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Run to Paradise

The Chevron Hotel, Gold Coast, from Foundation to Renaissance

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The post-war “boom” of the 1950s heralded an expansion into new holiday accommodation typologies on Australia’s Gold Coast. The introduction of the resort-hotel irrevocably altered the scale and type of architecture on the Gold Coast and established the direction that the development of the city has followed to this day. Among the projects that can be considered to have established this trajectory Stanley Korman’s Chevron Hotel is the undervalued middle child, oft overlooked but whose evolution over the preceding half-century to its turn of the millennium Renaissance presents a narrative of the pursuit of an escape to ‘paradise’ on Australia’s Gold Coast.

Following the end of World War Two the Gold Coast developed and expanded rapidly, during a period of economic “boom” with unprecedented growth throughout much of Australia, and indeed the western world. On the Gold Coast the post-war “construction boom” commenced when planning restrictions imposed during World War Two were lifted in 1952,¹ and is evidenced in the rapid development of holiday accommodation particularly in the beachfront areas of Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach, known then as the South Coast for its location approximately eighty kilometres south-east of Queensland’s capital city Brisbane. This era heralded an expansion into new accommodation typologies that irrevocably altered the scale and type of architecture on the Gold Coast. The emergence of the luxury resort-hotel on the Gold Coast in the 1950s validated post-war aspirations to escape to a leisure paradise by giving this desire form and bringing it within geographical and financial reach of suburban Australians, and is indicative of the enthusiastic adoption of American culture post-World War Two.

Inspired by the leisure culture and architecture of American holiday destinations such as Hawaii and Miami, Florida, the resort-hotel offered the holidaymaker a novel experience where

1. “Kinkabool (CHIMS 601477),” *Queensland Heritage Register* (Brisbane: Queensland Government Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, 2009), last updated 22 October 22, 2012, <https://www.derm.qld.gov.au/chims/placeDetail.html?siteId=16240>



recreation and entertainment took priority. This typology differs from its pre-war and nineteenth century predecessors in its commoditisation of the hotel as a destination in itself. Hotels such as Morris Lapidus' 1954 Miami *Fontainebleau* typify the typology of the fully self-contained holiday resort complex; a multi-level hotel set within luxurious landscaped grounds where indoor and outdoor entertainment, recreation and dining are provided for the use of guests.² An article, which is best described as an advertisement, published in the *Australian Women's Weekly* in the summer of 1957 declared that the *Fontainebleau* exists solely "to supply a craving for luxury."³ In this emerging culture of commodity, convenience and consumption this was a craving not only for this exotic experience luxury, but to be seen experiencing it.⁴ In the theatricalised space of the holiday resort one could escape the responsibilities of domestic and working life and the reality of austerity measures that were a constant reminder of the War. There are three key buildings constructed during the 1950s that heralded the establishment of this new typology on the Gold Coast, and can be considered to have established the trajectory the city has followed for the following six decades: Lennons Broadbeach Hotel (1955), the Chevron Hotel (1957) and Kinkabool (1959).⁵

Lennons Broadbeach Hotel, designed by Karl Langer and developed by Lennons Hotels Ltd., was constructed between 1955 and 1957 on the site of a former sand mine at Broadbeach⁶ just over three kilometres south of Surfers Paradise. Lennons follows the hotel-in-landscape typology of the post-war holiday resort. A five-storey accommodation wing containing sixty-eight double and forty single rooms site amongst extensive recreation facilities, mostly outdoor, including a tennis court and bowling green, swimming pool, dance floor and bandstand, public bar, cocktail bar, restaurant and convention hall. At the time of its construction Lennons Broadbeach Hotel was heralded as "Queensland's most palatial hotel,"⁷ however the hotel failed to attract the number and calibre of visitors anticipated and within only a couple of years of opening was considered by local journalists to be a "white elephant."⁸ This must, in part, be attributed to the hotel's location several kilometres south of the facilities of Surfers Paradise, in an area obliterated by sand mining and surrounded by very little in the way of built nor natural amenity, save for the surf beach several hundred meters to the east of the hotel's grounds. Over the following thirty years the hotel was bought and sold several times and continued operation under various names and with

2. "Lapidus Cuts Loose," *Architecture* 86, no. 2 (February 1997): 41.

3. "The Fantastic Fontainebleau," *The Australian Women's Weekly*, December 4, 1957, 40. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4828961>.

4. Mark Crinson and Claire Zimmerman, ed., *Neo-avant-garde and Postmodern: Postwar Architecture in Britain and Beyond*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 14.

5. Alexander McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast* (Surfers Paradise: Pan News Pty Ltd, 1984), 108, 118, 141.

6. Brendan O'Malley, "From Sand Mine to a Beach Icon," *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), October 30, 2009. <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/features/from-sand-mine-to-a-beach-icon/story-e6f9eoro-1225792678373>.

7. "Building Boom on the South Coast," *Architecture, Building, Engineering*, (February 1, 1955): 7.

8. McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast*, 108.

numerous modifications until eventually Lennons, then operating as the Broadbeach International Hotel, was demolished in 1987 to make way for the monolithic mall development that now houses the Oasis shopping centre and is connected to Jupiters Casino by a legacy of 1980s' public transport: a monorail.⁹

9 . Frank Hampson, "Massive Hotel Project Given Go-ahead," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, August 16, 1986, 7; and "Broadbeach Redevelopment Starts," *The Courier Mail*, July 14, 1987, 11.

Kinkabool is of a variation on the typology providing self-contained apartments equipped with all the latest commodities, but without resort-style facilities and landscaped grounds. Nonetheless, Kinkabool at the time considered luxurious and exotic holiday accommodation. Construction commenced in 1959 and at ten storeys Kinkabool was the first "high rise" building constructed on the Gold Coast. Kinkabool was designed by the architect John M. Morton of the Brisbane firm Lund Hutton Newell Black & Paulson¹⁰ and constructed by John D. Booker on a site in central Surfers Paradise one block south of the main nucleus of Cavil Avenue. Gold Coast journalist-turned-historian Alexander McRobbie has published prolifically on the growth of Surfers Paradise during this era. McRobbie cites Kinkabool as having been purchased before the completion of construction by one of the companies of Stanley Korman, who was responsible for the initial Chevron Hotel.¹¹ Newspaper articles from the 1960s show that Kinkabool was at that time owned by the business Stanhill Consolidated with Korman ensconced as Chairman of the Board. Kinkabool was added to the *Queensland Heritage Register* in 2009.¹² As an extant and therefore arguably greater example of the post-World War Two architecture and culture of the Gold Coast, Kinkabool has remained mostly unchanged since its completion in 1959 and therefore tells us much of the era of its birth but little of the five decades since.

10. "Kinkabool (CHIMS 601477)," *Queensland Heritage Register*.

11. McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast*, 141.

12. "Kinkabool (CHIMS 601477)," *Queensland Heritage Register*.

The Chevron Hotel 1957-1961

Considered alongside these well recognised projects the Chevron Hotel is the undervalued middle child, oft overlooked but whose development over the proceeding half-century presents a narrative of the pursuit of "paradise" on Australia's Gold Coast. Construction of the Chevron Hotel commenced in 1957, as Lennons Broadbeach Hotel was nearing completion and some two years before work on Kinkabool commenced. The Chevron Hotel was the first Queensland property development for Melbourne-based entrepreneur Stanley Korman's Chevron group of companies. The first facilities to be built were a service station and the Skyline



building, located on the Gold Coast Highway frontage and catering to the needs of the motoring tourist. Defined by a prominent butterfly roof the service station stands surrounded by vehicular and pedestrian circulation framed by the concave two-storey Skyline building. During construction a temporary bar opened inside the Skyline building. This was only the second hotel licence to be granted in Surfers Paradise, the other being held by the nearby Surfers Paradise Hotel. Korman purchased the Surfers Paradise Hotel from its founders the Cavill family later that year and came to hold a monopoly on licenced venues in Surfers Paradise.¹³ When completed the ground floor of the Skyline building was dedicated to retail while upstairs the Skyline Cabaret introduced a novel and more luxurious entertainment experience to the Gold Coast, relocating the popular beer garden experience indoors in a climate controlled environment overlooking Surfers Paradise. The elevated, glazed space of the Skyline Cabaret generated a heightened sense of exclusivity while the transparency of the architecture made this highly visible, publicising the experience and the patron's presence.¹⁴ The Skyline building was crowned with a roof that gave the appearance of a folded plate, or perhaps chevron-stripe, floating above a glazed terrace.

The Chevron Hotel offered many similar facilities to Lennons Broadbeach with the distinct advantage of being located in Surfers Paradise. The first accommodation wing of the Chevron Hotel consisted of 83 mostly one-bedroom short-stay rooms and opened in early 1958, with the second wing following later that year.¹⁵ Designed by Brisbane architectural firm David Bell and Associates¹⁶ and constructed by N. A. Kratzman and Sons Pty the structure was of concrete with exposed brick and white rendered concrete infill. Hotel rooms each had a private balcony that overlooked the swimming pools, gardens and sun terraces located in the centre of the site, or the Nerang River to the west. Archival images of the Chevron Hotel show that while the accommodation buildings were three-storeys high on the elevations overlooking the swimming pool an additional fourth storey was inserted on the outward facing frontages taking advantage of the site's gentle slope towards the Nerang River.¹⁷ These pair of rectilinear accommodation buildings were arranged at right-angles to each other on the southern and western bounds of the site with the hotel entrance located at their junction, identifiable by its checkerboard of glazing and brightly coloured cladding as well as the absence of balconies.

13. John Vader and Fred Lang, *The Gold Coast Book: An Illustrated History* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1980), 81.

14. Annabel Jane Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4-5, 14, 160.

15. Arthur Richards, "Business is Brisk Now on the Gold Coast ... They're Selling Sunshine to Southerners," *Courier Mail*, July 19, 1958.

16. The (Royal) Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter, *Buildings of Queensland* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1959), 36.

17. "Chevron Hotel Progressing," *Architecture, Building, Engineering* (October 1, 1957): 72. Alexander McRobbie, "Accommodation wing construction at the Chevron Hotel, Surfers Paradise, Queensland, 1958," *Picture Gold Coast* (Gold Coast: Gold Coast City Council, 2007), [picture, LS-LSP-CD913-IMG0012 Digitised for online access 2007, <https://gccoopac.sirsindynix.net.au/client/search/asset/1344680>].

18. Alexander McRobbie, *20th Century Gold Coast People*, (Surfers Paradise: Gold Coast Arts Centre Press, 2000), 22.

19. "South Coast Bulletin," June 11, 1958, cited in *A Sunny Place for Shady People: The Real Gold Coast Story*, by Michael Jones (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 26

20. Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Mitcham: Penguin Books, 1960), 83.

21. "Building Boom on the South Coast," 5.

22. Peter Spearritt and John Young, "Korman, Stanley (1904–1988)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2006. Accessed January 3, 2013, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/korman-stanley-12755/text23005>.

23. "Stanhill Flats," *National Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture*, Australian Institute of Architects, <http://www.architecture.com.au/architecture/national/notable-buildings>. "Stanhill (VHR: H1875)," *Victorian Heritage Database*, Heritage Council of Victoria, http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/heritagevic/?-timeout=yes#detail_places;2834.

24. "Poster for the Chevron Hotel in Sydney (2012/99/1)," Collection of the Powerhouse Museum (Sydney: Powerhouse Museum, 2012). Accessed April 5, 2012, <http://from.ph/435253>.

Korman's vision for the Surfers Paradise Chevron Hotel was to create an international standard luxury hotel that would attract wealthy, sophisticated clientele from Sydney and Melbourne to the Gold Coast.¹⁸ The resulting architecture embraced its American cultural influences and the hedonism of the newly popularised holiday lifestyle, exploiting the appeal and convenience afforded by new technologies developed during the war. Hotel rooms were equipped with the latest technology and conveniences, and while the constructional systems and materials were expressed honestly on the exterior of the hotel the interiors were decorated in exotic hues. A writer for the local South Coast Bulletin described the interior scheme of one of the Chevron Hotel rooms in 1958; "One lovely suite that took my eye, lounge room with walls of the softest mauve, ceiling deeper helio, and mulberry wall-to-wall carpet, from which you step into a bedroom of palest blue, and delicate primrose."¹⁹ Whilst Melbourne architect and critic Robin Boyd was vitriolic in his criticism of similar frenetic use of colour when describing Surfers Paradise as "a fibro-cement paradise under a rainbow of plastic paint,"²⁰ the flamboyantly coloured aesthetic held appeal with the construction industry and the public alike. In 1955 the journal *Architecture, Building, Engineering* published a special supplement "Building Boom on the South Coast" in which the newly technicolour landscape of the Gold Coast is praised for "infusing brightness and beauty into the entire area from Southport to the border" and "dotting the landscape with cheering notes of colour."²¹

Stanley Korman and the Chevron Group of Companies

Stanley Korman immigrated to Australia from Poland with his brother Hilel in the 1930s. Together they formed Stanhill Corporation and grew a vast business empire in Melbourne who came to own Holeproof, among other companies.²² In 1942 Stanhill Corporation commissioned "Stanhill Flats" on Melbourne's Queens Road, now considered one of the émigré architect Frederick Romberg's finest works.²³ In the 1950s Stanley Korman bought and refurbished two Melbourne hotels, Scotts Hotel on Collins Street in Melbourne's business district, and a hotel on St Kilda Road which he renamed the Chevron Hotel. Shortly after Korman's Chevron Hotel Surfers Paradise opened construction began on his Chevron-Hilton Hotel in the Kings Cross district of Sydney.²⁴ McRobbie suggests in *The Fabulous Gold Coast* (1984), one of his several books on the Gold Coast, that the Surfers Para-



dise Chevron Hotel was also intended, and advertised, as a Hilton branded hotel. In 1960 it was reported in the media that Hilton Hotels International were in negotiations with Korman to manage and invest in his Chevron hotels located in Melbourne, Sydney and Queensland, the first time Hilton had provided capital for hotels outside the USA.²⁵

25. "Hilton to provide part of capital for new Chevrons," *The Canberra Times*, April 6, 1960, 14. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article103076327>.

26. McRobbie, *20th Century Gold Coast People*, 20

27. Michael Jones, *A Sunny Place for Shady People*, 24. Although Jones's work appears to lean heavily on McRobbie for its content, it offers a valuable contribution by contextualising the development of the Gold Coast within wider social and economic frameworks.

28. Richards, "Business is Brisk Now on The Gold Coast."

McRobbie describes Korman as "unashamedly American"²⁶ in his values and demographer Michael Jones names Korman as "the real hero of the Gold Coast Capitalists."²⁷ The Queensland Government, still reeling from the War, had not yet recognised the business and financial potential of its natural assets in an increasingly mobile and liberal Australian society. By 1958 Korman was being heralded as the biggest tourism operator in Australia, and Gold Coast businessmen were reported to be studying the weather forecast like a form guide having realised that "selling sunshine can be just as important as selling uranium or coal ... and it will probably last longer."²⁸ Having established a substantial business and property portfolio in Victoria and New South Wales Stanhill Corporation and the Chevron Group were positioned to recognise the potential appeal of the Gold Coast's climate to the southern market. Korman's vision for development of the Gold Coast was not restricted to the Chevron Hotel. He acquired extensive parcels of land surrounding the hotel site including Wedgewood Island and Goat Island to the west, which Korman renamed Paradise Island and Chevron Island respectively, as well as land to the eastern oceanfront.

The Decline and Fall of the Korman Empire

A portion of the Chevron Hotel site between the Hotel and the Skyline building lay undeveloped during the early years of the Hotel's operation, shielded from public view by a sweeping arc of hit-and-miss brick. On the same day in March 1960 that the foundation stone was officially laid for the expansion of the Chevron Hotel to an audience predominantly of guests invited from interstate, a bridge connecting the hotel to Korman's Chevron Island was also officially opened.²⁹ Construction of the additional Chevron facilities commenced shortly thereafter. David Bell and Associates were again engaged for the design, which included new entertainment facilities, a ten-pin bowling alley, function and convention rooms as well as a 14-storey tower.³⁰ The tower was never built but the Paradise Bowl opened in 1962.³¹ Above the bowling alley

29. Jones, *A Sunny Place for Shady People*, 27.

30. McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast*, 149.

31. *The South Coast Bulletin*, June 13, 1962, 11.

was a fully air-conditioned convention facility, The Corroboree Room, which hosted many of the Gold Coast's first international business and entertainment events and became famous for the Concourse d'Elegance; an annual showcase that combined glamorous parades of luxury automobiles and high fashion and was hosted by the Chevron Hotel for almost twenty years.³²

32. McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast*, 175-76.

The Gold Coast's post-war development "boom" ended abruptly in the 'credit squeeze' of 1961 with Federal Government imposed restrictions on credit heralding the end of an era. Following the collapse of Stanhill Corporation, Chevron Queensland Ltd and Korman's multitude of inter-connected companies, the two banks from which he had borrowed the majority of the capital required to construct the Chevron Hotel formed a joint cooperation to acquire the Hotel.³³ This arose out of necessity given that the individual owners of holiday apartments within the Chevron Hotel were not owners outright in the manner of Strata Tile which is now commonplace rather owners were shareholders in Chevron Queensland Ltd, as was the business norm in this era. The first Building Units Titles Act establishing the practice of Strata Title ownership in Queensland was not passed until 1965.³⁴ Under the management of the Banks the success of the Chevron Hotel continued and the architecture of the hotel remained mostly unchanged. The Chevron Hotel became a favourite with tourism promoters, its image presenting a vision of the Gold Coast on advertising posters in the 1960s and 1970s and its entertainment and business events receiving heavy media coverage.³⁵

33. McRobbie, *20th Century Gold Coast People*, 23-24.

34. Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, "Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980," Queensland Government. <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/B/BuildngUnGrA80.pdf>.

35. Newspaper archives documenting publicity of the Chevron Hotel's business and entertainment events are held in hard copy by the Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library, Southport. <http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/library/local-studies-library-10111.html>.

36. Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Queensland* (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1984), 473. Keith Moore, "Embracing the Make-believe: The Making of Surfers Paradise," *Australian Studies* 18, no.1 (2005): 187-210.

37. McRobbie, *20th Century Gold Coast People*, 48-50.

38. Brian Harrower, "Go For Bricks, Not Share, Says Theo," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, February 17, 1988, 2, and Chevron Paradise Club, *Chevron Paradise Club News* 1, no.1 (Concept Studios & Progress Press, 1983).

The next "boom" on the Gold Coast occurred after the State Government abolished death duties in 1977 thus creating an appealing sub tropical tax haven.³⁶ In 1979 Latec Investments purchased the Chevron Queensland Ltd and constructed the 22-storey Chevron Paradise Tower on a riverfront site to the west of the Chevron Hotel's existing accommodation buildings. The two were connected across Ferny Avenue via a pedestrian overpass that housed further entertainment and commercial facilities.³⁷ Shortly after completion of the Chevron Paradise Tower Australia had entered a financial recession. Sydney property magnate Theo Morris purchased Chevron Queensland Ltd introducing the Gold Coast's first timeshare arrangement at the Chevron Hotel in 1983. Timeshare afforded similar rights of use of the apartments and related facilities as under Strata Title, but these rights were restricted to certain weeks of the year, thus allowing multiple timeshare owners to 'share' the same apartment.³⁸



With his acquisition of Chevron Queensland Ltd Morris had acquired several properties in close proximity to the Chevron Hotel, however his vision to re-develop the hotel was restricted to the original site and an opportunity to connect the Chevron to the beachfront, as well as the river, was lost. Morris engaged local Gold Coast architect Michael Witty of Christopher and Clark Architects to design the redevelopment of the original Chevron Hotel site. The proposal was for a second highrise accommodation tower above a retail and commercial podium targeted towards tourists.³⁹ Following demolition of Korman's Chevron Hotel in 1989 the site lay as a wasteland in the middle of Surfers Paradise.⁴⁰ Witty attributes this in part to Morris's piece-meal and short-term approach to property management and development.⁴¹ The dire economic climate in the wake of an influx of Japanese investment in the mid-1980s must also be implicated. In 1994 Singaporean businessman Ong Beng Seng purchased the Chevron site, and the following year the Chevron Tower. A long-standing political battle was waged over his application for a gaming licence to develop a casino on the site, an element of the project which Ong Beng Seng saw as vital in an oversaturated accommodation market, and the site lay dormant.⁴²

Chevron Renaissance

In 1998 a Joint Venture was announced with the Raptis Group, and Raptis quickly bought Ong Beng Seng out. By this time the Gold Coast was no longer purely a holiday resort and was experiencing an increased permanent population. Jim Raptis had established his company's reputation with several residential apartment developments including the Phoenician in Broadbeach, and the Moroccan in Surfers Paradise.⁴³ Raptis engaged Hawaii-based resort architects Wimberley Allison Tong and Goo for the concept design of a new Chevron.⁴⁴ Local Gold Coast architectural firms were also involved. DBI (Desmond Brooks International) Corporation were engaged in the early stages⁴⁵ and Archidiom Design later on the final accommodation tower.⁴⁶ At half the budget of Theo Morris' scheme the Raptis Group's initial development proposal included five high-rise accommodation towers. This was quickly reduced to three providing close to 800 residential apartments and hotel rooms at a ratio of approximately three to one. A staged construction program commenced at the turn of the millennium and the final tower was completed in 2005.⁴⁷ The Chevron Renaissance represents the expansion of tourism on the Gold

39. Brian Harrower, "Chevron to be Rebuilt," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, November 13, 1987, 1.

40. David Halpin and Brad Sharpe, "Goodbye Grand Hotel," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, May 3, 1989, 4, and Cindy Wockner, "Chevron Hotel Site: Paradise 'lost' at Surfers," *Courier Mail*, February 27, 1990, 12.

41. Michael Witty, interview by author, notation, office of Michael Witty Architects, Gold Coast Queensland, February 15, 2012.

42. Peter Gleeson, "Who's Bluffing?" *Gold Coast Bulletin*, August 27, 1997, 1.

43. Greg Stoltz, "Bomb site," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, January, 9 1998, 2-3.

44. Greg Stoltz, "Village by the Sea," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, October 8, 1999.

45. Stoltz, "Bomb site," 2.

46. Australian Institute of Architects, "Chevron Skyline Central by Archidiom Design," (Award Citation), Architecture Gallery, http://www.architecture.com.au/awards_search?option=showaward&entryno=20054074.

47. Archidiom Design, "Chevron Renaissance," official company website. Accessed March 24, 2013, <http://www.archidiom.com.au>.

Coast to an international market and a change in living patterns in Australia. For urbanised Australians the experience of apartment living no longer offers an escape, rather a familiar residential typology affording the convenience of high density living and of familiarity. The Chevron Renaissance provides both permanent residential accommodation and short-stay tourist accommodation within a combined resort-style residential complex. This duality demonstrates a convergence of everyday and holiday lifestyle values, acknowledging the Gold Coast's increasing permanent population and expansion into business and education tourism markets.

The aspirations and programmatic arrangement of the completed Chevron Renaissance is indeed a renaissance of Korman's original Chevron Hotel. The accommodation towers and formal entry occupy the western portion of the site arranged in an elevated landscape atop a podium housing resort facilities, retail, entertainment and commercial tenancies. The swimming pool and gardens retain their central location on the site but are elevated to the rooftop of the podium, referred to as the "Beaches in the Sky,"⁴⁸ thus increasing privacy for guests whilst maximising the street frontage available for retail and commercial uses. As at the Chevron Hotel of the 1950s and '60s, the eastern portion of the site again delivers publicly accessible entertainment and retail facilities. Here the podium is carved open along a sweeping arc to create "Chevron Walk" a pedestrian arcade intended to evoke the atmosphere of a seaside village.⁴⁹ This arrangement re-establishes elements of the original relationship between the Skyline building and service station, engaging with the Gold Coast Highway (now Surfers Paradise Boulevard) frontage at a pedestrian level.

48. The Towers of Chevron Renaissance, "Resort Facilities," Chevron Towers Official Website. Accessed February 24, 2012, <http://www.chevrontowers.com.au/surfers-paradise-accommodation-facilities.html>.

49. Justine Nolan, "Chevron Village Plan," *Courier Mail*, October 18, 1999, 41.

50. Wimberley Allison Tong and Goo, *Designing the Worlds Best Resorts* (Mulgrave, Vic.: Images Publishing, 2001), 87.

51. Philip Goad, "The Gold Coast: Architecture and Planning," in *Gold Coast Urban Heritage and Character Study* (Gold Coast: Gold Coast City Council, 2007), 42.

52. Wharton, *Building the Cold War*, 1-11. pAttach/4102.0Publication14.12.113/\$-File/41020_International_Dec2011.pdf.

In their anthology, architects Wimberley Allison Tong and Goo describe the project as "seaside tropical Mediterranean"⁵⁰ The Gold Coast Bulletin in 1999 dubbed the design "Tropical Mediterranean-themed," close to Philip Goad's description of "Tuscan Tropical"⁵¹ housing on the Gold Coast popularised in the 1990s. The addition of the word "themed" by local media presents both the notion of the project being derivative and a public aspiration to experience this. The podium and tower form emerged as the typology of American and International hotel architecture during the Cold War era.⁵² Rather than embracing the American cultural influences of this typology the Chevron Renaissance is visually representational of a European experience, typified by the theatrical treatment of the northern and eastern pedestrian frontages.



A dissonant series of facades aim to dissolve the mass of the podium, a bell tower marks the corner of the site and the entry to the arcade where pastel coloured arches capped with a frieze rest on colonnades.

Conclusion

Throughout the fifty year history of the development of the Chevron site the aspiration to escape to ‘paradise’ has remained key, in both the functional aspects of convenience and entertainment and the cultural aspects of image making. In a post-war era where financial and material provisions could not match the aspirations of a newly optimistic society, the Chevron Hotel created an environment of convenience and entertainment far from the responsibilities and social expectations of work and suburban family life. The material efficiencies of the Modern style and construction methods introduced to Australia during the war permitted the development of luxury hotels on the Gold Coast and made this exclusive and exotic experience accessible to a broader demographic of Australians. The Chevron Renaissance maintains the general programmatic arrangement of its predecessor and fulfils a common desire to experience a perceived exotic glamour. Korman’s Chevron Hotel embraced its American cultural and architectural influences and overtly expressed its innovations, whereas Raptis’ Chevron Renaissance is conscientious in its efforts to bely the American and technological origins of its form by looking instead to historical European elements. Both draw on international influences for their cultural aspiration and architectural resolution. Each key moment in the Chevron’s history marks an expansion of the Gold Coast into new economic markets and architectural typologies. In addition to the two bookend developments, unrealised proposals for the site chart the varying priorities and aspirations of a growing city. This history captures the cultural, economic and political climate of the Gold Coast across the last half-century united by a singular pursuit of paradise.