

The Distance between Myth and Reality: Constructing a Modern Architectural Identity in Rural Queensland

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From the 1960s, the projection of an Australian architectural identity, nationally and internationally, drew from myths surrounding white settlement and centred on the settler homestead in its rural setting—notwithstanding the facts of a highly urbanised population and an increasingly pluralist architectural setting. This paper will reflect on the distance that opens up for the architect between architectural intentions linked to faithfully reconstructing images of identity and the facts of the individual architecture project. It will address these issues by introducing one project, “Morocco” (1963), a house for Stan and Noela Wippell, located on the floodplain of the Balonne River in the western Darling Downs, Queensland. The paper will then compare “Morocco” with contemporaneous and subsequent architecturally design homesteads by the architect, John Dalton, as well as other Australian architects.

By 1963, Dalton had built a series of homestead “style” houses in the dry, sclerophyll forested suburbs of west Brisbane. However, “Morocco” required the homestead “style” be negotiated with the reality of the “outback.” The gap between romantic myth and the reality of station-life manifested itself in very prosaic matters. The proposed paper will address literal and figurative distance; the distance between the ideal image and particular circumstance; and between myth and fact: the glamorisation of the bush myth and the problems brought about by remoteness. It reveals that mythologies of settlement provided a wealth of material for grounding paradigms in a specific place.

Keywords: Queensland mid-century modern architecture; myths of settlement; Australian interior landscapes; national identity; Australian homesteads

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The “homestead” is intrinsic to myths of white settlement in Australia. If the image of a settlers “hut” in a rural landscape setting embodies the struggle by white settlers to subjugate nature through physical effort and by solving challenges with whatever was to hand, the homestead indicates tenure. Images of “hut” and “homestead” have persisted, sustained in art, literature and architecture, as the source of an Australian identity, notwithstanding the facts of a highly urbanised population and a pluralist architectural setting.¹

This paper reflects on the distance that opens up from the 1960s between images of the homestead arising from the settler myth as the model for an appropriate “indigenous architecture,”² and the particularities of that myth already redundant, in order to demonstrate the limits of the myth itself as a motivating idea and means of validation. The discussion will focus primarily on one project, “Morocco” (1963), by John Dalton Architect and Associates, that was designed as a station homestead for Stan and Noela Wippell located on the floodplain of the Balonne River, between Roma and St George, Darling Downs, Queensland. The paper will then compare “Morocco” with other architect-designed homesteads from the 1960s and later, including by Guildford Bell, John Andrews and Daryl Jackson, as well as another rural project by John Dalton twenty years later. The comparison reveals the persistence of settlement mythologies, and the role of the homestead idea as a vehicle for validating and translating discourses into an Australian context.

Incongruity in the Search for Identity and Modernism

It is widely accepted that the Australian self-identity is entwined with its interior landscapes.³ The circumstances surrounding the emergence of this sense of a “national interiority” is critical; it has become the lens through which modernism in Australia became normalised.⁴

The work of artists such as Russell Drysdale and Sidney Nolan during the 1940s and 1950s, and Patrick White’s character, *Voss*,⁵ corroborated in the “return to the frontier paradigm.”⁶ Art historian Elizabeth McMahon describes this as constituting the arts’ “territorial annexing of Central Australia,” with such work possessing a “spatial imaginary” that “shaped the *modern* ‘man’ [*sic*].”⁷ Such views are contested in recent times by the incontrovertible evidence of a nascent modernism in the much earlier work of artists such as Grace Cossington-Smith and Margaret Preston. The reluctance to accept these works as the earliest instances of Modern art has been attributed to the fact

1 Paul Walker and Karen Burns, “Constructing Australian Architecture for International Audiences: Regionalism, Postmodernism and the Design Arts Board 1980-1988,” *Fabrications* 28, no. 1 (February 2018): 29, 35. Walker and Burns’ interest lies in the link between the homestead and a nascent regionalism.

2 John Dalton cited by Noel J. Robinson, “Dalton Houses 1956-1975: an exemplar for Brisbane’s domestic architects?” (B Arch. thesis, University of Queensland, 1976), 323.

3 Elizabeth McMahon, “Australia: The Island Continent,” *Space and Culture* 13, no. 2 (March 2010): 178; Walker and Burns, “Constructing Australian Architecture,” 25.

4 McMahon, “Australia,” 178-87; Margaret Plant, “The Lost Art of Federation: Australia’s quest for Modernism,” *Art Journal* 28, <https://www.nga.vic.gov.au/essay/the-lost-art-of-federation-australias-quest-for-modernism/> accessed December 23, 2018. Art historians such as Margaret Plant argue that Australian art history is “seduced by a need for an avant-garde.”

5 Andrew McCann, “The Obstinacy of the Sacred,” *Antipodes* 19 no. 2 (December 2005): 152-57; Shirley J. Paolini, “Desert Metaphors and Self-Enlightenment in Patrick White’s ‘Voss,’” *Antipodes* 4 no. 2 (Winter 1990): 87-91. Voss is frequently cited as embodying this frontier character. Ironically, Voss, who is based on the doomed explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, is tasked by White with discovering and interpreting for the people of Australia, the meaning of the interior of the continent, and ultimately fails in his quest.

6 Elizabeth McMahon, *Islands, Identity and the Literary Imagination* (London: Anthem Press, 2016).

7 Elizabeth McMahon, *Islands, Identity and the Literary Imagination*.

they depict the local and domestic. The collective consciousness of a nation could not consolidate around images of women's work.⁸

For in fact and myth the settler role is an entirely gendered one; where "white" women were excluded from the early stages of settlement; and "no encumbrances" was the first rule for employment in the bush⁹—an edict that led to the abuse of Aboriginal women by (white) men.¹⁰ Further, as the "civilising" influence, "white" women arrived after a settlement was established, but were then left, often for extended periods, to fashion a "home" whilst the menfolk pushed flocks of sheep further into the interior in the quest for more and better pastures.¹¹ The voracious accumulation of land by squatters was particularly rapid and bloody¹² in Queensland before its separation from New South Wales¹³ and this led to the consolidation of wealth and power in the hands of a few, the squattocracy, who enjoyed an expansive lifestyle.¹⁴ The land selector who came after the squatters, seemed to occupy the smaller and less viable tracts of land, while truly embodying the settler myth.¹⁵

Even this brief overview reveals how settlement myths hide serious omissions and incongruities. The murder and dispossession of first peoples was overlooked in the 1960s when the architecture discipline was searching for a normative from which to derive an Australian modernism and its identity. The notion of the homestead as the outcome of settlers responding practically to the rigours of local circumstance with whatever materials were ready to hand, and then made it an ideal model.

The Colonial Past and the Search for Identity in Australian Architecture

In a pictorial essay titled "Post War Domestic Architecture" published in *Architecture and Art*, June 1961, the editorial reads: "If modern architecture has a link with our colonial beginnings than these houses reveal this link."¹⁶ It is illustrated with a range of projects including John Dalton's Head House (1956). The text focuses on identifying the shared characteristics of modernity underpinning a "national" style by attributing "unmistakable similarities between the architecture of north and south Australia" to "wide and sweeping eaves" and a "common regard and sympathy for the use of natural materials."¹⁷ The editorial also notes a generic "reliance by almost all on some form of modular planning and expression and provision for some form of indoor-outdoor living facilities."¹⁸

8 Plant, "The Lost Art of Federation." Plant locates the "genuinely modern revolution" in the 1930s with work by Grace Crowley, Margaret Preston, Ethel Spowers, Dorrit Black and Evelyn Syme, as well as the more widely acknowledged work of oi de Mestre, Sam Atyeo, Russell Drysdale, Eric Wilson, Frank Hinder, James Cant.

9 Peter Freeman, *The Homestead: A Riverina Anthology* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982), 60-62.

10 Arthur Boyd began his "Bride" series (more correctly "Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-caste") after a trip to Central Australia in 1951. which followed is immortalised by Arthur Boyd in his 1951 "Bride" series depicting half-caste and indigenous brides

11 Freeman, *The Homestead*, 60: "women were responsible for 'beautifying' the head station by decorating, gardening and entertaining; women set the tone of the colonial dwelling." Also: "the presence of a wife and family ... throws a halo of domestic felicity around the bushman's dwelling." And: "women started vegetable and flower gardens and the establishment of gardens meant the building of an enclosing fence around the home station."

12 Ross Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland: From the Dreaming to 1915* (St Lucia, QLD.: University of Queensland Press, 1982), 133.

13 Fitzgerald, *A History of Queensland*, 145. Fitzgerald observes, "(white) women were outnumbered by men four to one." Also: "Queensland remained a male-oriented and male-dominated frontier society ... well into the twentieth century" (149).

14 Anthony Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Described by Trollope on his 1873 tour of station homesteads on the eastern Darling Downs. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uq.edu.au/10.1017/CBO9781107338128>, accessed 15/03/2019.

15 Land selection introduced through legislation in Queensland from 1860 resulted in smaller parcels of land closer to settlements being made available, initially through leases, for more intensive cropping.

16 "Post War Domestic Architecture," *Architecture and the Arts* 8, no. 92 (June 1961): 43.

17 "Post War Domestic Architecture," 39.

18 "Post War Domestic Architecture," 39.

The Head House was one of a number of homestead “style” houses, that Dalton had built in the dry, sclerophyll-forested suburbs to the west of Brisbane by 1963; others included the Young (1956), Spink (1956), Leverington (1961), Crozier (1962), Whitehead (1963) and Stirling (1963) Houses. Photographed in black and white before their manicured gardens were established, they are characterised by natural colours and finishes, treated timber, and the low spreading roof forms of the traditional homestead. Many of these houses also featured in the popular press. The Head House featured in “Simple Dignity in Ranch: New Ideas Enhance the Ranch,” in *Australian Home Beautiful*, in which the “ranch house” is promoted as a “favourite form of home with every Australian generation since the foundation of this country.”¹⁹ The Stoneham House (1964) was described by John Hay in the *Sunday Mail* as: “making the best of two worlds” as a “ranch-style” house with a flat roof section and a pitched roof section.²⁰ The Leitch House (1967), for a retired couple who had spent a great part of their life in the pastoral industry in western Queensland, is described by Dalton:

*The long low expression of the Leitch house embodies design characteristics of the region: 8ft wide verandahs, galvanised steel hoods over the windows, batten screens to verandah ends, roof cripples to accommodate high internal ceilings and low verandahs, all naturally evolved out the client’s needs. The older furniture, and the interesting collection of a Queensland family’s lifetime have been enclosed in a form that succeeded in relating to the personal and private lives of the occupants.*²¹

In conventional accounts of Queensland architecture, Dalton’s work is more frequently associated with the development of a climate responsive modern house for the sub-tropics. It is strange then, that Dalton, who regularly derided style driven design responses, preferring to promote the search for an appropriate and “indigenous” architecture,²² allowed his work to be associated with the homestead “style” or its American equivalent, the ranch “style.”

Architect designed homesteads west of the Great Dividing Range are not common in Queensland. The Wippell Homestead, “Morocco” (1963), by John Dalton Architect and Associates for Stan and Noela Wippell, is one little known example. “Morocco” was a working station, located on the Balonne River, a braided river flowing into the Darling, on the western Darling Downs.

19 Eric Wilson, “Simple Dignity in Ranch: New Ideas Enhance the Ranch,” *Australian Home Beautiful* (June 1963): 8-11.

20 *The Sunday Mail Magazine*, October 25, 1964, p.14.

21 John Dalton, “Architects Comments.” Copy for publication in Dalton’s papers. Undated. Courtesy of Suzanne Dalton.

22 John Dalton cited by Robinson, “Dalton Houses 1956-1975,” 323.

“Morocco” shares the formal characteristics of Dalton’s climate-responsive through his ranch-like Brisbane projects. The design is one level with wings of single banked rooms to maximise cross-ventilation and roof overhangs to limit sun penetration. In the new temperate setting of Darling Downs, these same characteristics delivered an outcome that was romantic in idea, and a practical, first principles approach to design for the harsh, inland climate, constructed from local labour and materials.

Case Study One: Probing the Distance between Settler Myths and Fact: The Wippell Homestead, “Morocco”

“Morocco” was commissioned by Noela Wippell, who far from echoing the lonely figure on the edge of a Russell Drysdale landscape, took matters in hand by commissioning John Dalton Architect and Associates, a fashionable Queen Street, Brisbane practice, to design a *modern* home for her family.²³ Through her reading of the popular press, Noela Wippell knew of the importance of good climate responsive design and it was on this basis she approached Dalton’s practice. After marriage to Stan Wippell, Noela moved onto her husband’s family property and assumed responsibility for the domestic arrangements and the children’s education, whilst Stan managed the property and livestock. However, she was not prepared to accept the existing elevated timber farmhouse. Built during the depression using green timber²⁴ and neglected during the post-war period, the existing house was in need of significant repair. The Wippell’s

23 Interview with Jill Hammond and Noela Wippell at 48 Curzon Street, Toowoomba on February 18, 2016. Queen Street is the main street of Brisbane’s CBD.

24 As the green timber dried out, gaps between boards opened up, making the house very draughty. Interview with Jill Hammond and Noela Wippell at 48 Curzon Street, Toowoomba on February 18, 2016.

Figure 1. John Dalton Architect and Associates, “Morocco” homestead, St George, Darling Downs, (1963). Image shows new homestead in the foreground and the original house shown behind. (Photograph courtesy of Noela Wippell.)



decision to engage a fashionable Queen Street architect attracted local interest. In settler mythology, the housing of humans rarely had precedence over station operations and livestock welfare.

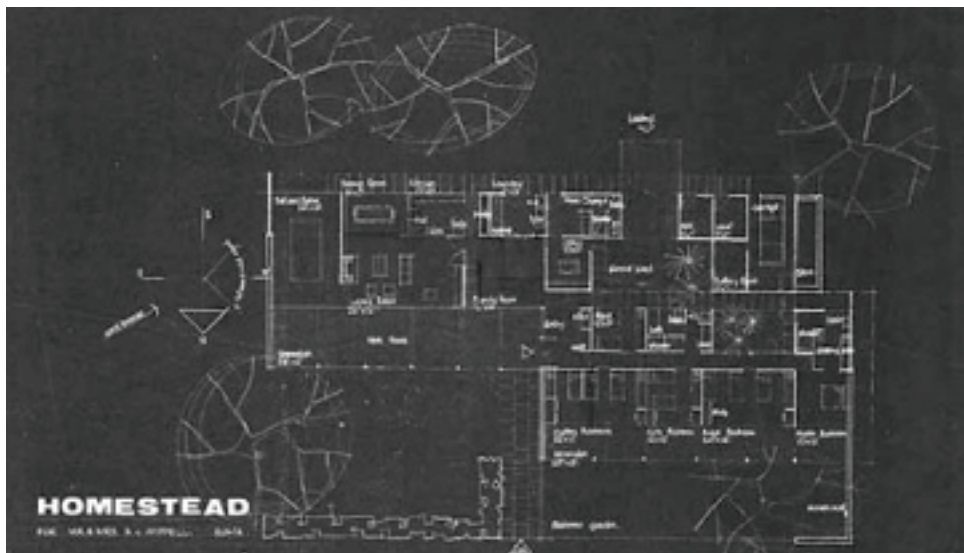
Remoteness brought complexities. The project was commissioned before construction of the Roma-Surat Development Road and access to the property was over black soil roads through paddocks that were dry and dusty or heavy after rain dirt roads. Dalton insisted on supervising and made six one-day site visits during the course of construction, flying into Roma. Noela Wippell would collect Dalton from “town,” two hours away by car.²⁵

The new house was located in the homestead compound, not far from the original elevated timber farmhouse and adjacent a number of other timber outbuildings.²⁶ The new homestead took no clues from the original house or its relationship to site and setting (fig. 1). Its final design accommodated, in addition to space for a family with small children, a separate entry for shearers from the yard to the farm office and enough storage space to enable the self-sufficiency of a small community for extended periods, especially during the summer wet when access roads were impassable. It included cold rooms large enough for a slaughtered beast. Dalton’s solution involved separating functions into wings divided by courtyards. Each wing was oriented east-west with long elevations facing north and courtyards between (fig. 2). This solution enabled the separation of farm operations from the family living spaces. A string of services and storage extended the length of the south elevation. The living space was large enough for a dining table

25 Jill Hammond recalls her mother, Noela Wippell on the drive to “town,” opening and closing gates behind her with white gloved hands. Gloves were an essential item of dress in conservative society during the early 1960s. Interview with Jill Hammond and Noela Wippell at 48 Curzon Street, Toowoomba on 18 February 2016.

26 The original elevated house was repurposed for hay storage.

Figure 2. John Dalton Architect and Associates, “Morocco” homestead, St George, Darling Downs (1963). Architectural floor plan. (Drawing by John Dalton Architect and Associates. Reproduced by permission from Noela Wippell.)



and a billiard table and occasionally, for church services. Twelve-foot deep, flyscreened, north facing verandas ran the length of the living space on the north. Here children played and were home schooled safe from insects, poisonous reptiles and roving marsupials.

The Western Downs has a greater diurnal and seasonal temperature range than Brisbane. Concessions to the temperate climate included the use of concrete slab floors and mass walls as a heat sink for winter months. The fireplace, chimney and mass walls on east and west elevations extend beyond the eaves line on an angle that recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West. Photographs of the house under construction indicate double-skin brickwork ready to be faced with fieldstones sourced from Wayamba 15 kilometres way. The low-pitched gable roof extends well beyond these walls protecting them from solar heat gain in all but the coldest months. Stan Wippell and station hands built the house using structural timbers sourced from trees felled and milled on site, using machinery deployed in building the original farm buildings. Whilst entirely romantic in its idea and built using local labour and materials in line with settler 'myths' of make-do, "Morocco" was a modern house. Building expression was the result of design decisions addressing prosaic matters such as the maximisation of cross-ventilation, the application of sun path data for summer and winter and the control of insects and wildlife rather than the imposition of any pre-determined form. The result is a long, low house nestled into its site, a sheltering roof casting dark shadows on stonewalls, with timber beams and eaves picked out in white paint and deep verandas promising cool. It demonstrates what Robin Boyd in 1951 described as an "Australian" response, in that it referenced "vernacular and anonymous architecture" through the expression of shelter and layered spaces, often involving a pergola or veranda.²⁷

Noela Wippell and John Dalton consulted on interiors, which involved a modern palette of materials and colours. Differences of opinion arose only in relation to the reception of the house in its rural setting: leading to an argument about fencing for the house compound. Noela insisted on the need to keep children safe, and stock and native animals at bay, whereas Dalton wished to maintain the illusion of the modern settler's house embedded in an extended rural landscape. The low chain wire fence seen in images of the house taken by the family soon after it was completed was the compromise solution, but otherwise the relationship between the house and its rural setting remained uninterrupted.²⁸

27 Boyd cited by Conrad Hamann, "The Return to the City," *Old Continent: New Building*, 33.

28 "Morocco" ceased to be the Wippell family home and was sold in 2006.

Comparisons: Guilford Bell's 1960s Homesteads

There are few contemporaneous architect-designed homesteads in Queensland besides the two designed by Guildford Bell for Australian Estates pastoral holdings. Both “Burleigh Station” Homestead at Richmond (1965), and “Kalamia” Sugar Mill Manager’s Residence (1964) near Ayr, are elevated above their surroundings and topped by a pyramid roof,²⁹ which, as Norman Day notes, becomes in Bell’s hands, a “platonic architectural element.”³⁰ A rhythm of vertical framing, flyscreen and mullions elements under a pyramid roof delivers forms strongly redolent of the vernacular Queensland House, rather than the horizontal lines of mid-century modernism. “Coochin–Coochin,” he Bell family’s historic homestead near Mt Alford where Guildford Bell spent time playing as a boy, exhibits the deep verandahed spaces and hipped roof forms characteristic of a Queensland homestead.³¹ Philip Goad identifies in Bell’s work a “refinement of forms,” and “an obsession with the visual aesthetic of the whole.”³² Day attributes this to “a deeper level of architectural scholarship and exploration.”³³ Bell’s rural Queensland projects are self-consciously mannerist, not “simple, ‘natural,’ unornamented response(s).”³⁴ This differs from those design features demonstrated at “Morocco,” which by comparison, is an exegesis of Dalton’s principle preoccupation with “ways of living life” as “the mainspring” for an appropriate and “indigenous” architectural form.³⁵ For both architects, a commission for a remote rural dwelling provided an opportunity to explore the relationship between built form and the vast interior landscapes, where the settler homestead became the touchstone for exploring these ideas.

Case Study Two: Mt Manning Station: A post-Modernist Reading of the Homestead.

Explorations of farm typology as an idea, persisted through the 1970s in rural work of architects including Glenn Murcutt, Philip Cox, and Chris Kringas in Queensland.³⁶ It resurfaced in the 1980s when the question of an identity for Australian architecture again preoccupied the profession. Glossy publications such as *Rude Timber Buildings in Australia* (1969), by Philip Cox, John Freeland and Wesley Stacey; *The Australian Homestead* (1972) by Philip Cox and Wesley Stacey; *Australian Woolsheds* (1972) by Harry Sowden; and Peter Freeman’s *The Homestead* (1982), all documented and/or romanticised extant historical fabric making it accessible to the general public. *Old*

29 Norman Day, “Homesteads: The Edge Condition,” in *The Life Work of Guilford Bell, Architect 1912-1992*, ed., Leon van Schaik (Melbourne: Bookman Transition Publication, 1999), 170; Philip Goad, “A Very Private Practice,” in *The Life Work of Guilford Bell*, 119, 123.

30 Day, “Homesteads: The Edge Condition,” *The Life Work of Guilford Bell*, 170. Interestingly, Bell’s other rural projects are also distinguished by geometric ordering; “Birkenburn Station” (1964). Bungendore, outside Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory, by series of concentric circles and “Bouddi Farm,” Kilcare Heights (1966) outside Sydney, by a linear arrangement of solid and void organised symmetrically about an axis.

31 Coochin Coochin Homestead, Queensland State Heritage Register, (#600034), Statement of Significance, <https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600034> accessed 22/12/2019; Goad, “A Very Private Practice,” 104.

32 Philip Goad, “A Very Private Practice,” 106.

33 Day, “Homesteads,” 169.

34 Hamann, “The Return to the City,” 33.

35 John Dalton, “Queensland’s Pragmatic Poetry,” *The Australian Journal of Architecture & Arts* 7, no. 82 (August 1960), 32.

36 Ian McKay, Robin Boyd, Hugh Stretton and John Mant, *Living and Partly Living* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Aust.), 1971) See architect-designed “homestead” by Graeme Gum’s House for Mr and Mrs D. G. Yencken at Tathra, NSW completed in 1969 (72-75), and Chris Kringas’ House for Mr and Mrs Stevens at Doncaster, Richmond, Qld., completed 1969 (84-89).

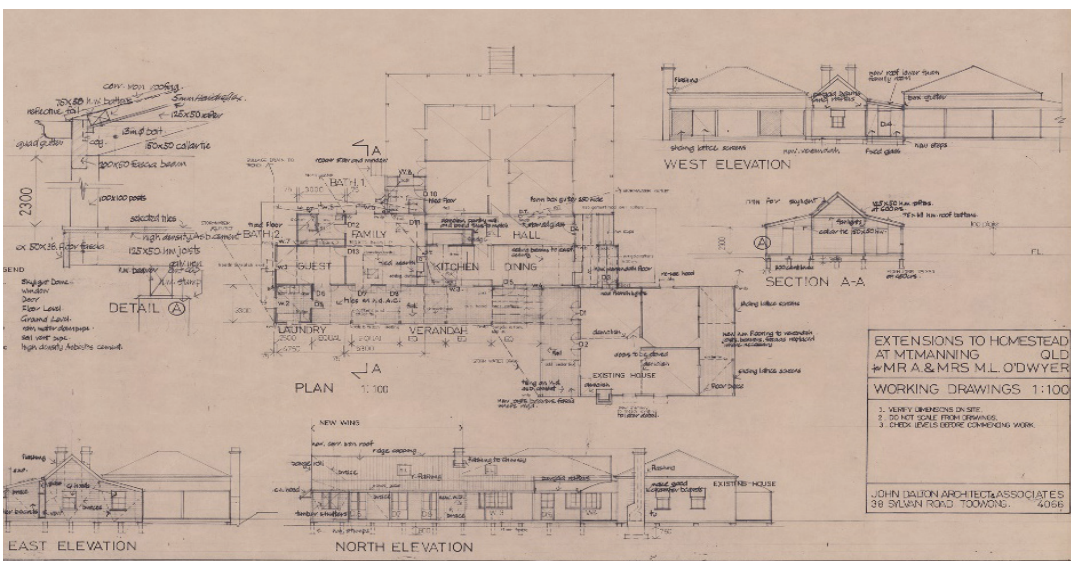
continent, new building (1983), edited by Leon Paroissien and Michael Griggs, and *Australian Built*, edited by Michael Griggs and Craig McGregor, both initiatives of the newly formed Design Arts Committee of the Australia Council, promoted Australian architecture nationally and internationally. Although intended to reflect the pluralist nature of Australian architecture at the time, Paul Walker and Karen Burns note a privileging “conceptually” of “regionalist” architecture.³⁷ Both publications are illustrated with anonymous farm buildings and celebrated ones including John Andrew’s House at Eugowa, NSW (1981); House at Mt Irvine, NSW, by Glenn Murcutt (1979); and Jackson House, Shoreham, Vic., by Daryl Jackson (1980). Similarly, the cover of *Detailing, National Identity, and a sense of Place in Australian Architecture* (1984) features a delicate aerial perspective in coloured pencil, by Noela Hills, of Richard Allom’s Birdsville Shire Hall (1982)—a vast sheltering roof pressed low against the arc of the earth’s horizon. The language of farm buildings in steel or timber and corrugated iron, masks a range of intentions: referencing various Postmodern paradigms; Critical Regionalism’s recovery of history and the vernacular; and an interest in the aesthetics of new technologies, and environmental consciousness.³⁸ The homestead provided one model by which a number of new paradigms were translated, rather than transplanted, into Australian contexts.

It is interesting then, that twenty years after the completion of “Morocco,” and challenged ideologically by the very idea of Postmodernism, John Dalton accepted a commission in 1980. The client, another exceptional modern woman, Mary-

37 Walker and Burns, “Constructing Architecture for International Audience,” 25.

38 Necdet Teymur, *Environmental Discourse: A Critical Analysis of “Environmentalism” in Architecture, Planning, Design, Ecology, Social Sciences and the Media* (London: Question Press, 1982), ix.

Figure 3. John Dalton Architect and Associates, Mt Manning Homestead (1981). Architectural working drawings including plan, elevations, sections and detail. (Drawings by John Dalton Architect. Courtesy of Fryer Library, The University of Queensland, UQLF499, “John Dalton Papers,” Tube 10.)



Lou O'Dwyer, engaged Dalton to assist with extensions and renovations of an existing homestead for a pastoral holding, in Mt Manning Station overlooking the Condamine River, Queensland. On accepting the commission, Dalton, who thought he had retired from practice to a quiet life in rural Allora, apparently quipped "once more then ... this time with love."³⁹

39 Interview Mary-Lou O'Dwyer. Suzanne Dalton recalls that it was Mary-Lou O'Dwyer, not her husband, Andrew, who commissioned John Dalton.

Dalton's solution for the O'Dwyer family involved relocating a contemporaneous four-roomed cottage adjacent to the existing farmhouse to create a north-facing courtyard, and stitching together the existing house, the relocated house and the new additions, with a twelve-foot veranda. In doing so, he maintained existing spaces with social rather than merely functional significance, such as the original entrance hall, an important ceremonial node in station life (fig. 3).

The practice of extension through the accumulation of sheds and small structures was, and still is, common in rural areas. The appearance of a collection of small structures, the hallmark of the traditional homestead, had ironically provided the justification for a number of Dalton's suburban houses from the 1970s including the Peden (1972), Vice Chancellor's (1972) and Louis Residences (1974) in Brisbane.⁴⁰ The unity in the composition of this collection of buildings, with their different gable and pyramid roofs, bullnose and skillion veranda lines, and a variety of plate and ridge heights, was achieved through the introduction of a consistent datum for veranda plates and pergola beams. Dalton further assisted in knitting the existing home and contents with the new, through a collection of building artefacts built into the homestead in a collagist manner reminiscent of practices by Charles Moore. Mt Manning Station is Dalton's *post-modern* take on the model provided by "Coochin-Coochin" homestead. Literally and figuratively, far from the gaze of his critics, the homestead provided Dalton with a mechanism for his translation of Postmodernism into the local context. Mt Manning Station can be described in the same manner Dalton described the earlier Leitch House (1967): "The older furniture and the interesting collection of a Queensland family's lifetime have been enclosed in a form that succeeded in relating to the personal and private lives of the occupants."

40 Dalton referred to Wolston House, a homestead outside Brisbane, in discussions with clients. Wolston House was the first building to be listed by the newly formed Queensland National Trust.

Conclusion

The interrogation of several rural projects by John Dalton and others, provides an opportunity to reflect on the settler homestead as an abstract idea and its role in architectural discourse in Australia from the 1960s onward. The paper

confirms the homestead as a reference point and device for mapping Australian architectural responses in sub-urban, rural and remote location designed well into the twenty-first century.

The homestead operated as a compound to gather all the functions of human life together and to provide a sheltered centre symbolic in the face of a vast and hostile landscape. Through symbolisation—a process of transformation that separates subjects from their reality—and through mythification it is possible to engage with the positive aspects of these stories whilst suppressing the negative connotations inclusive of the domination of indigenous peoples and environment through force, and the marginalisation of women by omission. A distance has opened between the ideal image and its less palatable associations, and the result is the glamorisation of rural and remote settlement for use in promoting Australian identity in art and architecture. In light of the de-colonisation project, an awareness of the distance between the myth and historical fact should now open new questions about identity.