

# TRANSLATION TRANSLATION

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Philip Goad, *University of Melbourne*

## The Translation of Practice: The Offices of John Andrews in Toronto (1962-74) and Palm Beach (1969-90)

In 1968, John Andrews was invited to design the Cameron offices in Belconnen, Canberra, Australia. At the time, he was heading a successful mid-sized practice in Colborne Street in downtown Toronto, which had designed large-scale institutional buildings like Scarborough College (1963) in Ontario, Canada, and the Miami Passenger Terminal (1967) and Gund Hall (1968) in the United States. The Belconnen commission became not just the impetus for Andrews to open an Australian office but also a compelling reason to move his family back to Australia, where he and his wife had been born, raised and educated. Andrews set up office at Palm Beach, 42 km north of Sydney, New South Wales. In doing so, Andrews entirely reconfigured his place of practice and to a large degree, his architectural personnel, while at the same time, retaining the Canadian office. The mode of his collaborative practice and his design philosophy purportedly would not change. But they did - and there were consequences. This paper explores the implications of the translation of an architectural practice in terms of geography, context, aesthetics, patronage and local construction practices. The non-hierarchical nature of the office environment and the relative abilities of the people he gathered around him were crucial to Andrews' dynamic mode of operating and designing. The move from a dense urban setting to a bucolic waterfront would be accompanied by different modes of professional behaviours and recruitment, exposure to demands for experiment in new building programmes, and a challenge to techniques of office delineation and communication between continents, and ultimately it would see the Canadian office close. It would be a test of translation.

The role of the physical space and the character of the architectural studio or office environment in the development and dynamics of architectural practice have received mixed attention from architectural historians. Some accounts are the stuff of legend such as the loft of Chicago's Steinway Hall. Located in the heart of a thriving metropolis and on the top floor of a skyscraper, its function not only a vital locus of practice and professional milieu from 1896 to 1908 but also as a generator of discourse for Chicago School architects was described in compelling fashion by H. Allen Brooks in 1963.<sup>1</sup> Linked but different have been analyses of Frank Lloyd Wright's move from Steinway Hall to his romantic studio retreats, whether his home-office in Oak Park, and the later east and west studios of Taliesin, one located in a landscape idyll, the other in the sublime aridity of the Arizona desert.<sup>2</sup> Other architectural office arrangements, by contrast, have been documented as conspicuous centres of business and production. Andrew Saint has described Burnham and Root's office on the top floor of the Rookery Building in Chicago, c.1888-89, complete with its library that doubled as reception and conference room and designed to impress but at the other end of the floor, a gymnasium for the office men. Saint quotes a visitor's impression: "Here for the first time we saw a large thoroughly equipped office. It impressed us like a large manufacturing plant."<sup>3</sup> As early as 1918, the Detroit office of Albert Kahn, architect for the Ford Motor Company factories, contained across a single floor, architects, draftsmen, estimators, mechanical and structural engineers. In Federico Bucci's words, "No differently than the factories, the space used for intellectual work was designed for maximum productivity."<sup>4</sup> Bucci described Kahn as "an architect capable of directing a group of collaborators."<sup>5</sup> It was Kahn in 1931, who believed that it was the end "of the individualist, the temperamental artist" and that instead there should be "the collective efforts of groups of men co-operating under proper direction."<sup>6</sup> These examples support the rather too simple binary of architecture as art or profession, which prevailed from the mid-19th century to the mid-twentieth century, and still does to a large degree today. This question of architect as artist or professional, or a complex combination of the two in varying degrees, is at the heart of a series of key professional choices. Where does an architect or a group of architects choose to locate their office and with whom? How is the practice portrayed to prospective clients and architectural colleagues? And, most significantly, for the individual or firm (whether alone or with others), how is it best to practice as

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- 1 H. Allen Brooks, "Steinway Hall, Architects and Dreams", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 22: 3 (October 1963): 171-75. Brooks wrote this article when working at the University of Toronto. The architect of the recently completed Steinway Hall (1896), Dwight Perkins, leased a large office on its top floor, in a loft above the 11th floor. From 1896, the following architects were associated with the space, practice and its social activities that made it one of the most exciting centres of architectural production in the United States: Dwight Perkins, Robert Spencer, Myron Hunt, Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin, Webster Tomlinson, Adamo Boari, Irving and Allen Pond, and Birch Long. As Brooks notes, the Steinway Hall group of architects formed the nucleus of a larger gathering of architects known as the Eighteen. See Brooks, "Steinway Hall", 171.
  - 2 Neil Levine, *The Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 75-111; 192-215; 255-97.
  - 3 Susan Beattie, *A Revolution in London Housing* (London: Architectural Press, 1980), note 110, 123, quoted in Andrew Saint, *The Image of the Architect* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 87.
  - 4 Federico Bucci, *Albert Kahn, Architect of Ford* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 129.
  - 5 Bucci, *Albert Kahn*, 126.
  - 6 Albert Kahn, "Architectural Trend" in *The Journal of the Maryland Academy of Sciences*, vol. II, 2 (April 1931): 133, quoted in Bucci, *Albert Kahn*, 126-27.

a discipline? There are no simple answers, especially for architectural practices after World War II, as the concept of collaboration and teamwork (or the appearance thereof), promoted in various spheres of education and practice, challenged conventional artistic and corporate practices in architecture.

This paper examines the transnational practice of Australian architect John Andrews who chose two different models of office environment in two different locations: Canada (1962-74) and Australia (1969-90). Both offices were phenomena specific to their time and place. Both relied on the key role played by their principal John Andrews and the structure and quality of the team that he gathered around him. Both offices were key to the nature and manner of the buildings ultimately produced by the practice. This paper is the first step in a larger project to explain the complete workings of the Andrews offices in 1960s Canada and 1970s and 1980s Australia.<sup>7</sup> As such it steps into the dangerous waters of the mythologies of architectural personalities and architectural practice. There are interviews still to be undertaken and difficult politics to be negotiated, especially since some of the key protagonists are alive while others have passed away. The paper also veers away from drawing early conclusions about the different types and common design aesthetic (or otherwise) of the work undertaken by each office.<sup>8</sup> As a first step therefore, it contains all the flaws of a preliminary study. However, at the same time, this paper underlines the importance of, at the very least, including an account of the spatial, social and professional environment of an architectural office as a necessary part of the examination of an architect's or firm's contribution to architecture culture.

## 47 Colborne Street, Toronto

In 1961, John Andrews (1933-), a young expatriate Australian architect and Harvard-educated under Josep Lluís Sert, returned to Toronto, Canada after his "escape from the Parkin office" and travelling for several months in Europe.<sup>9</sup> In 1958, on the strength of his near-winning competition entry for Toronto's City Hall, Andrews had been employed in the Toronto office of J. B. Parkin Associates, where he was also later to work on the design development and documentation of Finnish architect Viljo Revell's competition-winning City Hall. Andrews enjoyed his role as a senior designer in the Parkin office and designed there a series of buildings whose architectural themes he would later

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7 This paper forms part of the Australian Research Council Discovery Project (DP120100341) that examines the transnational architecture of John Andrews. The project team includes Paul Walker and Philip Goad (University of Melbourne), Mary Lou Lobsinger (University of Toronto), Antony Moulis (University of Queensland), Paolo Scrivano (Boston University) and Peter Scriver (University of Adelaide).

8 An exception to this is an unpublished paper that examined the work of the two John Andrews offices from the perspective of environmental design. It highlighted different design approaches according to climate and landscape. See Philip Goad and Paul Walker, "Diagrams, Design and Environment in the architecture of John Andrews", (paper presented at the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Society of Architectural Historians (U.S.A.), Austin, Texas, 9-13 April 2014).

9 Interview with John Andrews, 2 July 2012. Andrews had been encouraged to leave the Parkin office and travel by architect Viljo Revell, who also lent him the money to do so.

develop through his own practice.<sup>10</sup> But he despised the Parkin office's corporate gloss, its strict hierarchical nature, and especially its physical setting: an all-glass single-level Miesian box (1955) set within an open car park in suburban Don Mills, a "factory" of serried rows of draftsmen with the office partners secure in their air-conditioned glazed offices at each corner.<sup>11</sup> For Andrews, the Parkin office presented in the media as a collaborative workplace and an integrated practice that worked across the design, engineering and economics of building was not the reality of how the office worked.<sup>12</sup> Andrews, an outsider, also did not get on with John C. Parkin, the practice's design partner who was also Harvard-educated but under Walter Gropius.<sup>13</sup> Despite grudging admiration for the relentless technical and aesthetic consistency of the office's Miesian, classically inspired modernism, he disliked the practice's pretensions, not least because the firm's partners objected to his 1949 Plymouth which he had bought for \$25 and delighted in parking out front, partly to annoy them.<sup>14</sup>

In 1960, three staff members of the Parkin office – architect, John Andrews, landscape architect Richard (Dick) Strong, and structural engineer Norbert Seethaler – together with friend and lawyer George Miller formed a loose arrangement of built environment professionals called INTEG, which meant 'integration of the professions' – it also could stand for 'integrity'.<sup>15</sup> The aim was to be seen as a team of professionals in a hopeful (but ultimately unsuccessful) bid with other tennis-playing friends to develop, design and build a country club outside Toronto. While other ventures using the name largely came to nothing, INTEG did purchase a house on Woodland Avenue in 1960 and this was where Strong lived, and John and Ro Andrews moved to its top floor on their return from Europe in 1961. By this time Strong and Seethaler had both left the Parkin office and were working from Cumberland Street near the University of Toronto.<sup>16</sup> But Andrews now needed office space too. INTEG found an empty warehouse in what was then the partly run-down, St Lawrence neighbourhood of downtown Toronto. It was an entirely different set-up to the Parkin office and in an entirely different location.

The office at 47 Colborne Street was part of a four-storey nineteenth century red brick and stone Richardsonian Romanesque warehouse, the Milburn Building, designed by EJ Lennox and built in

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10 Buildings designed by John Andrews within the office of JB Parkin Associates included the Primrose Club, Toronto (1959); Federal Equipment Complex, Toronto (1959); Saulte Ste Marie Secondary School (1959); office tower project, Toronto (c1959); the Malton Hotel at Toronto Airport (c.1960); Malton Control Tower for Toronto Airport (1961–64); and Simpson's Department Store at the Yorkdale Shopping Centre (1961–64).

11 Interview with John Andrews, Orange, N.S.W., 12 December 2013.

12 John C. Parkin, "The Design of an Architect", *Perspective* (1956), 13–17; Keith Spicer, "Parkin's Big and Beautiful," *The Globe Magazine* (Toronto Globe and Mail) (July 5, 1969): 5–7.

13 John Cresswell Parkin (1922–88) was a Canadian architect and urban planner, trained in architecture at University of Manitoba (1944) and Harvard University's Graduate School of Design (GSD), graduating in 1947. He went into partnership with John Burnett Parkin (1911–75, no relation) in 1947. He was senior partner and partner in charge of design of John B. Parkin Associates.

14 Interview with John Andrews, Orange, N.S.W., 12 December 2013.

15 John Andrews in interview with Evan Walker, Cape Liptrap, 1 April 2003.

16 John Andrews in interview with Evan Walker, Cape Liptrap, 7 January 2003.

1889.<sup>17</sup> INTEG bought the building in 1962. George Miller arranged the finance and with a favourable return on the mortgage, Andrews designed its modest renovation (which included a new split-level front entry in reinforced concrete) and the group moved in. Miller occupied the first floor of 47 Colborne Street, Andrews had the second floor as did Seethaler, Strong bought 45 Colborne Street, and Jim Sykes, who worked for the Andrews office also made joinery and models for the office in a workshop on the top floor. The third floor, at first vacant, was leased to Vancouver architect Ron Thom, who had moved from Vancouver to Toronto to set up practice. The basement was leased as a studio to artist Gerald (Gerry) Gladstone (1929-2005). INTEG also leased space to Australian architect Evan Walker, who ran his architectural practice and university housing consultancy from Colborne Street and was to work closely in collaboration with Andrews in the development of the brief for the South Residences at the University of Guelph (1965-68).<sup>18</sup>

Within this vertical setting that included expertise in the law, architecture, engineering, landscape architecture and art, Andrews and his ex-Parkin office colleagues (Strong and Seethaler) commenced the Colborne Street era of practice. The idea of professional or disciplinary integration had been an intrinsic part of Andrews's education at Harvard under Sert who had argued in 1953 that the challenge of post-war urban design was the "carrying out of large civic complexes: the integration of city planning, architecture and landscape architecture; the building of a complete environment".<sup>19</sup> The organizational framework of INTEG was different from that of the Parkin office, which by 1960 had become the largest firm in Canada<sup>20</sup> and which had consciously modelled itself on the corporate structure of Albert Kahn's office.<sup>21</sup> It contained multiple forms of expertise within the one firm (largely as a way of becoming building type specialists and hence dominating the market)<sup>22</sup> and it had also borrowed from the teamwork ideals that underpinned Walter Gropius's The Architectural Collaborative (T.A.C.), which had been established in 1945.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, the ideals and practice framework behind INTEG was much more relaxed, indeed far less serious and instead more like a group of professional friends but importantly at the same time, willing collaborators. Each entity was to remain financially independent and be accorded distinct professional integrity but,

17 The Milburn Building at 47-55 Milburne Street is currently listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties.

18 Philip Goad, "Open field, open street, open choice: John Andrews and the South Residences, University of Guelph (1965-8)", in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 30, Open*, ed. Alexandra Brown and Andrew Leach (Gold Coast, Qld: SAHANZ, 2013), vol. 2, 639-50.

19 Josep Lluís Sert, quoted in Eric Mumford, *Defining urban design: CIAM architects and the formation of a discipline, 1937-69* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 102. Sert's 1953 talk entitled "Urban Design" was presented at the Regional Conference of the A.I.A. - Middle Atlantic District in Washington D.C. See also "Whither Cities?," *Architectural Record*, 114 (December 1953): 10.

20 Harold Kalman, *A history of Canadian architecture* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1994), 798.

21 Michael McMordie, "John B. Parkin Associates and Albert Kahn Inc.: An Industrial View of Architecture", in *John C Parkin, archives and photography: reflections on the practice and presentation of modern architecture*, eds. L. Fraser, M. McMordie and G. Simmins. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013), 31-52.

22 For example, see "Complex Professional Service for Diverse Industries", *Architectural Record* (December 1959): 117-24, which features the expertise in industrial architecture of John B. Parkin Associates and its establishment of an industrial engineering department within the framework of the organization.

23 Geoffrey Simmins, "The Design of an Architect - Collaborative and Corporatist in Practice, Artistic in Orientation", in *John C. Parkin*, ed. Fraser et al., 13-30.

where possible and as appropriate, each entity would collaborate at the earliest possible stages of a project as a coherent team-based approach to design. Gladstone's presence at Colborne Street also suited the idealism of the venture. It aligned with Sert's professed and practised engagement with artists in civic projects, and echoed his, Sigfried Giedion and Fernand Léger's 1943 call with respect to monumentality for the "integration of the work of the planner, architect, painter, sculptor and landscapist".<sup>24</sup> Andrews's later collaboration, for example, with Dick Strong in landscape design, Peter Miller (of Miller, Milston and Ferris) in structure, Don Thomas in mechanical engineering, Gordon Andrews in graphic design and way-finding, and Gerry Gladstone's sculpture/fountain "Optical Galaxy" at the Cameron offices in Belconnen, Australia (1967-76) is testament to the commitment to the INTEG ideal of professional integration.

From 1962 until 1969, the Andrews office at 47 Colborne Street became one of Canada's most vibrant and productive architectural workplaces, and it was from here that Andrews developed his international reputation with buildings like Scarborough College, the South Residences at the University of Guelph, the Miami Passenger Terminal and Gund Hall at Harvard University. The practice was kept deliberately small, ideally at fifteen but at one point there were thirty people in the office.<sup>25</sup> Many of the staff, all trained as architects, had been taught by Andrews at the University of Toronto, where he had been teaching part-time since 1961, as assistant-professor from 1962, and 1967-69 as Chairman of the Department of Architecture.<sup>26</sup> These included Bill Bennett, Frank Carter, Lawrence Diamond, Ed Galanyk, and Jim Sykes. Over the years, there were Canadians like Frank Final, Ron Sterling and Dennis Sweetnam. But as Andrews' reputation grew, others joined the office from previous collaborations with the Andrews office or they came from other places. Some came from the United States like Ned Baldwin. Others came from Great Britain such as R. W. (Bob) Anderson, Tony Parsons, Henry Scheffer, and John Simpson. Jack Diamond and Roger Du Toit were South African. There were also Australians who came to the office, either as students or graduates from the University of Toronto like Andrew Metcalf or others who had come looking for work, like Bruce Lincoln, Neil Loftus, David Morgan, Graham Brawn, Graham Walker and Ian (Titch) Morton, who had moved across from the Expo 67 authorities to work for Andrews.

The mood in the office was informal. While drawing boards were simply laid out in batches along the 75-foot length of the warehouse floor, the conference room was located in the fifteen-foot width of space across the front of 47 Colborne Street. The feeling was that of a studio rather than a factory and there were no suits.<sup>27</sup> Two floors up, Jim Sykes, an architect and a carpenter, would produce the timber architectural models, as well as, on occasion, larger scale mock-ups like the student

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24 Josep Lluís Sert, Fernand Léger, and Sigfried Giedion, "Nine Points on Monumentality," a position paper written in 1943 and first published in English in S. Giedion, *Architecture, you and me* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 48-51 (quote appears on page 49).

25 John Andrews and Jennifer Taylor, *Architecture: a performing art* (Guildford, Surrey: Lutterworth Press, 1982).

26 Jennifer Taylor, "John Andrews" in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23-24.

27 Interview with John Andrews, 31 January 2014.

bedrooms for Guelph. The relaxed studio atmosphere aligned with the office's emerging design aesthetic which by 1966 was condensed (not inaccurately) from the conceptual basis of Scarborough College as "lines of growth, organization by section, and topography."<sup>28</sup> Buildings like Scarborough College (1963), Bellmere School (1965) and African Place (1965-67) suggested the freedom and responsiveness to the Andrews office concern for circulation, environmental factors that related to landscape and climate, and the creation of social space: an ecology of factors that Sert would have described as preparedness for "the complete environment".<sup>29</sup>

While INTEG was never used as a term in any bid documents once the Colborne office was established, the concept of integration remained and was often emphasized in Andrews office documents for clients. For example, a 1968 proposal document for the School Building Program for the City of Hartford, Connecticut, spoke of a "fully integrated approach to design and production" and had a section headed "Integration", which stated: "Our firm is organized as a small integrated nucleus with less than 30 highly qualified and carefully selected members. Emphasis is placed on: analysis of social and environmental factors; high standard of conceptual design; efficient organization of professional and technical skills and resources."<sup>30</sup>

In February 1972, *Progressive Architecture* published an up-beat practice profile of the Andrews office. It described the development of the practice from a set of associates with Andrews initially in full control to a practice with nine partners (initially ten).<sup>31</sup> Roger Du Toit described the rationale: "Everyone in the firm who was acting in a professional capacity, who could carry on a one-to-one relationship with the client, became a partner. This was an innovative thing to do; you could have only 10 people in the firm and they could all be partners."<sup>32</sup> There were features on ten projects and quotes from the responsible partners, revealing a generosity of voice, and also it seemed to support the profile's contention that "The partners see the firm evolving into a co-operative, in the truest sense of the word, which could only reinforce their basic approach to architecture." The profile was however deceptive: the Andrews office had already begun to change.

## Palm Beach, New South Wales, Australia

In 1969, John Andrews returned with his family to Australia. On the basis of gaining the commission for the Cameron office in Belconnen, Canberra in late 1968, Andrews established an office not in

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28 "Beyond the individual building," *Architectural Record*, 140, 3 (September 1966): 164.

29 Sert, quoted in Mumford, *Defining urban design*, 102.

30 "City of Hartford School Building Program: A Proposal for Implementation - John Andrews: Architect, 47 Colborne Street, Toronto 1, Ontario," Spiral bound report, held in John Andrews Collection, Canowindra, N.S.W., ii and 2.

31 "Conversations with the John Andrews Architects," *Progressive Architecture*, 54 (February 1972): 62-75. The nine partners were listed as: Australia - John Andrews, John Simpson; Canada - Roger Du Toit, Edward A. Galanyk, Anthony Parsons, Edward R. Baldwin, William E. Bennett, Lawrence Diamond, Robert Anderson (Metro Centre Office).

32 Roger Du Toit, quoted in "Conversations with the John Andrews Architects," *Progressive Architecture*, 54 (February 1972): 62.



central Sydney but 40 kilometres north at Palm Beach, where Andrews and his family had also decided to live.<sup>33</sup> It was a complete sea change.

By the late 1960s, Andrews was tiring of the pressures of the Colborne Street office. On a trip to Europe in 1965, Andrews had met Jørn Utzon in Denmark and it was Utzon who had enthused about his own office at Palm Beach, set up in September 1964 in a boatshed at Snapperman Beach complete with its own slipway and jetty,<sup>34</sup> its proximity to the beach, the possibility of sailing, and its idyllic setting as an ideal place to bring up children.<sup>35</sup> Andrews had fond memories of his own of family holidays at Palm Beach, and with a growing family of boys, he was determined to see them grow up on an Australian beach.

The first Andrews office at Palm Beach was in a fibro-cement two-storey cottage at the back of a shop at 1118 Barrenjoey Road located in sub-tropical bush on the north-west-facing ridge that sloped into the Pittwater estuary. Successive timber additions were made to the cottage and as Taylor notes, “The informal, almost holiday atmosphere of the building, reinforced the intentionally relaxed mood of the organization.”<sup>36</sup> Photographs by David Moore of John Andrews and Peter Courtney in open-necked shirts with lush garden behind at Palm Beach in 1974 reinforce this observation and the background of pinups of bikini-clad girls in the office/studio reinforce the impression of a masculine milieu within the office.<sup>37</sup>

The shift from Colborne Street was a significant one. Most of the partners remained behind in Toronto though many travelled back and forth to Australia subsequently, contributing to Australian projects as well as to on-going Canadian and US work. Those that followed John Andrews to Australia to settle permanently or return home included Scotsman John Simpson and Australians Bruce Lincoln, Neil Loftus and Graham Walker. Joining the new Australian office was Sydney architect Peter Courtney, who had been the initial contact and collaborator with the Toronto office on the Cameron offices. Then based in Canberra, Courtney had been a fellow student with Andrews at the University of Sydney and also the best man at Andrews’s wedding in Cape Cod.<sup>38</sup> Over the next fifteen years, the Palm Beach office grew, mostly with the addition of Australian architects, but always remaining at a constant number of ten to fifteen employees.<sup>39</sup> In 1972, John Simpson had relocated from Toronto to open up a Brisbane office. This office was established initially on the basis of the

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33 Andrews, in Andrews and Taylor, *Architecture*, 114.

34 Philip Drew, *The Masterpiece Jørn Utzon: A Secret Life* (South Yarra, Vic.: Hardie Grant Books, 1999), 271.

35 Interview with John Andrews, 7 May 2013.

36 Taylor, in Andrews and Taylor, *Architecture*, 110.

37 Photographs by David Moore of the interior of the Palm Beach office appear in the special issue devoted to the work of John Andrews in *A+U*, 41, 74: 05 (May 1974): 22, 26–27.

38 Interview with John Andrews, 7 May 2013.

39 Staff at the Palm Beach office of John Andrews included over the years: John Andrews, Greg Anson, Ian Bailey, Barry Beck, Peter Courtney, Tina Curtin, Des Donaldson, Terry Edmonson, Bruce James, Michael Jenkin, Peter Kaye, Bruce Lincoln, Neil Loftus, Doug McKay, John Simpson (Brisbane), Arthur Robb, Mario Rossini, Ole Saeverud, Tim Shannon, Graham Walker, Warwick Werner, and Geoff Willing.

Roma Street Development in Brisbane and then master plans for four tertiary education institutions in Queensland.<sup>40</sup>

By 1974, the amount of work coming into the Andrews office necessitated expansion of the practice's facilities. The office bought the Palm Beach Marine Service right on the waterfront. The marine company did not move out. Peter Courtney took over its running as well as working within the John Andrews office which occupied a glazed-in section at the rear and upper level of the double height boat room. The informality of the office continued: the boardroom at Palm Beach was a boat, the former Geelong Harbour Master's launch, which the office had bought. Consultants who travelled up from Sydney arrived in suits but these were invariably exchanged for shorts and short sleeves by the end of the day, and on future trips never worn.<sup>41</sup> Andrews regarded the distant location as advantageous with respect to external consultants - once up at Palm Beach, he could be guaranteed of their full attention - there was no escape! Most employees lived within ten minutes of the office or rode there on bicycle, and the dartboard was an important focus in the office - the distinction between employer and employee disappeared.<sup>42</sup>

## Questions of Translation

The move to Palm Beach for John Andrews had mixed blessings. On the positive side, it meant his dream of having his family grow up beside an Australian beach was realized. It also led to the purchase of farmland at Eugowra, New South Wales in 1972 and the eventual building of Andrews's celebrated farmhouse there in 1978. Eugowra was a natural stopping point in the long drive between Palm Beach and Canberra, where the Andrews office continued to work on Belconnen and gain further work like the Woden Offices, Toad Hall at Australian National University, and Canberra College of Advanced Education student housing, and where Andrews would serve on various National Capital Development Commission competition juries and chair the Design Committee of the Australia Council. Having the office in Palm Beach also meant that Andrews put distance between his office and Sydney's highly competitive architecture culture.<sup>43</sup> The 'un-designed' freedom of the Palm Beach offices was in complete and deliberate contrast, for example, to the 'designed' environment of Harry Seidler's Milson's Point office building (1973). And yet, despite this physical distance, the Andrews office completed substantial commissions in Sydney, including the King George Tower (1970), housing at Little Bay (1975) and the Garden Island Parking Structure (1980), amongst others.

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40 Master plans were prepared for; Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane (1973); Ithaca Technical College, Brisbane (1974); Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Toowoomba (1974); and Ipswich College of Technical and Further Education, Ipswich (1975).

41 Telephone conversations with John Andrews, 20 October 2012; 31 January 2014.

42 Talk by Ian Bailey, John Andrews Symposium, Laby Theatre, University of Melbourne, 20 October 2012.

43 In choosing to practice from Palm Beach, Andrews was not an isolated example. Well-known Sydney architects like Glenn Murcutt, Richard Lepastrier and later Peter Stutchbury also made conscious choices to practice on Sydney's north shore and northern beaches, in a sense, removed from an urban practice context.

The negative aspects of the move however were several. After John Andrews left for Australia, the Colborne Street office did not get another job in its own right after 1970 and by 1975, it had closed its doors. Andrews attributes this to the fact that his presence was crucial to gaining commissions. Certainly, there was no one left in the Toronto office with his charisma, and perhaps most tellingly, his Australian sense of forthrightness, can-do spirit and leadership, emphasized by Jennifer Taylor, had brought the firm its extraordinary success in Canada.<sup>44</sup> By contrast, the Andrews office continued to prosper at Palm Beach until around 1990, gaining significant commissions for convention centres and hotels in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne, and prospects for projects in Sydney and overseas, as well as one of Andrews's greatest coups, the headquarters building for Intelsat in Washington D.C. (1980-86). Andrews also earned accolades in Australia, including the R.A.I.A. Gold Medal in 1980 at the age of 47, then the youngest architect ever to have been so acknowledged. The Gold Medal issue of *Architecture Australia* in May 1981 shows on its cover an image of Andrews, relaxed, in short sleeves, sitting on the jetty railing at Palm Beach.<sup>45</sup> There is also an image of the office of John Andrews International, in similar informal pose on the same jetty. It's a far cry from the Parkin 'factory' of twenty years previous, but also a far cry from the glory days of Colborne Street.

Dana Cuff has written of the social milieu of practice that "the firm is, in this sense, a culture",<sup>46</sup> and further that: "Every architectural office has a unique web within which a portrait of its culture can be discerned. That web is apparent when scores of otherwise unremarkable features are examined together... the social context of a work of architecture is at least as influential as the properties of building materials or the building site. Within the office, the roles, relations, and tacit individual theories are a significant part of the conditions that frame architectural problems."<sup>47</sup> In the two Andrews' offices, the key to their success, would appear to have rested with Andrews himself, larger than life, promoting on the one hand what Judith Blau would describe as "an ethos of voluntarism and egalitarianism",<sup>48</sup> but on the other possessed of an individual charisma that was essential to the lifeblood of the both ventures. In her summation of the ideals of The Architects' Collaborative, Blau may also have been summarizing the highs and lows of the two Andrews offices that they "actually advocate equality, although most unfailingly stress the importance of collegiality. The compromise of equality is due in part to the recognition that although professionals may be equal, artists cannot be."<sup>49</sup>

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44 Jennifer Taylor, "John Andrews, architect," *Architecture Australia*, 70: 2 (May 1981): 30.

45 Gold Medal issue, *Architecture Australia*, 70: 2 (May 1981), front cover.

46 Dana Cuff, *Architecture: the story of practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1992), 155.

47 Cuff, *Architecture*, 113 and 116.

48 Judith R. Blau, *Architects and firms: a sociological perspective on architectural practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1984), 26-27.

49 Blau, *Architects and firms*, 27.

There is little doubt that in terms of design culture, the two offices were different. In Colborne Street, Andrews had a strong, highly qualified team, which worked in the same building and a number of whom were talented designers such as Tony Parsons who, with Andrews, was largely responsible for the School of Art at Kent State University (1970-72). At Palm Beach, Andrews was, by and large, the sole design figurehead, with his other design partner John Simpson based mostly in Brisbane. To a significant degree, proximity and the intensity and contact of daily practice that had been the lifeblood of Colborne Street was sacrificed at Palm Beach through physical necessity. In Australia, various senior members of the office often shifted interstate to oversee large hotel and exhibition centre projects. Andrews himself was frequently interstate and increasingly travelling overseas as job prospects appeared tantalizingly close. At the Palm Beach office, young architects and graduates, some acolytes, others critical, came and went. Tim Shannon, later a design director at Hassell, recalls his experience there as "one of the best professional years of my life."<sup>50</sup>

Andrews himself was and remains sanguine about his move to Australia.<sup>51</sup> The translation of one's practice from one continent to another was never going to be straightforward. And certainly the generous profit-sharing arrangement agreed upon by the Toronto partners had mixed results. Andrews admits that both offices had very specific cultures suited to their time and place, and in each location, each was highly successful in its own way.<sup>52</sup> The significance of Andrews's two offices perhaps lies in their fortuitous timing: in Canada in the early 1960s, when in architecture "it was as if, suddenly, everyone had the tongue to speak with eloquence where they had been mumbling only ten years before"<sup>53</sup>; and in Australia in the late 1960s and -70s, when the impetus for Canberra's physical expansion and the internationalism of Australia's political ambitions accelerated and aligned, and there were commissions for the taking. What is also significant is that each Andrews office set-up was, in many respects, an idealistic experiment that ran counter to the orthodoxies of corporate architecture practice. At the same time, the motivations behind each office set-up were intensely personal. At the heart of these motivations lies the larger than life character of this paper's main protagonist, John Andrews, who staged his career as a two-act drama, and, as in the title of his 1982 monograph, addressed architecture as a 'performing art' not just in his buildings but also in his place of work.

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50 Conversation with Tim Shannon, Melbourne, Vic., November 2013.

51 Interview with John Andrews, Orange, N.S.W., 12 December 2013.

52 Interview with John Andrews, Orange, N.S.W., 12 December 2013.

53 Arthur Erickson, "Introduction" to Carol Moore Ede, *Canadian architecture 1960/70* (Toronto: Burns & MacEachern, 1971), 7.