Architecture Bulletin
Spring–Summer 2017

Front cover: In 2010, more than 5000 people gathered in front of the Sydney Opera House to be photographed nude for Spencer Tunick’s installation The Base. Tunick’s provocative works can be seen as an update on the long tradition of the nude as artistic medium. Photo: Nick Moir / Fairfax Syndication

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The previous issue of Architecture Bulletin on housing affordability has been receiving a lot of positive feedback from members and others who have had a chance to read it. It seems that genuine public discourse in architecture and the built environment is sadly at a low, and publications like the Bulletin are valued.

The Australian Institute of Architects play an important role in generating public discourse through our publications, the regular events at Tusculum and our broader advocacy role, including the annual architecture awards. Behind the scenes our committees, in particular the Built Environment Committee, are constantly reviewing and commenting on draft policy documents that will influence the outcomes for the built environment going forward. As the peak body of the profession, government and authorities rely on our advice and respect our opinion. We may not always agree with policy makers, however our role as critical friends is motivated out of a genuine desire for the public good and better design of the built environment. In a world where active lobby groups push for self-interest over everything else, the Australian Institute of Architects is often the lone voice consistently pushing for design excellence.

This current issue of the Bulletin, Provoke, has quite a different and more polemical take on public discourse. Perhaps the next phase of provocation could not be seen to be actual disruption. In the business world, disruptive innovators are revered as the future leaders who change the way that society operates. AirBnb, Uber, Tesla and of course Apple gave us services and products that we did not know we needed. Disruptive innovation should also be the realm of architects. Critical thinking and dreaming is part of our business world, disruptive innovators are revered as the future phase of provocation could be seen to be actual disruption. In the Institute of Architects is often the lone voice constantly pushing for design of the built environment. In a world where active lobby groups push for self-interest over everything else, the Australian Institute of Architects is often the lone voice consistently pushing for design excellence.

At some point during the genesis of this issue of the Bulletin it was suggested that we ought to label the provocative statement ‘the Institute needs reform’ into the mix. I took it as a rhetorical statement, rather than a necessarily provocative one. And while it probably is true, and nobody would shy away from the challenge, it is at the same time a bit too easy to cast aspersions on a broad and somewhat amorphous body like the Institute.

As we write this, we need to qualify this. It’s a복歌词这方面. That is to say, we need to acknowledge that anyone is afraid of having, or even an issue that anyone would necessarily dispute, but because the reform of the Institute is something that is already well underway – and this reform is driven by your elected members.

In the previous two years, the organisation has radically reshaped its key government model in two fundamental ways. First, from a membership-based, fifteen odd National Council to a re-energised, best-practice model which charges an Executive Board with the financial and risk-based management, and engenders the elected membership in the sphere of strategy and policy. Second, with a revised and modernised constitution. Neither of these is small acts, and the organisation has enacted both in the space of two years. All of these are necessary structural precursors to the more functional programs and services with which most members see and engage. The work continues, with equally essential improvements in our financial structures and reporting, human resources capacity, IT infrastructure and marketing and communications also underway. Moreover, by the time this edition goes to print, there will be a new three year strategic plan in place.

For NSW, in 2017 much of this change has been behind the scenes, as we recalibrate the way we work to align with the critical areas that the membership has identified, particularly in the areas of advocacy, education and practice. More of this will become apparent as we progress into 2018, through the programs we run and services we deliver on behalf of members.

The key, however, remains our governance framework. While for many this term will recall something arcane, opaque and complex, we are working to make the processes and systems both robust and transparent. For the first time in a while, we have reviewed (and now illustrated) the structure of the relationship between our membership, the various representative committees, your elected Council, and our staff team, who together bring expertise in programs, professional development, and policy and research. This work has all been undertaken with and through your elected Chapter Council.
Newcastle Division

Construction in the Hunter region is booming with over $38bn in developments approved in Newcastle alone in the last five years. The cities of Lake Macquarie and Maitland are also experiencing substantial growth. While some of these developments have generated controversy, they have also provided a great opportunity for the local architectural profession.

One result for this development is the changing nature of, and development pressure on, many suburbs, particularly those close to the inner city. Newcastle City Council recently prepared a draft masterplan for the suburb of Wickham, adjacent to the Newcastle Civic Centre. Wickham is being impacted by the Newcastle Urban Renewal Strategy, which advocates a strategic shift of the commercial core of the city westwards and the development of a new heavy rail terminus and transport interchange in the area. Newcastle City Council sought comment on the draft masterplan. We believe it is important that the Institute be involved in such discussions. As such, the Newcastle Division worked with the NSW Chapter and prepared a submission in response addressing issues including housing design, public transport, traffic management, cycling facilities, community facilities and character. We hope that the Institute can continue to assist Council in developing the masterplan. Thanks to local committee member Jodie Dixon for facilitating the response together with Murray Brown from NSW Chapter office. Peter Kempl, Newcastle Division Chair

Wickham masterplan

A draft masterplan released by Newcastle City Council in March aims to build on the historic logic of the commercial core of the city centre to Newcastle West. Wickham is evolving from a fringe semi-industrial area into a mixed use urban neighbourhood with a new focus as the new Newcastle transport interchange.

In its submission, the NSW Chapter’s Newcastle Division recommended the preparation of a Newcastle specific housing design guide to ensure a minimum consistent standard of housing design. A Wickham Design Ideas Competition would also encourage new ideas on the area’s design possibilities. The worst result would be a dense high-rise dormitory suburb.

Powerhouse Museum

The NSW Government intends moving the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences from its Sulman Medal-winning adaptive reuse of the 1899 Ultimo Power House to a new building on the banks of the Parramatta River.

In a Sydney Morning Herald op-ed, the NSW Chapter President Andrew Nimmo proposed two arms of the museum. The Ultimo building would continue to display its impressive collection of engines, aeroplanes and vehicles, complemented by a new branch of the museum in Parramatta. The government’s business case for the move, including consideration of a continuing cultural space in Ultimo, is expected at the end of the year.

Better Placed

The August launch of the NSW government design policy marks a turning point for the NSW built environment. Built around seven objectives, the policy advocates the importance of good design in creating better places and spaces, supports industry and government to deliver better design and enables effective design processes to be established and supported in the planning system.

Better Placed not only describes the design process itself. It will form part of the terms of reference supporting the delivery of design excellence processes, including design review panels and design excellence competitions. Welcoming the release of the policy, NSW Chapter President Andrew Nimmo said: “The new policy will help to deliver a higher quality of new development and great places as we meet the challenges of an increasing population.”

Murray Brown, Policy Advisor

Murray has retired after working at the NSW Chapter in policy and advocacy from 2006, including four years of organizing CPD. We wish him all the best in Canberra.

Chapter news

SuperStudio 2017

A clever idea, presented clearly, is a very persuasive thing. This is an important lesson and one that architects best learn when young. There is another: that sometimes the bigger the problem, the less time one should give oneself to propose an answer. SuperStudio, the Institute’s annual student competition, tests both of these.

SuperStudio 2017 was, as usual, a contest of ideas. Thirteen teams from NSW and ACT this year contested for the best project produced in response to a nationally-consistent brief: a defensive territory. The responses to the brief were diverse and sometimes a bond sawing through the provocation by parody to ‘make Sydney great again’. ZIP-NEY, a proposal for an aerial infrastructure and its alternatives to vehicular traffic congestion; and even digitally-activated gargoyles employed to assist in policing the streets of Sydney.

Fantastic though these ideas may be, there comes a point when ideas need to become interested in rude reality, and where it might be important to acknowledge that architects don’t always possess the answers. Our household, for example, are probably not the best field for romantic experiments, however well-intentioned.

Three prizes were awarded. Third, to a kind of play of digital abandonment in Martin Place; and second, to a well-executed field of rectangular prisms in Hyde Park, recalling Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. The winning scheme was an inventive and playful reimagining of the concrete defensive billboard as a kind of mushroom column, wrought with tensile elements that reimagined these too-frequently sinister protectors of public space with a musical quality. Here was a clear presentation of a concise idea, where the focus was no longer on the problem, but where architecture was the provider of the solution. A worthy winner.

Joshua Morrin, Executive Director, NSW

We thank the University of Sydney for hosting this year, and Dr Digna Ronemus for helping inspire the prize.

It is important that our students continue to enjoy the support of the profession, and to this end we welcomed the support of our jurors and mentors:

2017 SUPERSTUDIO JURORS

Vaughn Lane (Jacobs)
Fiona McIlhatton (Bates Smart)
Dr Digna Ronemus (University of Sydney)
Andrew Tinney (HGR Architects)
Shane Smale (SJE Architecture)

2017 SUPERSTUDIO TEAMMENITORS

Ben Coulston (Semeni / University of Queensland)
Jared Bhog (TGD Architects)
Georgia (aixiomn UTS Program Management Office)
Matilda Laskie (Blue Sheet)
Chloe Rayfield (TGD Architects)
Georgia Savva (TGA’s graduate architect)
Hannah Slater (Neeson Murcutt Architects)
Kaveh Rezaee (Tender Skylark’s graduate architect)
Eveline Rovey Price (Tender Skylark’s graduate architect)

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Tessa Goodman (Awards & Prizes Officer, NSW Chapter) (forsyrene committee)
Jacqui Chevannes (SGMA representative, University of Sydney)

FIRST PRIZE

Dymphamel
Yim Hoi Fung/ivan, Justin Pak and Justin Wohl (UNSW)

SECOND PRIZE

A conversation
Claire Jc, Jingli Lan and Gerard Yip (UNSW)

THIRD PRIZE

Urban + Terrorism = Urbanism
Erefteo Bontemps (University of Sydney), Aitkatay Sakate (University of Sydney) and Winten Xu (UTS)
It was with great pleasure that I undertook the role of Jury Chair for this year’s NSW Country Division awards. I am a passionate advocate of our awards system and believe it plays an important part in our continued promotion to communities of the best of regional architecture. We used the Award Force platform for entries again this year, making it easy to make submissions, and also providing access to entries for jurors during the judging process. The awards were well supported with 35 entries across eight categories. All entrants are also considered for the James Barnett Award for outstanding work by a Country Division architect, the Terminus Timber award for innovative use of timber, and the People’s Choice award, which is open to all through online voting.

The jury was impressed with the quality of entries and diversity of projects. Judging took place at the Country Division seminar at Goombooey Presen Station in Tamworth on 4 August. The awards were announced at the annual regional conference in Coffs Harbour on 5 October. Congratulations to all the entrants.

Sarah Aldridge, Jury Chair

Jury:
Sarah Aldridge (Jury Chair), Space Studio
Shaun Carter, Carter Williamson
Genevieve Libby, Genevieve Libby Architects
Janne Ryan, Ideas Curator

BKA Architecture

BKA Architecture announces the appointment of three new associates - Kristy Simpson (Newcastle), Radhiya Toshniwal and James Kim (Sydney) and one new associate director Bruna Souto. BKA feels we could be approaching the end of the current residential development boom. Two contrasting residential projects are nearing completion:

* 140 Apartments – Cliff Road, Epping
* 40 Student Housing – Barker St, Kingford

Both projects aim to go beyond the solutions which tick the boxes associated with the requirements of SEPP 65/ADG as well as meeting the numbers contained in the LEP related to FSR, height and other requirements. In most cases the criteria above will ‘fill’ the envelopes available negating potential variation, articulation and depth. Hence ‘standard’ and ‘repetitive’ solutions have prevailed recently with the only variations in façade material selection.

While the ADG elevates the standard of residential apartments – it does also working within a LEP framework, reduce creativity and rely heavily on the ticking of boxes producing standard solutions.

Mirvac Design

Australian cities are being disrupted. The rapid pace of change is a major challenge in achieving connected, thriving communities. Neighbourhoods are being raised from their suburban slumber through increased density, site amalgamations and an increase in mixed use. While most professionals agree that this is needed, how do we adapt our approach and ensure this rapid change is beneficial for all?

Customer research has informed our view of what future neighbourhoods must contain. People value community, amenity and a sense of place. A collaborative approach from all sectors is required. In many cities a lack of coordination between agencies providing the necessary infrastructure to achieve these goals is sorely apparent. Focus on the inner and middle rings of cities with projects such as Harold Park and Marrick and Co. in Sydney is delivering wall connected and sustainable places responding to heritage and existing communities. Revitalisation of the Australian Technology Park will establish it as the innovation hub of the future. Placemaking is core to our approach, embedding it within the surrounding context, disrupting the outdated concept of a Business Park to truly become a connected and thriving place.

David Head, Senior Urban Designer, Mirvac Design

Patrons news

BKA Architecture

BKA Architecture is pleased to announce the appointment of several new directors across the practice – in Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra and Perth.

In Sydney we welcome Alex Small, Ramin Jahromi, Saeed Mardani, Lachlan Abacrombie and John Fassino. We also announce the particular Perth based Emma Williamson and Kieran Wong of CODA, who are now merged with Cox Architecture. Cox Architecture is a singular design focused practice consisting of six Australian studios – as we are indeed a practice, the movement of ideas and creativity between our studios can be fluid. These appointments both strengthen and diversify the ownership of the practice, shaping a large practice ‘model’ based on a broad ‘partnership’, founded on a shared ethos. These appointments positions us well for a dynamic and changing future.

We congratulate our new partners and look forward to further appointment in Melbourne and Brisbane in the coming months.

Crone Architecture practice, Crone is proud to announce the promotion of seven key employees to the position of senior associate and associate. This vibrant, young studio, recipient of the Sulman Medal for Public Architecture at the 2017 NSW Architecture Awards, recognises employees with a diverse range of skills in design, management and technology thereby ensuring the continued growth and future success of the practice.

Stephan Harris, with some 30+ years’ experience in architecture, has been promoted to senior associate as has Ashley Dennis, one of the lead designers on the medal-winning Orange Regional Museum.

Crone is equally pleased to acknowledge the contribution of Maria guardala, Sally Ssu, Warren Meyer, Ariana Rodriguez and Andrew Woodward in promoting each of them to associate level.

Maria has been instrumental in maintaining Crone’s DA standards; Sally is an integral member of the high profile Wanda Vista Hotel development at Circular Quay; Warren’s knowledge and experience in BIM and Revit ensures the firm remains at the cutting-edge of technological design; Ariana brings a wealth of international experience to Crone’s masterplan and large-scale residential developments while Andrew’s involvement in managing the delivery of the David Jones Elizabeth Street retail redevelopment, in collaboration with Singapore-based firm Benoy has been invaluable. Crone, one of the early adopters of BIM and members of the Champions of Change, is an expert authority in firm-wide BIM processes and improve equality and diversity within the practice through gender, age, culture and skills-set in order to create a collaborative studio where knowledge is shared and a healthy work/life balance is maintained.
By any measure, Colin Still was a remarkable architect - productive, creative and likeable, as much at home on the sea, as on land. Colin’s graphic skills were extraordinary whether manifest as architectural drawings, paintings or prints and he leaves a rich legacy of completed projects which deserve to be better known. I have had the pleasure of knowing Colin since the early 1960s, when we were both studying architecture at Sydney University. Even as a student Colin produced drawings that were remarkable upon when displayed in the ‘crit’ room. It surprised no-one when Colin went on to graduate in 1966 with the University Medal (building design) and become an outstanding architecture student for the year, as well as numerous other awards. Shortly afterwards Colin went to Harvard University where he earned the degree of Master of Architecture. Upon his return, Colin resumed his work in the Special Projects Section of the Government Architects Branch producing a broad range of highly acclaimed projects. Colin’s skill at rapidly producing drawings, alluringly coloured, quickly won the loyalty of a diversity of clients. His projects from the 1970s include a building for State Bankworks in Blacktown, restoration and additions to Grafton Court House and Police Station, as well as the massive task of masterplanning and providing the architectural input for the new Flemington farm produce markets. Perhaps the most outstanding project from this period is the sculptural and spatially rich Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Oatley, now the Oatley Senior Campus of Georges River College. Not generally known is the fact that Colin produced concept plans for all the potential Olympic venues in a detailed feasibility study for holding the Olympic Games in Sydney in 1988, which the Wen Government ultimately decided not to pursue. Key buildings from the 1980s include the State Sports Centre at Homebush with its powerfully expressed steel structure and membrane-roofed entrance, major additions to the Australian Museum in College Street, and the dramatic large pre-stressed membrane-roofed entrance. Many of Colin’s projects from this time received RAIA Merit Awards but perhaps his finest work of the 1980s was the George Street Library, which was awarded the Sulman Award in 1986. Colin also designed some distinctive private houses. The flowing spaces of his family home in Victoria Street, Watsons Bay, enriched with his work of art and collected decorative items, was emblematic of his welcoming and unpretentious personality.

Part of the culture of Special Projects was the Friday night talks and drinks, to which Colin would contribute not only architectural imagery but also the most delectable sashims, caught by Colin at dawn that very morning. His skills in this pursuit are legendary. With the election of the coalition government in NSW in 1988, the process of progressively dismantling the Government Architects’ Branch commenced and Colin moved to the office of Cox Richardson, where he was a partner from 1994 to 2000. Once again Colin had the opportunity to be involved with a rich array of projects, both in Australia and abroad. These range from the Nuclear Reactor at Lucas Heights, an unrealised scheme for the Pipiou New Guinea High Court, the Lake Macquarie Art Gallery, buildings for the CSIRO as well as many other buildings and studies in Australia and Southeast Asia. Colin’s first foray into high-rise structures was the luxurious Rivergate apartment complex in Singapore in a richly curvilinear garden setting adjacent to the river.

COX director, John Richardson describes Colin as ‘a magician with colour who really knew how to use black ... Everything he turned his mind and hand to was a work of art, Colin’s particular work of art ... when Colin drew the section, the building became alive.

Colin died at home in Watsons Bay on 7 August, aged 74, after a protracted battle against cancer. His funeral with a congregation overflowing into the garden was held at the lovely St Peter’s Church, Watsons Bay, overlooking Colin’s favourite fishing grounds. His life was then celebrated at a splendid wake at the Watsons Bay Game Fishing Club attended by friends and architectural colleagues - including many young architects who he mentored – all enriched by knowing Colin.

Andrew Andersons

**Graduates of architecture, engineering and design were well represented in the more than 200,000 Europeans who came to Australia in the wave of migration associated with World War II. While only two graduates of the Bauhaus were known designers in Australia, artist Ludwig Hirschlack-Mack and printmaker George Adams (born Georg Teltchek), a small number of graduates from the universities and applied arts schools of Vienna, Zurich, Prague and Budapest spent the majority of their lives in Australia.**

Architect Hans Peter Oser (1913–1967), graduated in 1936 from the Technical University, Vienna, having joined the office of Peter Behrens. Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier had earlier worked for Behrens. Oser then held the position of chief draftsman in the practice of Josef Hoffmann and Oswald Haarff, central figures in the Vienna Werkbund and teachers at the School for Applied Arts, Vienna. The young architect’s time with the firm included assisting in the design of the Austrian Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques in the Service of Humankind in Avignon. In March 1938, Oser, one of Vienna’s many Jewish residents, was forced to flee the country. With wife Herta, he arrived in Sydney in December 1939.

Oser successfully navigated the difficult transition between a European architectural career and re-establishing himself in Sydney in the 1940s. As early as 1941, Oser’s work was featured in the Australian media and he held a wartime position as chief architect of the NSW Housing Commission. At the end of the war Oser formed his own practice and during the 1950s gained a considerable reputation, as demonstrated by his inclusion in the 1952 exhibition Architecture Today and Tomorrow, alongside Harry Seidler and Arthur Baldwinson. In 1956 Oser formed a partnership with French-born, Sydney-educated architect Jean Fombertaux. Highly skilled designers, they produced some fine examples of late-International style architecture. Examples of their work include the still prominent William Bland Centre, Macquarie Street (1960), Tosche’s Limited Administration Building, Mary Street, Surry Hills (1960) and the North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield (1956). The firm’s flout of the BDAC Travel Centre, Castlereagh Street (1963), one of Sydney’s most sophisticated modern spaces, and was included in the Royal Australian Institute of Architects’ 1971 survey 444 Sydney Buildings. After Oser’s untimely death in 1967 aged 54, the firm continued as Fombertaux Rice Hanley.

George Korody (born Kordy Gyorjyl (1890–1957)) arrived in Sydney in 1940 aged 50, having left behind a successful career as a designer, architect and educator in Budapest. A number of his Budapest projects were published, including in the British Decorative Art: The Studio Yearbook and his 1939 design of the Vilmos Lipcsai Fashion Salon remains one of Budapest key modernist interiors. Korody travelled to Sydney with the official role of holding an exhibition for the Hungarian Society of Applied Arts, however due to the war the exhibition did not go ahead. Deciding to stay, Professor Korody became a well known figure in the Sydney design scene.

A graduate of the established Royal Joseph Nador Technical University, Budapest, Korody enquired about registration as an architect with the NSW Board of Architects, but like many émigrés was deterred by the rigorous examination required. Korody instead turned to furniture design and in 1947 joined with the Sydney-born travel agent and Europhile Elise Saggart in the furniture business Art at Home. As chief designer, Korody produced a distinctive range of austere furniture featuring Australian cockwood, woven cane, strongly angled legs and black vitrolite glass. Drawing on a functionalist vocabulary infused with Hungarian folk traditions the Artes range was unique in Sydney. Although similar to Pierre Jeanneret’s c1955 Chandigarh designs, Korody’s work for Artes appears to pre-date them.

Korody was a prominent member of the Society of Interior Designers of Australia, and also wrote articles outlining his philosophy for design, In 1965, Dutchman Dick van Leer joined Artes and began importing iconic 20th-century designs from firms such as B&B Italia and Herman Miller. Korody died in 1958 but many of his designs continued to be sold through Artes, which remained a bastion of modern style for more than three decades. In 1979, surviving partner van Leer sold the business, which was eventually rebranded and continued to operate as Space Furniture.

Oser and Korody are two figures within what was a diverse and active community, although few of its members are known designers. Through an object-rich publication, this project tells the stories of Sydney’s émigré designers and the forgotten connections to European modernism they brought to post-war Sydney.

Rebecca Hawcroft

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1 Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Oatley, 1980. Image courtesy State Library of New South Wales. – B2000/2740

2 Defensive walls and structures, one of the key modernist interiors. Korody travelled to Sydney with the official role of holding an exhibition for the Hungarian Society of Applied Arts, however due to the war the exhibition did not go ahead. Deciding to stay, Professor Korody became a well known figure in the Sydney design scene.

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**George Korody enquired about registration as an architect with the NSW Board of Architects, but like many émigrés was deterred by the rigorous examination required. Korody instead turned to furniture design**
This is an issue full of issues. We have invited a range of contributors to take opposing sides of a variety of topics ... from the value of architecture to methods of practice to questions of social and gender equity. These are important issues that the profession cannot ignore—and yet, architects often retreat from this type of discourse. Perhaps, working in a small industry, we fear reprisal and reputational risk. Or harbour memories of opinions derided in university critiques and client presentations. Or we are just content to let our buildings do the talking. By creating positions of black and white, we have forced our contributors to take a position on these issues. Some authors present well-researched, well-considered arguments; others embrace hyperbole and humour to make their point.

We chose to keep the contributions anonymous. This allows each author to speak freely on their topic, but more importantly, keeps focus on the content of (and not the characters behind) these contributions.

Our core mission is, of course, to provoke. Not just to irritate, but to promote greater participation in issues of high consequence to us all.

David Tickle
Editorial Committee Chair
The Opera House is
good for Sydney

The Opera House has been 
bad for Sydney

CHECKLIST:
What makes a really good building?

✓ Iconic / World famous / Instagrammable
✓ Conceptual clarity: can be drawn (and redrawn endlessly) by anyone, from Ken Done to a 5 year old
✓ Available in Lego™ version
✓ Wins loads of awards, even from architects who are usually just jealous of other architects
✓ Makes normal people think about architecture
✓ Demonstrates the transformative nature of architecture as well as how effectively architects can get screwed by the process of architecture
✓ Takes pressure off entire architectural industry because no matter how hard you try, you’ll never design a building that good and all you need to do is wave the views from your building to that building and then everyone is happy

Leg Godt* 
* not their real name

The bridled scorn of so many talented architects is the Sydney Opera House. What an easy place Sydney would be if it were not ever built. History’s footfall distances us from the bitter events of the building’s past.

The Opera House has caused so much scorn, so much division and a conscious intention to remove architecture from the centre of things. One building should never have been allowed to absorb all the interest in our place. One building should never have been allowed to encourage debate against the relevance of architecture in a city.

The Opera House, despite its brilliance, is always ignored – always put to the bottom of the heap and still offered to custodians who do not know what architecture is, leaving the front of our city with a white party tent and pot plants for decades.

The Opera House shows us up to be very provincial and fundamentally aesthetically illiterate. It has demonstrated that even the greatest architecture will be ignored here and our culture is so uneducated that it can relegate a great building’s interiors and conservation to almost anybody. To date, there have been half a dozen architects that have engaged in the pursuit of its improvement and all that can be said is that they haven’t quite yet managed to destroy it. The latest array of ‘award-winning architects’ could be considered ‘slightly mismatched’ to themselves let alone the design ethic of the building. On the one hand, there is a picture of robust order and geometry within the building; on the other hand, there is possibly a new interest in the dissemination of geometry, the hiding of geometry or the
3. The Opera House commenced the cessation of all competitions for a building to be constructed was in 1994 for the Pyrmont Housing — and that was carefully marked with a commercial mandate.

The Opera House sits at the end or the beginning of our city; it is a barnacle of memory that we should care about but we do not. The recent removal of the paving and their reinstatement shows how ill-informed we can be even about technical pursuits — the Trust has allowed yet another part of the building to be repaired in a sea of ignorance and neoprene packers. If this is the standard for the Opera House then what of the rest of our work?

When Renzo Piano wanted his building in Macquarie Street to ‘speak with the Opera House’, people in Sydney were shocked. To an outsider this would be obvious. To us, this was unheard of. Perhaps it was poetic justice that Renzo pulled down the most important work of one of the architects instrumental in the political mess surrounding the Opera House. It can be said that a confounding mess is the result every time.

The tourists come and go, and yet the state government would like to never create a study in the amount of money that the Opera House brings as a consequence of tourism. Perhaps this is the last scornful idiocy. The very mercantile and mercenary propositions that have resulted from the disdain of its cost and lack of utility could be easily qualified by the statistic that architecture and cultural artefacts ‘bring money’ to cities.

Perhaps we should wait a few more generations when the present ‘racy to the bottom’ has destroyed it further. Then the next generation may see virtue in putting it back together. But what would they put together? It was never together to start with. So all we have is a half-made thing, a large impressive object that hypnotises tourists and raises values of the houses in the eastern suburbs that view it. It is a hope that future generations can harvest some of their own pride from what can show demonstratively, that to date, no one in our profession, educational faculties or various levels of government has sought to harness its full cultural worth. This too shows us to be ignorant. It is like having the Ottomans in charge of the Parthenon again; they used it to store their artillery and allowed the Venetians to ironically use it to fight the Ottomans.

The building has brought out the worst of our culture for so many reasons. It marked the time when the decline of the prestige of architecture as a profession here commenced. We do not deserve it. If it were never built, we could very well have a city like Melbourne — one with no singular work of greatness and where mediocre work, at least, is protected in a safe collective delusion.

‘Easy it is to imagine, the world without the Sydney Opera House. We would not live such hypocritical lives: on the one hand taking our visitors down to see it as something of a cultural offering, on the other hand, never looking after it ourselves’

making of something anew — or something that nobody knows. So little is spoken of this selection process; so disinterested are we as to the results.

Custodians of cultural artefacts are usually the best people we have to take care of our buildings. If this is true, the Opera House shows us all up for who we are. Here we have it. It is like putting TS Eliot to dine with a potato farmer. The result is always awkward and dumbfounding and deeply embarrassing for anyone that knows better. That said, Eliot may write a great poem about potato farming that can change the world. There is no such metaphor ascribable to architecture.

So little is spoken of this selection process; so disinterested are we as to the results. It is equally alarming to see how no school of architecture in Sydney can boast any study of the building. I challenge all the schools to prove that any student has been offered formal training on the subject since the building was built. We are more likely to read about Corbusier than Utzon. It can be said, on the contrary, that there has been a conscious effort not to teach about it at all. The silence in this pursuit is deafening. The building has demonstrably been of absolutely no didactic use to date.

The Opera House opened in 1973. No Sulman Medal was awarded between 1970 and 1978, except 1975, when the jury of award for the Sulman retrospectively in an event that hardly noticed this important work of one of the architects instrumental in the political mess surrounding the Opera House. It can be said that a confounding mess is the result every time.

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Senior Project Architect (SPO): OK, if we are going to argue about ambition being better than experience, we need to get a few things straight. In this debate, you are Donald Trump and I am Hillary Clinton. I am Peter Zumthor and you are a recent grad who’s just finished a kitchen renovation for her parents and is trying to get it published on ArchDaily. I will be gentle with you, listen to your perspective and nod encouragingly. I might even have a few words of wisdom to impart along the way!

Recent Grad (RG): OK thanks, I’ll try to pay attention but I’ve been up all night setting up my website and working on three competition entries.

Who is Peter Zumthor? And thanks for asking about my parent’s kitchen, I’ve attempted a reinterpretation of domestic labour by de-gendering the space, freeing the patriarchy with good design... anything’s possible. LET’S MAKE ARCHITECTURE GREAT AGAIN!

SPO: Great... again... Did you know that up until relatively recently architects received their training as part of an apprenticeship? Indeed, many of the great architects have spent significant portions of their career gaining experience and training with more experienced architects? Frank Lloyd Wright was apprenticed to Louis Sullivan. And Mies Van der Rohe to Peter Behrens. These architects, as individually talented as they were, understood the benefits of experience as the foundation of true great architecture.

RG: It sounds as though for all your experience, you’ve lost that intangible idealistic quality that we must strive for. I would say this can only be reached through ambition and not experience. What about the ambition to conquer the mundane? We would get bogged down in this murky water you speak of without ambition. It is this which pulls us through, not experience. I’m talking about ambition as desires.

You have argued for the sanctity of experience which has only revealed the implied privilege given to it. In placing expertise over ambition, you are arguing to maintain the status quo. And if the status quo is maintained there is no room allowed for not ambition. Over ambition, you are arguing to maintain the status quo. And if the status quo is maintained there is no room allowed for not ambition. It is this which pulls us through, not experience. I’m talking about ambition as desires.

SPO: It is all well and good to blast off into unknown directions, but to think you can do this propelled by novelty alone is pure folly. It is a false assertion to claim that the avant-garde comes from ambition rather than experience. It perpetuates the myth of the ‘single genius’ architect and seeks to minimise the reality that architecture is crafted slowly and carefully with many skilled hands, honing something joyous out of messy complexity. As much as we might like to believe, architecture is not poetry or art that can seemingly arrive into the world fully formed. The realities of building demand an engagement with the mundane universes of regulatory and material constraints, gravity, money, safety, etc. Without the necessary experience to navigate these mundane waters, a building will never get off the ground. The avant-garde doesn’t look so impressive while it languishes on the drawing board.

RG: It sounds as though for all your experience, you’ve lost that intangible idealistic quality that we must strive for. I would say this can only be reached through ambition and not experience. What about the ambition to conquer the mundane? We would get bogged down in this murky water you speak of without ambition. It is this which pulls us through, not experience. I’m talking about ambition as desires.

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SPO: OK, I concede that ambition can motivate to challenge the status quo, but I must insist that architecture at any scale – a kitchenreno to a new city plan – requires experience for its execution. But please do tell me more about how you’re going to smash ceilings, bring revolution to the streets and break new ground. I’ll just quietly get on with the job of making great architecture. Poetry and all...

RG: I’d just remind you again who actually won the election... LET’S MAKE ARCHITECTURE GREAT AGAIN!
Committees are the answer

PROVOCATION: Sydney does not have a holistic cultural strategy – rather an ad hoc series of ‘business plans’ and ‘visions’ by individual institutions. Why don’t we develop public expert strategies for our cultural institutions rather than treating them as political footballs or commercial enterprises?

Global market drivers

‘World’s best practice’ used to mean that. Market drivers underpinning globalisation have reduced this to ‘the same as everywhere else’. Cultural institutions are not immune; building ‘trophy’ or ‘icon’ buildings serving political, commercial ends or even well-intentioned philanthropic ends. Guggenheim Bilbao and the Foundation Louis Vuitton come to mind.

The latter has a great restaurant and stunning viewing terraces – not of the art but the building’s surroundings! Gehry, the museum’s architect, was inspired by the funding philanthropist’s ‘dream’ in developing the form of the building. Reality? Is this how an authentic cultural institution is developed?

With respect to urban context, iconic projects are promoted as city catalysts attracting tourists and visitors. While many have attracted large amounts of visitors, this should not be the driving factor.

In its eagerness to achieve global city status, Sydney’s cultural institutions aspire to similar aspirations. Look no further than the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta bolstering the state government’s focus on Western Sydney (seats), or the Art Gallery of NSW’s iconic SAANA designed Sydney Modern soon to intrude onto Sydney’s Domain.

Both projects appear to proceed in the absence of a broader cultural strategy, or cohesive public process informed by relevant experts. While the Sydney Modern is the result of an international design competition, judged by highly-esteemed (mainly architectural) jurors, what cultural strategy guided the brief that includes a large commercial conference facility and extensive ‘observation platform’ that double the land take of the institution?

What holistic strategy underpins the removal of most of the Powerhouse collection from its growing cultural collections separated by the Second World War and Cold War, acknowledging the evolving culture, history and politics of the city. As a result, the architectural design of individual buildings and location of collections were informed by broader cultural and urban considerations guided by expert bodies.

2. Concurrent with the masterplan, there was an architectural design competition for the Neues Museum, centrepiece and linking element of the museum precinct. The finalists varied considerably, from Grassi’s conservative winning proposal to Gehry’s more radical intervention. The expert panel was not in agreement with the winning scheme by Grassi. An intense period of discussion ensued as the masterplan progressed.

The competition highlighted challenges rather than the solution.

4. A commission of experts including representatives of the museums and preservation bodies focussed on the Gehry and Chipperfield entries. As the discussion progressed, the runner-up Chipperfield was considered the strongest. As a result, Chipperfield with the conservation expert Julian Harrap was commissioned to develop the scheme and respond to the masterplan. The masterplan framework underpinned the final choice of scheme.

Conclusion – lessons for us

The Berlin process resulted in the institution being far more than the sum of its parts illustrating the importance of developing cultural buildings in a broader context. In the case of Sydney, we would do well to develop a cultural strategy underpinned by a well-considered position paper that could constructively take forward Sydney’s current debate regarding the Powerhouse Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW and more broadly, cultural facilities for Western Sydney. Doing so would engage the broader community informed by a multidisciplinary range of experts, as appears to have worked in Berlin.

Alex Lloyd*

HAVE YOUR SAY

Public survey for the Art Gallery of NSW expansion:
www.research.net/r/KXMZKLX

Public consultation for the New (Powerhouse) Museum at Parramatta:
https://new.maas.museum/consultation

Develop a cultural strategy!

This isn’t good enough – a rigorous open process should guide the development of our public cultural institutions. Is such a thing possible in a global market context? It seems to be in Berlin where, in contrast to Sydney, the Staatliche Museen Zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums) developed a cultural strategy guided by an expert position paper, public debate, a museum precinct masterplan as well as design competitions for buildings and the precinct.

While Berlin is very different to Sydney, both have similar imperatives to expand cultural institutions more broadly throughout their city – addressing growth in Sydney’s case, and reconnecting a city split in two in the case of Berlin.

A brief look at the Berlin case is instructive:

1. In 1999, Staatliche Museen Zu Berlin had the task of bringing together the city’s 16 museums and collections distributed amongst 25 buildings throughout the city. The first step was to develop a position paper. This set off an intense and controversial discussion amongst experts as well as in the media, engaging the broader community. The paper underpinned a cultural strategy linking museums buildings and collections.

2. A masterplan was then developed bringing together collections separated by the Second World War and Cold War; acknowledging the evolving culture, history and politics of the city. As a result, the architectural design of individual buildings and location of collections were informed by broader cultural and urban considerations guided by expert bodies.

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Committees are not the answer

Dear Ed,

The Committee has convened again to discuss this question. We have continuing concerns around the phrasing of the issue, which page of the Bulletin it will appear on and the standard of the sandwiches provided at the said meeting. We have determined the best way forward is the formation of a Working Group and a Reference Panel, both pending a stakeholder engagement process and several rounds of ministerial review. Probably looking at 18-24 months to resolve this. Hoping this works with your deadlines.

All the best,

CANTACT (Committees Are Not The Answer Committee Tribunal)

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Eds for positions on NSW Chamber Committees will be opened soon – your opportunity to be part of the answer. More info: https://bit.ly/2z19x32
Architecture is potentially not all about the 1%

Working for the elites, we put our client interests first and in that process also take part in depleting natural resources, actively fostering inequality and bluntly ignoring people who live in the built environment. Amongst tight deadlines and rash construction programs, we barely have time to produce drawings of quality. We do not have time, scope or money to explore options for the greater good of the society. And so architecture cannot be for anyone other than the 1% who put pay in our pockets.

Even if you believe some architects think beyond the wellbeing of their clients, it is important to note here that the law forbids architects from feigning expertise in areas outside of their sphere of knowledge. While we would never produce a structural drawing or a geotechnical report, we somehow dare to presume that we are experts in politics, economics and human behaviour in urban and social constructs. This is where the argument stems from that architects should participate in disaster reconstruction, slum upgrading, urban regeneration or in addressing social issues. Those few architects who step outside the regular profession of architecture and step into working on sensitive projects and environments listed above, risk doing more harm than good. The fragile context of such projects also means that any harm done will reverberate much longer after the architect has left the scene.

We are not engineers. We are not scientists. We are not builders and therefore contrary to our popular belief, we also do not bring practical solutions to any issue. It is inevitably true that good design is much more than aesthetics. Unfortunately, architects are also not good at good design. The problem begins right from our university education. Architectural pedagogy focuses heavily on the virtue of beauty, vague adjectives and post-rationalised design narratives. It disregards, in most cases, the social impact of design on the built environment and the practicalities of constructing a building. With almost no realistic understanding of the complexities of the built environment, we enter into practices who merely use us for our skills in CAD software. To keep the 1% happy, we willingly devalue ourselves and the profession. We expect our employees to put in hours and hours of unpaid overtime work so we can stick to the unrealistic deadlines imposed by our clients. We generate an environment in the practice that does not encourage our employees to think, to be creative, and to question the urban, social and environmental imprints of our design.

Architecture is and will always be for the 1%, but that doesn’t have to be a grim fact. In any given context, the law of the vital few acknowledges that the 1% we work for, has a much larger capacity to influence change than the other 99%. If architects are good at something, that would be in pitching our ideas and in winning projects by selling the dream. After revamping our education system and the way we practice, what if we could spend 1% of our time in selling an altruistic vision to our projects? And influence our clients to engage specialists in economics, anthropology and climate science in building projects with real value to 100% of the world’s population. Maybe one day we can influence our clients to not just care about our project’s immediate context but to even produce quality housing for the most vulnerable of the earth’s population, addressing climate change and so on.
SYDNEY is blessed with many cultural ‘treasures’, not least its wealth of heritage buildings. The city’s heritage places reveal much, not only about the lives, hopes and aspirations of their builders but also of those who have campaigned for their protection. Elizabeth Farrelly’s warning that the destruction of such treasures will end in the destruction of culture, and perhaps even result in the demise of the community controversy surrounding the fate of Sydney’s brutalist Sirius building suggests that we haven’t learnt the lessons of the Green Bans of the 1970s which fought against threats to Sydney’s heritage fabric and integrity. Such a failure to learn from past lessons is perhaps an indictment on our elected representatives but is also a reflection of the emerging armchair activism of our time, possibly in equal parts.

Sirius stands today as a representation of a social housing model reflective of an equality which stands in opposition to so much of the international politics of our day. Located between The Rocks and Millers Point precincts, it also stands as the first building designed by the community activism of the Green Bans, a series of crippling union strikes, which sought to protect working-class residential areas from developers’ interests. What we see today is similarly short-sighted plans for large-scale demolition and redevelopment of the site, favouring short-term economic return rather than long-term cultural and social values.

The plight of the Sirius building has been much publicised. Nominated for listing on the State Heritage Register by a Council of experts appointed by the NSW Government, listing was subsequently denied by the Minister responsible for the care and protection of NSW’s heritage.

The fate of Sirius and its single remaining long-term resident is unseized. In August this year, the State Government remained determined to disregard the long-established assessment process by filing a notice of intention to appeal the Land and Environment High Court’s ruling that former Minister for Heritage Mark Speakman had ‘side-stepped the required assessment’. In October, the NSW heritage minister Gabrielle Upton also decided not to heritage list the Sirius building.

In terms of heritage, this building is not more significant than its city. Indeed, the precinct around Sirius has equally been recognised for its heritage significance through the listing of the Millers Point Conservation Precinct. The two are intrinsically linked. The debate for the retention of Sirius does, however, present the argument that the city is at risk when one of its recognised treasures is disregarded and the cultural values which define the wider city are threatened in turn.

There is a real risk that, if permission to demolish is granted, the debate extended for the cultural and social significance of this heritage place will prove a catalyst and precedent for a dilution of the values and fabric of The Rocks and Millers Point more broadly. For example, there is every chance that to maximise returns from the divestment of Sirius, developers will seek to increase the building height to exceed that of the current building envelope. Such a move would contravene the intent of the controls established by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority Scheme of building height envelopes, established following the Green Bans to ensure the setting and context of the nationally significant precincts of The Rocks and Millers Point.

Moves to circumvent these seem likely since it is already being tested across other divestment sites throughout The Rocks.

Our politicians tell us this development opportunity is of more value to the city than the building. This Sirius case demonstrates that for politicians and developers, an economic return above any other consideration is of highest value to them.

Is the economic gain of the city more important than this building? As part of a larger debate, one must not consider and compare the city or the building in isolation. Rather than simply acknowledging that a city is the sum of its parts, it must be recognised that these parts extend beyond that of individual buildings, and indeed beyond the fabric and people that shape our urban environment. It extends to an understanding of the evolution and history of our society, where buildings are more than mere markers of architectural periods and styles, but reminders of past social policy, politics (both good and bad), the communities they served and the activism they inspired. Understanding the significance of a place extends beyond aesthetics and the politics of any term of government.

The debate surrounding the fate of Sydney’s iconic brutalist Sirius building suggests that we haven’t learnt the lessons of the Green Bans of the 1970s which fought against threats to Sydney’s heritage fabric and integrity. Such a failure to learn from past lessons is perhaps an indictment on our elected representatives but is also a reflection of the emerging armchair activism of our time, possibly in equal parts.

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The Save our Sirius campaign is important not only for its aim to protect this significant building but in maintaining the integrity of the planning assessment processes and the controls intended to protect and enhance our cities. As the Green Bans of the 1970s prove, we should recognise this because we’ve been here before. We armchair activists who sit in support of the Save our Sirius campaign and for what it represents more broadly, but haven’t spoken or acted with the impelled efforts of those dedicated to the campaign, should not be complacent in the face of the NSW Government’s continued legal appeals. We need to remind our elected representatives that past community-led battles to save the ‘treasures’ of our cities matter. Now, as before, we continue to value legacy over short-term economic gain, and the destruction of these places risks undermining the very culture upon which our cities thrive.

Sirius is one of Sydney’s iconic brutalist buildings, but it also provides much needed inner-city social housing. Its imminent removal from an increasingly gentrified inner city has shaken the armchair activists. The Save our Sirius campaign defends its namesake from a combination of relentless, hungry developers and the threat of destruction of a significant building. Selling the Sirius site is expected to make more than $100 million, which would provide for many new social housing dwellings in NSW. However, a heritage listing and retention of Sirius could reduce the value of the site to $170 million, therefore funding less social housing and causing the government to suffer ‘undue financial hardship’.

The building is indeed more important than the city. But only when we are constructing the right type of building and retaining our important heritage: for social housing, schools and hospitals in areas of increased urban densification.

We need to rise above the petty partisan politics and point scoring; to a local, state and federal level, where the time of the ‘post-truth’, and polarised politics means that we consume media that mostly accords with our view of the world. We need to advocate for the right type of building and the right type of sensitive, quality development; to house the people of the Martin Place tent city and provide dignity for less visible people pushed to the city fringe; to retain our assets and to protect our heritage; and to imagine new sustainable precursors developed for the needs of all.

While Sirius stands, it honours a city that cares for all socioeconomic levels, not just the higher echelon. It embodies a city with a soul. We need to rise above a megapolitan full of iconic architecture that is unable to effectively house its people, where ‘super Spacer’s room uptown in all their geohygiene’? Or can Sydney retain its soul?

This is Sirius.

1 Elizabeth Farrelly, ‘The brutal truth: we’re trashing our cities’, 6 August 2017
2 Associated Press, 1 August 2017
3 ‘Sirius heritage saga heads back to court’, Architect-
   Journal, 24 August 2017
Provoke

WE have three options in considering where heritage belongs. There is the past, where the building was created to fulfil a need at that time. This is the present, where we often find that the function has become superseded and the building is now redundant, but we continue to debate whether its heritage significance as a built record of that moment in time. Then there is ‘the future’, which inherits a list from ‘the present’ of buildings which are deemed culturally significant enough to override the fact they are obsolete.

As time progresses, our catalogue of built history to be preserved grows. Much of this, particularly civic, is located in areas that were once small towns but are now thriving cities that are already facing enormous pressure. With more than half the world’s population now living in urban centres, we are increasingly reliant on our built environment to address a range of social and environmental issues around density, infrastructure, livability and affordability.

Consequently, our urban centres need to be able to adapt and evolve quickly to meet the rapidly changing needs of our population and create vibrant, healthy communities. This raises the question of whether it is sensible to put relics before people?

Density is our major challenge, and available space is our limiting factor in addressing it. The choice to preserve a heritage building will be at the direct expense of new buildings that are smarter, more efficient and better placed to respond to current needs and expectations. Preserving heritage for its own sake will become a luxury that we cannot afford. This isn’t to say that there is no value in heritage, but rather that we cannot have everything – we cannot preserve all of our historic buildings.

Heritage belongs to the past.

WE are currently in the ‘rapidly changing needs of our population’ phase of our cities. In the old days, when social and economic standards were much lower, we could afford to have major cultural institutions, like museums, located in the CBD. But this is no longer possible. As our population grows, so too do their needs. More and more people are being attracted to the CBD for work, shopping and living. This means that what once was a town square is now a commercial and cultural hub.

‘Architecture and cities are about people, and whether our buildings respond to their current and future needs should be the ultimate measure of their value.’

While the CBD was once a quiet residential area, it is now a place that never sleeps. The city is always changing and adapting to meet the needs of its inhabitants. This is why the CBD is so important as a cultural and social hub. We cannot preserve all of our historic buildings, but we can ensure that the ones we do preserve are important and relevant to the needs of the current day.

The question of whether buildings should be preserved for their historical significance or for their architectural value is a complex one. Many buildings that are considered to be important historically may not be as relevant today. However, many buildings that are considered to be architecturally significant may be of little historical importance. The key is to find a balance between these two aspects, and to ensure that the buildings we do preserve are both historically and architecturally significant.

HERITAGE, as an indivisible part of our cultural identity, does not belong in the past. Being a tangible resource and the embodiment of our culture, items of historic significance contribute to the evolution of a rich and meaningful society. Consequently, the value we place on the identification and protection of our urban environments, retained for prosperity and free from prejudice no matter their age, is an indication of how mature and civilised we can be.

Just as it’s the future of our cities that matters, the future of our cultural identity is no different. We must ensure that our cultural heritage is preserved for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

Heritage does not belong to the past.

The political decisions for these new developments are but only economically determined and it seems that any analysis of heritage impact is undertaken as a part of a post-rationalising process. As the NSW Government operates a heritage management system (‘Better Placed’), there is the potential that the NSW Government would set the standard for recognising and retaining our heritage. Importantly the actions of this administration and its ministers must indeed be held accountable as they have denied the recognition (or even provide the necessary statutory protection) for many of our significant items: consider the current politicised debacle with the Sirius Apartments. Can heritage, as representative of our collective cultural aspirations, survive in this current political climate? At a time of unquestionable change, it is imperative to remind the NSW Parliament and the ministerial ‘taste makers’ who make the decisions on our behalf, just how short-sighted and obstructionist they have become. Their economic criteria are not the only processes by which to organise the future of our urban environments. In the ‘Better Placed’ policy, the reinvented NSW Government Architect has presented an alternative strategy. Arguing for good design, this document confirms that as a society we must undertake good design that recognises all aspects of heritage if we are to maintain our national identity. Far from being nostalgic and yearning for things ‘old’, this intelligently written document should be read by every minister in the NSW Government. They will be presented with the truism that heritage has more worth than any other aspect of our culture. As the NSW Government continues to alter the multidimensional aspect of our city, we must ensure that our cultural identity is preserved for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

Architects and cities are about people, and whether our buildings respond to their current and future needs should be the ultimate measure of their value.

Béton Brut*
If it doesn't consume you, you aren't doing it right

I am writing this article on a Sunday. In front of me, I have coffee, cake and a morning of cancelled plans – all clear signs of an unbalanced existence.

This hasn’t always been the case. For a while, I subscribed to the ridiculous notion that I could somehow achieve balance. Preached by Sunday paper lift outs and HR gurus, I believed in the commonly-held idea that I could eat well, live well and be well; lean in, but not fall over. I was made to feel like there was a magical equilibrium that I could reach. But work and life aren’t two sides of some neatly balanced equation. They are slippery and imprecise. And the reality is that work – with its demands and relentless calendar invites – often takes precedence.

Sure, life should sometimes win this relentless tug-of-war. But, the rest of the time, we might as well embrace the full pelt of a life in architecture. It’s more fun, more fulfilling and ultimately more realistic. These days, I am imbalanced on purpose.

We all know the common reasons for imbalance in our industry: long hours, low pay, unreasonable demands from employers and clients, and a competitive culture that places perfection on a pedestal. While I don’t support any of these things, they are all factors that make work/life balance almost impossible.

Outside of these challenges, architecture still takes grit, conviction and commitment. As an industry, we favour immersion over detachment. We do unpaid competitions, agree to the extra render, and don’t flinch at redrawing a bathroom ten times. This makes absolute sense when you are trying to do the best work that you’re capable of and when the process itself motivates you.

The upside of this is that, at its best, architecture enriches both our work and our lives. Balance is meant to be about making time for other passions and hobbies like gardening or fly fishing.

What happens when your work and your passion are the same? What if you find joy in perfecting a problem or puzzling over a junction? Or if you turn around and notice it’s quarter past seven and you’ve lost track of time? According to some, this is a bad thing – imbalanced and compulsive and crazed. Ironically, this is the kind of work that psychologists salivate over – the ‘flow state’ that demonstrates complete immersion in a task. Architecture can do this to us, and that’s something to be celebrated, not reprimanded.

Of course, there is more to life than architecture, and sometimes there is no better feeling than muting your calls to sit down, drink wine and watch Netflix. Architecture is a job and a hobby, a passion and a project. It defines our social networks and lays out our travel plans. It makes our hearts soar and our blood boil. And this is a wonderful thing. When something gives you that much meaning and purpose, who cares if it throws the balance off?

Choosing imbalance is the best way to move through this industry, but it inevitably requires compromise and sacrifice. We set our alarm clocks early to head off to a site, send emails outside of hours, and sign up for talks and committees. We give our time and energy, and our profession gives back.

As my wise and wonderful mother once said to me: ‘you can have it all, you just can’t have it all at once’. Sometimes you’ll be frantic and sometimes you’ll be calm. Sometimes you’ll be elated and sometimes exhausted.

There are no simple binaries, no magical scale. Rather, there’s a pendulum that oscillates wildly in all directions at once.

Duke Silver *

If it consumes you, you aren’t doing it right

ONE thing that sets our profession in sharp distinction from many others is its inherent reliance on our generosity of spirit. The success of projects seems to rely upon the emotional investment we make over and above the professional investment.

Is it time to withdraw the favour? Should we begin to treat the creative endeavour purely as part of the commercial transaction? It seems fair that architecture should demand much in the way of professional investment. The stakes are high; projects are increasingly complex, expensive and resource-intensive. The results persist for decades and profoundly shape the lives of the people who occupy them.

The risks of failure correspond to these high stakes, and the professional satisfaction derived from negotiating the pitfalls is for many something akin to cage diving with sharks – part adrenaline rush, part survival reflex.

We’re all aware of the requisite five years of tertiary education, the two-year indentured registration process and the commitment to lifelong learning through compulsory professional development. It’s a significant professional investment, nothing less than that made by our peers the doctors and lawyers. But the intriguing thing here is our apparent willingness not only to submit to the professional commitment but to make a similar emotional investment alongside it. And perversely perhaps, this is the very thing that tends to lift architects and architecture above the pack.

All great projects derive their greatness – at least in part – from the emotional and creative investment made by those involved in their conception. And typically, the beneficiaries of this emotional investment reside well outside the profession. At some level this is fine; ours is a profession evolved through the humanist tradition, where architecture’s cause is to improve society. However, there are problems with this situation, not least of which is that it’s definitionally unsustainable. It tends to consume us. Particularly those amongst our younger ranks, and often at a point in life where decisions about partnering, family and homeownership begin to interfere.

Possessed with conviction and passion, we devote ourselves to projects at the expense of ourselves, our lives and loved ones. We probably all recognise friends and colleagues for whom this rings true. Those who lose sight of balance, or worse, who lose their 30s altogether.

The pivot to this question is not to undermine the value of our emotional investment or deny our willingness to offer it, but instead, to avoid the risk of it consuming us. Architecture (in its broadest sense) benefits from our spirit of generosity and our willingness to contribute beyond selfish interest.

Great architecture advances society, lifts the human spirit and defines the public interest, all exactly at a point in history where the forces of neoliberalism tend to diminish them. I look to a model of practice where all participants can offer their emotional and creative energy to make projects exceptional and deliver the social dividends that only architecture can. A mode of work-life that allows us to be intensely proud of the role we play within an increasingly sophisticated, intelligent, discerning, diverse and just society. Be driven, be uncompromising, be professional, be generous and selfless, be emotionally invested. Just don’t be consumed.

Howard Roark *
Provoke

Gender equity is never going to happen

If you take the position that gender equity is embodied in actions that moderate and limit the impact of sex-based discrimination then gender equity is already happening. It is present in advocacy, affirmative action and legislation. Given this, let’s unpick the statement to develop the positive. In particular, the words gender, equity and happen.

Gender

Gender is a loaded word. Surprisingly, the positive. In particular, the words gender, gender equity is already happening. It is present embodied in actions that moderate and limit the limited to, gender can illustrate societal structural differences. It’s about accepting people on an individualised belief – as well as the best approach to achieve it – and instantly you have a recipe for poor decision making and clarity of direction. At times, well-meaning groups charge forward and give measurable definitions for what is fair and reasonable. Even when defined in legislation, we aim for the wiggle room. The influence of power and privilege controls the timing of our move towards an equitable world. In the field of architecture, historical, cultural and institutionalised systems result in power and privilege being assigned to the white male. Unfortunately for them, privilege naturally generates an element of blindness towards the struggles that others face. Some react to this with kindness and open eyes. Others fight the feeling of being accused when they don’t feel responsible for the situation. There is no doubt that all leaders are ‘good’ people, but unless they consciously take responsibility for inherited systems and invest in readressing biases, the patterns of inequity will not budge. Of the reasons listed today, this change can occur – not by chance but by will.

Will we, by chance, reach a point where we accept individuals for who they are and no longer be required to question our assumptions and expectations regarding gender?

In short, no. Whether by chance or not, we humans have not proven to be capable of such lofty heights. We will always need equity to actively check our potential to discriminate. The most significant barrier to equity is reaching an agreement on the meaning of “fair”. We all have a built-in radar for fairness, yet one’s interpretation of fair is likely to be different to another. Transfer this to the group and task them to settle on an abstract, individualised belief – as well as the best approach to achieve it – and instantly you have a recipe for poor decision making and clarity of direction.

Equity

In her article, Why equity policy matters, Naomi Stass drew from the work of the Australian Federation of Medical Women defining equity as “the process of being fair to all genders and all individuals towards an equitable world. Inherent to gender equity was the specific valuation of difference and diversity.” We are hardened to understand difference, constantly scanning the field of people and categorising who is similar to us and who is not. At times, this can extend to a ‘them and us’ mentality. The ‘mystery of motherhood’ but mothers under-stand one constant: it is different for everyone.

As a group, young women are a major hurdle for gender equity. Biologically they are women, but they have not yet been assigned the gendered roles of society and so they feed the discussion on the status of fairness towards women. For them, life is fair – in a 50-50 sense. Growing up, they were educated with ideals such as ‘you can do anything.’ However it is not right for adults to create aspirations without the social structures to make them real. Unless we stop feeding these pipedreams or significantly rewrite the rulebook for women post-30, we will delay change squandered in meaningless quarrels between the young and the old. Assumptions around the biology of women continue to define the roles of women on the home front. Culture is slow to look beyond the ‘mystery of motherhood’ but mothers understand one constant: it is different for everyone.

Those who have not borne children feed the mythology around the bond between the mother and child, and this generalisation restricts individuals to lead their own life. Lastly, the tiredness epidemic shapes the time for advocacy. Gender equity will not happen by chance. The amount of work that women currently complete to maintain a household and develop career ambitions results in a level of exhaustion that leaves little space to question whether it is fair. The byproduct of exhaustion is acceptance of the status quo. Women, through standing together in solidarity to adapt roles, women will continue to face challenges not faced by men. And so, given our behavioural patterns, it is unlikely that gender equity will reach a point of ‘no further action’ in our lifetime. That said, if you want to prioritise equity, then you need to act. Nothing will ever take place unless you take responsibility for it. You’re contributing to the barrier to fairness. What will you do?

Notes

5. https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition

Gender equity is going to happen

As a society, we have evolved exponentially over the past 500 years and I do not doubt that we will continue at an even higher pace and a global level in the foreseeable future. It will become more enlightened (and I believe we will) we will need to draw on more significant capabilities and experience. With new found freedoms, women will have so much more to contribute across every level of society, be from a unique perspective, innate toughness or a natural ability to nurture a creative thought. The skills are complementary and supplementary, the resource is untapped and the possibilities are limited by imagination only. The desire to look at gender equity as ‘the right thing to do’ on a comparative basis, will be supplanted by the realisation that women have an incredible amount of diversity and uniqueness to contribute.

You only need to chart gender equity over the past 500 years, by geography and culture, and you will see a steady but inevitable advancement. Voices are being heard, ignorance is slowly being washed away, awareness is coming to the fore and changes are being made.

While ignorance and fear of the unknown have been the greatest hindrance to the speed of change, I feel that technology has given us all resources to individual expression and incredible amounts of varied information. This alone provides an excellent platform for testing opinion, holding us all accountable and exposed to new ways of thinking.

To date, some cultures and workplaces have embraced the opportunity of gender equity seamlessly, while others have struggled. The path is inevitable and I believe that the next ten years could prove a tipping point throughout many parts of the world.

Once equity is achieved at the point of making decisions, it becomes embedded in our everyday consciousness, the numbers will become irrelevant. The numbers pendulum will swing and will forever reflect a combination of circumstance, environment and politics.

It will not be a discussion about them and us, so much as about people. It will be about respecting individuals and giving space for each to thrive and the collective will be all the better for being inclusive and supportive.

It’s not a question of whether gender equity will happen, it’s merely a question of how it takes for humanity to inevitably evolve into this space.

Celeste *

Instagram is making architecture dumb

It would be convenient to default to Marshall McLuhan’s *The Medium is the Message* in any discussion of Instagram and the chimera of multiple other new digital platforms. But the medium is always what you make of it, and the content can have a broader value than the means of its transmittal. It’s easy to get caught up in the clickbait, which in a microsecond has superseded the flickerbait that used to characterise the dreamy page turning through magazines.

Instagram is symptomatic of the contemporary “information overload” problem that is undermining our ability to fixedly concentrate on a single intellectual task. This applies not only to scrolling through feeds but also to the careless and clueless posting of mediocre images, with trite or absent commentary. Like many other platforms, there is also the treadmill of endless advertising or want self-promotion. Vacuous is as vacuous does.

Of course, it doesn’t have to be like this. Like any other media, Instagram can be used to delight, engage, inform and broaden our knowledge and understanding. It can help to discover quirky angles on life, nature, things and places. Some personal favourites include the erudition of @shftoptplus (Phillip Arnold), the activism of @phuong_le (Phuong Le), the backlane compositions of @michael_stephen_harvey (Michael Harvey), the treasure trove of @combconstruction (Scott Burchell) or the classical beauties @rodiea.pt (Joao B elo Rod eia), amongst other cluey Instagrammers. Some of these people I have never met, but feel an affinity with — yawn ‘connectedness’ — through the interest in their posts.

As Instagram is here and now, best to use it with your intellect engaged and imagination twirled.

The Streetwalker

*’Instagram is symptomatic of the contemporary “information overload” problem that is undermining our ability to fixedly concentrate on a single intellectual task’*

INSTAGRAM is not making architecture dumb. Instagram is connecting architecture with our community. And being connected to our community is what keeps architecture relevant, thriving and valued.

It’s easy to argue that Instagram reduces architects’ complex cultural and artistic output to an ephemeral low-res image, but that argument ignores how successful Instagram is at starting conversations. It may look like an echo-chamber; a fashion parade propped up by indiscriminate ‘likers’, but my experience tells me it’s much more than that. Instagram connects us to a global audience. It connects us to other architects, to engineers, contractors, fabricators, artists. Perhaps most importantly, it connects our profession to future clients and business opportunities.

In the short time I have been on Instagram, I have been offered work, made genuine professional and personal connections, and been asked questions about architecture, about architects, about heritage. I’ve had my work hung in an art gallery and now, because of Instagram, I’m writing this. None of these things would have occurred if I wasn’t connected, through Instagram, to an engaged and receptive community. A community of ‘likers’ sure, but what’s wrong with positivity? The Instagram community may seem superficial, but in practice it is global, current, intelligent, passionate and dedicated.

My feed started out as a kind of documentary exercise, recording the laneways of inner Sydney. Straightforward elevations of the old dunny lanes and their honest, basic materiality. I rarely photographed known works of architecture, just the everyday unplanned stuff that we walk past every day. It has a charm of its own that I wanted to capture before it all gets rendered and painted mid-grey. Focusing on the diversity of materials in my neighbourhood, the photos developed into something more abstract, a kind of impression of the textures and colours of the area. Then I started adding new works of architecture, sometimes heritage items. On a deeper level, it also deals with visual perception. I only see from one eye, and that eye is not particularly good. The world to me is mostly flat with a shallow depth of focus; collage-like. I try to replicate this in my photos by limiting depth and perspective.

So you can ‘read’ my feed on any number of levels. It really depends on what you want to take from it. If you want it to be no more than a nice selection of colours, go for it. But if you want to read more into it, there’s more to be found.

In short, Instagram gives us the opportunity to connect our profession with a global community. And that community wants to connect with us too.

And if that’s dumb, then *Meh*.

*’It’s easy to argue that Instagram reduces architects’ complex cultural and artistic output to an ephemeral low-res image, but that argument ignores how successful Instagram is at starting conversations’*
Architects do not lack a moral compass

WITH the recent news that architecture ranks in the top ten occupation categories for Australian teens of both genders, it hardly seems like a crisis is in crisis. And yet, as a profession we remain interested in our relevance and reputation, unsure of our place among other trades and broader society. In a panel discussion at the Royal Academy of Arts, titled ‘Architecture and freedom: architectural ethics’, panellist Anna Minton suggested that discussing ‘public interest’ rather than ‘ethical considerations’ is more conducive to meaningful discussion about ethics in architecture – as public interest is concerned with what constitutes public benefit and public good. In contrast, writer, journalist, and broadcaster Jonathan Meades says ‘there’s nothing good about ethics, it’s rather like sincerity, it depends what you’re being sincere about, tyrants are sincere about genocide’. Meades is highlighting what we all know - that your morality is different to my morality and it will be different again to the next individual. Considering ethics as public interest is not a new idea, but it does form a useful framework for discussions as it elevates individual ideas about right and wrong to way we see ethics as a group.

Architectural Review editor Christine Murray has said that articles on ethics are popular among their readership. However, our debates above in architecture are often clouded with no firm conclusions. What is conclusive, is that architects seem to be preoccupied with the idea of doing work that is socially responsible and they hold themselves to this higher standard almost by choice. Ethics and architecture don’t need to inhabit the same sentence as Meades states, but somehow the two find their way entwined together at our insistence. At the Boyd Foundation lecture in July 2016, Bijoy Jain spoke about the hand as a symbol of empathy for him in the creation of their way entwined together at our insistence.

Architects and clients

Architects and clients have a reputation for ending on adversarial terms, being blamed for timing and cost overruns. I posit that this is a result of the architect’s moral compass, not the lack of one. In an architect-supervised building contract, the architect switches from being the client’s agent (in the legal sense) to a neutral arbiter who is nevertheless paid by only one side. The tension in this position amplifies the responsibility of the architect to act in good faith and to preserve the public good. It is somewhat inevitable that the fallout contaminates our reputation.

Architects and the community

2016 Venice Architecture Biennale curator Alejandro Aravena has spent most of his career responding to the housing crisis. He notes that ‘these difficult, complex issues require professional quality, not professional charity’ to deal with them. Aravena’s best-known work involves housing for underserved populations and the influential ‘half house’ project, which involves the professional design and construction of half of a house and the occupants are left able to complete the remainder at a later date themselves when they have the means. The fact that Aravena was considered a deserving candidate for curating the Biennale is an indication of how seriously the architectural profession takes these issues.

Locally, we have seen the architectural community step up to defend the rights of public housing occupants in inner city Sydney with the campaign to save the Sirius public housing complex, while the late Paul Pholeros and Healthhabitat showed that architects have both the skills and the interest in improving lives directly. Upending procurement methods can be another way in which architects can positively contribute to the community and reduce housing costs (think Jeremy McLeod’s Nightingale Housing). Radical architectural thinkers like Indy Johar are pushing the profession to cast our value in terms of social outcomes, rather than delivered projects. This is hardly the work of a profession that lacks a moral compass! Nor is this a belated response to a bad reputation: architectural thinkers have been engaged with issues of mass housing and social progress from the days of Ruskin through to early Modernism. The solutions proposed change; the moral compass that drives them does not.

Architects and ethics

Architects and their clients

Architects, at their most basic level of competence, conceptualize and communicate instructions about the layout and construction of buildings to third parties to build. This is typically on behalf of a client. Many architects rely on charm, and with experience become natural salespeople, taking advantage and manipulating their client’s ignorance to secure their own work and profile at least at the front end. Architects spruk obscure awards they’ve won to clients without giving any context to the award, such as its history, who sponsors it, how many entries are received and how much it costs to enter. (And they often find about how much the winning project cost too – can’t scare off a future client with accurate costing information!) They greatly exaggerate their experience and capabilities and extend this to claims about their buildings. To truly see an architect’s capacity for embellishment, simply compare a marketing render with ‘active edges’ and a finished, unpolished photo. This tendency to embellish the truth is a decay by another name.

WHAT is a moral compass? Morality is widely understood to be shared social norms about right and wrong. Morality differs from ethics in that ethics may be externally imposed. While morality is typically individually held, morals are almost always socially implicated: how we behave towards others. A moral compass then is an innate sense of what is right and wrong. To suggest an entire category of people lack a moral compass is a serious charge. In the words of Steven Covey, ‘we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behaviour’. Let us then judge the behaviour of architects with their clients, other professions and each other to see if this reflects the presence of a moral compass.

Architects and clients

Architects, at their most basic level of competence, conceptualise and communicate instructions about the layout and construction of buildings to third parties to build. This is typically on behalf of a client. Many architects rely on charm, and with experience become natural salespeople, taking advantage and manipulating their client’s ignorance to secure their own work and profile at least at the front end. Architects spruk obscure awards they’ve won to clients without giving any context to the award, such as its history, who sponsors it, how many entries are received and how much it costs to enter. (And they often find out about how much the winning project cost too – can’t scare off a future client with accurate costing information!) They greatly exaggerate their experience and capabilities and extend this to claims about their buildings. To truly see an architect’s capacity for embellishment, simply compare a marketing render with ‘active edges’ and a finished, unpolished photo. This tendency to embellish the truth is a decay by another name.

Architects lack a moral compass

The ego of architects is legendary, having been sent up in everything from The Fountainhead to 2016’s ‘The Architect’. The latter tellingly used actual quotes from architects, including Gehry’s infamous ‘I don’t know why people hire architects and then tell them what to do’. After all, we are a profession who use the term ‘starchitect’ without irony to refer to a special few. Architects always know better or know more than anyone else – the hallmark of a narcissist bolstering their sense of self. This ego-centricism also explains the architecture industry’s obsession with competitions and awards with their identified winners. Architects’ attitude to client budgets is appalling in the extreme, they’re frequently downright irresponsible: ‘A budget – that’s a problem, right?’ We look back and laugh at how small the budget was when we started. Once the client’s fallen in love with this design, they’ll find the money. Many architects misrepresent the value of a build on DA forms as a favour to clients. Rather than appreciate the favour, clients now have concrete evidence that the architect can be influenced to lie – right before the architect shifts into an independent contract administration role.

In contrast, when architects lose projects it’s never their fault: it’s the client’s fault for not understanding their vision, not having the budget to pay for the design, not listening to them. The common requirements of PI insurers that architects never admit fault when a client initiates a claim for professional negligence greatly exacerbate this natural incapacity for shame, guilt or remorse.

The moral – architects and other professionals

Our development system is set up in an inherently combative manner: architects draw up plans, which are then judged by planners and lay people who may have no qualification other than physical proximity. Architects, with their understanding of light and privacy, are often frustrated by planning policies that can work in direct opposition to architectural principles (for example, ‘living rooms should face the street for passive

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surveillance’, with no consideration to aspect). As a result, many architects break planning rules, sparking hostile interactions with planners and neighbours alike. They see themselves as special and above the law.

Similarly, architects speak of allied professionals not as well-intentioned individuals committed to completing a sound and rewarding project to the best of their professional capacity but instead as obstacles to achieving their dream. Which sounds more like something you’d hear in the office?: ‘The engineer/certifier/planner is fucking me with this fucking column/code/control’ or ‘Looks like I stuffed up but thankfully the engineer caught the mistake, so the job can continue’. Yeah, I thought so. Let’s not even get started on the reputation of architects with builders.

**Architects eat their own young**

Architecture firms are approached on a regular basis by keen and desperate students willing to volunteer their time and skills for free, as they seek an edge in a competitive job market. Having the discipline to refuse these offers can be challenging, and I’m willing to bet more than one or two firms don’t quite manage to do it. That’s before we look at certain overseas firms that have set up in Australia recently and are notorious for accepting free labour. They go so far as to require ‘interns’ to supply their own laptop, software and commit to working six days a week for six months.

It’s unfair of me to point the finger at a single company and interns though – we all know larger firms (often characterised by their tendency to have acronym names) are basically pyramid schemes. There are steady reports of firms having informal policies about overtime, not ‘counting’ until 55 hours have been worked in a week, with promises about ‘coming in late tomorrow’. Staff work ridiculously long hours, proving their ‘commitment’ to the firm with the carrot of being made an associate, who will benefit in turn from the long hours of others. Mysteriously, by expertise, capacity and cultural fit, men were the better candidate for promotion to associate or partner – with back-of-the-envelope calculations estimating this occurrence 100+ times in a row over the past 30 years between our largest practices. An attitude of ‘do it for the love of it’ and ‘if you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen’ has created an industry which continues to reproduce itself: stale, pale, frail and male.

The ACA annual salary report continues to show over 10% of architects being are paid below award wages and 37% of graduates were being paid below the award – and that’s before superannuation and overtime are factored in. It seems that too many architects run a short calculation like this: ‘The award calls for (say) $28/hour for 38 hours, then seven hours overtime at 1.5 which works out at $42/hour, so a 45-hour week should cost $1358 … Nah, I’ll pay $30/hour on the basis of a 38-hour week, set up a culture where overtime is the norm (“firm buys dinner”), tell them the award doesn’t apply because they earn more than the minimum wage and pocket the $218 difference. Multiply by 48 weeks and 20 staff, and there’s a nice extra $200,000 in “profit”. The more they work, the more I profit.’ Not strong evidence of a moral compass.

There’s also a healthy grapevine among women in architecture that transmits information on which high-profile architects are known to exclusively hire attractive, young female graduates; be ‘close talkers’ after a wine or two at a conference; and who should never be left alone with students or are just plain creepy. Also on this grapevine are which firms that always seem to promote young men and only ever send the female graduates to get lunch, while shunting them to interiors. This is not the sign of a healthy profession with a strong moral compass.

**Architects and society**

Globally, architects have been involved in planning the infrastructure for many horrific crimes: Auschwitz gas chambers; solitary confinement and execution units in some prisons; migration detention centres; and torture chambers in some jurisdictions. While many professions require members to abstain from engaging in work that may breach human rights, there appears to be no restriction on architects by their professional bodies. Attempts to encourage membership organisations to create prohibition clauses for their membership have not yet succeeded. The internal morality and the attempted imposition of an external ethics code have both failed to prevent architects from contributing towards the design of inhumane conditions for their fellow humans.

But what does this mean?

Many of the characteristics outlined above – ego-centrism, absence of pro-social standards, lack of empathy and remorse, exploitation as a means of relating to others, manipulation and antagonistic behaviour, deceitfulness, callousness, hostility, irresponsibility, impulsiveness and risk-taking – are set out by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as the clinical indicators of antisocial personality disorder. Sufferers of this are colloquially referred to as sociopaths. It’s not just that architects demonstrably lack a moral compass. It’s that our behaviour is demonstrably linked to pathological characteristics that should really have you worried. Although you probably think that you’re special and different to those other architects that I’ve described above, don’t you?

The Brick Thrower *