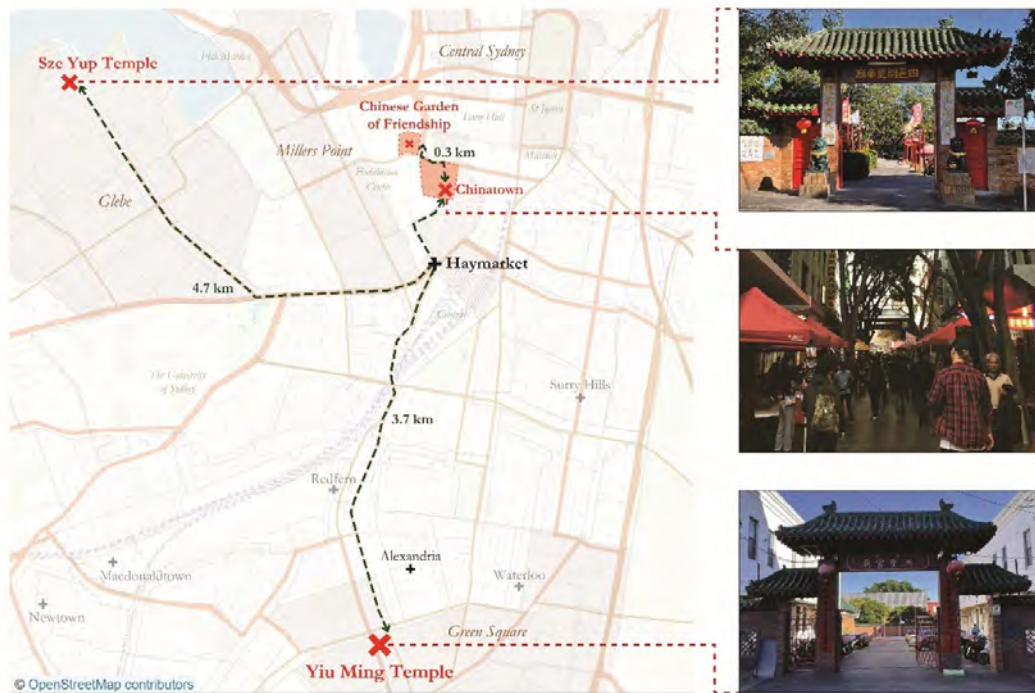
in 1934, the temple was reinforced as a centre of Chinese religion and culture, and not just for the immediate surrounding settlement. When the other temples of North East Tasmania closed (all earlier than the Weldborough temple), their most important elements – wooden plaques inscribed with dedications, ‘floating Golden palaces’ mounted on walls, incense racks and burners – were brought to the Weldborough temple for safekeeping. The temple remained a core element of the local culture and streetscape until the settlement ceased to exist.



**Figure 6.** North-east Tasmania context map showing the location and network of Chinese temples and mining settlements in the late nineteenth century (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data).

In contrast, the immediate area around the Yiu Ming Temple has transformed from being a place of Chinese market gardens in the later nineteenth century to being a predominantly industrial suburb in the mid-twentieth century to its gentrification as a part of inner south Sydney. The walled compound of the temple precinct provided comparative insulation for, and isolation of, the temple. It has seen an evolution of the area and dispersal of its community of worshippers through much of the twentieth century. However, in the density and boundedness of its urban form, the complex relates more clearly to its Australian context as an inner-urban presence than a rural compound. In more recent times, starting with the influx of Chinese migrants in the 1980s, the temple’s presence has become more prominent, and its status as one of Australia’s few surviving early Chinese temples has brought the building and its adjacent development listing on the New South Wales Heritage Register.<sup>14</sup> This recognition, as an intrinsic part

of the built fabric of the state, highlights the temple's part in Retreat Street as an enduring adaptation of patterns of settlement of a particular community to its surroundings.



**Figure 7.** Sydney context map showing the location of China Town, Chinese Garden, Yiu Ming Temple in Alexandria and Sze Yup Temple in Glebe (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data, photographs by Freya Su).

The Springvale Guan Di Temple at first appears isolated in its immediate surroundings, situated in a light industrial area next to cabinetry workshops and small factories. However, a closer look at the surrounding streets reveals it as being part of a culturally rich mixture of uses, including a Vietnamese-Australian Women's Association, a Greek Orthodox Church and a Hakka Chinese Community Association alongside numerous businesses making both culturally specific and generic goods (Figure 4). This is evidently more than an industrial precinct. On the one hand, the fact that cultural and religious places can be found here is a function of the low esteem in which this peripheral landscape of unheroic light industrial buildings was previously held by the existing majority population. In this light, the location of the temple is a matter of enforced circumstance, a combination of limited means to purchase land in the city, and, once land has been occupied, the relative lack of planning and other overarching governmental controls. On the other hand, in becoming a regional centre for Melbourne's Teo Chew/Chinese/Daoist community, the temple is a prominent example

of spatial occupation that, however unprepossessing its siting on the margins of an outer suburb, has become a productive focus for that growing community, and an example of the transformative potential of such siting with the changing demography of the city.



**Figure 8.** Melbourne context map highlighting Daoist Chinese temples and migrant hostels (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data).

### City and Regional Connections

The Weldborough temple's location and immediate surroundings are evidence of the separation of its Chinese community from the dominant 'white' population of the town and the broader area of North Eastern Tasmania. While it existed, there was a clear physical separation between the temple and its surrounding Chinese settlement and the rest of the town of Weldborough. Yet some of these settlements were, relative to the sparsely populated region of North East Tasmania of the time, quite prominent. Despite the separation (Figure 2), there was an acceptance extended to the Chinese in Weldborough, allowing them to partially integrate into its social fabric. Their children attended the public school and the Chinese included European settlers in their Chinese new year celebrations. Such events are documented in letters and journals of the time.<sup>15</sup>



The Chinese New Year celebrations centred around Garibaldi's Joss House in 1912 were reported to have attracted hundreds of visitors, making it a major regional event.<sup>16</sup> The reconstitution of the Weldborough temple (and elements from the other former Tasmanian temples) in a Launceston Museum speaks of this broader geographic scope, not only because Launceston is around 120 kilometres from Weldborough. The reconstituted temple, while essentially a museum exhibit, speaks of its value, most immediately to the former Chinese mining communities, but now more generally as an important part of Tasmanian history and culture.



**Figure 9.** Map showing the network of mining camps and Weldborough Chinese settlement located 450 metres north of the European township (Map by Van Krisadawat, traced from Map - Weldborough W13 (Tasmanian Archives: AF819-1-364), with OpenStreetMap data).

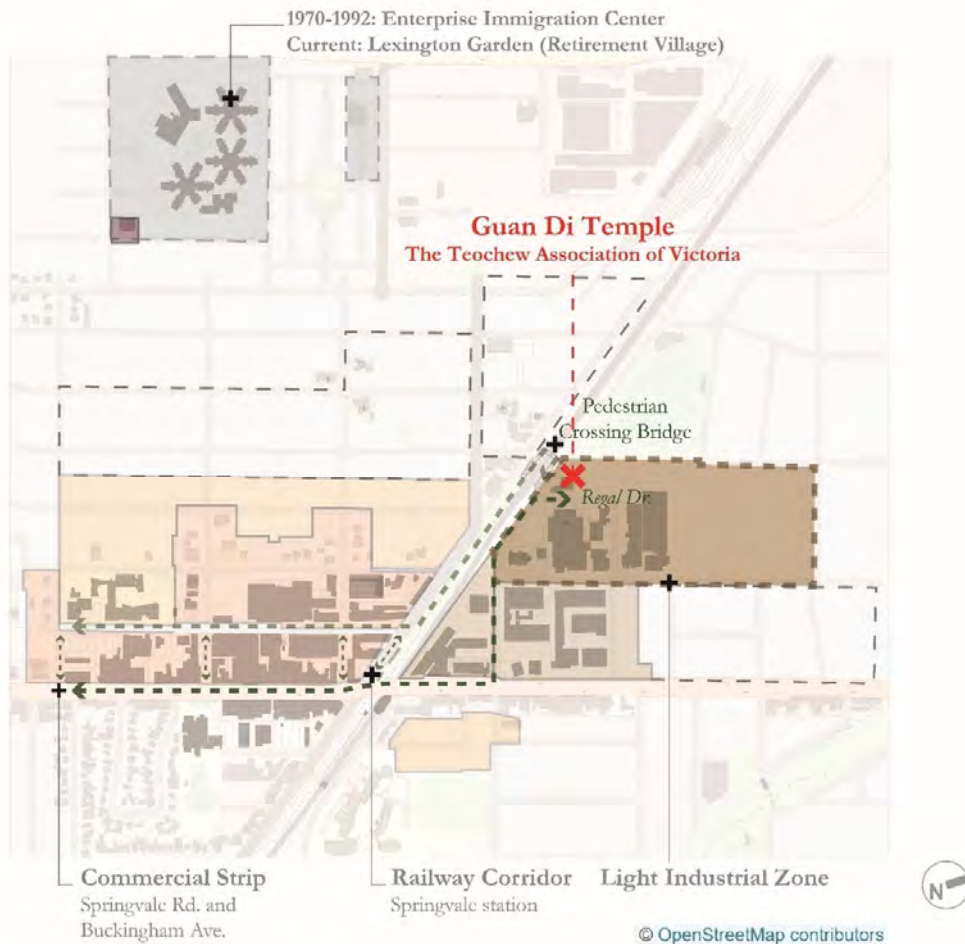
The Yiu Ming Temple, in contrast, remains on its original site and has been gradually surrounded by the metropolis of greater Sydney. While the market gardens that originally surrounded the temple have long since disappeared, the temple and its adjacent buildings still form a distinct street precinct reinforced by surrounding walls and accessed through gateways. In its contemporary setting, it appears that the temple complex has had little influence on the built environment beyond its walls, though traces of the former waterway can be detected in maps of the immediate area. However, one of only two Chinese temples (the other being the Sze Yup Temple in Glebe) to remain

in operation in Sydney during the 'white Australia' period of the twentieth century, its influence amongst the city's Chinese inhabitants was geographically wide.



**Figure 10.** Map of Alexandria, Sydney, showing Yiu Ming temple, with the Chinese market gardens along Shears Creek highlighted in green (Map by Van Krisadawat and Freya Su from OpenStreetMap data).

The Guan Di Temple in Springvale is of far more recent origin, and so its influence on the broader area of Springvale and south-eastern Melbourne is less a matter of historical traces, and more a reflection on its purpose within the wide expanse of the city's outer metropolitan area. Here, the temple's identity as specifically if not exclusively Teo Chew has a bearing, evidenced by its usage as a Teo Chew community centre as much as a specific place of worship, overlapping with the ethnically Teo Chew origins of some of its members as refugees from Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>17</sup> This broader influence is illustrated by the greater mobility of the temple's users, in contrast to the earlier buildings, with worshippers of Daoist/Teo Chew/Chinese origins visiting from a wide catchment area of south-eastern metropolitan Melbourne.



**Figure 11.** Map of Springvale, Melbourne, showing the location of Guan Di Temple within the light industrial zone (Map by Van Krisadawat from OpenStreetMap data).

### **Conclusion: Boundaries, Culture and Otherness**

While any place has the potential for meaning to be attributed to it in this manner, religious buildings are predisposed to be sites of difference. A Daoist temple first marks the presence of a particular identity and world-view by its establishment, and then reinforces this through the performance of rituals; from initial establishment, to the events and holy days that it celebrates, to the daily and individual activities that occur within it. However, the physical fact of each temple as a building or complex of buildings is that they are bounded, whether by actual walls, or by boundaries of their site. The activities that occur within these temples are also more or less bounded, and particularly since they are surrounded by quite different uses and users, must constantly be aware and considerate of neighbouring uses and activities. Relations beyond the temples' communities are determined not only by the purposes of buildings within and outside the temples' boundaries, but also with preconceptions and perceptions of temple



insiders, the broader population around the temple, and governing bodies. By their presence, these temples offer (or have offered) connection and reference to Chinese and Daoist identity, an identity that transcends the limitations of their buildings' siting within physical neighbourhoods. A temple represents a narrative that fills a particular imagined space, despite other narratives that appear beyond its spatial limits (and in the sense of the power of governmental planning and authority, sometimes within it). The space of the Daoist temple is one in which an alternately centred space (focused on Chinese syncretic beliefs and worldview) is promoted, one that remains 'other' to the dominant and hegemonic space of local society.<sup>18</sup>

Such buildings are most commonly thought of in terms of the adaptation of Chinese architecture to the otherness of Australian conditions. However, in addition to this, given the long history of Chinese architecture in Australia, it is also worth considering how the apparent otherness of Chinese architecture has itself been influential. That one of the three subject temples for this paper has been removed from its original location (and largely from its original purpose) indicates that the relationship between migration and settlement is a threshold between movement and fixity, ephemerality and permanence, residence and citizenship in the fullest sense. The removal and reconstitution of the Weldborough temple illustrates how struggles against power and hegemony that engage the everyday lives of marginalised people can be brought to bear on physical spaces. Comparison of the siting of these three Daoist temples – one from the nineteenth century that was dismantled and partially reconstituted as a museum exhibit, one that has survived over a century on a site that has changed from being amidst market gardens to part of a gentrified inner suburb, and one founded recently on a light industrial site in southeastern Melbourne – suggest that while much has changed about the reception of different cultures in Australia, a sense of otherness remains in relation to Chinese being Australian. The presence of consciousness in decision-making about practices, retention and usage of tradition, mean that the cultural environment for a Chinese temple, whether constructed in 1880 or 1990, is not tacit. It is the result of a diasporic community's active invocation of culture in unfamiliar conditions, a teleological as well as pragmatic exercise. The presence of these temples reminds us that minority communities produce architecture as one means of reconciling affiliations of faith, ethnic background and location, the "place you're at" versus the "place you're from."<sup>19</sup> As a nation, Australia still needs to fully come to terms with this as central, rather than marginal, to national identity.

## Acknowledgements

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Mirjana Lozanovska (ed.), *Ethno-Architecture and the Politics of Migration* (London: Routledge, 2016); Iris Levin, “Chinese Migrants in Melbourne and their House Choices,” *Australian Geographer*, 43, no. 3 (2012): 303-20. See also Hing-Wah Chau, “Migrancy and Architecture: The Num Pon Soon Society Building in Melbourne Chinatown, the See Yup Temple in South Melbourne and the Kaiping Diaolou in China as Case Studies,” *Gold: 33rd Annual SAHANZ Conference* (Melbourne: SAHANZ, 2016); David Beynon, “Beyond Big Gold Mountain: Chinese-Australian Settlement and Industry as Integral to Colonial Australia,” *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*, 29, no. 2 (2019): 184-206; and David Beynon, “Melbourne’s Third-World-looking Architecture,” in *Suburban Fantasies: Melbourne Unmasked*, ed. C. Long, K. Shaw, and K. & C. Merlo (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> “Joss House” is a Western term for a Chinese temple, derived from the Portuguese *deos* (god). Some view the term as prejudicial though it remains widely used for Chinese temples in the West.

<sup>3</sup> Alexandria Municipal Council, *1868-1943 Alexandria “The Birmingham of Australia”: 75 Years of Progress* (Sydney: W. C. Penfolds, 1943).

<sup>4</sup> Alexandria Municipal Council, *1868-1943 Alexandria*.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Annie Wong, secretary of Guan Di Temple/Teo Chew Chinese Association of Victoria, Springvale, April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent Gossaert and Xun Liu (eds.), *Daoism in Modern China: Clerics and Temples in Urban Transformations, 1860-Present* (London: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>7</sup> “Chinn, Maa Mon (c. 1845 - 1923),” Chinese-Australian Historical Images in Australia, [www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/biogs/CH00063b.htm](http://www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/biogs/CH00063b.htm) (accessed 5 August 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Gary Richardson, *Tin Mountain: The European and Chinese History of the Blue Tier, Poimena and Weldborough* (Hobart: Forty South, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Ann Stephen (ed.), *The Lions of Retreat Street: A Chinese Temple in Inner-Sydney* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Alexandria Municipal Council, *1868-1943 Alexandria*.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson, *Tin Mountain*.

<sup>12</sup> David Beynon, “Edge of Centre: Australian Cities and the Public Architecture of Recent Immigrant Communities,” in *Ethno-Architecture and the Politics of Migration*, ed. M. Lozanovska (London: Routledge, 2016); and David Beynon, “Defining Cultural Sustainability in Multicultural Built Environments,” *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, 6, no. 5 (2010): 255-266.

<sup>13</sup> Denise Gaughwin, “Chinese Settlement Sites in Northeast Tasmania: An Archaeological View,” *Histories of Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific: Proceedings of an International Public Conference held at the Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne, 8-10 October* (1993): 231-245. See also Michael Holmes, *Vanishing Towns: Tasmania’s Ghost Towns and Settlements* (Hobart: Michael Holmes, 2014), 63.

<sup>14</sup> “Yiu Ming Temple,” New South Wales Heritage Register, <https://apps.environment.nsw.gov.au/dpcheritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5044695> (accessed August 5, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Richardson, *Tin Mountain*.

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<sup>16</sup> Sue Walden, "The Tin Fields of North-East Tasmania – A Regional Variation," *Histories of Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific*, 177-87.

<sup>17</sup> Wong, Interview.

<sup>18</sup> J. Yolande Daniels, "Black Bodies, Black Space: A-Waiting Spectacle," in Leslie Naa Nokko (ed.), *White Papers, Black Marks: Architecture, Race, Culture* (London: Athlone, 2000): 199.

<sup>19</sup> Ien Ang, "On Not Speaking Chinese," *New Formations*, 24 (1994): 1-18.

# Local Government Coordination in 1960s Yokohama: The Case of the Inner-City Motorway Project

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## **Abstract**

*In the 1960s, when the inner-city motorway was introduced as a new urban infrastructure, major cities worldwide faced a severe shortage of urban space for installation. Yokohama was gifted, as it could utilise its disused canals, but faced many difficulties in changing its route and structure into undergrounding. In 1968, the Mayor of Yokohama invited urban planner Akira Tamura to set up the Planning and Coordination Office (PCO). Since the route and structure of the inner-city motorway in the central part of Yokohama had been authorised by the national ministry, a year of coordinative tasks led by the PCO seemed impossible, considering the highly centralised Japanese administrative system. The success of this case marked a paradigm shift in the initiatives led by local governments. The theme of this study is to clarify how the newly born agency tackled the task that evolved into the “coordinative mechanism” within the municipal administration.*

## **Objectives of Examining the Inner-City Motorway Issues**

In the 1960s, when inner-city motorway networks (Figure 1) were introduced as a new urban infrastructure in highly urbanised regions (Figures 2, 3), major cities worldwide faced a severe shortage of urban space for installation. Yokohama (Figure 4) was gifted, as it could utilise its disused canals (Figure 5) but faced many difficulties in changing its route and structure underground (Figure 6), considering the citizens' opposition campaign against an elevated motorway.

In 1968, the Mayor of Yokohama, Ichio Asukata (1915-90, mayoralty 1963-78),<sup>1</sup> invited the urban planner Akira Tamura (1926-2010)<sup>2</sup> to work for the city and set up the Planning and Coordination Office (PCO) as the coordinative mechanism (Figure 7) within the municipal administration. This undergrounding project was the first task assigned to the PCO. Since the route (Figure 8) and structure of the inner-city motorway had been authorised by the national Ministry,<sup>3</sup> a year of coordinative tasks led by the PCO seemed initially impossible.

This case is well-known among Japanese administrative officials and scholars in the field of town planning. However, the detailed process of its coordination was not clear, although it

has been mentioned in some books by Akira Tamura. There are no academic studies except the author's,<sup>4</sup> which attempt to verify this project scientifically and objectively. The vertically divided system of public administration is a common phenomenon globally. A centralised power structure of national agencies is found in many countries. Both vertically divided systems and centralisation were seen as inevitable when ensuring the efficient and fair functioning of administrative organisations in line with policymakers. However, from the 1960s in Japan, regional values gradually emerged in terms of environmental and landscape issues, mainly in local governments, opposing the national values that formed the background to centralisation.

The hypothesis of this paper is that cross-organisational coordination is necessary to eliminate conflicts within municipal administrative structures and to respect regional values. It is also assumed that the vision of the independent and proactive management of the local government, which consists of the mayor's administration and councillors' assembly, for the welfare of citizens, is imperative. The discovery of the "record memorandum"<sup>5</sup> of the coordination process of the motorway undergrounding compiled by the PCO revealed the details of the entire coordination process for the first time. Therefore, this study is based on the new findings of the recorded memorandum with reference to the author's previous research outcome.

Akira Tamura (1926-2010),<sup>6</sup> the protagonist of this coordination, was the acting Director of the PCO. He was a Japanese expert in city management and planning who conceived citizen-oriented planning theories and comprehensively put them into practice. Tamura accomplished the tasks assigned to him as the chief planner of the City Administration over a relatively short period of time from 1968 until 1978. In honouring his achievement, he was awarded the Grand Prize of the Architectural Institute of Japan for his work, the "Formulation of Theories and Methods of Innovative Town Planning and their Practice," in 2000.



**Figure 1.** Multi-layered motorways in front of Yokohama railway station district in 2018 (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 2.** The Tokyo Metropolitan Region in Japan (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).



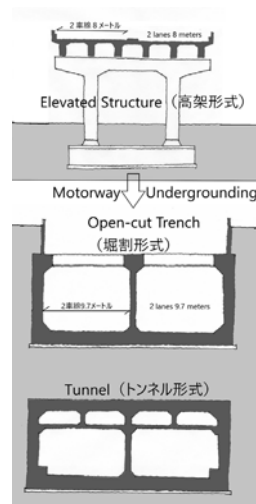
**Figure 3.** Yokohama City in the Tokyo Metropolitan Region  
(Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 4.** Kannai district, central part of Yokohama, at its early period of the port opening with river and canal networks in 1859  
(Courtesy of Yokohama Archives of History).

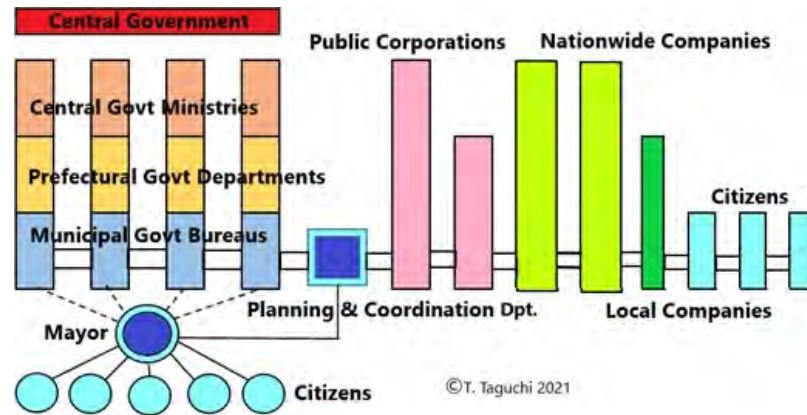


**Figure 5.** River and canal networks in the centre of Yokohama prior to the urban motorway planning (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

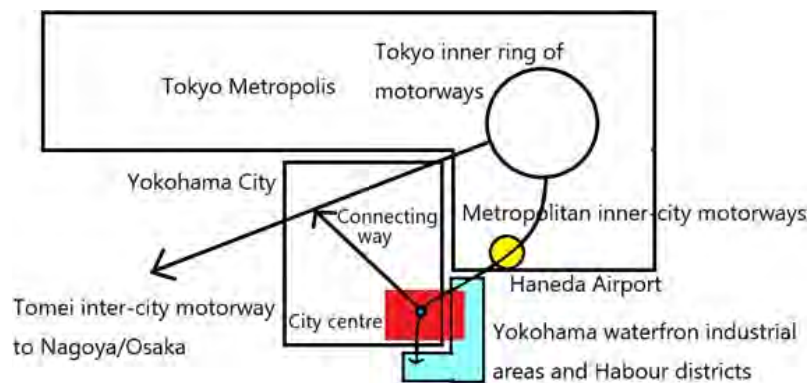


**Figure 6.** Change of structure from elevated to underground (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).





**Figure 7.** The concept of the PCO by Akira Tamura (Redrawn by Toshio Taguchi, based on Tamura's PhD dissertation).



**Figure 8.** The initially planned motorway route from Tokyo to Yokohama City (Diagram by Toshio Taguchi, based on City and MMA documents).

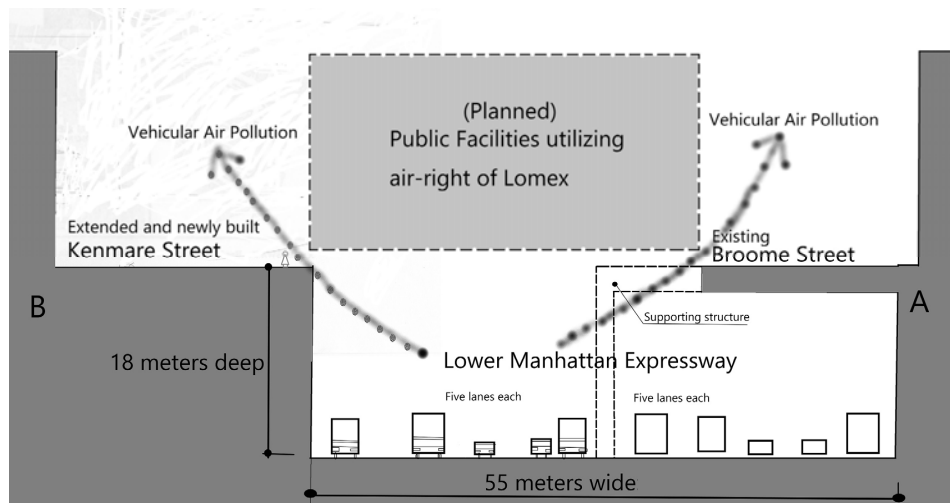
### Coordinative Mechanism in Municipal Administrations

After the Pacific War (1941-45), a democratic governmental system was born for the first time by the enactment of the democratic constitution and the Local Autonomy Law in 1947 in Japan. As of 2020, the administrative structure is three-tiered: the national government (state or central government), the 47 prefectures (regional governments), and the 1,741 municipalities (local governments). Each municipality has an executive head and a legislature. The head of the municipality, as well as the councillors of the legislature, are directly elected by the citizens. The mayor is a leader of his/her executive machinery, consisting of various bureaus with legal powers and financial backing that are admitted at the city assembly.

Therefore, local administrative systems are expected to address regional issues efficiently and fairly. Regional issues occur locally and often require immediate action. Increasingly, these issues arise in the boundary areas of fixed national ministerial structures owing to changes in the social and global environment. This demands coordination beyond the framework of existing national administrative organisations. As national ministries represent the interests of industries and act in their own interests first and foremost, the responses to regional issues are either ignored or significantly delayed. As a result, municipal organisations are likely to fail to act in line with the policies of the mayor. We presume the “coordinative mechanism (municipal planning and coordination function)” to be a solution to the above-mentioned organisational problems in its system.

### **Inner-city Motorway Planning in the United States and Britain**

New York was in a severe condition for motorway installation.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to Yokohama, the only way to introduce a new inner-city motorway in the Manhattan Island was to destroy existing city blocks, especially housing estates for low-income people. The history of the New York City motorway networks began in the 1920s, with Robert Moses (1888-1981).<sup>8</sup> He became the president of the New York State Public Highway Authority (TBTA), which was entrusted by successive presidents, governors and mayors to build motorways and continued to do so until the 1960s. The Lower Manhattan Expressway project in Soho, Manhattan Island, was the subject of a bitter confrontation between Moses and Jane Jacobs, a journalist. Jacobs, who refused to compromise as leader of the resident group, was arrested for disrupting a public hearing in 1968. Moses, coercive as he was, was later dismissed by the governor. Mayor John Lindsay proposed the concept of joint development (Figure 9) utilising the space over the planned open-cut motorway, which could not be accepted by the opposition group, and the project was finally abandoned in 1969. New York was not an exception. Other major old cities, such as Boston, Chicago and Seattle, saw resistance to elevated structures, too.



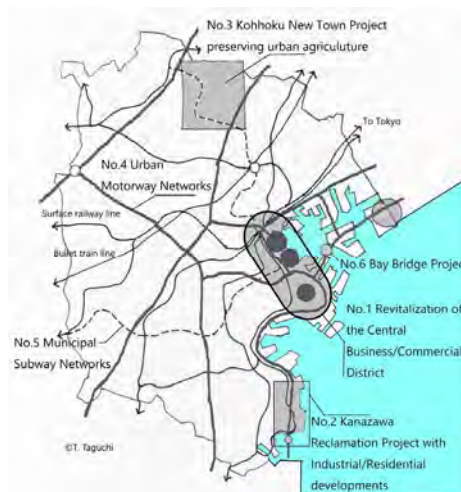
**Figure 9.** Concept of joint development in New York by Mayor Lindsay (Diagram by Toshio Taguchi, based on the Lower Manhattan Expressway Plan of March 1969).

In the old city redevelopments in the 1960s,<sup>9</sup> Britain introduced a new concept of inner and/or middle ring roads surrounding old city centres networked with motorway systems outside city centres. This system made it possible in the old cities, such as Birmingham and Leicester, to enjoy a free pedestrian zone in those city centres separated from vehicular traffic. Since England is comparatively flat, with gentle slopes, there was almost no need to construct elevated structures for those ring roads, in contrast to its American or Japanese counterparts.

### The History of Inner-City Motorway Planning in Yokohama

In 1964, Akira Tamura, who was then working at the Environment Development Centre, proposed to Mayor Asukata a plan for the future of Yokohama City (named “Six Spine Projects”)<sup>10</sup> (Figure 10) that included inner-city motorway networks planned since 1963.<sup>11</sup> In 1965, the City of Yokohama set up the Motorway Planning Section for the planning of the motorway networks (MPS, which became the Motorway Division of the Road Bureau in 1968).<sup>12</sup> In March 1966, the Town Planning Bureau,<sup>13</sup> together with the Ministry of Construction (MoC) and the Metropolitan Motorway Authority (MMA), proposed several routes for the extension of the Metropolitan Motorway from the Tokyo Haneda Airport to Kannai and inland districts of the city centre. Contrary to the Yokohama Canal Usage Council’s recommendation,<sup>14</sup> the MPS regarded the idea of using the Haohka and Yoshida canals for the motorway as the most feasible option, rather than for the municipal subways. It is noted that the reclamation of canals downstream of the river was made possible thanks to the construction by-passing the upstream river.

In July 1966, the Yokohama sub-committee of the National Urban Transport Council submitted its recommendation to the Ministry of Transport (MoT) that considering the urgent requirement caused by severely congested public transport, municipal subway line No. 1, between Kamiohka (southern Yokohama) and Kannai, and line No. 3, between Yamashita-cho (port area) and Yokohama Station, be built without delay.<sup>15</sup> In March 1967, the MoT granted a project license for new subways. It is noted that the Japanese subways are normally built underground beneath trunk roads only, with some exceptions on the surface in suburban regions. It is very rare that subways are to be constructed under built-up blocks with residents.



**Figure 10.** Location of the Six Spine Projects (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

In December 1967, the city assembly approved the reclamation project of the Haohka canal but suggested that the subway should be undergrounded and the motorway should be elevated. The MPS proposed a north-south line along the Yoshida canal connecting the inner-city networks with the inter-city Tomei motorway by planning an elevated interchange behind the Kannai railway station. The City Beautification Council,<sup>16</sup> which had been considering how to guide the redevelopment of the areas along Odori Linear Park<sup>17</sup> on the reclaimed Yoshida canal, feared that if the elevated motorway cut through Linear Park, the redevelopment project would be meaningless.<sup>18</sup> Despite these conditions, Mayor Asukata was still hopeful that undergrounding the motorway would be made possible by any means.

Subsequently, the Kanagawa Town Planning Local Council approved the motorway under the Town Planning Law for the route along the Haohka canal only, apart from the structural

type, and allowed the MoC to extend the metropolitan motorway to Yokohama (Figure 11). The route runs through the Haohka canal and then the Hori River to the port area. The north-south line along the Yoshida canal was not included because it still had to be coordinated with Odori Park and the subways. On learning of this decision, the shopkeepers of shopping streets in the city centre petitioned Mayor Asukata and the chairman of the city assembly to change the motorway route.<sup>19</sup> They argued that the construction of the elevated motorway would divide Kannai and the inland district, and that the huge structure would create a nuisance for the future landscape.



**Figure 11.** The initially decided plan of elevated motorway routes by MoC in 1968 (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

### The Planning and Coordination Office

In later years, the PCO recruited a diverse range of personnel from outside, but at the time of its establishment, these were staff members transferred from other bureaus. At that time, coordinative departments in municipalities all over Japan were mainly clerical, and it was rare to find one, such as Yokohama, which was mainly technical. These technical staff members used their expertise and experience to critically analyse and coordinate the ideas and plans of the other specialised bureaus involved in the work. One of those staff members was Yoshio Tashiro, who was an able motorway engineer and worked at the city's MPS before moving to the PCO. It is assumed that Tashiro formulated the “record memorandum,” since its handwriting was similar to his.

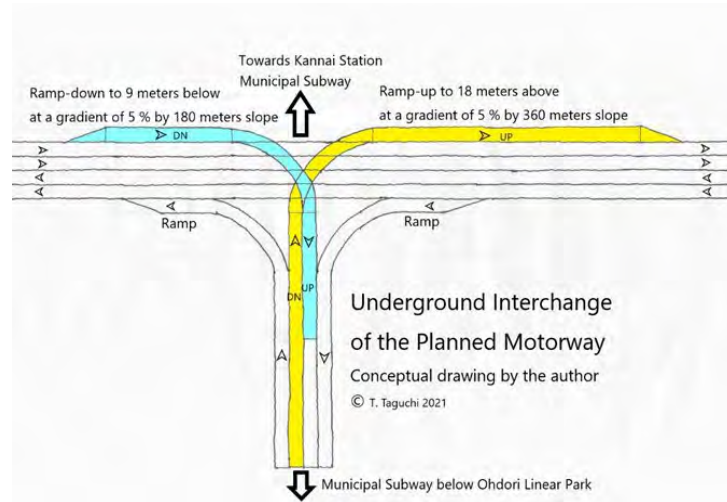
In May 1968, the City General Affairs Bureau issued a notice<sup>20</sup> to all concerned bureaus requesting the necessary collaboration with the PCO. The purpose of the establishment of the PCO was “to facilitate the planning, coordination and progress management of important

planning projects of the city,” and specifically stated that “important project plans, including the Six Spine Projects, should be coordinated with the PCO as early as possible at each point of progress.” Tamura attended executive meetings (mayor, assistant mayors, head of the PCO, head of the General Affairs Bureau and head of the Finance Bureau), and the PCO acted as the secretariat for the meetings. Tamura was a Director of the PCO at the initial stage until 1971; then, he became the head of the PCO.

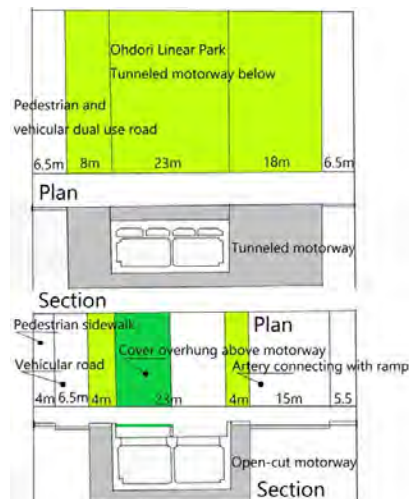
### **The Negotiation Process of Undergrounding Motorways**

The record memorandum detailed the chronology of the negotiation processes from 13 June 1968 to 23 April 1969 in a brief and concise manner, which includes when and where meetings were held, who attended the meetings and the topics that were discussed. Therefore, this document is the most important part of this research.

In March 1968, Urban Bureau of the MoC told in the city executives that they could not pass the concerned town planning decision on the subway route alone until the city had decided on its policy towards the north-south line. If the undergrounding of the motorway along the two canals was agreed upon and the interchange was also undergrounded (Figure 12), the subway had to cross under the underground interchange and go deeper, which was unacceptable in terms of cost and construction timeline. The limited space left above the ground next to the open-cut trench is unsuitable for Odori Linear Park (Figure 13). Mayor Asukata, who could not remain ambiguous about the undergrounding policy, expressed that elevated motorway would be a permanent scar on the city's future and that it was time to scrap the whole idea and start again.<sup>21</sup> In June, the city started to contact MoC officials who had previously made decisions. Negotiation on the undergrounding of the motorway and its rerouting began with the city trying to get the MoC back to the table, which was angry at the city's inconsistency.



**Figure 12.** The planned interchange behind the Kannai railway station to connect Haohka canal route with Yoshida canal route (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi, with reference to MMA documents).<sup>22</sup>

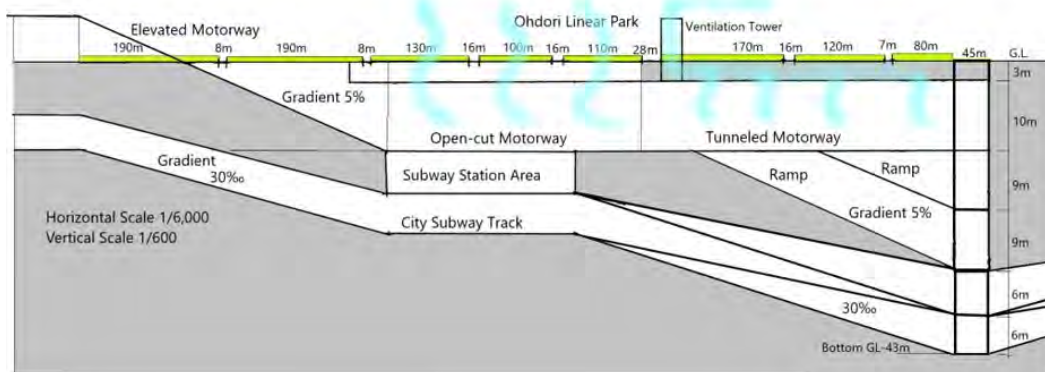


**Figure 13.** Plan and section of Odori Linear Park coexisted with the underground motorway (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

In August, the Director General of the Town Planning Bureau was asked by a MoC official whether the city would bear the increased cost of the undergrounding project and whether it would be responsible for any problems caused by the Nakamura River locals who would suffer from the rerouted motorway. On the other hand, the MoT accepted the change in the subway route. They replied that it would be possible to acknowledge a “slight change in route”<sup>23</sup> if the Haohka Canal was given over to the underground motorway. When the Mayor and Tamura met with the governor of Kanagawa Prefecture, he mentioned that the city’s proposal was fine and that he would cooperate, but the prefectural government’s actions stopped there.

In September, the Director General of the Urban Bureau of the MoC expressed that he wished to cooperate with the city's plan, and he did not mind the increased project costs. In October, a meeting was held with the MoC, MMA and the city to review the city's proposal. The MoC's policy was to evaluate the project's profitability in the MMA. In November, the MMA replied that it would be difficult to repay the construction investment in the required 30 years through toll revenues. In November, the MoC asked the city for a response, stating that: (1) the MMA could only be instructed to build an elevated motorway along the Haohka and Yoshida canals; (2) if the city was to replace the 6 billion yen increase in the cost of the project, the Haohka and Yoshida canals could be open-trench structures; and (3) if the Yoshida canal section (north-south line) was cancelled, the Haohka canal could be open-trench without the city's investment. The city announced that it would accept a prior investment of 4 billion yen for motorway undergrounding along the Yoshida canal.

In December, the MoC laid the following conditions for undergrounding of the Haohka and Yoshida canals: that the city pay the land cost, and concerned organisations bear the common cost such as reclamation equally. Yoshiro Watanabe<sup>24</sup> was an influential MoC official who tried to become an intermediary between the PCO and MoC. On the other hand, the city's Transport Bureau expressed that it was impossible for the subway and motorway to coexist (Figure 14) at the Yoshida canal and requested to separate them. At the end of January, the Director General of the City Transport Bureau informed the MoT that even if the subway was changed to a wide national highway running alongside Odori Linear Park a few blocks away, it would not be possible for the subway to turn around at the intersection in the centre of the Kannai district and thus would not be able to run directly to Yokohama Station. The MoT hardened its stance since the city's intention was contrary to the preconditions approved by the National Transport Council that approved the Yokohama subway project.



**Figure 14.** The coexisting subway and underground motorway along Yoshida canal (Diagram by Toshio Taguchi, with reference to MMA and Municipal Transport Bureau documents).



In February, the MoT commented that if direct service was impossible, the National Transport Council would cancel the license and cut off the national subsidies. The negotiations had reached an impasse. Therefore, the Deputy Mayor, head of the PCO and Tamura requested Saburo Oka, a Socialist Party Member of Parliament (MP), to mediate with the MoC and the MoT. Oka was the chairman of the Construction Committee of the House of Representatives that had jurisdiction over the MoC; he was also a close friend of Mayor Asukata. Oka presented the MoC with a conciliation proposal: “Motorway’s construction as soon as possible until the Yamashita Bridge and subways as soon as possible along the Yoshida canal.”<sup>25</sup> In other words, there would be no coexistence of motorway and subway in the Yoshida canal. In the meantime, the MoC informed the city that it would discuss matters with the MoT directly, but this was indefinitely postponed.

On 22 February, the Mayor, the Director of the PCO and Tamura met with the Director of the Urban Bureau of the MoC to inform him that: (1) there was no coexistence of motorway and subway; (2) the subway was to be built in Yoshida canal; and (3) the motorway was to be temporarily extended to the ramp in the middle of the route, but the extension would be considered without delay.



**Figure 15.** The finally agreed part of underground motorway (dotted line) and its connecting elevated motorways above Nakamura river (Drawing by Toshio Taguchi).

On 27 February, a day of heavy snowfall, Yukio Onouchi, the Vice-Minister of the MoC, and Tamura attended a meeting between the two parties sitting with Oka.<sup>26</sup> The Vice-Minister began by saying that he wanted to hear their conclusions. Tamura opined that coexistence

was difficult, and the subway and motorway should be built as soon as possible. The Vice Minister said that he understood what the city was saying.

Afterwards, a bureau meeting attended by all the officials concerned lasted until midnight, and the opposing comments led to a big controversy. In response to this situation, the project policy was reconfirmed at the city executive meeting on 3 March.<sup>27</sup> With this policy, the Mayor and the Director of the PCO met the Vice-Minister.<sup>28</sup> The Vice-Minister replied that what had been decided had to be done. On 23 April, Kanagawa Town Planning Local Council<sup>29</sup> approved the project (Figure 15), as originally proposed by the city.

### **Analysis of the Coordinative Mechanism**

The following are the key points of the coordinative mechanism that is visible from the detailed process of undergrounding negotiations:

1. When the city administration began contacting the MoC, it reaffirmed its undergrounding policy: the executive meeting demonstrated that the city's policy was consistent and unchanged.
2. By ordering the city road bureau that was dissatisfied with the Mayor's policy change and the role of luring the MoC to the negotiations, they were expected to view the matter from the opposite standpoint, rather than the MoC's default policy, and induced them to act in accordance with the city policy.
3. As official negotiations with the MoC and MoT began and proceeded, various important decisions in terms of policy formulation became necessary. The PCO then took the lead in bringing the relevant departments together while maintaining close communication with the Mayor.
4. Engineers from relevant institutions examined the feasibility of going underground from a technical point of view. By sharing the results with relevant bodies, they attempted to find an agreeable direction according to technical theories. In his testimony, Takashi Tatsugami,<sup>30</sup> a former member of the city motorway section, said that an underground interchange would require a loose alignment for visibility that would result in an excessive amount of area for its construction. If the underground motorway and subway could not be constructed simultaneously, it would be technically difficult to bury the motorway tunnel above the subway.<sup>31</sup> When looking for a place where the subway line could turn around, the only result was to go straight from the Yoshida canal towards Kannai district and use the space at the side of the City Hall.

5. In terms of cost, the city facilitated the negotiations by announcing that it would accept an upfront investment of 4 billion yen for undergrounding the motorway. Although the MMA expressed the extension of the motorway to Yokohama as unprofitable, the “upfront investment” by the city could become beneficial in cost for the MMA.<sup>32</sup> As the MMA was a public corporation set up and supported by the national and local governments in the metropolitan region, Yokohama City was one of the investors of the MMA. It was acknowledged that the subway construction would be severely affected by the undergrounding process. The City Transport Bureau and the MoT did not expect deep-depth construction<sup>33</sup> that would result in a longer period of construction and an increase in cost.
6. In the end, the MoT, angered by the inability to direct the subway operations due to the change in route, suggested that the subway license be abolished.<sup>34</sup> The MoC agreed to a political settlement through the intermediary of an MP to save face for each ministry since both ministries had no other choice but to maintain their original project assignments.
7. Both Asukata and Tamura came to the brink of accepting the incomplete coexistence of motorway and subway along the Yoshida canal,<sup>35</sup> even if the Odori linear park was left as a patch of small space, so far as the MoC and the MoT were satisfied. Subsequently, the situation took a major turn when the MoT pointed out a discrepancy with the original plan for the subway and opposed it. Finally, the coordination results imply the importance of technical work and cost issues. Political mediation has its place, but only after the preconditions for the concerned bodies are established.

## **Conclusion**

The outcome of this coordination became a milestone for the first time in the Japanese planning history – that the local government representing their citizens resisted the national planning policy authorised by the central government and ultimately accomplished their regional value endorsed by the citizens. Thereafter, the national planning system began to allow local governments to participate as a partner and moved forward as citizen-oriented by accepting the process of new infrastructure installation slightly democratised. Afterwards, the Asukata administration was recognised by the national ministries and other public bodies as a tough negotiator.

The PCO was originally established as the mobilising engine to implement the Six Spine Projects. Like Yokohama’s PCO, there were some similar municipal machineries in other local governments aimed at becoming coordinative mechanism within each administration.

Although the Metropolitan Government of Tokyo had its planning and coordination bureau at the time, the bureau stayed as a commanding post to instruct the concerned bureaus from a high place and never dared to be involved in the implementation of the projects. The shopkeepers demanded the “preservation of the urban landscape”<sup>36</sup> as a new regional value not to be destroyed by the elevated motorway. Asukata’s solidarity with their campaign forged a united movement to secure the regional value opposing the national value that promoted elevated motorways.

This case marked an “attempt to unify the administration”<sup>37</sup> as the most important element in initiating the realisation of new regional values. If not unified, the negotiation itself could not be started at all. Therefore, unification was seen as the first and the most visible germ of the planning and coordination functions envisaged by Tamura. In 1978 the underground motorway (Figures 16, 17) was opened, and Odori Park (Figure 18) was completed without an elevated motorway passing overhead. The municipal subway was opened in 1976 below Odori Park (Figure 19) as planned initially.



**Figure 16.** Completed open-cut motorway on the ground level in 2019  
(Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 17.** Completed open-cut motorway near Yoshida canal in 2019 (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 18.** Odori Park in 2019 (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).



**Figure 19.** Municipal Subway which had been open since 1976 (Photograph by Toshio Taguchi).

However, this coordination process was a tricky one, as the record memorandum shows. If it had not been successful, as Tamura wrote in his book, “everything that the PCO said afterwards was just idealistic and dreamy,”<sup>38</sup> it would not have functioned as a coordinative mechanism in the city administration. The ‘practical function’ of planning and coordination advocated by Tamura was later abolished. In 1982, during the Michikazu Saigo administration (mayoralty term, 1978-90), that followed Asukata’s, the Finance Bureau absorbed the PCO in a reorganisation process to become the Planning and Finance Bureau. The PCO was abolished on the grounds that its involvement in individual projects had undermined the autonomy of the original bureaus.

Lastly, the sense of inter-organisational collaboration in defence of new regional values continued to live on informally among young city officials even after the reorganisation. Thanks to their efforts, all Six Spine Projects were accomplished during the following twenty years until Tamura passed away in 2010.

### Acknowledgements

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# Heritage Conservation versus Urban Development and Politics: Persepolis Tent City in the Aftermath of the Imperial Celebration, 1971-1979

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## **Abstract**

*In 1971, MohammadReza Pahlavi, the former Shah of Iran, invited the most then-influential individuals of the world to Iran to commemorate the 2,500-year Anniversary of the Founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great (The Imperial Celebration). To accommodate the guests, Iran set up a city of prefabricated apartments by Persepolis that looked like tents, hence Persepolis Tent City. In the aftermath of the Imperial Celebration, the government proposed or received six different plans to reuse the Tent City. Such attempts were mostly to make the site profitable, hence responding to criticisms of its extravagance. The primary stakeholders in the conception and realisation of these plans were NASCO, an architectural and urban planning consultancy firm; Homa, the National Airline of Iran that owned the Tent City; and the Planning and Budget Organisation, a governmental body that planned and supervised the public budget. There was also a Shah whose orders had to be accommodated. The plans, however, could not bring reconciliation between active stakeholders, leading to their rejection or abandonment. As a result, the Tent City slowly deteriorated to the degree that no more than its steel structures exist today.*

*This paper contributes to a better understanding of the relations between nationalism, heritage conservation, institutional architecture and political disputes manifested in Persepolis Tent City. The paper also offers an account of a remarkable architectural intervention, the largest-ever intervention in the first-level buffer zone of the 2500-year-old site, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, that either because of the content or the (mis)reading of the messages it carried, has remained undervalued. To pursue these objectives, the research draws on previously unexamined archival documents retrieved from the National Archive of Iran and print media published in the 1970s.*

## Introduction

This paper concerns Persepolis Tent City (c. 1971), a set of prefabricated apartments amidst a carefully landscaped site adjacent to Persepolis (c. 550-330 BCE), in the aftermath of Iran's 1971 Imperial Celebration, an international event to commemorate the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Persian Empire. It contributes to a better understanding of the relations between nationalism, heritage conservation, institutional architecture, political disputes and diplomacy as manifested in Persepolis Tent City, Iran. The paper also offers an account of a remarkable architectural intervention, the largest-ever intervention in the first-level buffer zone of the 2500-year-old site, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, that either because of the content or because of the (mis)reading of the messages it carried, has remained undervalued. To pursue these objectives, the research draws on previously unexamined archival documents retrieved from the National Archive of Iran and print media published in the 1970s.

Persepolis Tent City was built to accommodate the heads of states during the ceremonies at Persepolis during Iran's Imperial Celebration. The guests included one emperor, seven kings, three queens, 21 princes and princesses, four emirs, one sultan, two governors-general, 21 presidents, and four prime ministers. The former Shah of Iran invited them to commemorate the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Persian empire in an array of parades, audiovisual spectacles, exhibitions, inaugurations and banquets. The highly political and diplomatically significant Imperial Celebration had two primary objectives. For a domestic audience, the event bolstered the ideological underpinning of the Pahlavi regime by promoting the idea that the successes of the country had been, and always would be, dependent on the throne, while to an international audience, the event signalled the beginning of a new period of prosperity and global influence for Iran.<sup>1</sup>

Persepolis Tent City constituted 50 circular residential tents, one oblong dining tent, one grand circular reception tent, three tents for hairdressing and makeup services,<sup>2</sup> one tent as a social club, and a few buildings for cooking and services. A 70-metre-long street, flanked between a round square at the end of Shiraz-Persepolis road on the north and an 1800 square metre heliport on the south, divided the area into two parts. Residential and hairdressing tents were on the eastern side, closer to Persepolis Palace, and the reception, dining and social tents were on the western side. Parallel

to the main street, a 45-metre-wide street separated the Persepolis heritage site from Persepolis Tent City (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

Residential tents, 13 metres in diameter and 3 metres in height, were spaced along five wings branching out from a central fountain to create a star-shaped encampment. Each wing of this star had ten tents paired on the opposite sides of an avenue. Residential tents were of beige and royal blue fabric containing an audience chamber, two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a kitchen (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> Another tent, 24.5 metres in diameter, was the social club near the heliport to while away the idle hours. It was equipped with a bar, a restaurant and a casino, all in modern décor.<sup>5</sup> The reception hall, or the Tent of Honour, 34 metres in diameter with a 6-metre domed ceiling, included the Shah's and his Queen's apartments. With walls of red Italian silk damask that were furnished with a continuous gold-trimmed valance and eight Empire-style chandeliers made of ormolu and Bohemian crystal hanging from an elegantly gathered 6-metre-tall domed ceiling of golden voile, and a floor of cerise moquette and woven wool fabric, the room was like a large jewel box.<sup>6</sup> Designed to seat 500 guests, 68 metres long, 24 metres wide and 13 metres high, the royal dining hall was like a "cathedral of cloth."<sup>7</sup> Its carpet was in blue and gold, a blue silk Persian design covered the wall, and a pink silk-draped ceiling with twelve coffered recesses had gilt and patinated bronze triple-tier chandeliers with stylised branches in the form of acanthus hanging from it (Figure 3).

A circular road marked the outer boundary of residential tents. This dominant register of the encampment was further extended and formalised by a dense garden, a wood of young pines.<sup>8</sup> Landscape architects decorated the area. The prominent feature of the landscape was the massive central fountain with 1211 pumps and 400 projectors.<sup>9</sup> At night, the dramatically lighted jets of water served to join the contemporary tented city with the illuminated monumental ruins of Persepolis.<sup>10</sup> The juxtaposition created a dominant east-west sightline, with the palace of Darius as a suggestive beginning point and the conjoint reception and dining tents as the culmination.<sup>11</sup> Overall, approximately 52,000 metres of waterproof and non-flammable canvas and fabric were used in constructing and decorating the tents.<sup>12</sup> The tents had been tested to withstand wind velocity of 125 miles per hour.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1.** Tent City (c. 1971) at the back vs Persepolis (c. 550-330 BCE) at the front side (Unknown Author, 1971, Wikimedia Commons, <http://bit.ly/3XZ8nOp>, accessed 3 February 2023).



**Figure 2.** Residential Tents (Photograph by Cyrus Kadivar, 1971, Wikimedia Commons, <http://bit.ly/3DEtYmZ>, accessed 3 February 2023).



**Figure 3.** The Dining Tent during the Gala Dinner  
(Photograph by Unknown Author, 1971, Wikimedia  
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### **1961-1979: Persepolis Tent City and the Imperial Celebration**

The idea of developing a city of tents near Persepolis to accommodate the heads of states was first proposed by a highly celebrated art and architectural historian, Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969).<sup>14</sup> Arguing that accommodating delegates of foreign countries in tents near Persepolis was the tradition of ancient Achaemenid kings (550-330 BCE), in 1961, Pope suggested setting up tented accommodation, noting that they should “err a bit on the luxurious side for the sake of foreign visitors.”<sup>15</sup> Even before October 1971, it was evident that the Celebration, with so many dignitaries present at Oriental tents and so much history around, would be a television photographer’s delight.<sup>16</sup> It was like a world fair, a universal exposition representing a single expanded world in a microcosm.<sup>17</sup> The event turned out to be successful from many perspectives, especially publicity. During the first four days of the Imperial Celebration, journalists and photographers circulated 12 million words, took nearly 500,000 photos, recorded roughly 1200 hours of video and made 3000 hours of phone calls.<sup>18</sup> All these figures were record-breaking in 1971. Peter Ramsbotham, the UK’s ambassador to Iran, noted that the Celebrations “put Iran on the map” and Persepolis “for a brief forty-eight hours, became the centre of world interest.”<sup>19</sup> Print media called it “Iran’s biggest possible publicity venture to date.”<sup>20</sup> They argued that “the publicity alone for Iran will be priceless.”<sup>21</sup> A projected estimated audience of 1.016 billion people worldwide was to witness the event.<sup>22</sup> Statistics showed that the Celebration increased Iran’s tourism rate. The number of foreign tourists soared from 210,000 in 1966 to 514,000 by 1972 and the average duration of trips increased from thirteen nights to nineteen in the same

period.<sup>23</sup> The travellers also saw Iran's security and "the Persian economic miracle along with the smooth, meticulously kept highways; in the countless construction sites with ultramodern equipment; in the small, neat factories and workshops; in the mechanized farms, and the extensive, reforested dunes along arid slopes."<sup>24</sup>

The event received some criticisms as well. In August 1971, for example, Rosette Hargrove, the *American-Statesman's* journalist, wrote "the Iranian birthday party will be an all-French production."<sup>25</sup> This statement was partially true. Most of the Tent City and its facilities had been delivered by foreign companies, especially French. Maxim's, the renowned culinary establishment in Paris, prepared the food. A team of 120 captains headed by Pierre Gachet, director of the then new restaurant service at Orly Airport in France, some Potel et Chabot staff from the Palace Hotel in St Moritz, Andrea Badrutt's team from the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo and Raymond Thuillier from the Baumaniere in Les Beaux in the south of France offered their services during the event.<sup>26</sup> The wines were from the UK's Rothschild's cellar and the French Moët et Chandon. The French Raynaud created a china set of Céralene. Bullet-proof Mercedes-Benz cars were imported from Germany. Limoges designed serving plates, Haviland supplied china cups for coffee, Porthault prepared linens and towels, and Baccarat made the glasses. A French designer was commissioned to make two sets of 30 dresses for the ladies in waiting. All the tents had been built by the Paris-based Saint Frères Group, international specialists in industrial textile, and designed by Jansen, a Paris-based interior design firm.<sup>27</sup> Apartments were equipped with the finest French toiletries, including Guerlain shaving preparations for men and Joy Eau de Cologne for women,<sup>28</sup> while the pantries had even the US-made Alka-Seltzer.<sup>29</sup> A French artist built the fountain, and England and Belgian designers delivered the landscape of the site.<sup>30</sup>

Non-Iranians were overwhelmingly more involved in developing the site for the Iranians' birthday party. It led to several issues. On the one hand, Iran had gone too far in erring on the side of luxury. Some questioned the necessity of such luxury and the opposition forces objected to the excessive costs. To address these critics, Iran decided to turn the Persepolis Tent City into a permanent and profitable structure using Iranian technology and resources. The following sections organise and interpret several hundred pieces of correspondence between Iranian entities and offer a history of the Tent City in the aftermath of the Celebration.

### **Plan No.1: Club Meditarranée**

The initial idea to reuse the Tent City in the aftermath of the Imperial Celebration was in place before the Celebration. The Tourism Organisation of Iran, which later became the Ministry of the Information and Tourism, wanted to turn it into a resort centre, to be operated by Club Meditarranée, a group of resort centres used by club members. Club Meditarranée had signalled its desire to take over the tents.<sup>31</sup> The vision, though, did not come true. After the event, the Club proposed to Iran's Tourism Organisation, the then owner of the site, a meagre sum of \$3 a night per guest.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Iran rejected the offer and terminated further collaboration with the Club. Hoping to find serious investors willing to pay more to the owner, the Tourism Organisation negotiated with other potential investors. But Pan American, Intercontinental and Hilton declined the opportunity to invest in the tents. Eventually, Iran could not find serious investors.<sup>33</sup>

The failure of the too optimistic plan of turning the tents into a resort for millionaires added up to the tensions. Probably, and retrospectively, now Iranian organisers, especially those affiliated with the Tourism Organisation, could see how unrealistic the initial goal was. A tent whose additional value comes from its previous owner, e.g. a king or queen of a nation, cannot function like a hotel room. Such furniture does not tolerate wear-and-tear, which is the basic principle of any resort centre or hotel. Upon Shah's approval, the ownership of the Tent City was transferred to the Iran National Airline (Homa) in August 1972.<sup>34</sup> The new owner, Homa, invited Jansen, the interior architecture firm who had designed the tents, to inspect the tents as they were deteriorating rapidly. Eight months later, Jansen advised Homa that the deterioration was due to Iranians' negligence of maintenance protocols.<sup>35</sup> While Homa, not unlike the Tourism Organisation, had not been successful in making the tents profitable, the increasing maintenance costs were imposing further challenges. The head of Homa wrote to the prime minister that Tent City's expenses were around 24,442,000 rials while its income was only 1,200,000 rials (\$350,000 c.f. \$17,150 USD). The report shows that Tent City had 129 staff members, a large number.<sup>36</sup> In another letter, he informed the Planning and Budget Organisation (PBO) about the 23,242,000 rials deficiency (\$332,000 USD) in the Tent City budgets.<sup>37</sup> Although the government had allocated a 30,000,000 rials (\$400,000 USD) budget to maintain the tents,<sup>38</sup> the letter suggests that the Tourism Organisation, the previous owner, accessed it while it was never realised for Homa. AbdolMajid Majidi, PBO's director, argued that since Homa is a for-profit entity, the government could not fund a site without public use with the public budget.<sup>39</sup>

### **Plan No.2: Conference Venue**

Having failed to attract investors and turn the Tent City into a luxury hotel, Homa sought alternative solutions. In July 1972, the Culture and Tourism Department at PBO put forward a plan for organising national and international conferences at the Tent City.<sup>40</sup> The letter also proposed allocating an annual maintenance budget and organising cultural and student tours to raise the site's income. As the tents' deterioration was a major concern, PBO suggested repairing them through another commission to Jansen. Since the cloths and furniture were Jansen-made, they saw it as the only short-term solution. On 20 June 1973, Jansen submitted a detailed quote in 40 pages: 4,130,605 French Francs (\$940,000 USD) for repairing and cleaning the tents and furniture, painting, flooring and plumbing. Although the tents were air-conditioned, Jansen also submitted another quote for 3,974,030 Francs (\$900,000 USD) for HVAC equipment, suggesting that the previous devices needed either improvement or replacement.<sup>41</sup>

### **Plan No.3: Façade Retention**

Jansen's quote raised desperation among Iranian entities, especially Homa, because maintenance costs would soon surpass the cost of creating them. The Tent City was not even nearly profitable, and the objections to the costs and extravagance of the party were still a concern. In the meantime, AliMohammad Khademi (1913-1978), the head of Homa, continued negotiating with PBO to have an annual budget for maintenance costs.<sup>42</sup> On 15 November 1973, Homa requested an urgent 17,000,000 rials (\$243,000 USD) for repairing the Tent City, suggesting that the deterioration of the tents was getting close to a critical condition.<sup>43</sup> While PBO had already rejected such offers on the basis that the public budget cannot fund a for-profit non-public entity, the urgency of repair made PBO approve the request, provided the prime minister's approval.<sup>44</sup>

Frustrated by Jansen's quote and the seemingly endless maintenance costs, the shah himself entered the scene. The grand tent was the primary concern. So, on 4 August 1973, he ordered "masonry materials or even concrete should fill in the space between metal frames to preserve the interior from climate conditions and a fabric similar to the original one, preferably produced locally by Iranian engineers, cover the structure."<sup>45</sup> Preferring Iranian engineers was most likely a reaction to the objections on commissioning foreign, especially French, companies over Iranians. The Shah also asserted that the "original layout of the Tent City should remain intact" and the grand hall should turn into a conference venue.<sup>46</sup> While the plan to turn the grand tent into a conference venue was already proposed by the PBO, it also received the Shah's order.



One month later, he organised a small party in the Tent City where he called upon the head of Homa and gave a more detailed order: “outsource anything related to furniture and covering fabrics to Jansen; but masonry works, construction of new buildings, and installing new equipment and facilities should be given to Iranian engineers.”<sup>47</sup>

#### **Plan No.4: Sports Club and Conference Room**

Following up on shah’s orders, on 18 September 1973, Homa advised PBO that executing the royal orders required: 1. repairing the tents urgently, especially since winter is close; 2. transforming the tents into permanent structures; and 3. transforming the grand tent into a conference venue. Homa also brought in an Iranian engineering consultancy, NASCO. According to the letter, requirement No. 1, i.e. repairing the tents, would be conducted by Jansen, though through direct supervision of NASCO, Homa and PBO. Item No. 2 was outsourced to NASCO, though the consultancy could liaise with Jansen if needed. And for No. 3, NASCO was expected to undertake a feasibility study.<sup>48</sup>

Assigning three entities to supervise Jansen indicates that the quality of Jansen’s deliveries was not completely satisfactory. In November 1974, PBO sent an inspector to assess Jansen’s work. The inspector’s report demonstrated that Jansen’s work was not of satisfactory quality: “The necessity of the current repairs comes from the vendor’s [Jansen] negligence in its choice of materials and execution. Consequently, climate conditions, humidity, and rainwater are deteriorating the floors, internal walls, and wooden walls.”<sup>49</sup> The report circulated confidentially among PBO and Homa. Nevertheless, Jansen finished repairing the tents by July 1975, when Iran hosted the president of Mexico at the Tent City. It is not clear who paid for the repair cost, PBO or Homa; similarly, while Jansen’s quote was for roughly \$940,000 USD, documents do not indicate how much was eventually spent on restoring the tents. Meanwhile, NASCO argued that turning the grand tent into a conference venue was not feasible. The grand tent did not have audio-visual, ventilation and communication equipment and adding them would change the characteristics of the tent, which was not acceptable to the shah.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, NASCO reconciled the shah’s order with the realities of a conference venue and in August 1975 suggested constructing a 500-600-seat conference venue at Darius Hotel.<sup>51</sup> Created in 1971 by the Persepolis for the Imperial Celebrations, Darius Hotel was built to accommodate less influential representatives. During the 1971 event, delegates from 48 foreign countries, among the 63 countries attending the

Celebration, were accommodated in the Tent City, and the rest resided at Darius Hotel. The hotel had followed the materials and characteristics of conventional hotels, masonry materials and reinforced concrete.<sup>52</sup> However, the proposal to establish a conference venue at Darius Hotel also meant another massive constructional attempt in Persepolis' first-level buffer zone, indicating that high maintenance costs and growing frustrations were pushing heritage conservation principles aside. To turn the tents into permanent structures, NASCO suggested that the cloth covering the tents should be removed and replaced with either a steel frame system or epoxy roofing.<sup>53</sup> The proposal presented by NASCO also mentioned that to make Persepolis Tent City profitable, the Persepolis region should become more vibrant and have more visitors. Therefore, it suggested developing the Persepolis Imperial Club, a set of sports facilities (golf, tennis and horseracing, among others). One week later, Shah approved the proposal. Regarding NASCO's suggested alternatives for the roofing system of the tents, he asked for a council of engineers to discuss it and decide the best approach. Later and after a few more discussions, the Shah's orders were sent to Homa in more detail. It included making the Tent City a permanent structure using NASCO's suggestions, constructing a 600-seat conference venue near Darius Hotel, and developing Persepolis Imperial Club near Persepolis.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Plan No.5: Wire Mesh Cable Tray System**

No plan was implemented by 10 October 1977, when another letter circulated in the court and government regarding NASCO's new proposals. The remaining archival documents do not explain why the previous proposals were abandoned. It is possible, though, that the epoxy roofing system was rejected because it was not permanent enough, and the steel frame roofing system was abandoned because it could change the visual characteristics of the Tent City. Either way, the new letter contained two new solutions and indicated another liaising session with Jansen: (i) Jansen System, a new cover of tiles and steel frame to be installed on the current cover; and (ii) wire mesh cable tray system, a network of cable trays and wires that would top the current covering and be covered with a layer of polyester.<sup>55</sup>

The letter also stresses that the small tents had satisfactory structures and did not need a new covering. It is not clear why the smaller tents were exempted from repairs and restructuring. Presumably, Jansen's previous repairs under the direct supervision of three Iranian entities sufficed for the smaller tents. The new letter recommended an 83,000,000 rials (\$1,185,714 USD) budget for installing electrical and mechanical equipment for smaller tents; therefore, it suggested Iran had accepted Jansen's quote

on repairing the tents while rejecting their quote on HVAC installations. Finally, the letter estimated an annual 50,000,000 rials (\$715,000 USD) maintenance cost. It ended with sharing the PBO's opinion, which was inclined toward the wire mesh cable tray system.<sup>56</sup>

#### **Plan No.6: Commemorative Monument**

One month after NASCO's second proposal, in October 1977, exactly six years after the Celebration, the Shah expressed his desire one more time that the Tent City must become profitable. "You have to examine how we can put this project in use [...] and find ways to make money from it," said the Shah to his prime minister, "perhaps you can strengthen the structure by concrete or brick; if it is not possible, do whatever costs less [to turn it into a permanent structure]."<sup>57</sup> Consequently, Homa, NASCO and PBO discussed it over a meeting and agreed to find a way to meet the Shah's desires.<sup>58</sup> A few weeks later, Homa advised the planning organisation on its plan. This plan was an amalgamation of all the previous proposals, including making the tents permanent structures, renting smaller tents to "people of certain classes," selling entry tickets to tourists and developing sports facilities to make the Persepolis region vibrant all year round.

Eventually, on 20 December 1977, in another confidential letter, PBO and its new head, Manuchehr Agah (1930-2012), decided to summarise and conclude all the previous plans and submit them to the Shah. It began by addressing Homa's plan (Plan No. 4) to develop a sports centre and turning the small tents into hotels for people of certain classes and the large tent into a conference venue. PBO concluded that this plan would inevitably change or damage the interior decorations. They added that "even if we transform the large tent into a conference venue, it will not pay off because the decorations are too delicate and irreplaceable." Regarding equipping Darius Hotel to make the Persepolis area more vibrant, the confidential letter advised that the occupation rate of the hotel stood at 13.71% and adding more facilities to the site would not help because Persepolis is located far from an established urban life. As a result, the letter continued, "tourists prefer to stay in Shiraz and have a half-day trip to Persepolis rather than accommodating in Persepolis."<sup>59</sup> It should be noted that Shiraz, one of the largest cities in Iran with abundant tourist attraction and facilities, has only a 60-kilometre distance from Persepolis, i.e. a 45-minute drive.

Regarding Plan No. 3, PBO explained that in the structural system used in the large tent, cables and metal frames bear the loads and forces. Therefore, using brick or

concrete would not help. The letter then turned to Plan No. 5, NASCO's proposal to use a wire mesh cable tray system. It clarified that the consultancy, NASCO, reconsidered their proposal and added that using such a system on the current system will only postpone, not prevent, the periodical need to change the cover; either way, a maintenance cost should be allocated. According to the letter, NASCO had proposed another solution which was demolishing the large tent and building another tent of the same size, but this time with permanent structures and materials. PBO echoed NASCO's observation that using a wire mesh cable tray system would not solve the problem for good or turn the tents into permanent buildings. It also dismissed the second proposal as it was "another project that requires a separate feasibility study" and "irrelevant to the core objective of retaining the form and characteristics of the tents."<sup>60</sup>

In surprisingly blunt language, the confidential letter concluded that Tent City could not become profitable or even self-sufficient. It advised the Shah that any scenario to preserve the tents as they are, without changing their forms and visual characteristics, required annual maintenance costs and massive expenditure from the public budget. There was no guaranteed plan to reuse the tents successfully, and they could no longer "evade the reality that all the tents were temporary structures." Finally, the letter requested the Shah's approval of PBO's proposal: disassembling the tents and constructing a commemorative monument in their place to "preserve the unforgettable memory of the fortunate Imperial Celebrations and to [enable] a deep understanding of Iran's culture," asserting that a team of "cultural experts, sociologists, and archaeologists should consider the architectural identity of Persepolis and the cultural and social contexts of the auspicious Pahlavi era" to design the monument.<sup>61</sup>

One year later, in April 1979, a revolution ended the Pahlavi era. Shortly after, the new regime decided to "purge" the community from "corrupted" consultancy firms, defining corruption as any history of collaboration with the defunct regime.<sup>62</sup> NASCO was among them, hence its obliteration. It is likely, also stated by some scholars,<sup>63</sup> that the Jansen-delivered furniture was looted after the revolution. There is no information on where they are now or how they are in use. Currently, the steel frames of the smaller tents are the only survivors of the once-lavish Tent City. So far, the new regime has commissioned nearly a dozen consultancy or engineering firms and academics to develop a plan to revive or reuse the remnants of the tents. None of those plans has been executed so far. The four-decade-long demonisation of the Imperial Celebration

by the Islamic Republic and the fact that all the furniture is gone have added another layer of complexity to the already unsettling site.



**Figure 4.** Residential Tents in 2012 (Photograph by Adam Jones, Wikimedia Commons, <https://bit.ly/3vimbgP>, accessed 13 January 2023).



**Figure 5.** Residential Tents in 2017. (Rup, Wikimedia Commons, <http://bit.ly/3Ynzty2>, accessed 3 February 2023).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The development of a city of tents near Persepolis heritage site was conceived in 1961 and executed in 1971. It was deemed a political act from the beginning, bound with the

nation's identity and the government's propaganda. To develop a profitable resort or venue, the government built on the invented heritage of having modern kings and queens sleep in some tents that were themselves a reinvigoration of ancient kings sleeping in tents near Persepolis. They insisted on keeping the visual identity and characteristics of the Tent City intact. Making the tents profitable using Iranian entities was also politically charged, as it could resolve the objections on the extravagance of the event and the blatant absence of Iranians in Iran's birthday party.

The (hi)story of the Tent City in the aftermath of the Imperial Celebrations had three primary players: NASCO, a consultancy firm primarily interested in large-scale architectural and urban planning projects; Homa, the national airline of Iran that owned the Tent City and wanted to make the site profitable; and the Planning and Budget Organisation, a governmental body that planned and supervised the public budget. There was also a Shah whose orders had to be accommodated. The contradicting incentives and objectives of these forces and the power imbalance between them shaped the life of Tent City. The relative success of the event at the Tent City, the media push it brought for Iran, the active and contradicting forces in the scene, the objections against its extravagance and vendors, and the formal and informal protests by heritage counsellors and archaeologists made the Tent City one of the most sensitive and complicated urban and architectural developments in Iran's modern history.

### **Delimitation Statement**

Iran had several established heritage organisations, including the Society for National Heritage and the Ministry of Culture and Arts, and other active cultural and political figures and entities, such as Empress Farah's office and organisations or institutes founded by her. While addressing the role and contributions of these entities to contextualise Persepolis Tent City in the aftermath of the Celebration could offer a more comprehensive understanding, this paper is highly dependent on archival documents relevant to the Tent City that exist at the National Archive of Iran. These documents, eight collections containing 1256 documents, are mostly correspondence between Homa, NASCO, PBO and the royal court. While this high number of documents does not indicate any other entity involved with the Tent City, there is a chance that other archives host relevant materials unexamined by this research. Currently, the Shah's role is very notable; however, it may be the outcome of focusing on correspondences between the court and a few court-dependant organisations.

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# Andrew McCutcheon, Evan Walker & David Yencken: Tracing Cross-Disciplinary Understandings in Architecture in 1970s Melbourne

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## **Abstract**

*The 1970s in Melbourne was a period of political, social and cultural flux. In the midst of this period of change, three figures loom large: Andrew McCutcheon (1931-2017), Evan Walker (1935-2015) and David Yencken (1931-2019). Each had strong allegiances to architecture, as well as commitments to politics and diverse social causes, including heritage, planning and religion. This paper argues that these three are representative of how a cross-disciplinary understanding of architecture can nurture community values and embed these within the built fabric through heritage.*

*The paper draws on McCutcheon's, Walker's and Yencken's own recollections of this time and uses their memories and reflections to develop a narrative-based understanding of social concerns to broaden architectural conceptions. It examines overlaps between the figures themselves, their work and connection to design, politics and society, mapping the confluences of understandings and outcomes that emerged from the intersections of this knowledge.*

*The research highlights the importance of reading architecture as a discipline connected to, and crossing, both time and place. The fundamental raison d'être of architecture was explored and questioned by each of the three protagonists – architecture is not simply designing bespoke buildings, but rather contributing to society (through better housing, protecting heritage, urban design), responding to this place (country, landscape and climate), understanding who we are (identity) and thus influencing policy and legislation. The paper teases out how new understandings and narratives of community values emerged through their cross-disciplinary interests and works.*

## Introduction

The scope of heritage and the responsibility of architecture shifted dramatically throughout the 1960s and 1970s across Australia, evolving beyond the preservation and construction of the built environment, and answering questions around social value and identities. Historian Graeme Davison notes that in the 1960s, the understanding of ‘heritage’ altered: “By the 1960s the two ideas – heritage as ideals, and heritage as things – were becoming more closely intertwined,”<sup>1</sup> and as a result a “boom” in preservation movements began, ensuring that by 1980 “even the most modest street-scape or environmental value has far more chance of survival than it would have done in the destructive 1960s, and progress from the position in earlier decades is, on the whole, overwhelming.”<sup>2</sup> Architectural historian Joan Kerr captures the sentiments of this progress in the closing words of her 1988 paper “Churches – Our Australian Architectural Heritage”:

The architecture we keep, as well as the architecture we create, provide answers to the questions posed in the title of one of Paul Gauguin’s most famous paintings: ‘Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?’<sup>3</sup>

By 1991, ‘heritage’ would be described by Davison as an extension of the idea of heirloom, connected to objects that linked family to a sense of identity. He writes that this idea was appropriated by young nations as they sought to solidify their own identity; heritage became a way of concreting a sense of nationalism.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, heritage practitioner Chris Johnson formally connected the social discussion around identity and heritage for the Australian Heritage Commission, introducing social value as an important concept in identifying heritage significance. Johnson argued that places recognised as having social value “provide an essential reference point in a community’s identity or sense of itself (for historical grounding).”<sup>5</sup> More recently, urban historian James Lesh has argued that it was during this time that “social value embodied social history,”<sup>6</sup> pointing to the growing popularity of heritage agendas within community organisations as representative of this connection.<sup>7</sup>

The shift in the definition of heritage across these years is notable for the involvement of three figures, Andrew McCutcheon, Evan Walker and David Yencken, in the protection and preservation of different environments across local, metropolitan and national levels. Not only were their actions an expression of the changing heritage environment across Australia, but they also demonstrated an understanding of the social value of their own surrounding

neighbourhoods and cities, and more broadly their connection to the identity of the communities around them.

In exploring the evolution of heritage during this time, this paper reflects on the insights that oral histories can provide, beyond that of formally documented records, and engages with the contribution that memory can make in the broadening of historical understandings. It is through oral histories and memories that glimpses into sensory experiences,<sup>8</sup> emotions and friendships are gained, insights that cannot “be communicated by statistics... or lists of names.”<sup>9</sup> Drawing on recorded conversations with McCutcheon, Walker and Yencken, the paper traces social connections and lines of influence that emerge in each conversation, teasing out links in the remembered narratives and tracing the evolution of heritage understandings as retold by these three key protagonists. The paper exposes how personal narratives can contribute to a wider historical understanding of community values through the recollections of the community members and leaders themselves.

### **Lustre**

In 2007, after Graeme Gunn received the 25-year award for Outstanding Architecture for his “spectacular”<sup>10</sup> Plumbers and Gasfitters Building, architects Des Smith, Bruce Allen and Jonathon Gardiner agreed that the works, words and thoughts of the generation of architects who came before the current school needed to be recorded. Gardiner remembers:

What was interesting about our observation of the audience was that most of them didn't understand it [Plumbers and Gasfitters Building] because they looked at it through today's lens... A lot of the people don't even understand that they're part of an outcome of a broader cultural movement, and some buildings shouldn't be assessed purely on 'do you like it or not'. It should be, what was it doing, why was it done, what was the context and culture in which it was done, that actually makes it able to now practice in the city.<sup>11</sup>

This observation led to the creation of the “Lustre Project,” to capture the memories of a number of key architectural figures who belonged to a group of people “not done yet.”<sup>12</sup> Bringing together colleagues and friends, Smith et al. recorded relaxed conversations with key architectural figures from the 1960s and 1970s in Melbourne, recalling their careers and the development of architecture in Melbourne at this time. The conversations are long, often over two hours, and sometimes rambling. However, in this format, they offer moments of insight, of serendipity, and an opportunity to find hidden connections that otherwise might not be known. These rich recollections are critical to seeing architecture as more than building, shedding

light on how politics, planning and social awareness are intertwined with the architectural fabric of Australia.

Of the many conversations recorded as part of the Lustre Project,<sup>13</sup> McCutcheon, Walker and Yencken each have interdisciplinary careers crossing design, social awareness and politics, gathering diverse experiences and social and political awareness as they progressed. The conversations with these figures reveal intersections and crossovers in their careers, highlighting the influence that the actions and values of one figure can have on others and revealing a new way of perceiving the importance of interdisciplinary intersections. The paper looks not only at the individual careers and actions of each figure, but also how they have affected each other, and contributed to heritage preservation narratives across communities at local, suburban, metropolitan and national levels.

### **Melbourne in the 1970s**

Donald Horne creates a picture for us:

Cranes nested on city skylines; premixed concrete trucks stood in building sites, patiently churning. Around the building sites the developers' hoardings were display areas of progress: on their official credit boards they listed the names of all the people, from architects and quantity surveyors to electricians and pavers, who were putting this edifice together; but also on the boards of the barricades were the posters advertising the protest meetings of those who challenged the very idea of development.<sup>14</sup>

The 1960s and 1970s saw widespread development across metropolitan Melbourne. Urban sprawl and urban consolidation affected businesses and residential buildings, dramatically changing the urban fabric of the city itself. The desire to modernise spurred the rapid update of inner-city buildings and the construction of high-rise housing solutions that embodied "Modernist design principles" with "economic frameworks" that guided aesthetic decisions.<sup>15</sup> As a result large tracts of existing buildings were demolished, from notable nineteenth-century buildings in the city centre, to suburban terrace housing in inner-city suburbs such as Fitzroy and Carlton.<sup>16</sup> However, the physical changes to the city were also accompanied by significant social shifts. Once dominated by industrial manufacturing, the inner-city suburbs lost business to an international market and as a result the population and demographic of the neighbourhoods changed, providing cheaper housing opportunities for young intellectuals.<sup>17</sup> Renate Howe, Graeme Davison and David Nichols note in their history of the inner Melbourne suburbs, *Trendyville*, that the 1960s and 1970s saw "the most profound generation[a] change

in twentieth century history.”<sup>18</sup> They note that within this profound societal change “was a belief in the city as a social ideal, and in urban planning as a way of realising it.”<sup>19</sup> The manifestation of these ideals in grassroots movements across the inner-city suburbs in Melbourne was particularly palpable. Residential action groups in inner suburbs were spawned to protect neighbourhoods from the proposed construction of high-rise towers<sup>20</sup> and National Trust groups emerged to protect significant heritage buildings.<sup>21</sup> This would eventually culminate in the introduction of federal legislation under the Whitlam Government in 1972 through the design and implementation of the Australian Heritage Commission and the Register of the National Estate. Lesh observes that “The idea of the national estate responded to growing perceptions that state and local authorities had shunned their urban responsibilities, and so nationwide action was required.”<sup>22</sup> Whitlam would draw on the enthusiasm and input of experts from across disciplines to develop this idea into legislation. It is within this context that we find Andrew McCutcheon, Evan Walker and David Yencken immersed in grassroots movements. They translated ideas and skills across disciplines, recognising the values of the communities they served and worked to preserve these values through their actions.

### **Andrew McCutcheon**

Andrew McCutcheon’s recollections of his life, from the influence of his father, significant Melbourne architect Osborn McCutcheon, to his cross-disciplinary career through architectural studies at the University of Melbourne, theology and religious ordination, and local and state government politics, reflected an awareness of the social value of the built environment and an intense knowledge of the place and people around his home in the inner Melbourne city suburb of Collingwood.<sup>23</sup> In particular, McCutcheon was able to influence the development of future building solutions and protect “social structures of the community... [where] everybody knows everybody else, and everybody helps everybody else”<sup>24</sup> through the documentation of the physical environment and the social narratives of the neighbourhood.

Early in his career as a Methodist minister, McCutcheon made the decision to move his family to the Dight St Housing Commission Estate in the inner-city suburb of Collingwood, to minister to the local people. This move embedded him within the social fabric of the neighbourhood, whilst also providing him with insights into “how people [were] living on that estate, and what they need[ed] in the way of mutual and other forms of support to help bring up children.”<sup>25</sup> He observed first-hand the lack of understanding displayed by the Victorian Housing Commission (VHC) in the design of their housing solutions, their disinterest in the lives of the people they were designing for and the effects that their housing solutions would have. McCutcheon argues that this was further exacerbated when the VHC developed high-rise towers as a proposed solution to the ‘slum’ conditions and urban sprawl.<sup>26</sup> He stated that these towers had

“no sense of space that was controlled and safe.”<sup>27</sup> His understanding of how a community functions, cultivated through his roles as religious minister and local councillor, generated a response to the proposed 20-storey tower that critiqued how a high-rise built environment would ultimately change the way social networks were maintained and forged within local inner-city communities.

But, now ... if you take Collingwood it's a very low-income, working class community. It's becoming more and more mixed with ethnic groups, but basically the social structures of the community are the way that everybody knows everybody else, and everybody helps everybody else, and minds kids, and when they are sick and all that stuff ... it was just a network ... that's all destroyed by that activity.<sup>28</sup>

Spurred on by these issues McCutcheon became a pivotal member of residential action group, the Fitzroy Residents Association.<sup>29</sup> His involvement bridged disciplines, enabling him to combine his social awareness of Fitzroy and Collingwood with his architectural understandings that provided the “ability to imagine that this is all possible.”<sup>30</sup> Fellow Residents Association member Barry Pullen notes:

Now other people were very influential in different ways. Andrew McCutcheon could see that these houses could be repaired, and he had seen these sort of things happening. He was providing that architectural kind of backbone that it didn't have to be done this way, you could do it as a mixture perhaps.<sup>31</sup>

McCutcheon's various role on the local council, in the Residents Association, and as a part of the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects provided a platform where he was able to introduce architectural methods of documentation and analysis to the protest movement against the VHC towers. He was part of an independent examination and report on the housing conditions, separate to that of the VHC.<sup>32</sup> McCutcheon's involvement in this reporting was twofold: as an architect he was able to provide architectural evidence of the housing conditions, and as a trusted resident, religious minister and councillor he was able to document the narratives and social connections within the community, creating a record of social values within Fitzroy. McCutcheon recalls:

[The VHC] were looking at [the] physical building, and you know ... “these are rotten physical buildings and we'll put some good ones there, and everyone should

be applauding us” ... No one had the task or the responsibility to look at the social fabric, and the way the things worked.<sup>33</sup>

... We did work very hard at trying to develop a consultative process ... So there was a whole inner-city thing of trying to help people participate more and understand that they could have an influence on their own environment.<sup>34</sup>

The fight in Fitzroy against the VHC highlighted a need for alternative methods of providing and designing housing, particularly within inner-city suburbs with growing populations, that respected and acknowledged the existing identity of place. As such, the resulting battle, coupled with the interdisciplinary approach developed by McCutcheon, protected the social values of the community, while simultaneously strengthening the suburb’s unique identity founded on the narratives of place. As summarised by Howe, “It has not been a history either of progress or of great local pride, but it has been a history where a strong sense of place has survived.”<sup>35</sup> The battle in Fitzroy to protect the built environment of the neighbourhood is reflective of a strong social awareness of the importance of place, and how it contributes to the narrative of the suburb’s and community’s identity.

McCutcheon’s work is an example of how understanding place and community through an interdisciplinary lens can ultimately create a more encompassing built environment. Through a combination of understanding built material and local culture, his actions marked a significant shift towards maintaining and repairing existing housing, ultimately ensuring that the residents felt a sense of ownership over their neighbourhoods and an ability to strengthen their ‘networks’. However, McCutcheon was not alone in protesting against the Brookes Crescent high-rise development. The involvement of the Institute of Architects reflects the wider mind-set of the Melbourne architectural community. Fellow architect Graeme Gunn recalls his own involvement in the Brookes Crescent protest whilst a member of the Institute Council.<sup>36</sup> Evan Walker recalls how the actions that occurred at Brookes Crescent created an atmosphere of action amongst the community, ultimately “multiply[ing] [the Collins Street Defence Movement] into a pretty big membership.”<sup>37</sup> Ideas about the social value of the urban fabric were able to cross from a small suburban context to a wider metropolitan setting, protecting identity narratives of increasing scale across the city. Walker was a key part of the expansion of the emerging heritage preservation movement in inner-city Melbourne, instigating the Collins Street Defence Movement and enabling the residents of Melbourne to vocalise their values.

### **Evan Walker**

Evan Walker, like Andrew McCutcheon, had a richly layered career beginning in architecture and then venturing into urban design and politics. Educated at RMIT and the University of Melbourne, Walker completed his Master of Architecture on student housing at the University of Toronto in Canada. In conversation with Des Smith, Bruce Allen, Jonathon Gardiner and Graeme Gunn, Evan and his Canadian wife Judy recall those formative years in Toronto, meeting each other, getting married and making the decision to return to Australia. They remark how during those six years that Evan Walker spent overseas from 1963 to 1969, significant shifts in the urban fabric in Melbourne emerged.<sup>38</sup> Shifts in technology and the need for better housing forced the government into the reclamation and demolition of large tracts of inner-city building, at the same time as inner-city developers were shifting to similar high-rise solutions. On the family's return, Walker was able to combine his architectural knowledge with social observations to leave a heritage legacy within the city, and to provide valuable connections between the built heritage of inner-city Melbourne and the identity of the community there.

Davison, in his *Use and Abuse of Australian History*, states that “heritage is essentially a political idea.”<sup>39</sup> Davison argues that the notion of heritage enables a public interest in what otherwise might be deemed a private matter. To further his argument, he turns to the words of Evan Walker, “Heritage belongs to the people, not to the owners.”<sup>40</sup> Davison states that Walker:

Did not mean that because a building or place was part “of the heritage” its owner ceased to have legal right to it. Rather he was insisting that the public retained a right to ensure its preservation that overrode the owner’s right to alter or destroy it.<sup>41</sup>

Davison’s argument here highlights the link between the public and private ideals embedded within the built environment, inserting a political layer into the way architecture and its histories can be read.

The Walkers’ instigation of the Collins Street Defence Movement was instrumental in increasing public interest in the National Trust’s actions to preserve and protect the nineteenth-century buildings of inner-city Melbourne. Coming from Toronto, where much of its colonial past had been erased,<sup>42</sup> Walker was able to see how a rising social consciousness in Melbourne and the preservation of the inner-city buildings were connected, a synergy that ultimately helped articulate the narrative of the people and place of Melbourne.<sup>43</sup> One of the



buildings that was threatened was the National Bank on Collins Street. The National Trust recorded that “In 1976 the bank proposed to demolish the building and many around it and replace it with a tower block.”<sup>44</sup> This threat spurred Walker to place an advertisement into the paper, reading “Anybody interested in saving Collins Street ... Come to Hilda Crescent.”<sup>45</sup> Walker describes the response as “overflowing,” his wife Judy recalling:

They were flowing out the door. I mean the dining room and the living room, you know, and we didn't have a back room at that point. It was just full of wet people 'cause it was a pouring night. All shapes and sizes. All political colours, whatever, and they were all there because they loved Collins Street. They loved their city.<sup>46</sup>

The large gathering of people hosted by the Walkers demonstrated an overwhelming appreciation for Melbourne's historic built environment, and the connection that the community had with it. The Walkers' actions exemplify how heritage had the potential to become a political idea, followed by action. Evan Walker's ability to combine his understanding of the significance of the built environment with his growing political skills created a movement that became known as the Collins Street Defence Movement.<sup>47</sup>

The Collins Street Defence Movement exemplified the potency of social value in the wider community's involvement in heritage protection. Judy Walker recalled the snowballing effect of this initial meeting as momentum grew and vast numbers of people got involved:

We got something like – I don't know how many thousands of signatures. People up and down Collins Street came and signed. And then we/Evan organised the march, and we made these huge, wonderful sticks that we all marched with, you know, “Save our Collins Street”, and we had big banners and we marched them down Collins Street. I mean looking back it was a very naive thing to do, but it was ... it attracted a lot of attention.<sup>48</sup>

The Collins Street Defence Movement was able to articulate and represent the social history of the city in a physical way. As Evan Walker remembers, the movement “clearly represented something that the public wanted dearly. The ad that we put in the newspaper had an electric effect.”<sup>49</sup> Lesh notes that this “energetic”<sup>50</sup> group developed an “all or nothing”<sup>51</sup> approach to heritage conservation, aiming to protect the overall environment of Collins Street, its “elegance, graces, charm and atmosphere.”<sup>52</sup> It is notable that the flyer listing the aims of the Defence Movement does not specifically point to the buildings themselves, but the wider context, including the atmosphere and charms, terms more commonly associated with social

values, and the “sense of place.”<sup>53</sup> Ultimately it presented the idea that “great numbers of people can influence the city council non-planners.”<sup>54</sup>

This period in Melbourne was reflective of a social awareness of the heritage narrative of the built environment, and its legacy. As highlighted by architect Norman Day at the time, groups such as the Collins Street Defence Movement were able to promote that “basic judgment values must centre around people”<sup>55</sup> and in turn curb the “hellish”<sup>56</sup> “social consequences of the disasters that [architects] help to perpetuate”<sup>57</sup> through a lack of care and attention to the people in their developmental designs. Evan Walker’s ability to influence the community and the urban environment of Melbourne was felt through his desire to preserve and save a place embedded in the social fabric of Melbourne. Walker describes this time in architectural practice as representative of the wider range of what architecture could be: “To do what we were doing, in the context of what Daryl [Jackson] was doing [designing], we parted company a little. Although he agreed with me that the full spectrum of what we were doing was legitimate architecture.”<sup>58</sup>

This movement became typical of Evan Walker’s work and his view on the interdisciplinary aspect of architectural practice, a view that would develop further and result in his leaving the Jackson Walker partnership to move into politics. Walker’s and McCutcheon’s actions during this time were part of a consciousness around how the built environment could embody identity values and how design decisions could reflect the needs of people in these places. David Yencken would similarly see the importance of protecting places, buildings and even landscapes that embodied identity values of communities across the nation.

### **David Yencken**

Unlike Andrew McCutcheon and Evan Walker, David Yencken never formally trained as an architect or urban designer. However, through his robust exploration and understanding of planning and architecture in his work founding project housing company Merchant Builders and planning and landscape firm TRACT, he was able to contribute to a national heritage strategy intertwined with emerging ideas about identity. Yencken’s career progressed across the disciplines of art, design and politics. Bringing together Whitlam’s ‘New Nationalism’ and the connections that communities had to smaller monuments, buildings and landscapes that embraced individual historical narratives, Yencken reflects on the broadening of heritage preservation through the Register of the National Estate (1974-2007):

Our surroundings are more than their physical form and their history. Places can be the embodiment of our ideas and our ideals. We attach meaning to places –

meanings known to individuals and meanings shared by communities. This is the essence of Social Value. It is about the special meanings attached to places by groups of people (rather than by individuals) and how we can take account of these values in our heritage assessment processes...<sup>59</sup>

Yencken's reflections on the embodiment of social values in the creation of the Register of the National Estate reveal how the heritage preservation process had developed over the course of the 1970s. As noted by Davison, the Register of the National Estate was reflective of significant shifts in legislated heritage preservation, and the limits by which this might be understood.<sup>60</sup> Davison notes that the word "heritage" was used sparingly, instead the committee "prefer[ed] more precise and neutral terms such as 'built environment', 'cultural resources' and 'historic buildings'."<sup>61</sup> Davison's observations highlight the importance of this shift, and the opportunities that this offered a government that was looking to cultivate a 'New Nationalism'. This idea is captured in the introduction to the Report of the National Estate:

This growing sense of national values will certainly be confirmed and increased as the concept of the National Estate takes shape in the acquisition, protection and enjoyment of items of the National Estate itself. Properly chosen, managed and presented, we suggest that these will become a focus not just for the pride of material possession, but for something less tangible but far more valuable, the sense of pride in being Australian.<sup>62</sup>

Yencken recounts the process for this intention, and the desire to ensure that the wider sense of what it was to be Australian was captured in a comprehensive, varied list of the "things you keep." He points to the international influences that were collected and then adapted to better fit the National Estate of Australia, and the breadth of this idea:

I happened to be going to Europe at the time, I was on the Committee of Enquiry, and because I was doing that, I decided to go to North America to see if there was anything interesting happening there because North America has a system of government that is more akin to ours than that of the United Kingdom. I went to Heritage Canada, and they sent me down to visit a body in Washington, and that body was a very impressive one. And I met the guy who ran it, and I thought there was something very interesting there. So, I carried that idea back to Australia, and we, in the drafting of the Heritage Commissions Act... we borrowed from that and we borrowed from some other provisions in the Act in the Environment Protection Act, United States. But we did something that none of these people had done in

that we included in the program, and in the legislation, not just historic areas and historic structures as in the United States, but natural and prehistoric and everything as well. So, it was ... absolutely comprehensive...<sup>63</sup>

Lesh argues that this process and “comprehensive” approach to the Register made it notable as “one of Australia’s most significant and unique heritage ideas.”<sup>64</sup> He states that the Register reflected Whitlam’s intention to “debunk the notion ‘that conservation is a “middle-class” issue or exclusive ‘reserve of the privileged’,”<sup>65</sup> further increasing the presence of the social values of the wider community. The democratic process of listing a place on the register of the National Estate enabled everyone to contribute their own cultural heritage to this cumulative list of Australia’s historic places, and therefore ensure that their own history was documented and part of the cultural identity of Australia.

Of particular importance to Yencken was the desire to ensure that the natural and precolonial areas were also protected in national legislation by the Register of the National Estate. This drive reveals his awareness of the potency of the Australian landscape, and the connection that this has to identity, particularly for himself, as he reflects:

And as I went through this landscape I knew there was something incredibly significant about it. Something I really loved about it, and I wasn’t ready to admit it for quite some years. Quite some time really... it was just the whole experience of that drive over a couple of days, and progressively going into the landscape. I did know that it was familiar and well loved. So that was very powerful. And then, yes, it had to do with opportunity. You see things that are very interesting. I was really interested in paintings. That was important. But the painting in turn drew me really powerfully into Australian culture because it was illustrating ... relating to and reflecting Australian culture in ways that were unique to Australia. So that was very important, and the people were extremely important.<sup>66</sup>

Yencken’s actions were reflective of how the landscape offered another dimension to understanding identity in Australia and what its contributing cultural factors might be. Through an interdisciplinary approach, combining professions, narratives and international legislation, he was able to structure a new system specific for Australian conditions. Acknowledging social values meant allowing communities with narratives connected to the landscape to also acknowledge their heritage. Yencken contributed to the shift in heritage preservation that McCutcheon and Walker were part of, nationalising a system for communities to have the built environments of their own heritage narratives formally recognised.

## Conclusion

The conversations by Des Smith, Bruce Allen and Jonathon Gardiner in 2010 and 2011 as part of the Lustre Project have provided valuable glimpses into the broad rich social awareness across the careers of McCutcheon, Walker and Yencken. All three were able to see the importance of promoting the values of people and the role that the built environment, and environment more generally, played in acknowledging heritage, from within smaller communities, to metropolitan areas and finally nationwide. The importance of the intersections of disciplines and social value was acknowledged in the Report on the National Estate, making clear that to achieve a positive outcome for all communities, all disciplines should be acknowledged:

Planning for conservation of such areas cannot be separated from these wider considerations, and this highlights the pleas that have been made to us for research and training facilities both in the identification and management of the National Estate. This should clearly be interdisciplinary training, involving planners, economists, biologists, architects, engineers and sociologists, as well as administrators at all levels, if the National Estate is to be made to serve all the objectives to which it can be relevant.<sup>67</sup>

McCutcheon, Walker and Yencken are representative of the accomplishments that interdisciplinary training can achieve, particularly within heritage movements. They reveal how layering architectural education and design awareness with political and social knowledge can lead to a greater understanding of neighbourhood values, and ultimately curate heritage such that it is reflective of local and national identity. The conversations with these figures elicit reflections and memories of this period which capture key shifts in the understanding of architecture in the 1970s and reveal the critical role diverse narratives have in realising preservation and protection strategies that encompass wider community values.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 112.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Kerr, "Making it New: Historic Architecture and its Most Recent Literature," in *A Singular Voice: Essays on Australian Art and Architecture*, ed. Candice Bruce, Dinah Dysart and Jo Holder (Sydney: Power Publications, 2009), 206-07.

<sup>3</sup> Joan Kerr, "Churches – Our Australian Architectural Heritage," in *A Singular Voice*, ed. Bruce, Dysart and Holder, 251.

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Davison and Chris McConville, *Heritage Handbook* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Chris Johnson, *What is Social Value* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1992), 7.

- <sup>6</sup> James Lesh, "Social Value and the Conservation of Urban Heritage Places in Australia," *Historic Environment* 31 no. 1 (2019): 49.
- <sup>7</sup> Lesh, "Social Value," 49.
- <sup>8</sup> Brigitte Halbmayr, "The Ethics of Oral History, Expectations, Responsibilities and Dissociations," in *Oral History: The Challenges of Dialogue*, ed. Krzysztof Zamorski and Marta Kukowska-Budzan (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 195, EBSCO ebook Academic Collection.
- <sup>9</sup> Halbmayr, "The Ethics of Oral History," 195.
- <sup>10</sup> Shane Murray, "Face the Sun," *Architecture AU*, last modified 1 March 2011, <https://architectureau.com/art/icles/face-the-sun/>.
- <sup>11</sup> Jonathon Gardiner in "Evan Walker, Interview No. 1," Interviewed by Des Smith, 15 September 2010, <https://lustre.archi/evan-walker-interview-1>.
- <sup>12</sup> "About," Lustre Project, Lustre, last modified 10 January 2022, <https://lustre.archi>.
- <sup>13</sup> In total nine people were interviewed over the 2010-11 time frame. These people also included Graeme Gunn (series one), and Billy Ryan, Hugh O'Neill, Len Hayball, Graeme Brawn and Doug Evans, whose recordings are yet to be transcribed and published.
- <sup>14</sup> Donald Horne, *A Time of Hope, Australia 1966-72* (Australia: Angus and Robertson Publishers, 1980), 112.
- <sup>15</sup> Elsie Telford, Akari Nakai Kidd and Ursula de Jong, "Beyond the 1968 Battle between Housing Commission, Victoria, and the Residential Associations: Uncovering the Ultra Positions of Melbourne Social Housing," *38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* (Adelaide: SAHANZ, 2021), 277-78.
- <sup>16</sup> Renate Howe, David Nichols and Graeme Davison, *Trendyville, The Battle for Australia's Inner Cities* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2014), 17.
- <sup>17</sup> Howe, Davison and Nichols, *Trendyville*, 17.
- <sup>18</sup> Howe, Davison and Nichols, *Trendyville*, xii.
- <sup>19</sup> Howe, Davison and Nichols, *Trendyville*, xiii.
- <sup>20</sup> Howe, Davison and Nichols, *Trendyville*, 31.
- <sup>21</sup> James Lesh, *Values in Cities: Urban Heritage in Twentieth-Century Australia* (New York: Routledge, 2023), Chapter 5, ProQuest Ebook Central.
- <sup>22</sup> Lesh, *Values in Cities*, 156.
- <sup>23</sup> Andrew McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1," Interviewed by Des Smith, 25 January 2011, <https://lustre.archi/andrew-mccutcheon-interview-1>.
- <sup>24</sup> McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>25</sup> McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>26</sup> Telford, Nakai Kidd and de Jong, "Beyond the 1968 Battle," 276-77.
- <sup>27</sup> McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1."
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- <sup>29</sup> Barry Pullen in "Barry and Margaret Pullen, Oral History Project," Interviewed by the Fitzroy Historical Society, 30 May 2016, <https://oralhistory.fitzroyhistorysociety.org.au>.
- <sup>30</sup> McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>31</sup> Pullen in "Barry and Margaret Pullen, Oral History Project"
- <sup>32</sup> Royal Australian Institute of Architects – Victorian Chapter, *Urban Renewal in Melbourne, Case Study: The Fitzroy (Brookes Crescent) Reclamation Area* (Melbourne: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1970).
- <sup>33</sup> McCutcheon in "Andrew McCutcheon, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>34</sup> Andrew McCutcheon, Quoted in Howe, Davison and Nichols, *Trendyville*, 143.
- <sup>35</sup> Renate Howe, *Fitzroy, Melbourne's First Suburb* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 178.
- <sup>36</sup> Graeme Gunn in "Evan Walker, Interview No. 1," Interview by Des Smith, 15 September 2010, <https://lustre.archi/evan-walker-interview-1>.
- <sup>37</sup> Evan Walker in "Evan Walker, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>38</sup> Judy Walker in "Evan Walker, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>39</sup> Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 121.
- <sup>40</sup> Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 121.
- <sup>41</sup> Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 121.
- <sup>42</sup> Judy Walker in "Evan Walker, Interview No. 1."
- <sup>43</sup> Evan Walker, *If a Things Worth Doing...: A Memoir* (Self Published: 2014), 216-17.
- <sup>44</sup> "Growing Dissent and Protest in the 1970s," National Trust Victoria, Last modified 2022, [www.nationaltrust.org.au/about-us-vic-2/60th-year-anniversary/our-campaigns/1970s/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/about-us-vic-2/60th-year-anniversary/our-campaigns/1970s/).

- <sup>45</sup> Evan Walker in “Evan Walker, Interview No. 1.”
- <sup>46</sup> Judy Walker in “Evan Walker, Interview No. 1.”
- <sup>47</sup> Judy Walker in “Evan Walker, Interview No. 1.”
- <sup>48</sup> Judy Walker in “Evan Walker, Interview No. 1.”
- <sup>49</sup> Evan Walker in “Evan Walker, Interview No. 1.”
- <sup>50</sup> James Lesh, “Why Not Call Ourselves Mutilated Melbourne? A History of Urban Heritage at the Rialto Towers,” *Historic Environment* 28 no. 3 (2016): 27.
- <sup>51</sup> Lesh, “Why Not Call Ourselves Mutilated Melbourne,” 27.
- <sup>52</sup> Collins Street Defence Movement, quoted in James Lesh, “Why Not Call Ourselves Mutilated Melbourne,” 27.
- <sup>53</sup> Johnson, *What is Social Value*, 10.
- <sup>54</sup> Norman Day, “Collins Street Conservation,” *Architect*, September 1976, 8.
- <sup>55</sup> Day, “Collins Street Conservation,” 8.
- <sup>56</sup> Day, “Collins Street Conservation,” 8.
- <sup>57</sup> Day, “Collins Street Conservation,” 8.
- <sup>58</sup> Evan Walker, Walker Interview 1.
- <sup>59</sup> Yencken, *Valuing our National Heritage* (Sydney: Future Leaders, 2019), 39.
- <sup>60</sup> Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 114.
- <sup>61</sup> Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 114.
- <sup>62</sup> Robert Hope, *Report on the National Estate, Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the National Estate* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1974), 31.
- <sup>63</sup> David Yencken in “David Yencken, Merchant Builders,” Interviewed by Des Smith, 15 February 2010, <https://lustre.archi/david-yencken-interview-3>.
- <sup>64</sup> James Lesh, “The National Estate (and the City), 1969-75: A Significant Australian Heritage Phenomenon,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 2 (2019): 117.
- <sup>65</sup> Lesh, “The National Estate,” 117.
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# Municipal Parks versus Glorious Gardens: The Tensions of Inter-Governmental Management of Urban Park Space

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## **Abstract**

*In the early twentieth century the view of urban parks as health-giving, vital spaces in modern cities had been firmly established, however, a stark contrast was present in the position of small urban parks, funded and managed by municipal governments, and the state-funded, pseudo-scientific Botanic Gardens. Using Meanjin (Brisbane) as a case-study, this paper examines how conflict between local and state governments drastically hindered the construction of accessible and functional municipal parks, while simultaneously limiting the access of working-class and marginalised citizens to state government-funded spaces such as the Botanic Gardens. Lack of cooperation between the tiers of government, and the privileging of the Botanic Gardens as a site of middle-class leisure, also led to citizen-intervention and investment in council-run park space, which sought to exclude or limit the use of these spaces by those perceived to be 'unrespectable' members of the population. This paper asserts that the unequal and oppositional practices in the governing of park and reserve spaces in the early twentieth century, and the tensions between local and state authorities, led to a further entrenching of social demarcations in public park spaces, and negatively impacted upon the significance of park spaces in urban centres.*

During an 1889 estimates debate, the Queensland parliamentary member for Bulimba, John Francis Buckland, proposed that the control of parks and reserve spaces in the colony of Queensland should be handed over to municipal governments. The intention behind Buckland's proposal was not to advocate for the ability of local councils to successfully govern park spaces, but rather to suggest that so much of the Legislative Assembly's time was consumed by deliberations around the parks' budgets that it would be more cost effective to see them removed from estimates altogether.<sup>1</sup> Buckland's statement was made a few months after an 1889 conference of local



government passed a collective recommendation that control of all parks and reserve sites should be vested in municipalities, rather than state government or trustees.<sup>2</sup> And yet, nearly two decades later in 1918, the Brisbane City Council and the Queensland State Government were still locked in fierce – and often litigious – debates around the condition, governance and ownership of the state capital's urban parks and reserves.

In the late nineteenth century, Australia's urban parks were the loci of complex governmental interactions around their ownership, management and use. As public spaces they were unique in their inter-governmental interest, often owned by colonial – and later, state – governments, governed by public trustees and policed by local municipal councils. This layering of accountability, and unclear governance structures, created predictable hindrances to the development and use of urban park spaces, an issue that was felt particularly acutely by the smaller, under-funded municipal parks. Coupled with this perplexing management structure was an emerging tendency to view parks as symbols of governmental beneficence and urban progress due to the increased perception of urban park spaces as morally reforming sites of respectable recreation. This image of park spaces as health-giving symbols of government beneficence exacerbated the competition of interests already coalescing around park spaces, further entrenching their position as subjects of governmental debate and interference.

This paper examines the impacts, both social and material, of this inter-governmental tension in the management of Brisbane's park spaces in the early twentieth century. It is concerned not just with the material outcomes for parks due to the oppositional and combative practices of both state and local government, but also considers the social consequences for Brisbane's residents and visitors. The contentious position of park spaces served to further entrench existing demarcations and delineations present within the public sphere. Parks are considered here not as natural, open or accessible spaces, but rather the products of aspirational city-building by governmental managers and owners – heavily regulated and imbued with moral and social imagining. By bringing governmental records – such as the Queensland Parliamentary Debates and Proceedings (QPD) and the minutes of the Brisbane Municipal Council (BMC), and later Brisbane City Council (BCC) – into contact with broader social understandings of park spaces, this paper illuminates the significant disconnect between the imaginative and literal functions of park spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### **The Place of Parks**

Despite the ubiquity of parks and reserve sites in Australian colonial cities, their governance has not figured prominently within urban scholarship. Botanic Gardens and Acclimatisation Society Gardens have garnered some historical interest over the years, mostly in relation to their scientific and horticultural endeavours, or as sites of middle-class recreation.<sup>3</sup> Urban parks garner even less scholarly attention, often situated on the periphery of historical urban analysis – as the site of other points of historical inquiry, rather than the focus of it.<sup>4</sup> Where urban parks in Australia have been considered is in histories of urban planning and design, particularly through the inexhaustible work of Robert Freestone,<sup>5</sup> although the scope of these works precludes dissection of the significant social role that parks were expected to play by the beginning of the twentieth century.

The notion that parks could “raise the intellectual character of the lowest classes of society” was one shared by the Scottish botanist and ostensible ‘father’ of the Victorian park, John Claudius Loudon.<sup>6</sup> When making this assertion in the 1820s Loudon was straying from contemporary understandings of the role of park spaces. As demonstrated by historian Peter Borsay, for many years privatised gardens and private nature walks had been the expected system in Britain, a practice of literal gatekeeping that was exclusionary of working-class participation.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this legacy, throughout the nineteenth century the view of British parks as improving spaces was on the rise – a desperate antidote to the apparent disorder of urban life and, echoing Loudon, an important civilising influence on the lower classes.<sup>8</sup> The nebulous moralising around working-class leisure and its associations with “irrational indulgences,” so prevalent in the nineteenth century, gave way to the importance of physical exercise as a healthy pastime that could be both morally and physically improving, and also theoretically accessible to all genders.<sup>9</sup>

This perception of the beneficial nature of urban parks was well-established in Australian cities by the early decades of the twentieth century – firmly transplanted into the Australian psyche through the process of British colonisation. It was common to see parks referred to as the “lungs” of a city, and Brisbane’s parks were often described as “breathings spaces” or “breathing spots.”<sup>10</sup> The supposed healthiness of park spaces was not inherent, however, but rather the condition of parks was subject to similar risk of degradation and disrepair as any other type of public space, particularly as a result of mismanagement or misuse. In 1890 the Municipal Health

Inspector filed a report to the BMC regarding an apparent nuisance caused by the dumping of refuse into the ravines of Wickham Park – situated on top of Spring Hill, overlooking Brisbane’s inner-city. The health officer’s investigation had been commissioned in the face of several complaints from local residents of the malodorous conditions and also concerns that the debris might contain broken glass or sharp tins.<sup>11</sup> In the report, the health inspector claimed the nuisance had been overstated, with no detectable odour to the earth unless “stooping down quite close to it,” and suggested that a small addition of clean earth or gravel would be enough to resolve any potential risk.<sup>12</sup> The relative risks when visiting a park space where refuse dumping took place may have been quite low, as suggested by the health officer, but the practice demonstrates an important disconnection between the management of public parks and their social and public use. Brisbane residents likely expected to engage with park spaces without the risk of injury or being accosted by rank odours. The municipal council also maintained the right to manage and develop park and reserve spaces in whatever manner the deemed most beneficial, and likely also cost effective.

This dichotomous position of urban park spaces illuminates the divide in the practical versus imaginative understandings of parks, both in how they have been treated by modern scholars and considered by their historic occupants. In *Melodramatic Landscapes* (2009), landscape architect Heath Massey Schenker suggests that urban scholars’ view of parks as ‘natural’ spaces, rather than constructed or artificial spaces, has skewed our modern understandings of their historic significance.<sup>13</sup> Schenker asserts that parks should not be removed from their associations with industrial capitalism – as “stage sets” demonstrative of perceived ideals of natural spaces, similar to the highly aesthetic but divisive private gardens of the British middle and upper classes.<sup>14</sup>

Although reserves may have been imaginatively constructed or perceived as spaces affording an authentic experience of nature, towards the end of the nineteenth century, as ideas around the civilising influence of parks became firmer, increasingly park spaces were expected to perform their redemptive purpose.<sup>15</sup> Unsurprisingly, it was also around this period that contestation between the municipal and state governments over the proper use and management of park spaces began in real earnest. The role of parks as an outward projection of the council’s ability to provide for their constituents appeared to be of great importance to the BMC and later BCC. In annual mayoral reports it was common to find comparisons between the leisure spaces and reserves

of Brisbane and those of other capital cities.<sup>16</sup> During one of the first surveys of Brisbane in 1842, Governor George Gipps – driven by his notion that Brisbane would never be more than a “pokey village” – scaled back several of the proposed design features, including the amount of reserve spaces for recreation.<sup>17</sup> Precedent was instead given to primary and commercial use of land. The placement of parkland at the bottom end of the hierarchy of needs was not uncommon – Robert Freestone described the reservation of parklands and reserves in the face of a ferocious colonial penchant for land speculation as a “major achievement” in early Australian town planning.<sup>18</sup> While the process of land speculation presented an early threat to Brisbane’s reserve spaces and parklands, it was the potential for alienation of land by the colonial government that later emerged as an imminent threat. Land was alienated and portioned as sites for hospitals, railways, orphanages, schools and technical colleges – all of which are institutions outside the control of municipal management but built on land that had been maintained and policed by municipal government since Brisbane town was founded. This obfuscation of responsibility, along with the pervasive threat of colonial or state government intervention, situated parks as liminal or ephemeral spaces, significantly influencing governmental decision making around their design and use.

### **Mismatched Management**

In 1909 the Queensland Under-Secretary of the Department of Public Lands raised a submission to the BCC regarding the illegal dumping of refuse on a block of land in the city’s inner north.<sup>19</sup> The small parcel of land, at the Wickham Terrace and Albert Street junction, was actually owned by the state government, not the local council, and yet the Under-Secretary appeared to believe that it was the responsibility of the BCC to maintain and police the space. This dynamic was true of most public reserve spaces since the initial 1842 survey – they were owned by colonial or state government and managed by the BMC or BCC. In some instances, this arrangement was formalised through leases, giving council certain powers in the use of reserve sites, but their ability to perform maintenance or make improvements on the park was subject to negotiation with the state government, or their appointed trustees. As evidenced by the submission to the BCC in 1909, even in the absence of a formal lease there was still an expectation that the city council would perform some oversight and maintenance of the reserve space, despite having no authority to assert any real control over the space itself. Even when a formal lease agreement was in place, it did nothing to undermine the process of legislative alienation or resumption of land by the state

government. Placing the BMC and BCC as trustees of these small reserve and park spaces, rather than the managers or owners, led to a natural hesitancy in engaging in any public works or improvements that might see the parks influence and use amongst the population bolstered.

The practice of placing parks and public reserves in the care of boards of trustees was a convention established in Queensland during its separation from New South Wales in 1859.<sup>20</sup> It was also the method by which the Brisbane Botanic Gardens was managed from 1855 until the amalgamation of the Brisbane City Council in 1925.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the Botanic Gardens, it was not uncommon for a Member of Parliament or public servant from the Department of Agriculture (the 'owners' of the Gardens), to also act as a trustee, ensuring the process of management and approval was narrow and contained. Brisbane historian John Laverty has suggested that the endowing of trustee powers to the BMC for Brisbane's other urban parks was only intended to be a temporary measure in establishing the town's system of local parks and reserves, with the intention that full ownership and control would instead be invested in the municipal council.<sup>22</sup> Instead a latent mistrust of the BMC by colonial government interrupted the process of vesting the council with any real power. It took over 30 years, until 1887, before any deeds to the reserve sites were officially granted to the BMC, and even then only two of the eleven agreed upon were finalised within that year.<sup>23</sup> It was not until 1892 that the deed for Albert Park, which would become the most eminent of Brisbane's municipal urban parks and is the site of the modern Roma Street Parklands, would be honoured, despite being one of the first agreed upon.<sup>24</sup>

The impetus of the mistrust held by the state government towards the local council is unclear, however it may not have been entirely unfounded. By 1899, seven years into their lease of Albert Park, a mayoral deputation of the BMC described it as still being in "a rough state."<sup>25</sup> It is possible that this assessment of the park as "rough" may have been coloured by personal interest – the deputation comprised members of the Queensland Cricket Association who were concerned about the paucity of sports grounds and amenities in the inner-city. When meeting with the council, the association's vice president noted that they had previously invested their own funds in improving a small section of Albert Park for the purpose of constructing a cricket pitch, only to have the land annexed by the colonial government for railway expansion.<sup>26</sup> A promise was made by the colonial government that an alternative site would be found, but it does not appear that the promise was fulfilled.

When faced with the threat of reclamation and resumption of land, it is evident why the council would have some hesitancy in spending municipal funds on improving parks and public reserves. Albert Park was a particularly acute site for these types of anxieties owing to its adjacency to Roma Street station – one of the largest and busiest stations in Brisbane at the time. After several small resumptions across 1886 and 1887, the BMC took an oppositional stance, supported by the community trustees of Albert Park, and it is likely these resumptions that provided the impetus for their concerted push to secure a deed and seize greater control of the site.<sup>27</sup>

By far the most combative instance of land resumption in Albert Park came in 1911, several decades after the BCC had gained full control of the park. The Railways Commission requested that 7 acres of the site, representing nearly a third of the total space, be alienated to once again support railway expansion.<sup>28</sup> The contentious parcel of land had only recently been improved upon by the BCC, who had constructed a kiosk on the site, and also contained a large amount of old tree plantings that were too delicate to be relocated. As a result, the Railways Commissioner agreed to compensate the council for the loss of land and sunk costs – funds which the council planned to put towards the improvement of existing parklands, or the purchase of more.<sup>29</sup> The Works Committee of the BCC, responsible for the construction of park improvements, suggested in a council meeting that they would ordinarily oppose any plans they saw as an “interference with the city recreation grounds,” however, this proposed railway expansion had become emblematic of the increased prosperity of significance of Brisbane, and thus the council was initially not prepared to raise any objection.<sup>30</sup> This amicability was short lived though, and when the City Valuer and the Park Ranger (both employees of the council) arrived at a figure of £16,350 for the land and improvements, the situation quickly soured.<sup>31</sup> What ensued was a nearly decade-long combative dispute with surprisingly wide-reaching consequences. By November of 1912, when the BCC initiated legal action against the state government in the hopes of resolving the issue, the urgency of the Railways Commission’s need for the land meant that works on the railway expansion had already commenced.<sup>32</sup> It was not until 1919 that the battle was actually resolved, however, a BCC councillor had stated that the relentless battle meant that Albert Park was rendered more or less useless as a recreative space in the meantime.<sup>33</sup>

### The Impacts of Infigting

The overall influence of these economic and political factors ensured that by the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of Brisbane's urban municipal parks were un- or under-developed and lacked basic amenities. In 1901, a *Brisbane Courier* article described Victoria Park, in the city's north, as "a piece of waste land of the most barren description."<sup>34</sup> During a 1902 discussion of the BCC it was highlighted that no council-run park had a bandstand, which was a ubiquitous feature of parks at the time, and a prominent feature of the state-run Botanic Gardens.<sup>35</sup> A significant influencer was budgetary – the entire annual parks budget of the BCC was around £1000, which included a small endowment from the Department of Agriculture of around £100.<sup>36</sup> The compensation that the BCC hoped to receive from the Albert Street resumption therefore represented almost sixteen times their typical annual budget, and would have made a significant impact on the state of Brisbane's municipal parks. The Botanic Gardens, by comparison, had an operating budget of £1118 in 1863,<sup>37</sup> rising to £2134 in the 1890s,<sup>38</sup> which secured dedicated staff, usually a curator and at least one overseer, whose sole responsibility was the management and maintenance of the gardens. This significant divide in budgets meant that the Botanic Gardens could serve its function as an outward symbol of government beneficence in a way that the municipal parks never could.

Improvements to park spaces requested by the public were generally slow to be actioned by the council, except for when a petitioner was willing to contribute some or all of the costs, such as the addition of a water tap requested by the Tabernacle Club in 1907.<sup>39</sup> Often the facilities themselves were built through the fundraising efforts of local sporting clubs and other community groups.<sup>40</sup> When faced with budget shortfalls for some tennis courts on the grounds of Albert Park, for example, the council considered a private lease with the Brisbane Lawn Tennis Club in exchange for maintenance, meaning the facilities were not accessible to the broader public.<sup>41</sup> While the Trustees of Public Lands Act 1869 meant that park trustees could not profit from public land, there were no rules against allowing special privileges to those willing to invest in public spaces themselves. This situated specific citizens and groups, particularly those with means, as the literal gatekeepers to the facilities under their charge, allowing them to dictate not just what type of activity but also what *type of person* was permitted to use them.

This stark contrast in the budgets of the Botanic Gardens and the council-run parks may appear innocuous at first viewing. When brought into contact with contemporary ideas coalescing around the civilising influence of parks in the early twentieth century, however, this preferencing of ornate government gardens over small community parks gains a distinct moral caste. The inequitable approach to the management of access and public enjoyment of the Botanic Gardens is evident in myriad ways, no doubt exacerbated by the relationship of the state government to the Botanic Gardens, as ‘owners’, caretakers, frequent visitors and neighbours. The Botanic Gardens, and associated Queens Gardens, were directly adjacent to Parliament House, and its occupants were afforded the best view of the gardens and their lush plantings. Debates on the gardens often bled into other parliamentary discussions – when a dangerous barbed-wire fence was erected, the members of parliament spent several minutes discussing the “scandalous” fence, and the risk it posed to women and children.<sup>42</sup> Member for Toombul, Michael Gannon’s fervent desire for the riverwalk around the gardens to be opened at night was raised every year for several years – a cause furthered by other members long after Gannon left office in 1893.<sup>43</sup>

For the wealthier classes, congregation in the Botanic Gardens was a fairly routine affair. The correspondence files of the Department of Agriculture are littered with requests – and demands – from society’s elite planning private garden parties, high teas and soirees on what was ostensibly public land.<sup>44</sup> In 1889 the Brisbane Socialists, on the other hand, sought permission to hold a small open-air meeting on the park grounds and were promptly denied.<sup>45</sup> That same year it was revealed by Patrick Perkins, parliamentary member for Aubigny and Cambooya, that several “privileged individuals” had been obtaining flowers and exotic plants from the gardens for their own private gardens.<sup>46</sup> Conversely, when Margaret Brownrigg – a working class woman – picked some flowers in the gardens to gift to a local hospital she was imprisoned for seven days for the floral ‘theft’.<sup>47</sup> When Lulu Wynand was charged for a similar act in 1908, she was described as “stylishly dressed” and “half-frightened” and was let off with only a warning.<sup>48</sup> When sports fields were constructed in the gardens, certain organisations were allowed leases to the facilities at a cost that would have been exclusionary to the broader public, and which were tacitly understood to unofficially grant them privileged levels of access.<sup>49</sup>

These allowances made for the wealthy and elite citizens of Brisbane to the Botanic Gardens, formal or otherwise, highlight how it was considered as a public space.



Ultimately, there was little incentive for the managers and caretakers of the gardens to factor in its accessibility to the working classes or urban poor. Rather the exceptionalism afforded to the gardens by its close proximity – both physically and politically – to society's elite exacerbated already extant social demarcations prevalent in public space. Even though access to the gardens was, on paper, fair and equal, the space was expected to serve different functions for those special few. Despite this inequity, the council-run parks did not serve as a counterpoint to the exclusionary gardens. The Brisbane Socialists were not granted permission to meet in any municipal park either.<sup>50</sup> Instead, it appears the municipal government subscribed to the same imaginative and aspirational process of constructing park spaces in an ideal way, just with less money and mixed results.

### **Conclusion**

In 1925 all park and reserve spaces within greater Brisbane came under the control of the BCC as part of the local government amalgamation, bringing the obfuscation of responsibility for Brisbane's park and reserve spaces to an anti-climactic end. As this paper has demonstrated though, for decades prior to this the competition of interests between state and local governments interfered with the construction and use of Brisbane's parklands, which in turn served to further entrench forms of social demarcation already present in the public sphere. With the state government intent on ensuring the provision of parklands to their peers – the wealthy classes and social elites – and the municipal government unable to financially keep pace with public demands for park assets, the enjoyment and use of parks can be considered a quotidian aspect of the lives of the upper classes in a manner unachievable to ordinary citizens. Instead of the BCC adapting to their financial circumstance and adopting a fresh approach to park management – such as attempts to enhance the naturalness of the experience, or a more passive approach to altering reserve sites – the imagined position of parks as symbols of government beneficence saw them competing to achieve a prescriptive model of park construction that was unachievable at best, and actively exclusionary at worst. The imaginative positioning of parks as symbols of urban health and progress made them susceptible to considerable politicisation in their construction and governance. The latent mistrust between the layers of government can be seen as emblematic of this fact, and therefore parks should be more broadly understood as another form of delineated and deeply regulated space, rather than anything remotely natural.

<sup>1</sup> *Queensland Parliamentary Debates and Proceedings (QPD)*, 14 October 1889, 2173.

<sup>2</sup> *QPD*, 14 October 1889, 2172.

<sup>3</sup> This narrow historiographical framing is particularly evident in Brisbane. See: Ray Sumner, "The State of Science," in *Brisbane in 1888*, ed. Rod Fisher (Brisbane: Brisbane History Group, 1988), 97-108; Peter Osborne, "Assessing the Acclimatisation Gardens," in *Brisbane: Houses, Gardens, Suburbs and Congregations*, no. 22, ed. Rod Fisher (Kelvin Grove: Brisbane History Group, 2010), 117-25; Jean Sim, "Discovering the Garden...in Brisbane," *Brisbane: Houses, Gardens, Suburbs and Congregations*, 49-65; Catherine Brouwer, "The Acclimatisation Society Gardens," *Queensland Review* 10, no. 2 (2003): 37-46. For a useful example of broader analysis see: Nuala C. Johnson, *Nature Displaced, Nature Displayed Order and Beauty in Botanical Gardens* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> An illuminating example of this in a Brisbane context can be found in: Clive Moore, "Poofs in the Park: Documenting Gay 'Beats' in Queensland, Australia," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2, no. 3 (1995): 319-39; Helen Penridge, "Echoes of Home: Park Music Culture in Colonial Brisbane," *Queensland History Journal* 22, no. 6 (2014): 468-73.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Freestone, *Designing Australia's Cities: Culture, Commerce and the City Beautiful 1900-1930* (Sydney: UNSW, 2007), 210-44; Robert Home, "The 'Grand Modell' of Colonial Settlement," in *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (London: Routledge, 2013), 9-37; Robert Freestone, "From City Improvement to the City Beautiful," in *The Australian Metropolis: A Planning History*, ed. Stephen Hamnett and Robert Freestone (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 27-45. See also: Helen Proudfoot's chapter, "Founding Cities in Nineteenth-Century Australia," in *The Australian Metropolis*, 11-26.

<sup>6</sup> John Claudis Loudon in Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: The Elements of Urban Form through History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 169.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Borsay, "The Rise of the Promenade: The Social and Cultural Use of Space in the English Provincial Town C. 1660-1800," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9, no. 2 (1986): 125-40.

<sup>8</sup> Carole O'Reilly, "From 'the People' to 'the Citizen': The Emergence of the Edwardian Municipal Park in Manchester, 1902-1912," *Urban History* 40, no. 1 (2013): 136; Pauline Marne, "Whose Public Space Was It Anyway? Class, Gender and Ethnicity in the Creation of the Sefton and Stanley Parks, Liverpool: 1858-1872," *Social & Cultural Geography* 2, no. 4 (2001): 423.

<sup>9</sup> *Australian Etiquette or the Rules and Usages of the Best Society* (Melbourne: People's Publishing Co., 1886): 440-45. For a general history of the rational recreation movement in Brisbane, see Bryan Jamison, "'A Great Social Force Making for Order and Morality': An Analysis of Institutions for Rational Recreation in Late Victorian and Edwardian Brisbane," PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2002, <https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:193272>; Bryan Jamison, "Making 'Honest, Truthful and Industrious Men': Newsboys, Rational Recreation and the Construction of the 'Citizen' in Late Victorian and Edwardian Brisbane," *Journal of Popular Culture* 33, no. 1 (1999): 61; Mike Huggins and J.A. Mangan (eds), *Disreputable Pleasures: Less Virtuous Victorians at Play* (Abingdon, Oxford: Frank Cass, 2004); Mike J. Huggins, "More Sinful Pleasures? Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 3 (2000): 585. J.W.C. Cumes asserted that women's leisure (regardless of class) had been particularly contested since early European occupation due to the inherent sexual connotations and gender imbalance evident in the early colonies. See: J.W.C. Cumes, *Their Chastity Was None Too Rigid: Leisure Times in Early Australia* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1979), 86-88, 203-04.

<sup>10</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 16 February 1912, 3; *Brisbane Courier*, 29 July 1911, 4; *Brisbane Courier*, 5 January 1901, 5; *Brisbane Courier*, 6 November 1884, 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Telegraph*, 15 July 1890, 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Telegraph*, 15 July 1890, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Heath Schenker, *Melodramatic Landscapes: Urban Parks in the Nineteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Schenker, *Melodramatic Landscapes*, 7-8, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Irene Maver, "Glasgow's Public Parks and the Community, 1850-1914: A Case Study in Scottish Civic Interventionism," *Urban History* 25, no. 3 (1998): 323; O'Reilly, "From 'the People' to 'the Citizen'," 136; Marne, "Whose Public Space Was It Anyway?," 423.

- <sup>16</sup> James Hipwood, *City of Brisbane, Mayor's Report 1887-1888* (Brisbane: J.H. Reynolds, 1889), 23-24; John Allworth Clark, *City of Brisbane Mayoral Report 1891-92* (Brisbane: R.S. Hews and Co., 1893), 24-25; Lesley Gordon Corrie, *City of Brisbane Mayoral Report 1902-03* (Brisbane: Nichols, Larwill and Butler, 1903): 82; Lesley Gordon Corrie, *City of Brisbane Mayoral Report 1903-04* (Brisbane: Nichols, Larwill and Butler, 1904): 72-73.
- <sup>17</sup> John McMaster, *Volume of Proceedings of the Second Australian Town Planning Conference and Exhibition, 1918* (Brisbane: A.J. Cumming, Government Printer, 1919), 21.
- <sup>18</sup> Robert Freestone, "A History of Planning," in *Planning Australia: An Overview of Urban and Regional Planning*, ed. Susan Thompson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70.
- <sup>19</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings, the Council of the City of Brisbane, 1909-1910*, BCA0002, Brisbane City Council Archives, 124-25.
- <sup>20</sup> John R. Lavery, *The Making of a Metropolis: Brisbane 1823-1925* (Brisbane: Boolarong Press, 2009), 116.
- <sup>21</sup> Lavery, *The Making of a Metropolis*, 116.
- <sup>22</sup> Lavery, *The Making of a Metropolis*, 116.
- <sup>23</sup> Hipwood, *City of Brisbane Mayor's Report, 1887-1888*, 23.
- <sup>24</sup> Allworth Clark, *City of Brisbane Mayoral Report 1891-92*, 23.
- <sup>25</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 11 May 1899, 3.
- <sup>26</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 11 May 1899, 3.
- <sup>27</sup> *Telegraph*, 10 December 1887, 4.
- <sup>28</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 19 October 1911, 6.
- <sup>29</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 19 October 1911, 6; *Brisbane Courier*, 28 November 1911, 3.
- <sup>30</sup> *Telegraph*, 29 November 1911, 10.
- <sup>31</sup> *Minutes of Proceedings, the Council of the City of Brisbane, 1911*, BCA0002, Brisbane City Council Archives, 141; Roughly \$2,343,210 AUD adjusted for inflation in 2021.
- <sup>32</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 26 November 1912, 9; *Brisbane Courier*, 18 November 1919, 6.
- <sup>33</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 18 November 1919, 6; *Brisbane Courier*, 2 August 1918, 6.
- <sup>34</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 5 January 1901, 5.
- <sup>35</sup> Corrie, *City of Brisbane Mayoral Report 1902-03*, 114.
- <sup>36</sup> Aggregated data from Minutes of Proceedings of the BCC between 1902 and 1914; £1000 is roughly \$143,315 AUD adjusted for inflation in 2021.
- <sup>37</sup> Approximately \$145,879 AUD adjusted for inflation in 2021.
- <sup>38</sup> Approximately \$384,526 AUD adjusted for inflation in 2021; *Record of the Proceedings of the Queensland Parliament*, 14 August 1863, unpaginated; *QPD*, 11 November 1896, 1445.
- <sup>39</sup> *Telegraph*, 3 December 1907, 3.
- <sup>40</sup> *QPD*, 14 October 1889, 2172.
- <sup>41</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 18 December 1894, 6.
- <sup>42</sup> *QPD*, 24 October 1888, 873.
- <sup>43</sup> *QPD*, 24 October 1888, 873; *QPD*, 18 November 1890, 1450; *QPD*, 8 October 1895, 1183.
- <sup>44</sup> "Botanic Gardens: General Correspondence" Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM902829.
- <sup>45</sup> "Botanic Gardens: General Correspondence" Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM902829.
- <sup>46</sup> *QPD*, 14 October 1889, 2165.
- <sup>47</sup> *Telegraph*, 14 October 1912, 2.
- <sup>48</sup> *Truth*, 4 October 1908, 5.
- <sup>49</sup> *QPD*, 3 October 1901, 1068.
- <sup>50</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 17 March 1914, 8.

# Centenary Estates: Private Development and Brisbane's Post-war Expansion West

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## **Abstract**

*The Centenary Estates project was announced in 1959 to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of the State of Queensland. It was an early private sector development; a master-planned community adjacent to the Brisbane River [Maiwar] situated between Brisbane [Meeanjin] and Ipswich [Tulmur]. An industrial garden city proposal, the Industrial Garden City Darra had been developed for the same site in 1916, but never realised.*

*The development was overseen by the LJ Hooker Investment Corporation. Also known as the Centenary Project, it organised residential, commercial and industrial areas on 3500 acres of land, allocated to six "self-sufficient" suburbs with 9 kilometres of river frontage and two adjacent industrial estates. A total of 10,261 residential lots were surveyed, anticipating 35,000 residents, with 20% of the land set aside for commercial and industrial purposes. It included the promise of an Olympic-size swimming pool, golf course and a new bridge across the river with supporting infrastructure financed by the developers, as part of a new Centenary Highway connection from the city to Ipswich through the western suburbs.*

*The paper will give an account of the prior history of the site including the proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, and situate Centenary Estates within Brisbane's post-war expansion west, the shift from public to private development, new methods of promotion, lifestyle aspirations, the transfer of knowledge between government, corporations, planners, builders and architects, and a cautionary tale for the consequences of building on flood-prone farmland adjacent to the river.*



**Figure 1.** Centenary Estates / Centenary Estates Limited (1961) (National Library of Australia).

### **Introduction**

The Centenary Estates project was announced in 1959 to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of the state of Queensland. It was an early private sector development; a master-planned community adjacent to the Brisbane River [Maiwar] situated between Brisbane [Meeanjin] and Ipswich [Tulmur] on Turrbal Jagera country, marketed for post-war lifestyle. In 1916 the Industrial Garden City Darra, a proposal inspired by the garden city movement, had been put forward for the same site to facilitate the repatriation of soldiers returning after World War I, but it was never realised. Also known as the Centenary Project, the Centenary Estates “satellite town”<sup>1</sup> organised residential commercial and industrial areas allocated to six “self-sufficient” suburbs with 9 kilometres of river frontage and provision for two industrial estates designed “to meet Brisbane’s rapid expansion.”<sup>2</sup> It included allowance for an Olympic-size swimming pool, golf course and the Centenary Bridge, a new bridge across the river, financed by the developers as part of a new Centenary Highway connection from the city to Ipswich through the western suburbs, along with “five additional road and rail bridges, eight kilometres of highway, sewerage treatment plants, and a water reservoir.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Golden Era**

LJ Hooker was one of the first real estate agency networks established nationally in Australia.<sup>4</sup> In 1955, Hooker Rex was formed to oversee developments at Batemans Bay, Kogarah and the Gold Coast. In 1958, LJ Hooker Investment Corporation was formed to allow a further expansion of business activities. Centenary Estates was

developed under managerial agreement from Centenary Estates Limited by Hooker-Rex, with LJ Hooker the sole selling agent.<sup>5</sup> The Menzies Government's credit squeeze affected the Hooker Corporation which posted its first ever loss in the financial year 1961-62, prompting a further restructure and full-page advertisements for Centenary Estates in the *Courier Mail* and *Sunday Mail* from November 1961, that continued sporadically through to 1970, when an advertisement appeared alongside an eight-page supplement in the *Courier Mail* that presented evidence of Brisbane's bright future as a consequence of projected growth.<sup>6</sup> Former Prime Minister, Arthur Fadden, was appointed as chairman of the public company Centenary Estates Limited to oversee the development, and it was managed for six years under that banner. In October 1967 the private stakeholders were bought out by the Hooker Corporation and the project once again became a fully owned subsidiary. From July 1971, the name of the company overseeing the development was changed to Hooker Centenary, as a division of the Hooker Corporation. Centenary Estates is significant as a precursor to the advent of public-private partnerships, in this case a cooperation between the Brisbane City Council and LJ Hooker Investment Corporation.

The plan for 3,500 acres (1,416 hectares) of land released by Centenary Estates Limited in 1959, was initially imagined to comprise nine neighbourhoods with residential subdivisions between 600 and 700 square metres that heralded, according to the developers, "a golden era of high prosperity and unlimited expansion" at the beginning of Queensland's second century.<sup>7</sup> The promotional brochure produced in 1961 pitched Queensland with its favourable climate as "moving rapidly towards its destined position as the pre-eminent State of the Commonwealth, and the richest investment field in the Australian continent" to a national and international audience, with the promise of low labour costs, plentiful power and water, access to raw materials, a strategic location – proximity to overseas markets – and a local work force, in short the potential to foster new industry.<sup>8</sup> A total of 10,261 residential lots were surveyed anticipating 35,000 residents – the population advocated by Ebenezer Howard (1850-1926) for Letchworth Garden City (1903) in England – with 600 acres or roughly 20% of land set aside for commercial and industrial purposes.<sup>9</sup> Framed by the idea of "neighbourhood living," shopping was to be organised with a principal Regional Shopping Centre – the illustration in the promotional brochure reminiscent of a British New Town – and secondary Neighbourhood Shopping precincts, with the promise of efficient delivery services.<sup>10</sup> The developers clearly had detached houses for the post-

war nuclear family in mind when they pitched the development to the wage-earner, housewife, child, gardener, sportsman and sportswoman.<sup>11</sup>

The development team had visited the British New Town of Crawley, planned by architect Anthony Minoprio (1900-1988) under the direction of Thomas Bennett (1887-1980) for the Crawley Development Corporation, and other projects in “America, Scandinavia and Europe.”<sup>12</sup> As a foundational narrative the brochure recounted that:

In Centenary Year, Mr J Hatrick, a director of LJ Hooker Limited, was flying over the Brisbane area in a passenger-liner. Below him he saw the crowded city and suburbs of the capital, the silver serpentine pattern cut by the lovely Brisbane River through the changing greens of pasture and bushland to the west of the city. He saw the scattered factories in the Darra area, and the tree-shaded homes of residential Kenmore. Between them he saw four thousand acres of almost empty land – soft country, undulating, ringed by the river, dotted with trees and the magnificent natural pastures that welcoming soil grows.<sup>13</sup>

An agreement was reached with the Brisbane City Council, with Clem Jones (1918-2007), newly elected as Lord Mayor, at the end of 1961. The Centenary Bridge and Highway that would allow access to the northern suburbs and the city were an integral component of the development. In a second promotional brochure, “New Horizons,” released in 1970, six suburbs – Jindalee, Jamboree Heights, Mount Ommaney, River Hills, Westlake and Middle Park – were identified, but two, Seventeen Mile Rocks and Sinnamon Park were mentioned as separate developments. It claimed that “Each suburb has a different characteristic.”<sup>14</sup> Two industrial estates became the suburb of Sumner, while Oldfield was incorporated into the suburb Seventeen Mile Rocks, but the industrial focus of the first brochure was left behind for an emphasis on the promotion of middle-class lifestyle activities.



**Figure 2.** Plan of the Proposed Industrial City Darra, Queensland (1918) (Brisbane City Council).

### **Proposed Industrial Garden City Darra**

The proposal for an industrial garden city for Darra that encompassed the Centenary Estates site was exhibited and presented in 1918 by Dr Thomas Arthur Price (1871-1957) – Mayor of Toowoomba – at the Second Australian Town Planning Conference in Brisbane.<sup>15</sup> He was assisted in his task by surveyor D. A. Crawford who facilitated a contour survey, and civil engineers W. M. Nelson, W. H. Huxham and J. A. Louttit, and the proposal was drafted by A. E. Jones.<sup>16</sup> The paper cited the “First Industrial Garden City Letchworth” as a precursor, and in line with the social agenda of the Garden City Movement, it argued that the plan was a solution that would counter social inequality, improve conditions for workers and most significantly, provide a platform for the repatriation of returned soldiers through the combination of housing and employment, including for the “partially disabled,” in anticipation of the ending of World War I.<sup>17</sup>

It argued for the economic benefit of planning industrial cities that yield “a far greater quantity of material wealth at less cost, and, in addition to this, a far greater number of the only true units of the wealth of any country – healthy, intelligent and good citizens.”<sup>18</sup> Darra, the paper noted, was a convenient site for industry; Britain’s Brickworks had been relocated there in 1899, and the Queensland Cement and Lime Company was established in 1914 on the basis of the ready supply of limestone from the Darling Downs to the west – in the 1930s it constructed a wharf on the Brisbane River at Seventeen Mile Rocks, bringing coral from Moreton Bay by barge – and its position in relation to the Ipswich coalfields and the main South-Western railway.<sup>19</sup> As



the paper forecast, “Access to coal, river, rail, road, proximity to capital and port, and an ideal site – everything is here to ensure success and to secure efficiency.”<sup>20</sup>

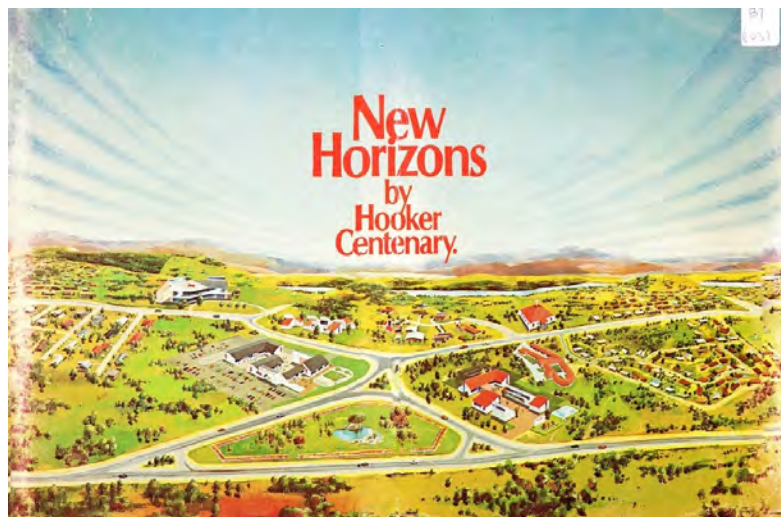


**Figure 3.** Queensland Cement and Lime Company, Darra, April 1965 (Queensland State Archives).

The plan of the proposal displayed in the conference exhibition set aside an ovoid figure at its core for public buildings, ringed by the main business area with a market reserve at one end, adjacent to the factory area that incorporated the existing cement works and brickworks and a radial street overlay somewhat compromised by the hilly topography.<sup>21</sup> A secondary business and warehouse area was located adjacent to the train station. Sites for public buildings including an art gallery, public library, offices of the city commission, technical college, museum and law courts were allocated to elevated corners along with provision for a hospital and “two grammar schools.” Shopping centres were provided at regular intervals, and fire stations and substations were positioned where roads radiated in the greatest number of directions.<sup>22</sup> An Aviation Ground was located on the southern edge of the city. Factories, the paper stipulated, were to be built for efficiency of operation, hidden where possible from view, and separated from worker’s houses by a ten-minute walk through park lands.

The plan provided for the separation of noxious industries south-west of the town centre. Two large blocks of rough country, one to the north and one to the west, with a total area of about 700 acres, were set aside as timber reserves. These reserves were in close proximity to the centre of the city, and imagined as a future source of revenue, and recreation area for young people and camping ground for “tired, sedentary workers.”<sup>23</sup> To attract new industry for repatriation purposes, good sites and residential

areas had been reserved, the paper noted. In addition, an area of 500 acres was set aside solely for repatriation purposes, considered as a half-way house between the army and civilian life, and to provide a training ground for the “partially disabled” through the provision of model farms, workshops and areas for recreation.<sup>24</sup> 110 acres were set aside for a botanical garden through the heart of the city along a string of lagoons, with over 800 acres of recreation and other reserves provided, interspersed through the city, in addition to the forest reserves. <sup>25</sup> A future Brisbane River basin power station on the Ipswich coalfield would, the paper claimed, supply cheap electricity and Mond producer gas – coal gas used for industrial heating purposes – would be carried by a high pressure main to supply cheap fuel for industry.<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 4.** New Horizons by Hooker Centenary. Booklet cover (circa 1970) (Centenary Suburbs Historical Society).

### **New Horizons**

LJ Hooker employed a variety of new promotional methods nationally, taking the lead from similar developments particularly in the United States, also applied at their Killarney Heights development in Sydney.<sup>27</sup> These included display homes, competitions to design houses, family days, cross-promotions with suppliers and furniture companies, and regular multi-page features in *Woman's Day* and newspapers.<sup>28</sup>

Around 1970, towards the end of the life of the development phase of the project, Hooker Centenary produced the brochure “New Horizons” that further reset the focus of the development towards lifestyle and outdoor pursuits. The front cover featured an idealised birds-eye view across the most prestigious suburb, Mt Ommaney situated

“on the high central ridge” looking towards the river. The render depicted schools, a shopping centre and a hospital in a parkland setting flanked by suburban subdivisions on both sides. The representation also signalled an embrace of modern architecture and its use for architect-designed detached homes, using innovative new materials.

The allotments in the suburb of Mt Ommaney (1970), at over 1000 square metres were larger than those of Jindalee and Jamboree Heights. The first stage of the suburb was conceived as private courts each with around seven large properties, and a private entrance – gated communities – and provision for shared private ownership of internal roads and nature strips, a departure from previous subdivisions at Centenary Estates and one of the first developments of its kind in Australia. Riverhills (1973) would be designed, the brochure flagged, with young families in mind.

The official opening of Jindalee in 1962 brought the first public transport to the district, a bus connection to Oxley Station.<sup>29</sup> Loranah Street shopping centre – the first shops in the district – were also established early in the suburb’s development. Jindalee became a focus for sporting activities with a golf course, swimming pool and bowls club. In 1969, McLeod Country Golf Club opened, the first women’s golf club in Australia. If the proposal for the Industrial Garden City at Darra from 1916 had been formulated for the working class, Centenary Estates had moved away from the focus on industry to a promotion of outdoor lifestyle activities to the new post-war middle-class audience.



**Figure 5.** Hooker-Rex Display Home (1963) (Hayes and Scott Collection, UQFL278, Fryer Library, University of Queensland).

### **Display Homes, Dream Homes and Exhibition Houses**

The Hooker-Rex Display Home completed in 1962 was opened to the public to launch Centenary Estates in the first suburb, Jindalee.<sup>30</sup> It was an affordable house prototype designed by local architects Hayes and Scott. It was a flat-roof, brick and timber, slab-on-ground house that featured a tall brick chimney, and block screen to the street. The house was accessible from the side with entry made legible by a brick wall extended beyond the house proper. It included a pop-up clerestory window for light and ventilation, roof overhangs, with a stacked breeze-block screen in front of bedrooms, and an iconic Hayes and Scott chimney, often used through the 1960s. The first promotional brochure signalled a move away from the characteristics of the timber Queensland house, and opened up the possibility of a range of house styles, declaring:

Today the contemporary Brisbane house is a compact, beautifully designed home that makes faithful use of its materials, cross-ventilated and adequately lighted by protected windows – perhaps a ranch-style house, or a split-level design where rising ground makes that a possibility. The old room-darkening wide verandah has gone, and terraces make the house a part of its own garden. Hooker-Rex will build a number of exhibition homes on home-sites in the neighbourhood areas.<sup>31</sup>

The house was built at 6 Jindalee Street on a north-facing block. Part of the brief was to set the scene for the Centenary Estates, to demonstrate to the public what modern housing and landscaping could be like. It was clad in timber chamferboards at the back but presented a brick-clad face to the street, along with a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows that incorporated a line of fixed, solid panels. Plans of the house do not survive but it is likely that the service areas such as the kitchen, bathroom and laundry were located beneath the clerestory window, towards the back of the house alongside the main living space, which included a fireplace. Three bedrooms were positioned at the front, towards the street. The house was entered by a door on the eastern side of the house, accessed via a path from the street that ran parallel with the garage, terminating in a large projecting brick wall used to both define the entry and screen off the back garden. Entry from the side allowed for simplified internal circulation and a reduced central hallway.

The flat roof was made possible by a cliplock roofing profile – a deep pan profile of continuous metal sheeting newly developed by Lysart Brownbuilt that allowed the construction of low-pitched roofs of large spans. The large clerestory window had four bays of Naco hopper windows with a remote winder, favoured by the architect Campbell Scott to facilitate the removal of hot air from the middle of the house. He also used the new Cowdroy and Lidco frameless window systems for north-facing window walls, a feature of many of the houses he designed.<sup>32</sup> Hayes and Scott developed a particular modular treatment for windows in their affordable houses to give the houses a “prefabricated look, as though they were mass produced.”<sup>33</sup> The house interior was lined with plasterboard which CSR had been manufacturing since the mid-1950s and by the early 1960s had gained social acceptability. Another contemporary product employed were concrete screen breeze blocks, used for the freestanding fence that gave the street front of the house its distinctive monumental quality and provided a privacy screen for the glass window wall.

Photographs of the house after it was first constructed show it sited alone in a greenfield setting with remnants of bushland in the background. The design anticipated the time when it would be surrounded by neighbouring houses. Projecting walls, freestanding front fence and the placement of the garage were used to define the garden and create private terrace areas contiguous with the living spaces. This merging of the house and its garden is another Hayes and Scott trademark and was achieved simply and effectively on the compact, flat suburban block. Another efficient strategy they employed was the use of the generous roof overhangs to shade windows and walls while also providing weather protection for the entry pathway.

It is difficult to gauge how Hayes and Scott’s affordable house prototype was received locally but based on the photographs taken when completed, was roundly criticised in *Architecture Cross Section*, published by the Department of Architecture at the University of Melbourne at the end of 1962, that was sent to architects and master builders across Australia.<sup>34</sup> Interest in Centenary Estates was initially slow, and it was only after Hooker-Rex had completed construction of the bridge linking Jindalee to Kenmore in October 1964 that houses and land began to sell in greater numbers. Certainly, few other display homes advertised by builders and developers in the local newspapers at the time appeared as strikingly modern as the house in Jindalee. The flat roof in particular set it apart from other proposals.

The Hooker-Rex Display Home is quite an early Australian example of an architect-designed display home, itself a marketing innovation of the early 1960s. The Colonial Gas Association established a display house and home service centre at the Beauville Estate, an AV Jennings project in Murrumbidgee, Victoria, in 1935, one of the first display houses in Australia.<sup>35</sup> This was an American selling strategy, which the company and other project home builders continued to refine throughout the 1950s. However, as home ownership peaked in the early 1960s, architectural expertise began to be drawn upon as house builders became “more conscious of style and product differentiation.” It was the phenomenon of project home villages in Sydney, such as the Master Builders Association’s Parade of Homes of 1960 and Lend Lease’s Carlingford Homes Fair of 1962 that launched architect-designed project homes, not only as a marketing tool but also as a form of popular entertainment. It is estimated that around 2 million people visited the Carlingford Homes Fair, which was co-sponsored by the *Australian Women’s Weekly*.<sup>36</sup>

This was clearly the model that Hooker-Rex had in mind when they commissioned ten exhibition houses from local architects and builders to launch the opening of Centenary Estates on 22 September 1962. Advertisements for the opening in the *Courier-Mail* claimed that each house was “a masterpiece of modern design, every one different in style and materials ... this is the most exciting Home Exhibition ever.”<sup>37</sup> As at Killarney Heights, Hooker-Rex also organised a state-wide, £11,500 “dream home” competition in conjunction with *Woman’s Day* to mark the opening of the estate.<sup>38</sup>

Centenary Estates was one of three Hooker housing estates promoted in 1963 with a Dream Home Competition. The others were at Killarney in Sydney with a house designed by Sydney Ancher (1904-1979) where Hooker also oversaw estates at Castle Cove and Winston Hills, and Burwood in Melbourne, that represented a concerted publicity campaign by Hooker on Australia’s Eastern seaboard.<sup>39</sup> Hayes and Scott were again chosen, and their ‘Dream Home’ was a variation on the Hooker-Rex Display Home, a brick three-bedroom low-set extruded-gable house, further extended through flat-roof carport and living area with half-covered terrace to back yard. An L-figure plan was slipped to form the entrance and a clerestory pop-up positioned over living area. Hit-and-miss brick screen wrapped around service court to street, accessible from laundry and proud of carport setback from boundary. These projects

mark a moment where architects staked a claim in the provision of post-war housing overtaken by project home developers.

## Conclusion

Centenary Estates provides a cautionary tale for the consequences of building on farmland adjacent to the river. Developed on the premise that the area would be subject to “occasional inundation,”<sup>40</sup> low-lying areas were significantly impacted by the floods of 1893, and with Centenary Estates substantially complete, the floods of 1974, and exacerbated by climate change, the recent floods of 2011, 2019 and 2022. With closer settlement to the Brisbane River since the 1960s thousands more people are now affected by floods. More productively, Centenary Estates represents an early example of close collaboration between private developers and the Brisbane City Council to facilitate Brisbane’s post-war expansion west, the shift to private development, methods of promotion, and transfer of knowledge between government, corporations, planners, builders and architects. It also captures the brief moment when architects attempted to stake a claim to the emerging project home economy. The Industrial Garden City for Darra and Centenary Estates considered side-by-side, reveal Brisbane’s shift from a city of workers to post-war middle-class expectations for lifestyle.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> “The Centenary Project: Opening Up New Horizons,” in *New Horizons* by Hooker Centenary, circa 1970, 1.

<sup>2</sup> “The Centenary Project,” 1.

<sup>3</sup> “The Centenary Project,” 1.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Spearritt, “Hooker, Sir Leslie Joseph (1903-1976),” *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 14 (Melbourne: MUP, 1996), 487.

<sup>5</sup> “Centenary Estates,” Centenary Estates promotional brochure (Sydney: Waite and Bull Pty Ltd, 1961).

<sup>6</sup> “£330,000 Drop in Hooker Profits,” *Canberra Times*, 18 April 1962, 34; Spearritt, “Hooker, Sir Leslie Joseph (1903-1976),” 487-8; “Centenary Estates,” *Courier Mail* (Brisbane) [Advertisement], 11 November 1961, 9; and “Centenary Estates Limited. We Make It So Easy to Own Your Own Home at Jindalee,” *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane) [Advertisement: Real Estate Page], 29 November 1970.

<sup>7</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>8</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>9</sup> “£8m Development Plan for Brisbane,” *Canberra Times*, 11 November 1961, 5; and Centenary Suburbs Historical Society website, <https://cshsoc.org.au/history-suburban-period> (accessed 1 July 2022).

<sup>10</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>11</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>12</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>13</sup> “Centenary Estates.”

<sup>14</sup> “The Centenary Project,” 1.

- <sup>15</sup> "Garden City. Brisbane's Model Suburb," *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), 1 August 1918, 6.
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- <sup>21</sup> Robert Freestone, "The Australian Garden City: A Planning History 1910-1930," PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 1984, 199.
- <sup>22</sup> "Proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, Queensland," 39.
- <sup>23</sup> "Proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, Queensland," 37.
- <sup>24</sup> "Proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, Queensland," 38.
- <sup>25</sup> "Proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, Queensland," 38.
- <sup>26</sup> "Proposed Industrial Garden City at Darra, Queensland," 38.
- <sup>27</sup> "Women Say!" *Tribune* (Sydney), 10 October 1962, 10; "Land Sale," *Government Gazette off the State off New South Wales* (Sydney, NSW: 1901-2001), 11 October 1963.
- <sup>28</sup> "Project Houses: The Dream Home Business," *The Bulletin* 89, no. 4556 (1 July 1967): 24-6.
- <sup>29</sup> "History Suburban Period (1962 and Later)," Centenary Suburbs Historical Society Inc., <https://cshsoc.org.au/history-suburban-period/> (accessed 2 July 2022).
- <sup>30</sup> John Dalton, "Hot Humid Zones," *Architecture in Australia* 21, no. 1 (March 1963): 77.
- <sup>31</sup> "Centenary Estates."
- <sup>32</sup> Joanna Besley, "Hayes and Scott and the Modest House," In *Hayes and Scott, Post-war Houses*, Andrew Wilson (ed) (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2005), 84.
- <sup>33</sup> Besley, "Hayes and Scott and the Modest House," 84.
- <sup>34</sup> "Hooker Rex, Proposed Satellite Town at Darra, Brisbane," *Architecture Cross Section* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Department of Architecture), no. 122 (1 December 1962): 2.
- <sup>35</sup> *Dandenong Journal* (Melbourne) [Advertisement], 7 November 1935, 3.
- <sup>36</sup> Besley, "Hayes and Scott and the Modest House," 84.
- <sup>37</sup> *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) [Advertisement], 21 September 1962.
- <sup>38</sup> *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) [Advertisement], 21 September 1962.
- <sup>39</sup> Charles Pickett, "Dream Homes," *Powerhouse*, 2012.
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# Notre-Dame as the Memory of Paris: Hugo, the Historical Novel and Conservation

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## Abstract

*Controversies surrounding the restoration and representation of the narrative and memory of Notre-Dame de Paris are not new. The latest debates remind us that the building has been at the centre of conservation controversies since the nineteenth century. But why is Notre-Dame de Paris central to these debates? The answer appears to lie in its function as a mnemonic device for Paris and the French nation.*

*This paper focuses on the four literary pieces published by Victor Hugo in the period between 1823 and 1832 – ‘Le Bande Noir’ (‘The Black Band’), ‘Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France’ (‘Note on the Destruction of Monuments in France’), ‘Guerre aux Démolisseurs!’ (‘War on the Demolishers!’) and Notre-Dame de Paris (also known as The Hunchback of Notre-Dame). Through an analysis of these four texts, the paper will attempt to understand Hugo’s convictions about the role of buildings – especially Notre-Dame de Paris – in establishing the memory of the city and the nation, and how these in turn underpinned his arguments for conservation.*

*Whilst these texts were all written in a period before the development of key contemporary concepts in the psychology and neuroscience of memory, this paper nevertheless uses the concepts of memory, imagination and Mental Time Travel to try to understand the kind of memory work that the Cathedral performs, and that Hugo suggests it performs in his writing. By examining how Hugo’s literature augmented and engaged the reader’s memory and imagination of the past, this paper will explain how Hugo romanticised the idea that the building was a witness to history. The paper ultimately argues that Hugo positioned Notre-Dame de Paris not only as the centrepiece in his own fiction, but as a beacon of memory for Paris and France, and as such the building came to represent Paris, and indeed the nation as a whole.*

## Introduction

This paper will focus on the four literary pieces published by Victor Hugo in the period between 1823 and 1832 – ‘Le Bande Noir’ (The Black Band), ‘Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France’ (Note on the Destruction of Monuments in France), ‘Guerre aux Démolisseurs!’ (War on the Demolishers!) and *Notre-Dame de Paris* (also known as *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*).<sup>1</sup> Using literary interventions and tropes to outline his claims for historic architecture, Hugo establishes the city and buildings as guardians and witnesses to France’s history and past glory. By romanticising architecture, Hugo’s literature catalyses the building, in particular Notre-Dame de Paris’ role as a beacon of memory and cultural identity for Paris and France. Collectively, the four texts position the Cathedral as the central place of life in both the city and nation. Hugo proposes that both civic and national memory are embedded in the historical life of the building. This paper will analyse these four texts using key contemporary concepts in the psychology and neuroscience of memory, to elaborate on the kind of memory work Hugo promotes through his writing.

## Memory and Imagination

Ancient orators and philosophers beginning with Aristotle emphasised the importance of human sight and perception on the ability to produce *phantasia* (imagination). The word *phantasia* comes from the Greek *phaos* which means to be ‘visible’ or to have images ‘appear’. In order to remember and imagine, Aristotle believed that humans “employ *phantasmata* which are bodily marks (*tupoi*) that are carved in the matter of the heart or *proton aisthetikon*.”<sup>2</sup> These *tupoi* are like memory traces, which leave fragments of images (*phantasmata*) in our brains – the “primary perceptive part of the soul”<sup>3</sup> (the *proton aisthetikon*) – through which we are able to exercise perception and use our senses to understand memory cues and imagine. The sense of sight is particularly important to the idea that memory and imagination can be generated through perceptible objects and visual cues such as nature and architecture, or through representations like literature, photographs and paintings. As a causal result, imagination and memories imprint a *phantasmata*, an image or memory trace within the brain of the perceiver, much like “the way in which a piece of wax takes on the impress (*semeion*) from a signet-ring without the iron or gold.”<sup>4</sup> This process provides an environment where the human mind has the “capacity or power... to create, to recombine or reproduce and to call up mental images of objects, events, faces or

scenes, which are not present to the senses”<sup>5</sup> and thereby mentally travelling through different spatial-temporal zones.

As scientific research into memory and imagination developed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, a consensus emerged that the “neurocognitive machinery by which humans flexibly (re)construct past, future, and atemporal representations”<sup>6</sup> required both personal and acquired knowledge – *episodic* and *semantic memory*. Furthermore, it was identified that memory and imagination cannot be separated from our material, cultural and social environment, but rather it occurs through an active creative engagement with the world, whereby the imagined world or memory can be created or recreated – transforming the reality of an object or scene (like the built environment) into a *phantasm* (memory trace).<sup>7</sup> In this way, contemporary research reaffirms that through literature like Hugo’s, that text can ignite our imagination, enabling us to engage with our perceptions of what it means for buildings to act as witnesses to history and somehow possess memory. Reorganising information we possess through our senses and perceptions of buildings/landscapes, or through our knowledge of these places, we can create a complex understanding and (re)imagining of the past, present and the future.<sup>8</sup>

Ground-breaking research in memory developed by Dr Endel Tulving in the 1980s, explained that the difference between humans and animals is dependent on the evolutionary emergence of *autonoetic consciousness* and the ability for humans to look backwards and forwards in time.<sup>9</sup> Tulving highlights that through the perspective shifting qualities of *autonoetic consciousness* and the recreative qualities of imagination,<sup>10</sup> humans can mentally travel through time, placing themselves in the past, in the future or in counterfactual situations, and thus have the ability to examine their own thoughts while crossing the spatial-temporal divide – a phenomenon Tulving coined *Mental Time Travel*.<sup>11</sup>

Both *episodic* and *semantic memory* draw heavily on a core brain system which allows a perspective shift from the present (immediate environment) to an alternative and imagined perspective (a past or future environment) that is based largely on the ability for imagination to weave together experienced and acquired knowledge of the past.<sup>12</sup> This perspective shift and navigation of different spatial-temporal zones provides the ideal conditions for *Mental Time Travel* to occur.

Literature, and in particular the novel, emerged in the nineteenth century as the ideal vehicle for enabling such travel across spatial-temporal zones. Novels could engage the reader in a historic past, in order to precipitate an awareness of present conditions or the absence of a quality in the past which was evoked by the novel.

Drawing upon their *semantic memory* of France's past that was partly constructed in fiction, and their *episodic memory* of their own lives in Hugo's Paris, a growing group in society began to rebel against the upheavals and encroachment of modernity. Placing value on targeted and disappearing structures as witnesses and repositories of memory of past achievements, a national consciousness about France's historic past, and a desire to preserve architecture and the environment burgeoned.

Using literature to highlight the devastation of the preceding generations, impassioned writers like Victor Hugo attempted to capture the nation's memory about their past, endeavouring to engage the reader's *autonoetic consciousness* and imagination in order to "engage with the past and the present and to consider the historical circumstances of both."<sup>13</sup> Doing so, Hugo and his contemporaries fostered the perspective that these elements are important vessels of collective memory and history and can provide lessons from the past – *magistra vitae*. Thus, through his writing Hugo encouraged the reader to personally connect and re-connect with this collective memory and history, and catalyse change in society's protection of these significant places, Notre-Dame de Paris being the most significant one of all.

### **Victor Hugo and Notre Dame de Paris**

The Île de la Cité on which Notre-Dame de Paris was constructed, was described by twelfth-century writer Guy de Bazoches as the "the head, the heart, the very marrow of the whole city."<sup>14</sup> King Louis IX of France further refined the Île de la Cité, to become the jewel of the Seine, by financing the construction of the palace chapel Sainte-Chapelle (1242-48) and the construction of the now landmark Notre-Dame de Paris.

Paralleling the building of the Cathedral with the building of the nation,<sup>15</sup> architectural historian Kevin D. Murphy intimates that Hugo saw, much like Guy de Bazoches centuries before him, "the island with Notre-Dame as its most prominent landmark was the epicentre of Paris, and some would argue, of the nation."<sup>16</sup> Not only was Notre-Dame architecturally significant, but Hugo establishes the importance of Gothic architecture to the national memory and identity, explaining that architecture's ability to

act as a palimpsest and witness to the nation's history made it a repository of memory. Hugo writes: "admirable monument of the Middle Ages, upon which the historic glory of our nation is imprinted and to which are bound both the memory of our kings and the traditions of our people."<sup>17</sup>

The French Revolution and related destruction and dilapidation of the estates of both the Church and State in France, in particular Paris, was a life-giving force for Hugo. Consequently, Hugo took advantage of the politically and literary awakened bourgeoisie, using writing as a catalyst for change in society. By making people aware of their surroundings and important issues like the destruction of architecture, Hugo intended to invigorate society's interest in their national memory and identity.

Hugo viewed Paris not only as the capital of France, and capital of society in the nineteenth century, but as the preeminent civilisation and centre of the educated and cultural world. To Hugo Paris was a city of ideas and ideals whose memory lives in the forest of the city's buildings. These buildings were the living roots, foundations and witnesses of society.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 1.** Chevet de Notre-Dame-de-Paris, vue pris du Quai de La Tournelle, 1860s (Charles Soulier, Getty Museum Collection, [www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1043RH](http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1043RH); Creative Commons Licence).

### **Ceci Tuera Cela: Loss of Memory and the Conservation Movement**

As a result of the social-political upheavals of the French Revolution and Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, and the concurrent emergence of historical consciousness in France, in the Spring of 1792 the *Commission*

*Conservatrice de Monuments* (Monuments Conservation Commission) was established in Paris (later known as the *Commission des Monuments Historiques* (Commission for Historic Monuments) by 1837). The Commission's role was twofold – serving both the Revolution and heritage, it was tasked with overseeing the obliteration of evidence relating to the ousted monarchy and Catholic Church, whilst also preventing further destruction of significant works of art and architecture.<sup>19</sup>

However, despite appointing Alexandre Lenoir to safeguard structures and art, the Commission was largely unsuccessful, as during the decades that followed, France lost many important works of art and historic buildings, many of which were either demolished or adapted for new purposes. By 1819, however, a new attempt to conserve France's built heritage was launched by the Ministry of the Interior, with the provision of an 80,000 Francs allowance for the preservation of historical monuments. Despite this allowance, France's heritage and national memories continued to fall victim to destruction and dilapidation through neglect. It is no surprise therefore, that in this context Hugo, an ardent proponent of France's Gothic and historical architecture, took it upon himself to call the nation and the Ministry to action, pleading on behalf of France's monuments.

Prior to his publication of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1831, Hugo wrote two politically inclined pieces about the destruction of France's monuments and a call for their conservation. The first of these pieces, published in 1823, was the poem 'Le Bande Noir'. The poem was followed by a pamphlet in 1825 entitled 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France'. A later essay entitled 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' was published in 1832 a year after the first release of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1831. 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' and 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' have over the years been contracted and bundled together as one essay and understood to be Hugo's first political piece discussing the destruction of France's monuments and conservation. However, they were in fact written seven years apart and the latter of the two essays over a decade after his first political piece on the destruction of France, 'Le Bande Noir', was published. 'Le Bande Noir' and 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' have rarely been translated from their original French, which may indicate why 'War on the Demolishers!' is the better-known piece of the three.

In 'Le Bande Noir' Hugo dedicated the poem to Charles Nodier, his friend and fellow conservation activist, lamenting that he, like Nodier, was a traveller experiencing the

ruins and devastation of France's architectural heritage. Hugo split the poem into two cantos. In the first canto Hugo calls for the respect of France's monuments, using the reader's *semantic memories* and literature induced *phantasms* to romantically frame these monuments as witnesses to France's glory, with architectural ruins described as the repositories of memory, and the picturesque muse of a poet. However, in the second canto, Hugo's voice changes, and it is here that the desperation for the plight of the historical monuments are narrated. The romantic descriptions of the first canto are juxtaposed with a dismissal of these ideas as a poet's folly.

— Hush, lyre! Silence, O lyre of the poet!  
Ah, let these glorious debris fall in peace  
To the abyss where no friend, in his silent pain  
Will not long follow them with his eyes!  
Witnesses that old times have left in our age,  
Guardians of a past that is outraged,  
Ah! flee this enemy century!...<sup>20</sup>

Personifying the ruin as guardian of, and witnesses to, the past, Hugo is identifying in this stanza that the ruins and architectural monuments of France no longer have friends within the Republic. For why should the nation care for these ruins, when instead they can achieve progress through political and industrial revolutions? Hugo explains that the virtues and honour of the old French order have been replaced by the crime and destruction of the political and technological upheaval of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Hugo's second last stanza employs reverse psychology to plead with the reader for action, which is juxtaposed with the final stanza, where Hugo's authorial intervention invites the reader to engage their *autonoetic consciousness* to imagine a counterfactual situation, a future where France is bereft of its architectural monuments, a shadow of her former self.

When France is stripped of her memories,  
Alas! will have lost her old majesty,  
Still fighting for some soiled purple,  
They will laugh at her nakedness!  
We, do not profane this sacred mother;

Let us comfort her mournful glory,  
Let us sing her eclipsed stars;  
For our young muse, facing anarchy,  
Will not shake her banner, whitewashed  
Of the powder of past times.<sup>21</sup>

Hugo's poetic entreaties to protect France's monuments achieved little traction, and two years later in 1825, Hugo penned another piece, this time in prose, again calling for change. In 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' Hugo begins his opinion piece by singling out Baron Taylor and Charles Nodier, criticising them for neglecting various monuments in their 1820s survey of France's historical buildings and landscapes – which he believed disregarded buildings and ruins which lacked romantic appeal and ones which restorers sought to modernise. Arguing that these monuments – the everyday fabric of France – may lack romantic appeal but have value for their age, history and ability to tell the story of France's past. Buildings can act as both a physical witness to what has transpired but also through human perception and imagination, act as a cue for people to *mentally time travel* and thereby develop a sense of having witnessed that past. This, he believed, was key to building a sense of collective memory of the nation.



**Figure 2.** Picturesque and Romantic Journeys in Ancient France, Picardie (Vol. 2): Roye (Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France par Charles Nodier, J. Taylor, et Alphonse de Cailleux: Roye), 1824 (Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of John Bonebrake 2010.603).



In 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France' Hugo continues to detail several buildings and locations across France which had fallen into disrepair or been destroyed due to the actions of the Revolution, but also through the incompetency and neglect of the French people and lawmakers. Reiterating the importance of France's monuments as paramount to the national memory and glory of the people, Hugo uses impassioned language to describe the fabric as imprinted with the memories and traditions of France, and therefore anthropomorphising the fabric, as key witnesses to the glory that is France.

The time has come when no one is allowed to remain silent. A universal cry must at last call the new France to the aid of the old. All kinds of profanation, degradation and ruin threaten at once the little that remains of these admirable monuments of the Middle Ages, in which the old national glory was imprinted, and to which the memory of kings and the tradition of the people are attached...<sup>22</sup>

Hugo emphasises that the buildings belong to the nation and are part of the French national memory and landscape. As such, these buildings should not be demolished and replaced by new buildings. Abhorring this practice, Hugo refers to it as a form of degradation and memory loss.

It is in this 1825 article that Hugo speaks directly to the Ministry of the Interior, calling for a law to protect the historic monuments and objects of France. It took another five years before any real action was taken towards safeguarding France's monuments and required further political change, with the establishment of the July Monarchy after the July Revolution. Under the July Monarchy, in 1830 the Minister of the Interior proposed that a position as the Inspector-General of Historic Monuments should be created. The first post was assigned to Ludovic Vitet on 25 November 1830, and later reassigned to Prosper Mérimée on 27 May 1834. The Inspector-General of Historic Monuments was charged with the classification of buildings across France, and the distribution of funds for their maintenance and restoration. In 1840, the first list of historic monuments was compiled and published by the Commission which detailed over 1000 historical monuments, most of which were buildings.

With the slow development of the Commission and its protection and conservation of historic monuments, Hugo was disconcerted by the lack of action, penning another

political opinion piece in 1832 entitled 'Guerre aux Démolisseurs!' Throughout the article Hugo outlines his disdain at the Commission and his opinions about their restoration programme and how modern developments were destroying the memories of France. Hugo saw the forward movement of history, changes in architectural style, political upheaval and development of technology all as enemies of the historic monument, leading to its destruction or neglect. Prefiguring John Ruskin, Hugo deplores the restoration efforts in France. He believed they negated the age and historical value of the building by removing the patina and palimpsest, which he saw as evidence of the witnessing these buildings were perceived to have taken apart of. Describing the erasure caused by restoration and destruction as a loss of France's memories, the story of the nation: "It must be said, and loudly, that this demolition of the old France, which we decried many times as 'restoration', continues with more tenacity and barbarousness than ever."<sup>23</sup>

Hugo ends his tirade with a plea to the French people to call the government to account, which by 1832 had only recently employed the Inspector-General Vitet and had not begun to implement a procedure to document and allocate funds for the historic monuments of France. His plea for the fate of the nation's monuments was detailed as something which should be undertaken for the posterity of future generations, insisting that the protection of monuments is one of public and national interest to stave from further loss of memory and nationhood:

... say forcefully to the government, to the communes, and to the individuals that they are responsible for all the national monuments that fate has left in their hands. We must account for the past in the future. *Posterī, posterī, vestra res agitur* [descendants, descendants, this thing is kept for you]

Repair these beautiful and solemn edifices. Repair them with care, with intellect, with sobriety

You have jurisdiction over those that are public; defend them from being demolished

This is a question of public interest, indeed one of national interest<sup>24</sup>

Building upon the ideas espoused in 'Le Bande Noir' and 'Note sur la Destruction des Monuments en France', Hugo used his historical novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* to further reiterate to the French public the impacts of destruction on the historic fabric of Paris and France, and in turn the impacts on the French identity. Paris was a city of ideas and ideals whose memory lived in the forest of the city's buildings. To Hugo, these buildings were the living roots, foundations and witnesses of society.<sup>25</sup>

The choice to set *Notre-Dame de Paris* in the historical setting of 1482 is highly significant in the light of the socio-political milieu surrounding Hugo's writing. By narrating the book in 1482, during the Cathedral's hey-day before its decline into disrepair and desecration, Hugo was able to juxtapose history against the fresh memories and reality of post-Revolutionary France. By utilising and playing upon the social and collective memories of the reader, Hugo used his writing to engage the imagination of the reader and transport them across spatial-temporal zones, whilst also underlining his alternate agenda – calling for the restoration of the French cultural identity through the conservation of its architectural monuments (like Notre-Dame de Paris). Setting the novel in 1482 and juxtaposing it with the reader's context (the 1830s), Hugo provided two temporal coordinates through which the reader can *mentally time travel* to navigate Paris and the story. Through this, Hugo intended to engage the reader with the characters and buildings within the narrative, whilst subliminally highlighting that the city and its buildings are significant witnesses to the passage of time, and the events which lead to the reader's present.

Hugo also establishes the Cathedral as the main character and heart of the novel, with the building performing an important function as an interpretive mirror within the text. Not only do the surrounding characters of the story read themselves and the world around them through their interactions with the Cathedral, but so too does the reader. By positioning the Cathedral as the main character and the centre of Paris, Hugo also emphasises the building as one of the principal achievements of the Parisians. In this way, Hugo treats the building metonymically. The Cathedral is Paris, Paris and the Cathedral are the nation. Thus, Hugo makes the reader and the French people generally, the building's guardians, and thereby sought to change the dynamic, from destroyers to protectors.

To achieve this dynamic shift, Hugo employs the reader's *imagination*, and the brain's ability to undergo *Mental Time Travel*, to transport the reader through time and space.

This process forces the reader to undergo a self and societal reflection, in particular reflecting on the impacts that social and political upheaval had had on their city and surroundings. Through this self-reflection, the reader is able to engage the forward projection capabilities of *autonoetic consciousness* and travel between the past, present and future to imagine the compounding impacts and consequences of the events of the past and present, and thereby begin to comprehend how this may impact the future of Notre-Dame de Paris and other buildings which Hugo has so carefully crafted in the narrative as key to their French identity.

Hugo also dedicated a whole chapter – Chapter II in Book V entitled ‘Ceci tuera cela’ (This will kill that) – to the discussion of the impacts of not the French Revolution per se but instead the Industrial Revolution, primarily the technological advances of the period like the printing press. This chapter, along with two others were not published in the first edition of the novel in 1831. It has been said that Hugo ‘lost’ the chapters, however it is more likely that he did not think that the chapters would be well received, and the book would not be published. Instead, these chapters were published in 1832, after the publication of his last article ‘Guerre aux Démolisseurs!’ and were likely his last-ditch effort to appeal to the French people against the destruction occurring to the historic cities and landscapes of France.

In ‘Ceci tuera cela’, Hugo reiterates the ideas espoused by his contemporary Sir Walter Scott in his 1823 novel *Quentin Durward*, which predicts the consequences of technology like the printing press. In the narrative, Scott depicts a scene where the character Galeotti Martivalle predicts the consequences of technology like the printing press, which would allow a stream of new ideas and science to enter the public discourse, which, left uninterrupted and unbounded, would change “the whole form of social life; establishing and overthrowing religions; erecting and destroying kingdoms.”<sup>26</sup> This technology Scott compares to a “young tree, which now newly planted, but shall, in succeeding generations, bear fruit as fatal, yet as precious, as that of the Garden of Eden; the knowledge, namely, of good and evil.”<sup>27</sup> Hugo took Scott’s ideas further, exclaiming that “Printing will kill architecture”<sup>28</sup> and thereby be the tree which bears the fatal fruit to France’s historic architecture and cities. As through the dissemination of new ideas through written media like pamphlets, the printing press became the ‘mother’ of the French Revolution,<sup>29</sup> garnering greater support and therefore leading to the neglect and destruction of France’s historic monuments.

Dramatically, Hugo describes this shift and competition between architecture and printing as akin to the ‘survival of the fittest’, where each generation develops and replaces their predecessors’ form of expression through new mediums which present new ideas.<sup>30</sup> Hugo’s fear, however, was that through these modern technological developments, humanity, and most importantly for him, the French, would forget how to interpret, understand and interact with the old mediums (architecture) which speak of their identity and history, abandoning them, and thus through neglect and destruction cause the loss of French identity and memory.



**Figure 3.** “This Will Kill That.” The illustration depicts the book killing the edifice, in this case, Notre Dame Cathedral (Illustration by H. Scott, from Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1877 edition, 227).

By trying to mobilise the ideas of nationhood, collective memory and identity through the novel, Hugo specifically crafted the narrative to bear witness to the life of the city and its great cathedral and act as a cue for memory. Resigned to believe that if he could not persuade the public who were reading the novel, that Notre-Dame would face ruin and destruction, Hugo ensured that the novel became a cue to the historic building. Hugo described the building in exacting detail as “a literary and historical narrative written in stone, wood, and glass.”<sup>31</sup> Employing the brain’s ability to figuratively travel through time and space, Hugo seeks to create self-reflection in the reader. By harnessing their *episodic* and *semantic memories* so that they can observe the historical impacts of the passage of time, the novel, through a reciprocal interaction between the text and the reader, becomes a witness to history.

Despite detesting the printing press and the advance of technology, Hugo utilised it, much like the Revolutionaries, to mass produce the novel and spread his message far and wide. As a result, Hugo safeguarded the building in two ways. First, he sought to change the public perception about architecture, and the perception of the past, by reconnecting the reader with the building. The literary version of Notre-Dame is constructed through words and literary images, which helps the reader to understand the actual building.<sup>32</sup> Using literature as his weapon of choice, Hugo advocated for the memory and identity of France imbedded in the physical stones of the building and the city. Secondly, by printing the novel, should the building succumb to the destruction of people, time, war or force majeure, the building and social history of France would be forever encapsulated in the pages of the book, and could be replicated, shared and read ad infinitum, its memory forever stored.

Printing therefore did not kill the building, the built fabric of Paris and France. On the contrary it helped to save Notre Dame de Paris and other buildings throughout the country, as Hugo's written word calling for conservation countered the Revolution's written word which called for destruction. However, did it save architecture? Did France's memory repositories retain their mnemonic function? Or did the conservation that ensued, falsify the memory? Hugo emphasised that the national French identity and collective memory of society are imbued in the stones of the Gothic architecture throughout France, where the fabric itself could be used as a positive re-affirmation of the French history, memory and identity. Through his work, human memory, and the ability to imagine and undergo *Mental Time Travel*, Hugo helped to capture society's attention and re-engage their memories, catalysing change, which in turn helped the development of the conservation movement in France.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Hugo's literature will henceforth be referred to by its original French title.

<sup>2</sup> John E. Sisko, "Space, Time and Phantasms in Aristotle, De Memoria 2, 452b7-25," *The Classical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (May 1997): 167.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle and J. I. Beare, "De Memoria: On Memory and Reminiscence," 350BCE, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/memory.html>; and Jack M. Greenstein, "Icons and Memory: Aristotle on Remembrance," *Public*, no. 15 (1 January 1997): 13.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle and J. A. Smith, "De Anima: On the Soul," 350BCE, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/soul.html>; and Greenstein, "Icons and Memory," 11.

<sup>5</sup> Christina S. Papachristou, "Three Kinds or Grades of Phantasia in Aristotle's De Anima," *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* 7, no. 1 (8 June 2013): 29.

<sup>6</sup> Muireann Irish, "Chapter 27: On the Interaction Between Episodic and Semantic Representations - Constructing a Unified Account of Imagination," in *The Cambridge Handbook*

of the *Imagination*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, ed. Anna Abraham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 447.

<sup>7</sup> Koukouti and Lambros, Chapter 3 in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, ed. Abraham, 38; and Martin Bressani, *Architecture and the Historical Imagination: Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-Le-Duc, 1814-1879* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Anna Abraham and Andreja Bubic, "Semantic Memory as the Root of Imagination," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6, no. 325 (March 2015): 1; Anna Abraham, "The Imaginative Mind: The Imaginative Mind," *Human Brain Mapping* 37, no. 11 (November 2016): 4204; and Arne Dietrich and Sandra Zakka, "Chapter 9: Capturing the Imagination," in *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, ed. Abraham, 138.

<sup>9</sup> Endel Tulving, "Chapter 2: Origin of Autonoesis in Episodic Memory," in *The Nature of Remembering: Essays in Honor of Robert G. Crowder*, ed. Henry L. Roediger et al (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2001), 29.

<sup>10</sup> David Davies, "Chapter 34: Imagination in the Philosophy of Art," *The Cambridge Handbook of the Imagination*, ed. Abraham, 469.

<sup>11</sup> Endel Tulving, "Episodic Memory: From Mind to Brain," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. 1 (February 2002): 5.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel L. Schacter, Donna Rose Addis and Randy L. Buckner, "Remembering the Past to Imagine the Future: The Prospective Brain," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 8, no. 9 (September 2007): 660.

<sup>13</sup> Katharina Boehm and Victoria Mills, "Introduction: Mediating the Materiality of the Past, 1700-1930," *Word & Image* 33, no. 3 (3 July 2017): 237.

<sup>14</sup> Kevin D. Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris: A Quick Immersion*, Quick Immersions 11 (New York: Tibidabo Publishing, 2020), 39.

<sup>15</sup> Julie Lawrence Cochran, "The Gothic Revival in France, 1830-1845: Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris, Popular Imagery, and a National Patrimony Discovered', in *Memory & Oblivion*, ed. Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1999), 394.

<sup>16</sup> Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Victor Hugo and Danny Smith, "War on the Demolishers!," *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 25, no. 2 (September 2018): 228.

<sup>18</sup> Victor H. Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), 51.

<sup>19</sup> Murphy, *The Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris*, 94.

<sup>20</sup> Hugo, "Le Bande Noire" (author's translation).

<sup>21</sup> Hugo, "Le Bande Noire" (author's translation).

<sup>22</sup> Victor Hugo, "Note Sur La Destruction Des Monuments En France," 1825, [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Litt%C3%A9rature\\_et\\_philosophie\\_m%C3%AAI%C3%A9s/1825-1832\\_Guerre\\_aux\\_d%C3%A9molisseurs\\_!](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Litt%C3%A9rature_et_philosophie_m%C3%AAI%C3%A9s/1825-1832_Guerre_aux_d%C3%A9molisseurs_!)

<sup>23</sup> Hugo and Smith, "War on the Demolishers!," 232 (author's translation).

<sup>24</sup> Hugo and Smith, "War on the Demolishers!," 246-47 (author's translation).

<sup>25</sup> Brombert, *Victor Hugo and the Visionary Novel*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Scott, *Quentin Durward* (Project Gutenberg, 1823), l. 2939 (ebook).

<sup>27</sup> Scott, *Quentin Durward*, 2943 (ebook).

<sup>28</sup> Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 215

<sup>29</sup> Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 223.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Emery, *Romancing the Cathedral: Gothic Architecture in Fin-De-Siècle French Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>31</sup> Nicola Minott-Ahl, "Nation/Building: Hugo's 'Notre-Dame de Paris' and the Novelist as Post-Revolutionary Historian," *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 10, no. 2 (2012): 251.

<sup>32</sup> Minott-Ahl, "Nation/Building," 251.

# Integrating Urban Sculptures into the Urban Planning System in China: Origin, Transition and Breakthrough, 1982-2003

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## **Abstract**

*The integration of urban sculptures into the urban planning system requires cross-disciplinary cooperation. Since 2003, many cities in China have mapped out all urban sculptures and formulated related regulations and overall urban plans. In fact, as early as 1982, the government established the Urban Sculpture Planning Group (USPG) to guide the development of urban sculptures. So why did it take so long to integrate urban sculptures into the urban planning system? Through analysing the changes in the USPG as well as related policies and regulations, this research shows that the development of urban sculpture planning in China has three critical moments: 1982 (origin), 1992 (transition) and 2003 (breakthrough). Also, the paper reveals that the changing ownership, responsibility and leadership of the USPG, the unclear definition of urban sculpture planning and many uncertain elements of urban planning are the primary factors slowing down the development of urban sculpture planning in China. The transition from urban sculpture to urban sculpture planning is not only a cross-disciplinary process but also a struggle between urban planning and sculpture. The paper argues that the essence of the transition is an antagonism between planning ideology under authoritarianism and the free expression of artistic thought. The research results benefit scholars in understanding the historical trends of urban sculpture practice in China. In addition, the history of urban sculpture planning reveals the problem of transition from small-scale objects to large-scale planning, which provides a prediction for the cross-field development of similar objects.*

## **Introduction**

The definition of urban sculptures in Chinese government documents is: within the urban planning area, outdoor sculptures were built on roads, squares, green spaces, residential areas, scenic spots, public buildings and other activity sites.<sup>1</sup> While there is



no clear definition of urban sculpture planning, it could be understood as enacting regulations and construction plans for urban sculptures on the scale of an entire city. The plan suggests their theme, location and scale. Urban sculpture planning has attracted many concerns from scholars in the past two decades. However, most research focuses on the strategy, principle and value of regulations for urban sculptures.<sup>2</sup> There is insufficient research to discuss how urban sculpture crosses into the urban planning system. Through literature review, we found that many cities in China formulated regulations and urban plans for urban sculptures after 2003.<sup>3</sup> In fact, as early as 1982, the government established the Urban Sculpture Planning Group (USPG) to enact regulations and planning for urban sculptures. Why does it take a long time to integrate urban sculptures into the urban planning system?

Therefore, this research focuses on the development process of the USPG and related policies. It explores the challenges of integrating urban sculptures into a city planning system. In addition, this paper combines significant historical incidents to explain the reasons for changes in USPG. The research results contribute to understanding the historical trends of urban sculpture practice in China. In addition, the history of urban sculpture planning reveals the problem of transition from small-scale objects to large-scale planning, which provides a prediction for the cross-field development of similar objects.

### **Origin – The Establishment of the Urban Sculpture Planning Group**

Established in 1982, the Urban Sculpture Planning Group was the leading department of urban sculpture management and planning in China. The organisation was formed by group members for the construction of the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall in 1976. China's central government convened a group of 100 excellent sculptors from art colleges and factories across eighteen provinces to build a "sculpture group" for the memorial hall. Among this group are pioneers of contemporary Chinese sculpture, such as LIU Kaiqu, and WANG Keqing. After constructing the memorial hall, the central government decided to set up the memorial hall revision group based on the original sculpture group. The government appointed LIU Kaiqu as a group leader and WANG Keqing, SHENG Yang and SHENG Yang as deputy leaders.<sup>4</sup> The government also expected to discuss the plan for further sculptures in China with the group.

After two years of domestic and European surveys, the Chinese Artists Association (CCA) proposed *Suggestions on Sculpture Construction in National Key Cities* (SSC) to

the central government in 1982.<sup>5</sup> CHENG Yunxian and WANG Keqing drafted this document, and HUA Junwu and LIU Kaiqu examined it. They were all famous artists as sculptors or calligraphers. SSC revealed that urban sculptures lacked artistic value and were in inappropriate places. Hence, SSC suggested establishing USPG to manage the sculptures' construction. Notably, it was the first time the term "urban sculpture" was mentioned in a formal government document. Using the term urban sculptures was in keeping with the culture and political background at that time. "Urban sculpture" encouraged sculptors to create works in public spaces as opposed to only creating works indoors. Additionally, in the context of the central government's advocacy of city development, the term urban sculpture might help make the proposal easier to be approved.<sup>6</sup>

The SSC proposal received immediate feedback from the central government; the government approved the proposal and nominated LIU (sculptor) as the leader of the USPG. In October 1982, LIU Kaiqu's speech at the National Urban Sculpture Academic Conference announced the establishment of the USPG. Moreover, under the USPG, the Urban Sculpture Art Committee (USAC) was set up to convene sculptors, architects and landscape gardeners to provide research assistance and the creation of urban sculptures. Kaiqu emphasised the value of urban sculptures: culture protection, environmental improvement and educating the masses.<sup>7</sup> Kaiqu made many discourses on sculpture planning and design. He stressed the importance of managing urban sculptures' material, theme, form, scale, colour, aesthetic interpretation, location and relation to the surrounding environment. Also, he advocated that sculptors, architects, landscape architects and the urban planning department should work together on managing and planning urban sculptures. He highlighted the dominant role of USPG, and other departments, such as the urban planning bureau and garden bureau, should coordinate USP.<sup>8</sup> The establishment of the USPG marks the beginning of urban sculpture planning in China.

Although it took less than one year to establish USPG, there was a dispute in the central government regarding which department USPG belonged to. The SSC advised the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Culture and the CAA to collaborate on managing USPG. However, WANG Renchon, the Minister of the Publicity Department of China, suggested that only one department handle the USPG due to its effectiveness. Nevertheless, ZHAO Ziyang, Premier of the State Council, insisted on the advice of the SSC. Ultimately, the three departments managed the USPG together. However, the

detailed responsibility of each department for the USPG was not confirmed until 1983, one year after the establishment of the USPG. The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development was responsible for coordinating the construction of urban sculptures in public spaces. The CCA and Ministry of Culture took charge of urban sculptures' censorship, management and enacting related regulations.<sup>9</sup> This decentralisation of power created an issue for the development of urban sculpture planning.

In addition, the list of USPG members changed between the submission and approval versions. The historical material that Qi Jiahai collected indicates that the Director of the Arts Bureau, Li Gang, was added to the approval document.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, there were eleven people on the approved list. Nine were sculptors and two were landscape gardeners. In addition, the USAC subsidiary of the USPG had 23 members. The list included nineteen sculpture artists, two architects and two landscape gardeners. Hence, such a personnel arrangement of USPG indicated that the government and administrators of USPG realised urban sculptures were not just independent objects but also had a relationship with their surrounding environment on a small urban scale. However, the personnel list also suggests that the construction of urban sculptures did not merge into the overall urban plan.

### **Turning Point – The Third National Urban Sculpture Work Conference in 1993**

From 1982 to 1992, urban sculptures underwent a large development. WU Liangyong defined this period as the beginning of urban sculptures.<sup>11</sup> Also, SHAO Jin suggested that these ten years of development were the stepstone of the golden age of urban sculpture development from the early 1990s to 2000.<sup>12</sup> USPG had a significant contribution to these achievements. On 21 October 1985, USPG held the second National Urban Sculpture Planning Conference. Kaiqu further stressed the significance of the influence of the surrounding environment on urban sculptures.<sup>13</sup> HE Jingzhi, a member of USPG, suggested the primary themes of urban sculptures should be revolutionary thought, patriotism, collectivism, socialism and communism, as well as having country-specific characteristics. Plus, they should have national characteristics. Many members echoed his suggestion, too.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, the USPG enacted an urban sculpture regulation in 1986, *Regulation on the Current Urban Sculpture Construction of Several Issues*. It was formulated based on Soviet memorial management regulations due to the similar political environment and ideology.<sup>15</sup> This regulation primarily concerned the creators of urban sculptures and

ensorship. The creators were required to have a Certification of Urban Sculpture Creation Qualification. Next, the local government should censor all sculptures in public spaces and report them to USPG. A memorial statue's construction is supposed to be approved by both the local government and USPG. Interestingly, this regulation stressed the inclusiveness of urban sculpture themes. This was the opposite of the ideology Jingzhi proposed at the second National Urban Sculpture Planning Conference in 1985. Moreover, the establishment of USPG encouraged local governments to establish regional USPG. From 1982 to 1988, 22 local governments set up urban sculpture planning groups to coordinate the work of the USPG.<sup>16</sup> Notably, the Beijing government enacted the *Interim Rules of Urban Sculptures Construction and Management*. It is the first formal document about the management of urban sculptures in Chinese history.<sup>17</sup> Also, it was the only local government that enacted regulations for urban sculptures from 1982 to 1992.

In fact, historical facts presented many challenges in the development of urban sculptures. Between fine art and urban sculpture, there was a struggle. At that time, contemporary sculptors did not pay attention to urban sculpture because they thought it was just a display of governmental awareness instead of free artistic expression.<sup>18</sup> In 1987, Mu MU complained about the fairness of the first National Sculpture Awards judging panel in a paper called *Judge or Assign Prizes*.<sup>19</sup> Many members of the judging panel were from the USPG, including LIU Kaiqu, LI ZhenXiang, PAN He, TIAN Jingduo, etc. Moreover, Mu Mu pointed out that the panellists had similar interests and preferences in work selection, violating the government's policy – The Hundred Flowers Campaign (CCP encouraged citizens to express their opinions openly). Subsequently, the USPG immediately initiated a lawsuit to fight back. After two years, the USPG published a paper explaining the judging process and the doubts.<sup>20</sup> As Jane Zheng suggested, the essence of the urban sculptures award was in accordance with the Chinese government's dominant ideology.<sup>21</sup> Although it is difficult to investigate the truth in the sculpture award, we can see that converting arts to political arts was full of challenges.

In 1993, urban sculpture development reached a turning point. On 27 May, the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Construction and CAA held the Third Urban Sculpture Work Conference. The conference confirmed the achievements USPG made from 1982 to 1992; the report states that USPG proposed 60% of the urban sculptures constructed in the last ten years. Many local governments dismissed local USPGs or maintained them

without real authority.<sup>22</sup> Plus, few cities enacted and implemented regulations and plans in relation to urban sculptures. As stated above, it confirms the difficulties the USPG encountered in the 1980s. At the Third Urban Sculptures Conference, the USPG announced modifications to its administration and the policy of urban sculpture management and planning. Also, the government changed the name of USPG to Urban Sculpture Construction Steering Committee (USCSC).

At the conference, USCSC enacted detailed regulations on urban sculptures based on the *City Planning Law of the People's Republic of China (1989)* and *Regulation on the Current Urban Sculpture Construction of Several Issues (1986)*. On 14 September 1993, after censorship by the Ministry of Construction and Ministry of Culture, USCSC issued *Regulations for the Administration of Urban Sculptures*. The regulation redefined urban sculpture: within the urban planning area, outdoor sculptures were built on roads, squares, green spaces, residential areas, scenic spots, public buildings and other activity sites.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the revised definition still generated controversy. Scholars criticised it since it excludes sculptures from indoor public spaces, like airports and libraries. Additionally, sculptures cannot include all artworks in public spaces.<sup>24</sup> In addition, the regulation pointed out that urban sculpture planning was supposed to be incorporated into the city's overall and detailed planning to ensure the plan's implementation. Kaiqu Liu, the director, stressed that urban sculpture planning should coordinate with the development and needs of different eras. The regulation also urged local urban planning departments to formulate overall and detailed urban sculpture planning schemes.<sup>25</sup> These changes demonstrated that the government and scholars further recognised the relationship between urban sculpture and urban planning both on a small and large scale.

Moreover, the USCSC's attitude to urban sculpture's theme became more inclusive. Furthermore, the regulation stressed the importance of the Hundred Flowers Campaign's policy in the development of urban sculpture and allowed sculptors the freedom to express themselves in their sculpture. Thus, in the regulation, the government simplified the examining process. It retained the mechanism for reviewing the works of urban sculptures' creators: there was no need to report general sculpture projects to the USCSC but to local departments, such as decorative art or folk sculptures. However, the control of the urban sculpture theme and location became more strict, particularly that of memorials. The projects must be reported to the superior department if sculptures are at critical locations, with important themes or important

political and historical figures. In contrast to the old regulations, the new ones centred not only on famous historical and political figures but also on the sculpture's variety and location.

In addition, the leadership of the three departments and personnel of the USCSC were changed. Firstly, the USPG changed its name to the USCSC. It indicates that its duty and responsibility for urban sculpture have become clearer. The new name emphasises its role in urban sculpture planning, construction and management. Secondly, the AAC was no longer the primary administrative department of the USCSC. Although the government agreed that the three departments managed the USCSC together, the ACC did not have practical authority. The official document demonstrated that the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Culture were the competent departments, the ACC provided advice on the detailed work, and the Urban Sculpture Art Committee was retained to serve as an adversary agent (USAC). The government adjusted the personnel of the USCSC, too. Kaiqu was still the director of USCSC; plus, the new organisation kept these people's positions from the previous one, including LI GANG (Ministry of Culture), WANG Keqing (sculptor), CHENG Yunxian (sculptor), LIU Guohua (sculptor) and CAO Chunsheng (sculptor). Moreover, three new members were added to the list: ZOU Shimeng (Department of Urban Planning), WANG Jinghui (Department of Urban Planning) and Cao Chunsheng (sculptor).<sup>26</sup> The director of USCSC was LIU Kaiqu, and most members of the USCSC were sculptors. However, two urbanists were added to the USCSC. The change in the USPG's administrative functions and personnel indicated that government and administrators valued constructing urban sculptures through an urban planning system.

### **Breakthrough – The New Urban Sculpture Construction Steering Committee in 2003**

In the period 1990-2000, China experienced rapid urbanisation and the government adhered to the policy of controlling urban development through a comprehensive and detailed urban plan.<sup>27</sup> As a result of the government's promotion, urban sculptures in public spaces have dramatically increased. In these ten years, more than 2,000 urban sculptures were erected in Chinese cities, with different themes and forms.<sup>28</sup> Some cities enacted regulations, an overall plan and a detailed plan for urban sculptures. According to the literature review and archive data, the *Urban Sculptures Plan of Tongling, Anhui* was the first sector plan of the urban sculpture plan in China in 1993.<sup>29</sup> Another example is the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Urban Sculpture Management Regulations and

Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Urban Sculpture Master Plan in 1998 (Figure 1). The plan presented that the layout of urban sculptures relies on the arrangement of urban landscape corridors. Moreover, it distinguished the placement of memorial sculptures from decorative sculptures.

Did urban sculpture step into the urban planning field after the Third Urban Sculpture Work Conference? The facts indicate that the answer is no. Certainly, the new USCSC optimised the regulations on urban sculptures; in addition, USCSC's management and responsibilities became clearer. However, a few local governments have enacted regulations for urban sculptures and urban sculpture plans. Several scholars collected urban sculpture regulations and plan from 34 cities between 1988 and 2017.<sup>30</sup> The record demonstrates that only five cities announced management regulations and formulated an urban sculpture plan before 2003. By contrast, 29 cities initiated urban sculpture planning after 2003. These five cities have either thriving economies, such as Shanghai and Shenzhen, or they have significant ties to the USCSC, such as Changchun and Tongling. Changchun held the *National Urban Sculpture Festival* from 1996 to 2002, endorsed by USCSC.<sup>31</sup> The urban sculpture plan of Tongling, Anhui, was the pilot project proposed by the USCSC around 1993. The director of USCSC, LIU Kaiqu, is from Anhui. Thus, all these records indicate that urban sculpture management and planning did not make enormous progress before 2003.



**Figure 1.** Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Urban Sculptures Mater Plan (Drawing by Jie Zhu, following archive documents from Shenzhen Planning Bureau).

The USCSC's report also suggests the difficulties of urban sculpture management and planning between 1992 and 2003. It shows that only ten local USCSCs still operated in 2003.<sup>32</sup> Plus, it points out the reason. Firstly, LIU Kaiqu passed away in 1994. Although the central government assigned a new director of USCSC, WANG Keqing (sculptor), and a new director of USAC (Urban Sculpture Art Committee), Wang Chaowen (sculptor), the USAC could not operate efficiently due to managerial and functional confusion. In addition, the USCSC's administrative departments did not cooperate very well in deciding on the construction and management of urban sculptures. As a result, the USCSC had almost no practical control over its operations. The sculptor, as well as the member of USAC, CAO Chunsheng, had a similar comment at the eighth China Sculpture Forum in 2002.<sup>33</sup>

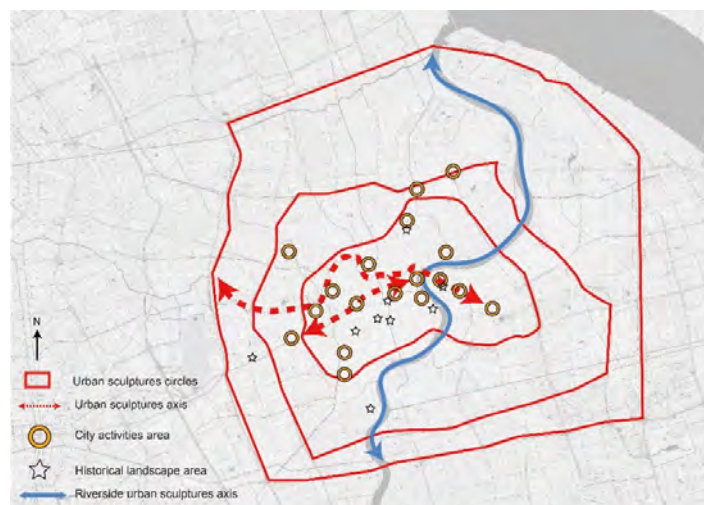
Accordingly, in 2003, the central government reconstituted the USCSC, and assigned the Ministry of Construction to manage USCSC completely, belonging to the Department of Urban Planning. This decision ended the USCSC being led by multiple departments. Subsequently, the composition of the membership has also significantly changed. Twelve people were on the member list; only two were sculptors, CAO Chunsheng and ZENG Chenggang. Of the ten people, two were from the Ministry of Culture, and the other eight were from the Ministry of Construction and the Department of Urban Planning. Plus, these two sculptors were just members of USCSC but not directors. These changes in ownership of the USCSC and personnel marked that urban sculpture stepped into the Chinese urban planning system.

The work report of USCSC stressed the importance of re-establishing USCSC again.<sup>34</sup> The Shanghai government replied positively to USCSC and formulated the *Shanghai Urban Sculpture Master Plan (2004-2020)*. The plan proposed the layout plan of urban sculptures, "one vertical, two horizontals, and three rings." (Figure 2) Moreover, the report still stressed that urban sculptures' planning and development depended on various departments and professions, although the USCSC has embraced this view since its establishment. In addition, it revealed that many cities were participating in urban sculpture competitions and only chasing the "biggest on a sculpture's scale." The work report also stated that reworking urban sculpture management was crucial. In 2006, USCSC revised the old regulations released by the Ministry of Construction.<sup>35</sup>

Compared to the version issued in 1993, it repeatedly emphasises the meaning of constructing urban sculptures and the inclusiveness of the sculpture's theme; the local



government need to formulate management measures and an overall and detailed plan for urban sculptures. It also highlights the strict censorship of the sculpture project with a big scale, important theme and vital location. Additionally, it noted that the construction of urban sculptures should involve public participation, and should adhere to the urban sculpture plan. Other departments are supposed to coordinate with the Department of Urban Planning to execute the plan. According to the above discourse, urban sculptures are fully integrated into the urban planning system.



**Figure 2.** The layout of urban sculptures in the centre of Shanghai (Drawing by Jie Zhu, following archive data provided by the Shanghai Planning Bureau).

### **Why Take So Long to Integrate Sculptures into Urban Sculptures Planning?**

This history of USCSC shows that it took 22 years to integrate urban sculptures into the urban planning system completely. This process can be divided into three stages: origin (1982-1992), transition (1993-2002) and breakthrough (2003). The first stage was the beginning of the government and sculptors realising the importance and value of urban sculptures.<sup>36</sup> From 1982 to 1992, the Chinese government and USPG were dedicated to publicising and promoting urban sculpture development. Chinese urban sculptures' development reached a turning point in 1993, marking urban sculptures getting into the urban planning system. The government reassigned USCSC functions and administrative departments, laying the foundations for the rapid development of urban sculptures in the 1990s. The year 2003 was critical for urban sculpture development. The ownership and leadership of USCSC shifted to the Department of Urban Planning, ensuring that the urban sculptures were incorporated into the urban planning system.

Urban sculptures in public spaces have become popular in various forms and themes.<sup>37</sup> There is no doubt that the Chinese government and USCSC have achieved substantial success in urban sculptures. Nevertheless, many issues and challenges of urban sculpture development are revealed by reviewing the historical changes of USCSC and related policies. First and foremost, the multi-departmental management of the USCSC slowed the development of urban sculptures. Too much time was wasted clarifying the responsibility of each department. Although in 1993, the government diminished the power of the Chinese Art Association in USCSC, this adjustment did work well. The USCSC did not have practice authority and pointed out inadequate cooperation in urban sculpture construction between sculptors, architects, urban planners and leaders.<sup>38</sup> Collaborative management of multiple departments in running USCSC led to no department paying much attention to it. Rather, as ownership and leadership of USCSC passed from the CAA to the Department of Urban Planning after 2003, a large number of cities reorganised their local USCSC and formulated detailed plans for urban sculptures. CHEN Xiaoli, the Chief Planner of the Ministry of Construction, pointed out in 2003 that urban planning should dominate the construction of urban sculptures. Probably, if the government had taken the advice of WANG RengChong to set up only one competent department of USPG, the development of urban sculpture planning in China would have been a different story.

In addition, the definition of urban sculpture planning is obscured, negatively affecting the development of urban sculptures. Initially, urban sculptures were understood by USCSC as all sculptures sited outdoors; however, USCSC adopted the term urban sculpture in the first document due to the political and social background.<sup>39</sup> It has been argued by many scholars that the term urban sculpture is inaccurate because it excludes sculptures located in scenic spots, villages and public buildings. This makes it difficult for the local USPG to manage and implement practical plans.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the view of “urban sculpture planning” keeps changing, slowing the transition from urban sculptures to urban sculpture planning. Before 2000, decision-makers and scholars did not take much concern about incorporating urban sculptures into the urban planning system. They focused on the relationship between the sculpture and its surrounding environment on a small urban scale. LIU Kaiqu, the director of USPG, pointed out the dominant role of sculptures instead of the Department of Urban Planning in 1982. Plus, Linagyong, an urban planner and a member of USAC, barely stressed the environment around the sculptures in 2000.<sup>41</sup>

In every urban sculpture conference and regulation, the efficiency of implementing an urban sculpture plan is repeatedly stressed. As Zheng noted, it was challenging to incorporate urban sculptures into the urban planning system.<sup>42</sup> Sculptures are objects on a small scale; however, the overall sculpture planning focuses on a much broader scale. The massive span of the planning scale makes urban sculpture planning difficult. Plus, scholars have suggested that urban sculpture construction relates to their surroundings and culture.<sup>43</sup> It is difficult to ensure the rationality of the plan, despite the government's claim that it would use both an overall and detailed urban sculpture plan to assure its implementation. As the physical environment and social culture are always changing, it is difficult to ensure that the plan is effective. Plus, unlike most buildings, urban sculptures can be permanent and temporary, raising the difficulty of planning urban sculptures. Consequently, many uncertain elements make the implementation of urban sculpture planning challenging.

In light of the above issues, I found it necessary to investigate the essence of integrating urban sculpture into the urban planning process. It is the collision between fine arts and dictatorship, as well as the struggle between freedom and constraint. Zheng commented that urban sculpture planning is a cultural policy to manage social ideology.<sup>44</sup> Based on the changes in the ownership and leadership of USCS as well as the regulations, this research confirmed Zheng's comments. As the USCS evolved, the Department of Urban Planning's rights became stronger from assistant to dominant, indicating that the government expected to use planning to govern public arts. The change in the attitude of government and sculptors toward urban sculptures embodies the government's few concessions in managing public arts. The Chinese government aims to balance the conflict between free artist expression and the control of collective ideology. Initially, the government emphasised that urban sculptures' themes should be patriotism and communism based. Many sculptors regarded it as a political tool instead of free art. The revised policy indicated that the government became more inclusive of forms and themes in the later development of urban sculptures, even though it remained strict for those sculptures with considerable potential effects, such as memorials at significant locations in the city. This change motivated many sculptors to engage in the development of urban sculptures.

## **Conclusion**

Through analysing the changes in the USPG as well as related policies and regulations, this research found that urban sculpture planning in China had three critical moments:

1982 (origin), 1992 (turning point) and 2003 (breakthrough). In addition, this paper combines significant events between each critical moment to explain these changes' effects. Based on the current data and analysis, the paper revealed that the vague ownership, responsibility and leadership of the USPG, unclear definition of urban sculpture planning and a large number of uncertain elements of urban sculpture planning are the primary factors slowing down the development of urban sculpture planning in China. In the end, the transformation from urban sculpture to urban sculpture planning is an enormous shift on the spatial scale; also, the transition manifests a tension between the ideology of authoritarianism and the free expression of artistic thought and collective consciousness. Due to insufficient historical data, this research cannot explore the challenges of developing urban sculpture planning systems in China from every perspective. It is expected that further research will investigate the development of urban sculpture planning after 2003.

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## Abstracts for Oral Paper Presentations

### **A Moderate's Megastructure: Edward Larrabee Barnes and the Planning of SUNY Purchase, New York, 1967-1971**

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In the 1960s United States, university campuses were seen as testbeds for urban spatial and social relations, and their master plans were therefore a prime opportunity for their designers, usually architects, to realise urbanist visions. Initiatives from this period remain staggering in their scale and architectural ambition. The State University of New York system undertook a massive expansion on more than 50 campuses across the state during the tenure of Governor Nelson Rockefeller. The most ambitious of its new campuses was its flagship arts college at Purchase, about 25 miles north of Manhattan, master planned by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes. Mimicking Thomas Jefferson's famous design for the University of Virginia, the master plan symmetrically arrayed buildings for different disciplines around a massive paved plaza. Along the plaza's centreline, Barnes himself designed an interconnected complex for students' everyday needs. Flanking this was a concrete-framed arcade onto which buildings by other leading architects abutted. Barnes' plan challenged these architects with prescriptive requirements intended to engender a cohesive and consistent atmosphere, including the dictate that all buildings be clad in the same grey-brown brick, and that all openings be framed in dark grey glass and metal trim. These prescriptions were a negative image of "architecture" as understood in this particular place and time: a stable regulatory regime within which architects could be liberated, within reason. Barnes' design was a moderate's version of a megastructure, intended to manage creative impulses – both those of other architects and of art students – rather than set them free. If the eternal problem of planning is to offer a vision for the future loose enough to adjust to the unexpected, then the vision offered here was the controlling gaze of a paranoiac. Is the master plan inevitably a tool of management, or can it be a liberatory document instead?

### **Crossing Worlds: Nancy Northcroft's Contribution to New Zealand Planning**

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Preferring to be known as Nancy, Anna Holmes Northcroft (1913-1980) fashioned New Zealand's emerging planning profession and education. Architecture was her founding discipline, and she was the fourth woman to graduate (1940) through New Zealand's first academic programme in the subject, established by Auckland University College in 1917. Winning a British Council Scholarship in 1942, she arrived in World War II London to investigate housing. She discovered shattered townscapes, impoverished post-industrial cities and new housing estates bereft of affinity and soul. Nonetheless, it was an exhilarating time as Britain commenced plans for reconstruction, with opportunities and ambition to innovate in social, economic and environmental policy. Northcroft was intrigued by new planning technologies, including survey methodologies, and stayed to work for the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction (1943-46) while completing her professional examinations to become an Associate Member of the (UK) Town Planning Institute. Returning to New Zealand in 1947, she applied this experience, initially as the Christchurch Town Planning Officer (1949-54) and then as the inaugural Regional Planning Officer of the Christchurch Regional Planning Authority (1954-62). Her career concluded in

the private sector, working in a multidisciplinary consultancy, and she became President of the then New Zealand Institute of Professional Town and Country Planners (1967-68) and the Institute's first Gold Medallist (1978). The paper draws on archival materials, especially her letters during the Second World War, and interviews, to explore Northcroft's career and legacy – complementing Freestone's work on her contemporary, architect-planner Professor Robert Kennedy. Both moved between disciplines, enticed by the possibilities of working at scale across longer horizons. Northcroft did so in an indubitably male world.

### **Choosing a Middle Shore: Environmental Contestation and the Suburbanisation of the Central Coast of New South Wales, 1946-2001**

Chris Beer  
University of Newcastle

The suburbanisation of the Central Coast of New South Wales in the second half of the twentieth century was accompanied by continuing environmental conflict and attempts to manage this through urban planning and policy. During this period the region's population increased tenfold to just under 300,000 people and saw the rise of a local identity of being both within and beyond Sydney. This paper examines the experience of this understudied region in three ways. First, it will seek to situate it in what will be argued was a wider "coastal crisis" across Australia and other countries in the last quarter of the twentieth century, which in turn can be seen as a front in the longer standing "war on sprawl." Second, within this context, focus will be given to the Gosford Wyong Structure Plan produced by the state government in the mid-1970s, which sought to enable continuing urbanisation while also controlling shorefront development and offering new relationships to automobility. Third, the region's planning and politics will be considered as a compromise within the era's prevailing liberal urbanism that embodied different forms of choice and understandings of property in accordance with an ascendent self-image of Australia during the period as a property-owning democracy.

### **The Invention of Urbanism and its Aesthetic Principles by the Société Française des Urbanistes**

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The word "*urbanisme*" was unknown to the French public and the rest of the world until the 1910s, when it was coined by the Société Française des Urbanistes (SFU), an association founded in Paris in 1911 by a group of architecture theorists and practitioners. In the interwar years, SFU, in addition to instituting the practical, legal and academic foundations of urbanism in France, engaged in a global urban reform campaign, drawing up comprehensive restructuring schemes for cities within Europe, North America and South America, the French colonial Eastern Mediterranean, North and East Africa, and Southeast Asia. I argue that SFU invented urbanism as a professional and intellectual field distinct from the sociological and infrastructural engineering we know today.

Urbanism as conceived by SFU, I contend, was not simply a process of comprehensively planning a city and incorporating technical concerns associated with sanitation, circulation and zoning. Acknowledging industrialisation's homogenising effects on society, SFU believed that urbanism needed to be rooted in philosopher Henri Bergson's theories of time and consciousness. SFU, thus, founded urbanism on principles that recognised the importance of historical influences on the site in question and the need to satisfy the psychological well-being of the residents in the spatial design process.

The Société saw *urbanisme* as a “scientific art” of territorial development which sought to reconcile the conditions of the industrial city with features that characterised the pre-industrial urban landscape, namely mysticism, nature, tradition and art. This paper considers *urbanisme*’s aesthetic principles. Examining SFU affiliate Henri Prost’s urban reform scheme for Rabat (1913), it argues that he positioned Bergsonian ideals of creative evolution alongside neoclassical techniques of spatial organisation, to create a visually organised plan where local historical urban forms were incorporated into the architecture of the present.

### **Technologies of Territory: Baker’s Australian County Atlas and the Architecture of Property**

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University of Technology Sydney

Jasper Ludewig  
University of Newcastle

This paper presents an analysis of the role played by architectural production within the colony of New South Wales’ mid-nineteenth-century system of land administration. It draws on a peculiar document, *Baker’s Australian County Atlas*, which recorded the legal status of every parcel of land in the colony between 1843 and 1846. It approaches the Atlas as a snapshot of the structure of the colony as it transitioned to an economy based on land revenue. The analysis moves across a scalar sequence from the colony as a whole to the individual parcel of land, specifying the role played by buildings and other structures – “improvements” in the legal vernacular of the day – within the governing apparatus of the state. It argues that the existing historiography of colonial Australian architecture has had very little to say about the role architectural production played in both enacting and justifying Aboriginal dispossession and state governance. In methodological terms, the paper makes the case for an expanded understanding of architecture as a mediating technology: both shaped by and shaping the forces of political economy as constrained by the law.

### **Pragmatic Utopianism: Tracking the Australian New Town Ideal from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries**

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David Nichols  
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Julian Bolleter  
University of Western Australia

Thomas Reiner’s *The Place of the Ideal Community in Urban Planning* (1963) documents a selection of schemes from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century as “general propositions” for solving “contemporary urban problems.” This paper assumes a similar challenge of tracking Australian 2D spatial representations of similar ideal projects over an even longer time period: from the 1830s to the 2010s. Over 20 schemes are illustrated and discussed, from T.J. Maslen’s “Friend of Australia” town (1830) as an instrument of colonisation to schemes for new regional cities connected by High Speed Rail (2018) as vehicles for commercially viable decentralisation. The intent is to understand an evolving urban planning agenda and both its continuities and discontinuities through



schemes capturing the *zeitgeist* of their times. These are set against broader social, political, environmental, technological and economic drivers demanding suitably responsive new urban design formulations. Major trends in physical planning aspirations are discussed along with fluctuating enthusiasm for such ideal spatial concepts and their role moving forward.

### **The Recognition of Historic Areas in Aotearoa New Zealand**

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Late twentieth-century heritage discourse acknowledges a general shift of attention from the historic monument to the scale of area, precinct, district or ensemble of buildings. It is apparent in legislation of the 1960s, notably in France and the UK, and in declarations and charters of the 1970s, and was then more explicit in 1987's Washington Charter, also known as the ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas, and the subsequent emergence of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach.

This paper explores the recognition of historic areas in Aotearoa New Zealand, where since the 1950s, heritage legislation and planning legislation have worked in parallel to identify and protect built environment heritage resources.

The paper asks: (i) what were New Zealand's first recognised historic areas; (ii) through what mechanism was each of them identified and/or protected; (iii) how has the use of the historic area category changed over time; and (iv) how effective has it been? Before exploring these questions, three mechanisms by which areas can be formally recognised for their heritage value are first explained, namely, local authority scheduling, local authority zoning, and listing (previously classifying / registering) by the national heritage agency, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (previously the New Zealand Historic Places Trust).

The paper finds that New Zealand's first historic areas were recognised by local authorities in the 1970s, some by scheduling and others by zoning, with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust classifying historic areas from 1981, shortly after the Historic Places Act 1980 gave it legislative power to do so. Use of the area category has grown since that time, with local authorities favouring it for business and residential areas, and the Historic Places Trust / Heritage New Zealand using it for an increasingly diverse range of sites.

### **In Pursuit of a Capital Ideal: Robin Boyd and Canberra**

Philip Goad  
University of Melbourne

Throughout his career, architect and critic Robin Boyd held up the image of Canberra as Australia's national capital as a necessary but unfinished project. Canberra featured regularly in his writings on Australia's cities and landscapes in books, journals and newspapers. It was often compared – sometimes unfavourably – with other national capitals. Yet Boyd was a champion of Canberra's potential and the hopes and dreams of its designers, the Griffins. He and his firm also contributed to the city's post-World War II development. From 1951 to 1971, he designed several houses there, including for Manning Clark and Frank Fenner, professors at the new Australian National University, where Boyd designed its Zoology Building (1963-68). He was also a member of the National Capital

Planning Committee from 1968, and played a key role in the commissioning of architects for significant public buildings such as the National Gallery of Australia, and with planner Gordon Stephenson he was instrumental in shaping the so-called “Civic Design Philosophy” for major buildings within the Parliamentary Triangle. That philosophy, Boyd would also apply to the last major public building of his career, Churchill House, on Canberra’s Northbourne Avenue, one of the city’s major boulevards and the subject of mixed official opinions about its urban design. This paper examines Boyd’s undiscussed role in the public shaping of Canberra: his advocacy and his built contributions, his vision for an ideal suburbia, an ideal Australian urbanism and an ideal design language for the centrepiece of the nation.

### **The Evolution of Housing Experiments: From Architectural Excellence Showcase to Planning Policymaking Tool**

Laura Goh  
University of Sydney

Housing experiments, once the exclusive domain of architects and designers, are not only being utilised for their original purpose, to explore innovative designs in housing, but are increasingly being used as a new method of policy production by planners. The recent proliferation of government-led housing experiments are distinct from past competitions in that these projects more clearly articulate a formalised link between experimenting and planning policy reform. Government-led housing experiments have been studied for their potential to produce innovative housing outcomes, but this unique experimental approach to policy production that governments are utilising when they embark on such projects is often overlooked. This paper explores the adaptation and evolution of housing experiments from architectural excellence showcase into a planning policymaking tool. Housing policy analysis reveals increasing references and instances of experimentation in Australian housing policy, indicating that many governments are so enamoured with the promise of innovation that comes from housing experiments, they are making space to allow experimentation to disrupt their own planning systems.

The dual responsibility of housing experiments as a platform to demonstrate architectural excellence, as well provide a unique planning policy production method, is not without its challenges. Through the examination of case studies, it is revealed that difficulties in the methods and pathways of experimentation are obstructing the scalability of such programmes, hindering the potential of experimental approaches in planning policymaking but also altering the virtue of housing experiment for architects.

### **Methodologies and Anomalies: Mapping Boom Urbanism in Kalgoorlie and Boulder, 1894 to 1905**

Philip Goldswain  
University of Western Australia

This paper argues that the rapid development of mines and adjacent settlements of the goldfields of Western Australia in the late nineteenth century led to the proliferation of unusual urban conditions and processes that are distinctive to the boom town. The complex visual data that maps these unique urban mining agglomerations requires suitably novel techniques to explore and analyse this material, to order and comprehend these processes.

Focusing on a series of maps that record the growth of the townsites of Kalgoorlie and Boulder between 1894 and 1901, this paper explores the nature of the settlements’

interaction with the neighbouring goldfield. The research utilises digital graphic organisation and tracing techniques to track several different modes of urbanisation. In these processes the legislative and spatial orders of the urban lot and the industrial mining lease intersect, compete for territory and produce a range of what might be described as urban anomalies.

In discovering, describing and analysing these anomalies, the research draws a number of conclusions. Firstly, the proliferation of temporary urban conditions that flourish before being absorbed back into predictable forms suggests that boom urbanism is found as much in the “processes” of urbanisation as the final urban form. Secondly, that non-urban parameters, such as the mining lease, determine both permanent and temporary novel urban forms, revealing that there is a multifaceted relationship between land development and mining that characterises boom urbanism. Finally, these discoveries point to the necessity for novel methodologies for the organisation and analysis of visually rich, information-dense historical documents. Further, this new digital information has potential to inform additional time-based research techniques to understand the unique temporal processes of urban change.

### **The ‘Soft Edge’: Heritage, Special Character and New Planning Directives in Aotearoa Cities**

Carolyn Hill  
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Divergent visions for urban form are currently contesting the future of cities in Aotearoa. Severe pressures of population growth, inadequate housing supply and unsustainable transport systems are raising a spectrum of voices on the appropriate planning response. The heritage field is enfolded in these debates, as intensification pressures have amplified questions about the value of historic urban fabric and the planning mechanisms that sustain it. To what extent should cities’ existing areas be retained or developed, and who gets to decide?

Until recently, these ructions in the very purpose and meaning of heritage have been able to remain largely submerged in our cities. The day-to-day processes of identifying and managing historic urban form have continued on gradually evolving paths through Aotearoa’s planning legislation, from the early town planning acts to the Resource Management Act 1991. However, new national directives that seek to improve housing affordability are not only causing upheavals in urban planning; they are disrupting the systems used to manage historic urban environments. In so doing, the status quo of heritage-making is being exposed for question and critique.

This paper explores these directives, specifically the National Policy Statement on Urban Development, the Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Bill, and the proposed replacement of the Resource Management Act itself. Particularly focusing on the “soft edge” of heritage – early suburbs valorised as “special character” – the paper traces the history of heritage-making in urban Aotearoa, analysing the tension between contemporary urban planning directions and historic places conservation, and exploring the concept of “amenity” which is implicated in both. It concludes with some avenues for deeper collaboration between planning policy and heritage-making for more spatially and culturally equitable cities.

### **Te Whare Rangitupu: The Scaffolded House**

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Bill McKay  
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Te Whare Rangitupu is a space in flux. As a temporary ancestral house, it is at once new yet old. It is indigenous Māori yet propped up by the mechanics of European construction. It challenges assessment of whether it even qualifies as architecture. By creating a kō-written passage through Te Whare Rangitupu, this paper explores past and present indigenous material production, post-colonial loss and trans-colonial possibilities.

The great whareniui Tānewhirinaki was built in 1874 by Hira Te Popo and aimed to restore the mana of a people devastated by the sacking and subsequent confiscation of their lands during the East Coast War. The carvings of Tānewhirinaki are today older than the adjoining forests from which they were hewn – torched as part of the colonist’s scorched earth policy. They have spent decades in a tin shed. Te Whare Rangitupu was created for a three-day wānanga of Ngāti Ira o Waioweka and saw the gathering of these taonga in a structure of scaffolding with a fabric raincoat; in European terms, a tent for gathering. It may appear a temporary structure, but it was a significant manifestation, important in time, place and meaning, if not architectural carapace. The temporary suspension of the whakairo in the scaffolded structure was especially poignant – just two living members of this hapū have ever seen these taonga standing together.

Te Whare Rangitupu not only provided a potent backdrop for the wānanga but facilitated LiDAR scanning and drone photogrammetry, technical work that will propel the reconstruction of Tānewhirinaki. To do so will restore the mana of the hapū. The project also raises questions about the nature of architecture through consideration of community values, concerns and methodology. As a more ephemeral architectural structure than most, it inverts Western notions of monumental architecture and heritage, prompting questions about cultural notions of temporality, materiality and significance. This paper considers these issues against a wider background of “temporary” Māori structures such as hākari, and the fluidity of Māori architecture in time, space, memory and meaning.

### **Watershed or Whimper? The Australian Year of the Built Environment 2004**

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Olivia Daw  
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The 2004 Year of the Built Environment was an Australian Government initiative that aimed to raise awareness and propel positive change in built environment design for the benefit of the whole of the community. Instigated after successful lobbying by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, it provided an opportunity for architectural leadership and engagement with built environment governance at a time when the sustainability agenda was gaining popular momentum. An array of national and state initiatives championed a range of themes from construction innovation to architectural heritage to the future of housing, with a focus on highlighting exemplars and supporting built demonstration projects. Patron-in-chief Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery described it as a “watershed year” that had the potential to influence the quality of the built environment for years to come. In contrast,

the Urban Design Forum described the initiative as “a whimper” disguising a lack of ongoing budget commitment and disinterest in national leadership on built environment issues across the political spectrum. In the ongoing absence of a national built environment policy agenda in Australia, and as a coordinated approach to climate adaptation in which built environment design has become more than urgent, what was the legacy of this somewhat forgotten Year of the Built Environment? This paper explores this question, analysing how the year exposed the need for new forms of engagement with government that aligned with changing modes of public administration. It reflects on how the year was a catalyst for the establishment of new State Government Architect positions, and influenced how the architecture profession’s involvement in built environment governance has developed since.

### **Beyond Discipline: A Nonlinear Urban Occasioning**

Hannah Hopewell  
Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington

In 2002 the experimental urban-scaled project “Artweb: A Nonlinear Model For Urban Development” was initiated in Auckland by landscape architect Dr Rod Barnett. Coinciding with “Creative City” ambitions, the material aim of the local authority funded research project was to realise a series of networked sites across Auckland and Manukau, connected by walking and cycling pathways throughout, in which art and landscape architectural interventions were to be distributed. Yet beneath this prosaic description, the project intended to jostle with the way natural events and processes were enlisted by urban planning’s typological visual constructs, whilst demonstrating what had at that time been a solely theoretical confluence of urbanism and nonlinear dynamics. Drawing on the generative self-organising qualities of open systems, alongside landscape architectural concerns and techniques, the project experimented with mobilising nonlinearity within both formal and relational urban transformation processes. With this novel approach, Artweb posed numerous fronts of resistance without derision to the tools and recognisable conventions constituting urban organisation itself. In alignment with its subject matter, the labour that gives rise to this paper is mobilised experimentally as a dynamic open-system. Thus the “flattened” method “thinks-with” open systems to proceed generatively rather than representationally: by permitting my own entanglement in Artweb’s ecosystem; by accepting self-organisation or emergence in a form not held to account by scholarship type; and by destabilising any hierarchy of sources, instead maintaining complexity of overlapping relationships through the hosting of various coexisting components and conditions that might or might not, on the surface of things, appear connected. In contrast to sequential narrative exposition, the paper unfolds without beginning or end, by way of textual fragment, to trace Artweb’s intersecting contexts and approach. As a feedback loop, the significance of Barnett’s timely research practice among the nascent genealogy of Aotearoa New Zealand’s urbanism is conveyed, in a nonlinear way.

### **The Mannerist City**

Andrew Leach  
University of Sydney

The tools used up to the middle of the twentieth century to understand processes of change and significance in the history of architecture relied heavily and explicitly on the traditions of *Kunstwissenschaft*. Architecture, together with sculpture and painting, offered evidence of values, mentality and of digressions and crises of various stripes to the broader study of culture. What could be seen in painting had its corollary in architecture, or sculpture. The reconciliation of the realities of architectural practice with the teaching and documentation of

its history was integral to the emerging idea of an architectural history. In the mid-twentieth century, it was driven by claims that the teaching of architectural design and architectural history as matters of composition had failed to prepare architects for the realities of practice in urban settings. This was manifest in many places in various ways, but took on an emblematic character in Italy, where pedagogy, politics, practice and polemics assumed a distinct cast, and influence. This paper explores one manifestation of this in the reconsideration of the architectural history of Europe's long sixteenth century, with specific consideration of Manfredo Tafuri's *L'architettura del Manierismo* (1966). His work locates architecture, the paper shows, in a cultural situation that was not determined solely by the history of art as it had been practised across the first half of the century, and asserted the city much more vigorously as the principle referent for the production of architecture. The failure of his broad claims on mannerism to win over his contemporaries, the paper argues, does not detract from the manoeuvres he makes to locate (part of) the history of architecture beyond the domain of the history of art.

### **What's in a Place Name? Researching "Moreland" and the Legacies of Slavery**

James Lesh  
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In late 2021, a new Greens Mayor was elected to the City of Moreland, a municipal government area in the inner north of Melbourne, Australia, approaching 200,000 residents. His first major announcement was his intention to re-name the municipality, because of historical links between the name "Moreland" and Caribbean slavery, following conversations with progressive residents and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. In 1839, during the early colonial period, property speculator and physician Farquhar McCrae acquired property in the area in the first Crown land sales and called it "Moreland" after his grandfather's late eighteenth-century Jamaican slave plantation. This fact entered the public record a century ago, before re-emerging in the public consciousness in 2021. Drawing on my role as the project historian engaged by the City of Moreland, the paper critically reflects on the measures and actions undertaken by the municipality. The emphasis of the paper is on examining place linked to slavery in urban contexts, using Melbourne and Moreland for its case study. It traces tensions related to how places take on association, value and meaning. Place names in settler-colonial urban Australasia are increasingly subject to academic and community interrogation. Along with presenting the findings of the Moreland project, the value in the paper thus lies in providing a reflection of engaging with contemporary historical and political debates.

### **Against Formalism: Encounters between Planners and Architects at ILAUD, 1976-1981**

Hamish Lonergan  
ETH Zürich

For several productive years from 1976 to 1981, the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD) engaged with the issue of participation in architecture and planning in the city of Urbino. Each year, these summer workshops – founded by Giancarlo De Carlo in 1976 – brought together students, educators and prominent practitioners from across the fields of architecture, urban planning, architectural history and art to discuss and experiment on the issue of how designers should engage with users of the built environment. In this sense, the workshop's participants were explicitly united against the aestheticising, and object-centric trends of the period which De Carlo derided as formalism, and later as postmodernism and eclecticism. At the same time, despite this broad consensus, ILAUD's public outputs – the student work and lecture transcripts collated in the Annual Reports –

seem to betray a set of disagreements between participants from various European and North-American schools and between planners and architects. On one side, a group of schools who argued that participation involved an analysis of the built fabric and cultural heritage of a city and its architecture; on the other, those who believed that participation required the direct involvement of future users. Yet, rather than accepting these as fundamental differences in attitude, this paper uses such apparent contradictions to argue that these various approaches were united in articulating a new, broader and more equitable relationship between users, clients and designers, on the cusp of postmodernity.

### **Churchill's Cigar: Marketing a Regional Workers' Town in 1960s Victoria**

David Nichols  
University of Melbourne

160 kilometres south-east of Melbourne, a town of 4,500 people is assembled around a large abstract monument commonly assumed to represent the famous cigar of an infamous British prime minister. The curved street pattern, underpasses, extensive parkland and university campus all indicate that this is no ordinary country town.

The creation of this new town, to the design of architect Best Overend, in Victoria's Latrobe Valley, is yet another example on the long list of new cities which were essentially hindered in the early throes of their development – in this case, by the discovery of natural gas. Intended to house workers at the nearby Hazelwood plant, the town was promoted with a particular flair to attract home-owning, largely (or at very least aspirationally) middle-class blue- and white-collar workers and their families.

Whereas the State Electricity Commission had sponsored Churchill's predecessor, Yallourn, and the state government was looking to private enterprise to establish (nominally) satellite cities around Melbourne, it was the Housing Commission (HCV) which was entrusted with Churchill. It was a major departure for an institution which was more commonly expected to create uniform rental housing for the low-waged, often rehoused from slum clearance projects. In this case, literature from the period boasted, "Mr and Mrs Citizen" and "Mr Industrialist" would both admire and talk about the new town "in glowing terms."

This paper examines the light that the HCV's marketing of Churchill casts on the expectations and values of 1960s Australia. Its aesthetic and the rhetoric surrounding its creation are analysed in the context of similar Australasian projects of the era such as Elizabeth (SA), Sunbury (Vic), Melton (Vic) and Porirua (NZ).

### **Thirty Years of the AUHPH Conference Series**

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University of Melbourne

Christine Garnaut  
University of South Australia

In March 1993 the University of New South Wales' School of Town Planning held a one-day Planning History Conference described by honoured guest attendee Gordon Cherry as "the first such gathering in the country," showing that "planning history is alive and well in Australia" and representing "the beginning of a specifically Australian brand of planning history distinctive in its concerns, its insights and its personalia." Seventy people attended –

on the day of the federal election – and 35 papers were presented over two concurrent sessions.

A second conference followed in June 1995, at the Australian National University in Canberra, when “Urban History” was added to make the “UH/PH” conference; eighteen months later, the subsequent event hosted in Melbourne by Monash was titled the Third Australian Urban History/Planning History conference. At the end of the decade (and century) the growing number of New Zealand participants made the rebranding as “Australasian” inevitable, and following the 2000 Adelaide conference, New Zealand venues were added to the host cities. If one allows for retrospective renaming, this paper appears at the 16<sup>th</sup> AUHPH conference, a remarkable achievement in itself for a series which has had only the most informal of organisational structures.

This paper is a survey of the broad trends of the AUHPH conference series, outlining a general profile of contributors and their backgrounds, affiliations and areas of interest. It countenances the interdisciplinary turn and the expansion of disciplines involved and subjects of focus, including the rise in practitioner participation. In so doing it reviews the change in the disciplines attracted, and influenced, by the AUHPH conferences; comments upon the AUHPH’s own impact on urban and planning history in Australasia; and refers to the networks and fields of enquiry forged by the conference over three decades.

### **Unlocking a Multidisciplinary Discourse on Architecture and the City: The 1996 Anybody Conference in Buenos Aires**

Cathelijne Nuijsink  
ETH Zürich

This paper focuses on the multidisciplinary Anybody Conference, which took place in Buenos Aires in 1996, and investigates the production of knowledge and engagement in architectural discourse in the “encounter” between architects, architecture theorists, urban planners, philosophers, economists, gender theorists, activists, art critics and the like. Using the concept of *histoire croisée*, this paper aims to incorporate a multiplicity of viewpoints by looking at the conference theme from different perspectives. As such, I will study not only the ideas expressed at the conference table, but also the prior knowledge brought to the conference, the crossing of disciplinary perspectives during the conference, and the effects and repercussions of the conference on the careers of participants and architectural debate at large. It is precisely in the crossing of disciplinary perspectives, I posit, where architectural ideas can change, mutate or evolve, and where a “crossed history” emerges, which opens new perspectives in the field of architecture. The 1996 Anybody Conference illustrates that, at the intersection of cultural and disciplinary perspectives, critical awareness was raised about the examination of urban problems on a mere theoretical level, confronting the Northern Hemisphere participants with the social reality of Latin American cities.

### **Domains, Totems and Sewers: Planning Histories of Discrete Aboriginal Settlements**

Timothy O’Rourke  
University of Queensland

This paper examines the chequered history of town planning in discrete Aboriginal settlements located in remote areas of Australia. From the late nineteenth century, church and colonial institutions used settlement planning to control and reshape Aboriginal people’s lives. Formulated by the missionaries and adopted by the state, the political intention behind these town plans and their morphology was remarkably consistent across the nation, with



little challenge to this conformity until the 1960s. A gradual shift from policies of protection, and then assimilation, to self-determination held promise of more participatory forms of planning, which could include the nascent Indigenous housing cooperatives of the early 1970s.

The primary focus of this paper is on this period of transition and a comparison of different approaches to re-planning remote missions and town plans for newly established Aboriginal communities. One seasoned advocate for Indigenous-led development published a pamphlet on plan types based on Aboriginal totems, which guided the layout of at least one very remote settlement. In a more typical and prosaic approach, new housing was arranged along the sewer lines, a state-sponsored engineering solution that disregarded any local preferences or social structures of mission villages. From 1972 to 1978, the Aboriginal Housing Panel (AHP) developed a more consultative and multi-disciplinary approach to planning. Across diverse locations, the AHP sought to accommodate the interconnected social and spatial patterns that were evident in Aboriginal communities planned and constructed in the shift to more sedentary forms of settlement. A comparison of these different approaches, and the long-term implications for residents, suggests that such planning histories are too significant to be ignored.

### **Innovator and Activist: Colin Ernest Philp as Architect and Planner in Tasmania 1925-1960**

Stefan Petrow  
University of Tasmania

Hobart-born Colin Ernest Philp (1906-1995) trained as an architect in Hobart and in 1925 moved to Launceston, establishing his own practice there in 1930. While influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and acknowledging “We cannot escape our heritage” (1934), Philp applied new methods to an eclectic range of projects and produced some prominent Art Deco buildings. After returning to Hobart, he began a practice first in 1936 with David Hartley Wilson and from 1946 with transplanted Melbourne architects Ray Lighton and Alan Floyd. While this paper selectively discusses examples of his innovative architectural work, partly influenced by a series of overseas visits, and his role as “one of the entrepreneurial leaders of Modernism in Tasmania,” Philp commands our attention above all for being the most outspoken architect-planner activist to insist on the application of town planning principles, especially from the 1940s in Hobart, where he was prominent on numerous professional and community bodies, advocating metropolitan planning and tackling problems caused by the motor car. While serving on the Hobart City Council as an alderman from 1956 to 1960, Philp was well placed to further his town planning agenda. This paper assesses his career as architect, planner and alderman until 1960 when he made his permanent home in Fiji.

### **Claire Wagner: Australian Planner, Writer, Editor, Feminist, Environmentalist**

Nicola Pullan  
UNSW Sydney

Robert Freestone  
UNSW Sydney

Claire Wagner (1930-2018) was an Australian journalist, author and activist working across a wide set of social and political interests with planning and design as core concerns from the 1960s to the 1990s. Although barely remembered today, she made substantial contributions

as a planning communicator and commentator at a time when planning was expanding from a focus on land use and infrastructure to encompass a broader range of social and environmental considerations. Drawing on a personal archive and secondary sources, this paper recounts Wagner's career as a journalist and planning advocate who crossed interdisciplinary boundaries to inject a strong conservationist, feminist and humanitarian perspective to Australian planning. With an educational background in English and philosophy – and a degree in planning from Sydney University – her initial incursion into the institutionalised world of planning was in writing and editing for Sydney's Cumberland County Council (a metropolitan planning agency) and subsequently the NSW State Planning Authority. After a stint in London and attending the 1972 UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, she returned to work for the Commonwealth Department of Urban and Regional Development, editing its journal *Community*. In 1976 she was invited by leading architect-planner George Clarke to edit the *Royal Australian Planning Institute Journal* and helped oversee its transformation into the *Australian Planner* in 1982. She established links with planners in Asia, becoming a councillor of the Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Housing. Long affiliated with the Australian Labor Party, Wagner drew attention to the necessity to lessen the impact of urban development on the built and natural environment, better address the needs of women and the elderly, and reduce racial injustice. Wagner's education and skills allowed her to highlight the human needs of all communities at a time of massive social and technological change.

### **Looking to Past, Learning for Future: The Legacy of the Olympics in Australia**

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University of Queensland

Onur Tumturk  
University of Melbourne

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Within the globalised world, international events are crossing countries and cities on a regular basis and leaving permanent traces. This paper examines the legacy of the Olympic Games in Australia and their transformative effects on Melbourne and Sydney during the 1950s and 1990s. Although the length of the games was not more than a fortnight, the preparation process triggered and catalysed large-scale urban developments that forever changed the face and their global reputation. The infrastructure and construction projects boosted the local and regional economies through the flow of capital, and the considerable expenditure shifted the dynamics on the ground. These transformations urged sophisticated master plans for their applications. Thus, the paper focuses on the spatial changes and significant architectural projects on both sites. It questions how these projects transformed the physicality of the built environment in a short period. There is no doubt that the reputation of Melbourne and Sydney cemented as "global cities" after the Olympics. Nonetheless, a meticulous analysis of the contextual and historical background is needed to understand this phenomenon. While the main focus is the Olympic sites, the paper also briefly discusses the housing projects that were born within or beyond the Olympic parks to accommodate the large populations and their afterlives.

At the peak of a global pandemic, Australia won its third nomination for the Olympic Games, Brisbane 2032. Despite the ambitious set of goals from the International Olympic Committee, some shocking news came within the initial stages of the decision-making process. The demolition and rebuilding of the Gabba stadium and the entire destruction of a 123-year old heritage-listed state school are among these decisions. Therefore, it is crucial to question

whether it is possible to learn from the past in order to empower the future for the outcomes of a mega event such as the Olympics in Australia.

### **Competing Visions: The Battle for Public Architecture in Wilhelm II's Berlin**

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Who owns a city? In early twentieth-century Berlin, this question emerged most conspicuously through debates on public architecture. Following the rapid extension of city-owned services, Berlin's urban image was managed largely by one individual: the architect and chief municipal building officer Ludwig Hoffmann, who from 1896 to 1914 designed and built over 300 public service buildings in the city, including schools, fire stations, street-cleaning depots, hospitals, nursing homes, baths, parks, monuments and sporting facilities. While eclectic and historicist, Hoffmann's mature architectural style put a distinctive face to what foreign admirers were labelling the "German model" of good government – a model of municipal socialism "without the socialists" in the approving words of American reformer Frederic Howe.

The building office's designs nonetheless needed to meet the ultimate approval of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who proved to be a thorn in the side of municipal self-government. Wilhelm II's power over artistic matters was very publicly exposed when he objected to Hoffmann's design for a fairy-tale themed children's fountain, leading to public ridicule over the Kaiser's anachronistic aesthetic ideals, but more importantly, to criticisms over the failure of the middle classes to effectively control the city's image. By examining public debates as well as Hoffmann's private correspondence documenting his relationship with the Kaiser, this paper explores the tensions between imperial and municipal large-scale visions of urban improvement that defined public architecture in Berlin. It argues that while the Berlin municipal building department advanced a distinct cultural policy during Hoffmann's reign, it was one that nonetheless conformed to the Kaiser's expectations for public architecture and sat comfortably within outmoded dynastic and imperial notions of urban beautification.

### **Modernism in Context: Ted McCoy's University Architecture in Dunedin**

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Ted McCoy (1925-2018), prolific modernist architect in Dunedin, has left an enduring imprint on his hometown. McCoy's career, which covers many houses, churches and public buildings alike, spanned half a century. His first commission was a university hall of residence, Aquinas Hall (1950), and his last, the refurbishment of Otago Museum (2000).

His practice McCoy & Wixon added to the city itself, in particular with its buildings at Otago University. Amongst these are three buildings from perhaps the most productive decade in McCoy's career: University College (UniCol, 1969), the Archway Theatres (1973) and the Hocken Building (1972-80), the focus of this paper.

These three buildings are closely linked in their aesthetic, with UniCol acting as the "forerunner" to the Hocken, as Ted McCoy once put it. The challenge for McCoy was how to manage the insertion of a modernist aesthetic into the fabric of nineteenth-century Dunedin.

The Hocken Building both reacted and initiated: its architecture responds to the university's masterplan of the post-war period but equally evidences a strategy to articulate and define the university precinct. The building achieves a studied balance between the strong architectural language of brutalism and an integration into the fabric of city and university. For example, the footprint of the Hocken Building references the shape and orientation of the University's earliest and significant heritage building, the clocktower of 1878 by Maxwell Bury.

While published sources on Ted McCoy and his work are not plentiful, this paper investigates the university buildings predominantly through archival material held at the Hocken Library in Dunedin. This material provides new insights into the campus planning process and the development of particularly the Hocken Building.

### **“New Towns and the Motor Vehicle”: Transport, Futuristic Technology and Urban Design in Twentieth-Century New City Projects**

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When John Tetlow and Anthony Goss wrote in 1965 that British new towns were “important as examples of urban communities where the best conditions for coping with the motor age have presented themselves,” they also arrived quickly at the grim assessment that early versions of “new towns and the motor vehicle” could “only be described as disappointing.” They detailed alternative models of housing, parking and street hierarchies intended to mitigate the impacts of rising car ownership on new town ideals favouring pedestrians. Planners and architects in mid-twentieth-century Australia sought to balance similar pressures, but with larger scales of motorisation. By the time of the Federal growth centres programme, professions looked both to design and new technologies. Monorails, guideways, on-demand and other futuristic means of automating or separating transport modes were featured (fleetingly) in plans for new settlements in later decades of the twentieth century.

This paper reflects on how and why planned new cities deployed technical solutions to “coping with the motor age” and future urban transport. It draws on examples of abandoned monorail schemes including for Australia's Berwick MetroTown and Monarto, and the UK's Monorail City. It argues the forsaken monorail – staple of world's fairs, theme parks and spoofs – became symbolic of a turn away from high modernity in planning, particularly from ensuing decades subordinating utopianism to an uneasy acceptance of private cars. Plans for monorails in new cities can be understood in terms of fundamental realignments in how planners imagine and relate to the future, and to automobility. Proposals typically grew out of the environmental, aesthetic and equity pressures of motorisation, and a belief cars could be tamed or bettered. In this, they have modern parallels with the promises and perils of emerging forms of mobility: from hyperloops, to shared, electric or automated vehicles.

## **Mapping the Incomplete City: A Half Century of Urban Change in Central Sydney**

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This paper reports on practice-based research on the processes by which cities are made, resulting in inherent “incompleteness,” counter intuitive to mainstream concepts of planning and design. The idea of “city incompleteness” is a new paradigm to understand complex social urban systems with a focus on the temporal and shifting plurality of urban space. Contributions from urban theorists such as Saskia Sassen (2017) and Paul Chatterton (2010) point towards an elusive yet persevering character to incompleteness within cities. Practice-based researchers often contextualise cities in crisis, ruin or duress, as in Hiroaki Kani’s (1997) reconstruction of urban life in the Kowloon Walled City or C. J. Lim’s (2017) axonometric reenvisioning of London. This paper builds on these perspectives, addressing a gap in the theoretical understanding of the idea of “city incompleteness” through experimental graphic processes. A detailed spatial and temporal axonometric analysis of an inner-city block in the Sydney CBD is reported. This draws from detailed local government archival records spanning 50 years of building and development approvals, historic weblogging, news websites, historic print media and other forms of cultural production that have recorded occupations and inhabitations within the study site, from singular floors to whole buildings. Themes of urban “identity” and cultural “image” underpin the graphic output in this paper. Synthesised in a series of analytical and speculative drawings, overlapping and hierarchical relations are revealed, eroding perceptions of distinct periods and discrete spatial identities. An urbanscape emerges even within a relative fixity of built fabric that is in a continual and shifting process of “merging” and “becoming” that is inherently “incomplete.”

## **Diagrams in the Field: Three Approaches to Australian Democracy in the Architectural and Urban Planning Arrangements of Entries for the 1979 New Australian Parliament House Design Competition**

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Compositional relationships are well established between Walter and Marion Griffin’s 1912 urban plan for Canberra and the winning design by Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp for Australia’s New Parliament House. As recognised by Andrew Hutson in 2011 and 2013, the civic-scale geometric planning features of the Parliamentary Triangle and Land Axis – from the Griffin Plan – influenced the competition brief, submitted entries and assessors’ deliberations for the 1979 New Australian Parliament House design competition. Yet, on reviewing the submissions for 324 of the competition entries in the National Archives of Australia, many schemes appear to reject an apparent alignment with the geometric symbolism of the Griffin Plan.

This paper surveys the lesser-known majority of competition submissions to consider other approaches to the relationship between Canberra’s urban plan and proposed parliamentary architecture, beyond the legacy of the Griffin Plan. It compares James Weirick’s 1989 criticism of Parliament’s remote location and Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter’s 1978 criticism of urban voids to evidence three conceptual approaches to the problems of the site’s isolation –

apparent in common characteristics across many entrants' unique schemes. These three approaches include rejecting references to Canberra's urban exterior with autonomous parliamentary architectural forms; internalising Canberra's urban plan in parliamentary designs replete with symbolic gestures; or reclassifying parliamentary architecture as urban interiors for gathering places of public representation. Each approach considered the principles of Australian democracy in different ways, and, when compared to criticism of Australian democracy in Weirick's 1989 essay, reveals risks and potential benefits of attempting to exemplify democratic values in architectural and urban design.

### **“I Am Only the Co-ordinator”: Collaboration in the Office of Frank Heath**

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Questions of attribution within group endeavours such as architecture and town-planning are always in question. We contend that the issue of writing minority figures into architectural and town planning history requires careful examination of attribution, contribution, collaboration and staff influence on practice orientation. Indeed, the Australian careers of the vast majority of migrant architects were in large architectural offices, governmental or otherwise.

The Office of Frank Heath Architect Town Planner carried out diverse projects in its more than 50 year practice, and is notable for the number of émigré architects who passed through its ranks. Heath (1907-1980) was the archetypal mid-century modernist architect-planner, yet this characterisation somewhat belies the variety and scope of the works his office undertook: multiple regional and zoning town planning schemes, private houses, bush nursing hospitals, a “boatel,” caravan parks, high-rise hotels, industrial buildings and estates, banks and even a canal estate on the Gold Coast.

What propelled this eclectic practice? Heath's changing theoretical inclinations; the opportunities and vicissitudes of commercial business; or his ever-changing staff? This paper investigates collaboration in the Office of Frank Heath by focusing on the “new towns” designed by Heath and his then chief assistant Viennese émigré Ernest Fooks (1906-1985). Together Heath and Fooks designed seven “new towns” on the principles of expanded elements on an older core (which notably predated the British model); numerous suburbs; and a tranche of public housing. This paper examines Heath and Fooks' collaboration and the ways in which European, specifically Russian, ideas were transmitted to emerging new towns and suburbia in 1940s Victoria. The paper attempts to unravel the agency Fooks had within Heath's office, amid the backdrop of architectural and town-planning ideology, and the commercial and political reality of the time.

## **Eucalypts of Hodogaya: Organic Cultural Diplomacy at Yokohama War Cemetery**

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Located within the existing Hodogaya Yuenchi recreation park about 7 kilometres south-west of the city centre, the 27-acre Yokohama War Cemetery is the primary site of commemoration and remembrance for the Allies of the Second World War within mainland Japan. Alongside Hiroshima Peace Park and the controversial Yasakuni Shrine in Tokyo, it serves to remind both foreign nationals and locals of the consequences of war in Asia, from 1942 to 1945. And yet beyond the official narratives, its inception, design and construction in the peripheral port city of Yokohama, rather than within Tokyo, the imperial, cultural and political heart of the Japanese nation, remains relatively unknown.

This paper develops a greater understanding of Australia's significant role in this war cemetery's creation. Under the auspices of the Australian War Graves Services and its director Lieutenant-Colonel Athol E. Brown, Australian and Japanese modernist architects, gardeners and the construction industry of both nations collaborated to create a significant setting for deceased servicemen and women. Whilst ostensibly another of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) many sites throughout the world, Australian involvement offers an alternative interpretation of how it came to be conceived.

This paper pursues the theme of "organic cultural diplomacy" in examining this important Australian contribution to our region. It explores factors leading to the considered allocation of the site and its subsequent layout design, asking why this war cemetery differs considerably from the orthodox nature of the conventional war cemeteries. It unveils the many unknown architects, landscapers, contractors and officials that put aside differences to collaborate on this war cemetery and its memorials, recording and analysing the careful detailing and construction of the memorials using local volcanic stone and cast bronze fenestrations. The lens from architectural history offers unique insights into these processes.

## **Historical and Morphological (Trans)formation of Laneways in Melbourne and Brisbane: The Encounter of Emergence with Design**

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Morphological preconditions coupled with historical and local peculiarities have determining effect on the patterns of development and change in cities. Australian city centres, mostly designed as gridiron structures composed of large urban blocks, have experienced a unique and bottom-up transformation process in their street layout: the emergence of unplanned laneways. In this paper, historical and morphological transformation of laneway infrastructures in Melbourne and Brisbane are examined comparatively. The paper questions the peculiar reasons leading to the differences in their morphologies, planning and design processes and current spatial performances.

After the Victorian gold-rush and consequent population boom, the subdivision of spacious urban blocks and piecemeal sale of the allotments in Melbourne led to the emergence of an

extensive laneway infrastructure. Taking inspiration from Melbourne's success in recognising this emergent structure and making it an essential part of re-design and regeneration of the city during the last decades, Brisbane City Council initiated the Vibrant Laneways Program as part of a broader planning framework to develop the unused laneways.

The overall discussion in the paper is framed by two distinctive matters demonstrating the critical differences between two cities. The first, "emergence of laneway infrastructure," covers the physical and formal preconditions (such as block sizes and orientations, locations of pedestrian generators, plot subdivisions) and historical particularities leading to the emergence of laneways in different forms. The second, "recognition of laneways by design," discusses the varieties in design interventions and strategies leading to the contrasting spatial outcomes. The analysis and discussion demonstrate that replicating Melbourne's laneway strategy in Brisbane, without comprehending the morphological qualities and historical trajectories of the locality, has resulted in dispersed laneways struggling to establish a successful socio-spatial infrastructure for the city.

### **Design and the Multifunction Polis**

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The Multifunction Polis (MFP) was a new city proposed for Australia by the Japanese Minister for International Trade and Industry in 1987. Innovative in many ways – not least in its being initiated by a foreign government – states vied to be the location of this high-tech city before a brownfield site adjacent to Port Adelaide in South Australia was selected.

The Multifunction Polis project was informed by initiatives the Japanese government had established at home, notably a series of "technopolises" established from 1980. There were, however, significant differences between the Japanese and Australian authorities on the industries the MFP would support: high-tech (software, biotechnology, high-spec materials) versus "high touch" (recreation, tourism, education). In Australia, the MFP left screeds of policy propositions and documents; contemporaneous criticisms made of it focused on its social and economic shortcomings.

Although urban design was a key criterion in choosing between MFP proposals by the Australian states, there was almost no comment on this. Nevertheless, a design by the Sydney architectural practice of Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs was central to the successful South Australian proposal. It consisted of three overlaid, disjunctive design devices: a system of grids, a series of axes and a pattern of landscape zones. These determined the location of discrete "villages" that together constituted the city. While this design ostensibly addressed environmental issues bearing on the MFP's site – possibly reflecting earlier South Australian innovations in urban planning – the EMTB design is best understood in relation to the international design culture of the period.

After government investment reputed to be \$100 million, the MFP was abandoned in 1997. The major built outcome was the new residential district of Mawson Lakes, which, while it had advanced environmental credentials, is a suburban development far more conventional than the "technopolis" first envisaged.



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