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Béton Prefabriqu : Translating Materials 'as Found' in Pre-Cast

Translated into the Australian context, the term 'Brutalism' was eventually reduced to any use of exposed concrete - in itself suggesting the significance of materiality within the Australian Brutalist paradigm. The pioneering English movement New Brutalism advocated for the valuation of materials 'as found' in architecture. This propensity was originally observed by Reyner Banham and was, despite their differences, corroborated by Alison and Peter Smithson who retrospectively stated that "we were concerned with the seeing of materials for what they were: the woodness [sic] of wood; the sandiness of sand." For Banham, in *New Brutalism* "... every element is truly what it appears to be." This matter-of-fact approach echoed a wider shift post-war toward the expression of materials, which to a large extent was concerned with the question of surface and, in the case of New Brutalism, the presentation of materials 'as fact'. Using Ken Woolley's *Town Hall House* (1977) in Sydney as a case study, this paper examines how this so-called ethic was translated in the building's use of pre-cast concrete; arguing that the matter-of-fact attitude, promoted by the 'as found' and New Brutalism, is still evident in works which seemingly escape the brut aesthetic straightjacket, i.e. works that are built from materials other than those commonly associated with Brutalism (brick and off-form concrete). Further, it will postulate that the use of pre-cast in the project, on the one hand, alludes to the notions of delay and displacement, which are often associated with the appropriation of foreign attitudes toward the art of building. On the other hand, it indicates a conscious engagement with the realities of industrialised production, which (contrary to others who have been quick to conclude yet another loss in translation) indeed points toward a degree of ethical alignment with New Brutalism.

The delayed translation of the New Brutalist ethos in Australia, occurring from the 1960s onwards, inevitably meant that the initial ethic had to operate in a different time and place. First developed in architecture by Reyner Banham and the Smithsons, this ethic is inextricably linked with the notion of valuing materials 'as found', which proposed that it was not a question of what material per se, but instead the way in which it was used. The first half of this paper discusses how the theoretical impact of this so-called material ethic caused the field of Brutalism to become somewhat immune to traditional historic categorizations - that heavily rely upon formal judgement and the indexing (for whatever purpose) of aesthetic qualities - thus making it possible for historians, such as Banham, to put the steel-and-glass Hunstanton School side-by-side with the b ton brut Unit  d'Habitation within the same discourse. This paper follows this line of enquiry, further exploring the implications of translating an ethic into another context far removed from its original. It will propose that the New Brutalist ethic lingered in the background of an aesthetic transformation which has caused some to conclude that a shift in material choice warranted a new style, or perhaps, a loss in translation. Using Ken Woolley's Town Hall House (THH) in Sydney (1974-77) as a case study, this paper sets out in opposition to this stance, arguing that the matter-of-fact and 'as found' attitude, promoted by New Brutalism, is still evident in works which seemingly depart from the canon - i.e. works that are built from materials other than those commonly associated with Brutalism, namely brick and concrete. Like many other Brutalisms, the use of material at THH demonstrates a high level of engagement with industrialized production techniques, irrespective of its stage of development within history. At this point it would be prudent to remember that "...Brutalism was an attempt to reinstate an 'aura' into the mute reality of industrialised production by aestheticizing [sic] the latter's abstract emotive possibilities."¹ Further, if this is the case, then THH can be discussed as Brutalist building since it successfully communicates how it came to terms with the exigencies of its own construction, making it obvious to the observer that the building is made of pre-cast concrete. The material, regardless of its name, is presented 'as fact' and technically 'as found' (at least on site). To cite Banham's view on New Brutalism, "...every element is truly what it appears to be".² The architect's key decision was not what material, but instead how to use it. But before delving into how the 'as found' was translated in pre-cast at THH, the historic context in which the concept itself developed must first be established.

Discovering materials 'as found'

A year before publishing the highly contentious article *The New Brutalism* in 1955, Banham observed a new aesthetic of materials in Alison and Peter Smithson's steel-and-glass Hunstanton School (1954). Contrary to Phillip Johnson, who criticized the building as a new form of Adolf Loos-inspired anti-architecture and a cheap imitation of Mies' Illinois Institute of Technology campus buildings

1 Harry F. Mallgrave, *Architectural Theory Volume II: An Anthology 1871-2005* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 513.

2 Reyner Banham, "School at Hunstanton, Norfolk," *Architectural Review* (September 1954): 152

(1939-58), Banham explained that at Hunstanton there was a new way of valuing materials 'as found', specifically for their surfaces as delivered to the site.³ It was a view much broader than Johnson's who restricted his critique to the use of materials in a literal sense. In contrast, Banham largely ignored which materials were actually used, instead focussing on how those materials were valued and how their rawness was expressed. From a theoretical point of view, by introducing this more inclusive attitude toward materiality,⁴ Banham expanded the scope of what could be accepted as New Brutalism, because it did not rely on the use of any particular material. This inclusive, non-hierarchical attitude promoted by Banham has roots in the Art Brut of Jean Dubuffet, who accepted materials irrespective of their supposedly ignoble reputation.⁵ Dubuffet questioned the presupposed status of materials, such as marble and exotic timbers, and with an air of cheek he asked why it was that "...man bedecked himself with necklaces of shells, and not spiders [sic] webs, with fox furs and not their guts, in the name of what I'd like to know? Mud, rubbish and dirt are man's companions all his life; shouldn't they be precious to him, and isn't one doing man a service to remind him of their beauty?"⁶ For Dubuffet, every material was as good as any other, and each had its own characteristics. His work, which is synonymous with the Art Brut anti-aesthetic, experimented with rough surfaces of mud, sand and asphalt, revealing inconsistencies and imperfections.⁷ For him and later for New Brutalism, it did not matter what material it was or how conventionally unappealing it might be. What was important was that the material be used 'as found'.⁸ This tendency became central to the progress of post-war modern architecture, especially in terms of how the rawness of materials was exposed by architects practicing under the strenuous conditions of austerity.⁹

In New Brutalism, the valuation of materials 'as found' meant that timber surfaces were left rough sawn, bricks left bare and concrete exposed, even if the result was commonly accepted as crudity or ugliness. It was matter-of-fact. Surfaces were no longer abstract, smooth and white. They were now tangible and appreciated for the qualities they had when delivered to the site, qualities that hitherto had been considered flaws. For Banham, this mentality of celebrating the surface qualities of raw

3 Banham, "School at Hunstanton, Norfolk;" see also Philip Johnson, "School at Hunstanton, Norfolk: Alison and Peter Smithson," *Architectural Review* (September 1954): 148-50.

4 As an adjective detached from the reality of the material itself.

5 Nigel Whiteley, "Banham and 'Otherness': Reyner Banham (1922-88) and His Quest for an Architecture Autre," *Architectural History* 33 (1990): 191.

6 Jean Dubuffet as quoted in Whiteley, "Banham and 'Otherness:'"

7 To his credit, Johnson mentioned the anti-aesthetic quality of Hunstanton School. Meanwhile Banham exploited this anti-aesthetic, using it as a means to stretch the discussion on New Brutalism into the realms of post-war anti-classical aesthetics. He consciously used the anti-aesthetic quality of the work to strengthen his own pet notion of *Une Architecture Autre*, which he promoted as a legitimate alternative to Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture* and the established conventions of what was hitherto known as Modern architecture.

8 Whiteley, "Banham and 'Otherness,'" 191.

9 In a conversation with the author, Woolley mentioned how buildings such as the *Unité d'Habitation* (1952) and *La Tourette* (1960) by Le Corbusier, and the Tokyo Concert Hall (1961) by Kunio Maekawa demonstrated that concrete was a material that can be left exposed. Paddington, Sydney, 12 November 2012.

materials was like that of the Dadaists, who he also appreciated for accepting their objects and materials 'as found' and was built into the Modern Movement by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.¹⁰ Significantly for the history of New Brutalism, the notion of "...valuation of Materials 'as found'"¹¹ became the final index of Banham's tripartite definition. First published in 1955 it is today arguably the most widely used reference with regard to the wider genealogy of Brutalism period. He clarified in the article, in a particularly Corbusian flavour, that "...materials 'as found' are raw materials."¹² This fascination with 'as found' materiality has been attributed to his fetish for 'otherness', and grander ambition for Une Architecture Autre. According to Nigel Whiteley, Banham linked New Brutalism to the realms of art history by introducing concepts from Art Autre and Art Brut, with the latter eventually contributing to its nomenclature. To understand why Banham did this it is worth briefly noting the circumstances in which the discussion on New Brutalism and with it the notion of materials 'as found' in architecture first emerged.

Je-m'en-foutisme

The literature on New Brutalism started within the circles of the English print media, specifically within the pages of two rival periodicals: *The Architectural Review* and *Architectural Design*.¹³ During the 1950s and -60s Banham was an active member of the former's editorial team. During this period there was an increasing sense of dissatisfaction amongst the emerging avant-garde with the rhetoric of the older generation. Nikolaus Pevsner, Herbert Read and Rudolf Wittkower, represented some of its main figures. The younger Team X generation, including Banham and the Smithsons, questioned the validity of some of the established ways of the early Modernists. For them even the French master (Le Corbusier) had turned his back on the old ways, seemingly revising his position when faced with the devastating conditions of post-war Europe. In England, they formed a separatist faction within the Institute of Contemporary Art, formally naming themselves as the Independent Group (IG). Within the context of the IG, they challenged conventions, and what remains pivotal with regard to materiality was the questioning of the old Modernist dogma 'truth to materials'.

"The belief in 'truth to materials' is part of the legacy of the aesthetico-moral tradition of the nineteenth century that continued into the present century. Its manifestation percolated through Modernist art and architecture... but where the New Brutalists parted company with the Modernists was in the end to which the means were put."¹⁴

10 Reyner Banham, "School at Hunstanton," 152.

11 Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *Architectural Review*, (December 1955): 361.

12 Banham, "The New Brutalism," 361.

13 Andrew Higgott, *Mediating Modernism: Architectural Cultures in Britain* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 86-113; see also: Nugroho Utomo, "New Journalism: on the role of the Architectural Review in the reception of New Brutalism in Australia," in *Critique 2013 Conference Proceedings*, ed. Chris Brisbin and Myra Thiessen (Adelaide: University of South Australia, 2013), 369-80.

14 Whiteley, "Banham and 'Otherness,'" 191.

In contrast to Louis Kahn, for instance, who famously claimed that a brick wants an arch, Banham would see a brick to be no different to a billiard ball - topologically speaking. Banham did not consider materials as possessing innate 'beauty', which could be unearthed by the artist or architect. This matter-of-fact attitude resulted in an architecture that presented its materials 'as fact' in their raw form, even if the result would conventionally be accepted negatively.¹⁵ As an approach, it differs from 'truth to materials' because 'beauty' had been debunked. Surely this attitude contributed to the *je-m'en-foutisme* or bloody-mindedness that Banham stressed as being essential to New Brutalism. A lack of this bloody-mindedness was in fact the reason why Banham omitted Kahn's Yale Art Gallery (1953) from the exemplars of New Brutalism. In doing so, Banham revealed his agenda to tie New Brutalism to a-formalism and anti-classical aesthetics; ultimately, distancing his discussion from the humanist rhetoric of Wittkower which was very popular at the time. It was an attempt to position New Brutalism not only within the avant-garde of post-war architectural history, but also within anti-classical aesthetics. Furthermore, it partially explains the departure from 'form' to 'surface', which was spurred by a wider shift from the 'painterly' to the 'sculptural' that occurred post-war.¹⁶ During this transitional period, materials were gradually being seen as having unique characteristics, which should not be subservient to abstract form making. For the Smithsons specifically, such characteristics improved architecture's communicability. Consequently for them the focus was shifted away from the visual to the haptic qualities of materials, because for them it more effectively communicated the reality of its construction.¹⁷ Ultimately, this led to their expression of materials 'as found'. No doubt this change in attitude was widely covered in the pages of *The Architectural Review*, which indeed had a significant readership in Australia. In fact, from the early 1950s on, Australia had an active contributor in Robin Boyd.¹⁸

Béton-prefabriqu 

Town Hall House (THH) was completed by Ancher, Mortlock and Woolley in 1977 and is an example of how the Brutalist sense of 'as found'-materiality was expanded as a result of its delayed translation into another territory. Prominent historians David Saunders and Jennifer Taylor have both separately alluded to the building's Brutalist influences, highlighting the use of exposed concrete, the exposition of service-cores, circulation, and the top-heavy composition of volumes to name a few.¹⁹ Neither, however, has firmly labelled the building as Brutalist.

15 Whitely, "Banham and 'Otherness'", 191.

16 Laurent Stalder, "New Brutalism, Topology, and Image: some remarks on the architectural debates in England around 1950," *The Journal of Architecture* 13, no. 3 (2008): 263-81; see also: Gevork Hartoonian, "Theatrical Tectonics: the mediating agent for a contesting practice," *Footprint* 4, (2009): 77-96.

17 Higgott, *Mediating Modernism*, 86-92.

18 Boyd played a central role in translating New Brutalism to the Australian public, from its mainstream introduction in *The Australian Ugliness* to its, alleged, conclusion in *The Sad End of New Brutalism*; see: Utomo, *New Journalism*, 369-80.

19 Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture Since 1960* (Canberra: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1990), 62-63; see also: David Saunders and Catherine Burke, *Ancher, Mortlock, Murray, Woolley: Sydney Architects 1946-76* (Sydney: Power Institute of Fine Arts, 1976), 53-57.



Fig 1. View from Kent Street.

This in part has been caused by a penchant amongst Australian architects to resist historic categorization.²⁰ Without labelling THH as a true example of Brutalism, it is still possible to discuss the materiality of the building within the broader context of Brutalism and the 'as found'.

In contrast to earlier Brutalist works found in Europe (New Brutalism included), THH was created in an era of relative prosperity. It was part of a stream of civic buildings and complexes that were being built in the seventies during a period of urban renewal in Sydney.²¹ What becomes critical for this argument is the building's use of pre-cast concrete, which arguably created a sense of materiality that was inspired by but different from the quality 'as found' and from *b ton brut*. In both the tower and podium of THH, the pre-cast concrete has an exposed aggregate finish. At a micro-level the surface is highly textured. The effect is achieved by sandblasting the concrete so that the underlying aggregate mixture is exposed. The stone of said aggregate mixture has a tinge of gold, which varies in intensity depending on light conditions. The colour references the sandstone of the adjacent historic buildings and can in part be interpreted as homage to a regional material widely used in Sydney. In Australia, architects practicing so-called Brutalism had a tendency to bush-hammer, sandblast or acid-etch concrete. Interestingly, they are all artificial processes that create texture and are not the result of limitations which are typically associated with 'as found' materiality, such as poor craftsmanship or monetary constraints. Furthermore, the surfaces were not used straight off the formwork. This is in fact characteristic of many delayed Brutalisms.²² Architects in Australia used surface textures for practical reasons as well, such as reducing maintenance and glare. Moreover, many Australian architects considered rough surfaces as being in harmony with the native bushland. Critically, pre-cast technologies allowed architects to efficiently predetermine the

²⁰ Brutalism was perhaps overshadowed by discussions in Australia during the 1950s and -60s that focussed on the issue of national identity, which architecturally speaking, advocated for the possibility of a local school of architecture.

²¹ Taylor, *Australian Architecture*, 62-63.

²² Comparable practices can be found abroad, for instance, the extensive use of bush-hammered concrete in Chamberlin, Powell and Bon's Barbican Estate (1965-76) in London.

qualities of technically 'as found' surfaces. As such architects in Australia developed a haptic sense of materiality comparable to that of the New Brutalists, but their underlying motives diverged as a result of its delayed translation.

Beyond micro-level texture, pre-cast concrete also allowed architects to experiment with modelled or moulded surfaces without a significant price penalty. Variation, on the other hand, was limited as it had to conform to the exigencies of pre-cast construction and its associated economy of scale. For example, at THH the extra sun-blade, which gives subtle variation to the moulded pre-cast window-box modules, is bolted-on and not set into the same mould thus reducing the number of modules required. In addition, the size of these pre-cast modules was limited by the confines of the factory and the capacity of a semi-trailer en route to the site. This type of industrialized logic, as seen in many other examples of Brutalism (if in somewhat varied forms), produced a strong and specific sense of rhythm and repetition. It has become a hallmark of pre-cast constructions from this period. Some have dubbed it the 'stacked TVs' effect.²³ Similar examples in Australia include Sirius Apartments (1978) by Tao Gofers, the University of Sydney Law School (1969) by Peter Johnson and the NRMA Building (1970) in Canberra by Stephenson and Turner. All were completed more than a decade after Banham's article on New Brutalism. It is distinct from the use of concrete or stone as panelling, such as that found at the Smithsons' Portland-stone-clad Economist Building (1964), which for Banham marked the death of New Brutalism.²⁴ Using pre-cast as panelling in a two-dimensional sense is arguably more conventional and decorative and denies the potential plasticity of concrete which is demonstrated so proudly by earlier examples of Brutalism. The use of pre-cast concrete at THH, on the other hand, is three-dimensional in profile or section. It made for repetitive elements that incorporated spandrel, awning and *brise soleil* into the one repeating module. The effect is that of an expansive textured surface, which is achieved through a dynamic composition of shadows that animate the volume.

In the end, by virtue of these relentlessly repeating modules it becomes obvious that the building is made of pre-cast concrete. Similar to the New Brutalist approach to materiality, the pre-cast concrete elements at THH are presented 'as fact'. They look like pre-cast! Moreover, on an aesthetic level, the rough texture of the exposed aggregate finish concrete continues the New Brutalist sense of 'as found'-materiality. It is a curious choice, however, when considering the smooth aesthetic possibilities associated with the industrialized production of concrete, which THH was heavily engaged with.

23 Joseph Buch, "Beyond Brutalism: Another Imported Style vs. Team Ten Theoretical Ideas," in *Progress 2003: The Proceedings of the XXth Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Australia and New Zealand, ed. Maryam Gusheh and Naomi Stead (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2003), 40.

24 Robin Boyd, "The Sad End of New Brutalism," *Architectural Review*, (July 1967): 10-11.

A Delayed Translation

In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, Australia gradually realigned its identity away from England. What ensued was, as John Maxwell Freeland puts it, the 'Americanisation' of Australian tastes and ideals.²⁵

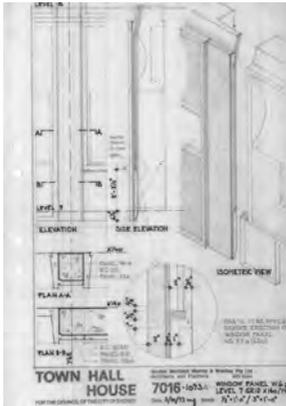


Fig 2. Pre-cast panel detail.

By the sixties, Boyd had observed and criticised the turning of Australia into what he called 'Austerica'.²⁶ This shift in identity perhaps influenced the reception of Brutalism in Australia as an architectural tendency of cosmopolitan origins.²⁷ Joseph Buch argues that despite the dismissive view adopted by many Australian architects toward the influence of Banham's New Brutalism, the translation of its ideologies in Australia was made easier by the obvious English pedigree. However, he noted that regardless of the convenience of a common tongue, modifications to the New Brutalist ethic could not be avoided, subtly alluding to the notion of delay and displacement and the reduction of a radical philosophy into a mere stylistic option. By the time the 'as found' materiality of New Brutalism was translated into Australian architecture, contrary to England and Europe, steel was relatively cheap and labour was expensive.²⁸ Hence the popular use of pre-cast concrete in examples of Brutalism in Australia. The buoyant economy pushed architects to produce a comparable amount of buildings per year as the Smithsons did their entire career. Such conditions are proof of the so-called 'time lag' associated with antipodean modernity. It speaks of the delay between occurrences abroad and their translation locally.²⁹ Amongst other things, the effect of this delay was that, unlike in Europe, architects in Australia were no longer bounded by austerity.

25 John M. Freeland, *Architecture in Australia* (Victoria: Pelican Books, 1972), 264.

26 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2010).

27 See: Brutalism: A heritage issue, *Architecture Bulletin*, March-April 2012.

28 Buch, "Beyond Brutalism," 39-40.

29 Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture*, 12.

After publishing his most comprehensive thesis on New Brutalism in 1966,³⁰ Banham made clear the distinction between 'New Brutalism' and 'Brutalism' in a short encyclopaedia entry. For him, the compound term 'New Brutalism' was a counter to labels such as 'New Empiricism'. Moreover, as polemic it was, as the Smithsons claimed, "...an ethic not an aesthetic".³¹ Just 'Brutalism', on the other hand, was simply an architectural style that was popular in the 1960s and -70s. It was derived from the post-war architecture of Le Corbusier and is synonymous with large Modernist block forms and large surfaces of exposed concrete.³² On this occasion, however, Banham omitted how both strands share a common reliance on technology. In New Brutalism, the Smithsons' experimented with 'plastic theory' at Hunstanton School to deduce the most efficient ways in which they could build in steel.³³ This close relationship between materiality and industrialised production is also evident in Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation (1952) in Marseilles, where he worked with the Assemblée des Constructeurs pour la Rénovation Architecturale (Builders' Assembly for Architectural Renovation) or ASCORAL and the Atelier de Bâisseurs (Builder's Workshop) or ABTAT to achieve a robust sense of materiality that would henceforth be known as *béton brut*.³⁴ With this in mind, it is possible to reconcile the aesthetic divergence between 'New Brutalism' and 'Brutalism' by considering how both shared a common ethic that faced up to the realities of industrialized production and mass consumption. Arguably, it is an ethic shared by the architect of THH.

The increasing viability of pre-cast technologies in the 1960s and -70s enabled architects to experiment with surfaces in a factory-controlled environment. It meant that architects could exploit the surface characteristics of concrete and paradoxically predetermine how it would be 'as found'. In Australia, this eventually led to the expansion of the materiality-driven Brutalist aesthetic, from the realms of *béton brut* to *béton-préfabriqué*, as evinced in THH. Translated into the Australian context the term 'Brutalism' in its broadest sense was over time reduced to any use of exposed concrete, with no distinction between pre-cast and in-situ nor board-formed and ply-formed.³⁵ Joseph Buch highlighted this development and criticized it as a dilution of the earlier hard-line position pursued in Europe by New Brutalism and Team X; he further suggested that ideological modifications occurred as a result of its displacement into a new territory. In outlining this however, Buch, perhaps unconsciously, underscores the significance of materiality within the Australian Brutalist paradigm. Like their forerunners in Europe, architects practicing so-called Brutalism in Australia were engaged in the, so to speak, aestheticisation of industrialized production. This close relationship between aesthetics, technology and technique, meant that the original 'as found'-materiality of Hunstanton School would inevitably expand as a result of the adoption of materials and technologies more apt for the time and place, i.e. the translated context.

30 *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* was published more than a decade after the Smithsons' first used the term.

31 Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (London: The Architectural Press, 1966), 134.

32 Reyner Banham, 'Brutalism', *Dictionary of Art* vol. 5 (London: Grove, 1996), 55-57.

33 Banham, "School at Hunstanton," 152.

34 Roberto Gargiani & Anna Rosellini. *Le Corbusier: Béton Brut and ineffable space, 1940-1965* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2011), 3.

35 Buch, "Beyond Brutalism," 39-40.

The realities of industrialized production in Australia during the 1970s made pre-cast concrete a sensible choice of material from a practical point of view. Like the Smithsons who, as a reaction to the 'Kraft cheese-like' materiality of modern buildings before them, "... turned back to wood and concrete, glass and steel, all the materials which you can really get hold of",³⁶ Woolley used a material that was readily available (at least for larger scale projects). The high quality finish can hardly be read as 'making do' and likened to the Smithsons and New Brutalism. But it can be argued that the emphasis on surface is still there, if only as an option and not an imposed constraint. To recall Banham again, what matters is how the material arrives 'as found' on-site, regardless of the quality.³⁷ Further, like the Smithsons' use of 'as found' steel and glass at Hunstanton, the matter-of-fact aesthetic of THH clearly communicates that the building is made of pre-cast concrete. In an interview with the author, Woolley mentioned that it was about being direct and understanding how "it ought to be."³⁸ This forthright approach is indeed comparable to that of the Smithsons', who asserted that their use of materials was meant to communicate the quality of 'real materials' which were used in a direct and, apparently, unaestheticised way so that it is apparent what material the building is made of and how it was put together.³⁹ Looking back at the Smithsons' ideas on the notion of materials 'as found', it is possible to grasp what they meant by "... the woodness [sic] of wood and the sandiness of sand".⁴⁰ Concrete, a synthetic material, on the other hand is far more complex. The complexity is exacerbated when pre-fabrication techniques are considered. If surface characteristics could be predetermined, it raises the obvious question, what does pre-cast look like in its 'as found' state?

If one accepts that, like in England and Europe, Brutalism in Australia relied on the aestheticisation of industrialised construction methods, both in times of austerity and prosperity, the question should then be how did this affect the original 'as found' sense of materiality? The delayed translation of Brutalism meant that the ethic - to which the Smithsons hopelessly clung - had to operate not only in a displaced geographical context but also a different period, inevitably leading to an expansion of the related aesthetic dimension. Brutalism's engagement with technology and technique, inherited from an earlier generation of modernist architects, meant that the original sense of materiality evinced at Hunstanton and Marseilles, respectively, would inevitably expand through the adoption of materials and techniques more apt for the time; hence *b ton-prefabriqu *. Like other Brutalist buildings the materiality of THH is moulded by the aestheticisation of an industrialised constructional logic, which indeed produces an aesthetic that is highly susceptible to the effects of delay and displacement. Thus the question whether in Australia Brutalism was an ethic or aesthetic, which in regards to New Brutalism itself has been exhausted elsewhere, is truly irrelevant. Since it is not one or the other but instead, to recall Boyd and,

36 Alison Smithson quoted in Higgott, *Mediating Modernism*, 92.

37 Banham, "School at Hunstanton," 152.

38 In conversation with the author, Paddington, Sydney, 12 November 2012.

39 Higgott, *Mediating Modernism*, 88.

40 Alison Smithson as quoted in *The Independent Group: Postwar Britain and the Aesthetics of Plenty*, ed. David Robbins (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 201.

more recently Anthony Vidler's position on the subject, both/and.⁴¹ The inclusivity of New Brutalism mentioned earlier further asserts this claim. Thus if New Brutalism was an ethic 'and' aesthetic, it would be fair to argue that both aspects were expanded in a positive way as a result of its delayed translation in pre-cast.

41 Boyd, "The Sad End of New Brutalism;" see also Anthony Vidler, "Another Brick in the Wall," *October* 136 (2011): 117.