Encyclopaedia of Time in Art

To find the time in this work of art, enter a room in which there is a dining table and think of your last swim in a pool.

With this swim in mind, hold a pen above the grid on page 29, close your eyes and let your hand fall. Open your eyes and note the time and date of this fallen mark, on page 30.
Heritage
The atrium at Kinghorn Cancer Centre
Art Gallery of NSW entrance court
Belltrees shearing shed
Macdonaldtown Station
Centennial Hall at Sydney Town Hall
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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS
Five issues (including NSW Architecture Awards issue) $60;
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PRINTER
Southern Colour

The printer and paper used to produce this publication are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and ISO 14001 environmental certification. FSC is a Chain of Custody (CCO) process. The printer is printed using vegetable based soy inks

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Outgoing President’s message

It’s been two short years since my honour of being elected as your president, and now it’s time to hand over to my successor. Andrew Nimmo has done a sterling job chairing the Architecture Bulletin editorial committee for the past two years. I’m sure he’ll make an outstanding president.

Two years ago I nominated three priorities for my term: advocacy, equity and membership. Now it’s time to report back to you on my achievements in those areas.

ADVOCACY: I formed productive relationships with some key Fairfax journalists during my term, particularly with the Sydney Morning Herald’s city editor, Jacob Saulwick, and the Financial Review’s Michael Bleby.

I objected strongly to the siting of the Barangaroo Crown Casino on waterfront land designated for a public park. This delivered the single most effective headline of my presidency – ‘Architects of Sydney defend public interest as Barangaroo casino faces final hurdle’ – for an article by Anne Davies in the Herald on 29 April last year.

I’ve also been interviewed on the 7, 10 and ABC TV networks, several times on ABC Radio with Robbie Buck, and on 2GB, 2UE and numerous community radio stations. My Twitter feed has provided daily advocacy and information.

But the issue I’ve been most closely associated with has been the campaign to save the brutalist Sirius building in the Rocks. We ran a successful $50,000 crowdfunding campaign to support a court case challenging the legality of the heritage minister’s decision not to list the building on the State Heritage Register. I led a 2000-strong rally and participated in several press conferences as part of the campaign to keep Sirius for social and affordable housing.

EQUITY: the Male Champions of Change group are well advanced in their third year addressing gender inequality within their practices. They have agreed to implement nine actions, including surveys to gauge the level of staff satisfaction with conditions regarding maternity leave, flexible working hours, on and off ramps, career breaks, networking, mentoring and much more. They have all participated in honest and open sharing of experiences within the group. All have agreed not to take part in panels with inadequate female representation.

MEMBERSHIP: I’ve been an active advocate of the Chapter’s mentoring program managed by Monica Love and Leone Lorrimer, with dwp|suters as a sponsor. 34 mentors are currently providing mentoring program managed by Monica Love and Leone Lorrimer, with the benefit of their advice and experience to the same number of mentees through two workshops and on-going contacts. Nurturing our young architects makes both the profession and their careers stronger and more successful.

In my time the Institute has continued to enjoy friendly, collegiate, professional and productive relationships with Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore and her excellent design team, with the Office of the Government Architect Peter Poulet and with the Registrar Tim Horton. I have enjoyed good access to Government Ministers Dominic Perrottet, Mark Speakman and Rob Stokes, and their shadows.

The built environment, like democracy itself, is contested space: architects are its natural interpreters and guardians. I encourage every member to be involved in deciding how we make our housing, streets, parks, towns and cities as good as they can be. We need to be political to achieve the best result so that our children will inherit the quality places they deserve.

Thank you for your support.

Shaun Carter, immediate past NSW Chapter President

Incoming President’s message

Firstly I must thank and admonish outgoing NSW Chapter President Shaun Carter. Thank him for an excellent and committed term where he has worked so hard in raising the public profile of the profession. And admonish him for being a tough act to follow for the next president. Thanks for that Shaun.

After two terms and four years as a NSW chapter councillor, I believe that I have the experience and understanding to step into the role of NSW president. I have chaired several committees, most recently the editorial committee, and have been an active member of Chapter Council.

As a practitioner, I co-direct a small design-based studio with experience across a broad range of scales and type. I understand the day to day of running and maintaining a practice.

It has been a difficult few years for the Institute. There is a new governance structure in place and the next two years must be a time for consolidation and regaining the trust and respect of the members in NSW. That will be my priority.

I want to build on Shaun’s legacy of public engagement and informed critique. I want to engage with the NSW government initiative for design-led planning and look forward to discussing the profession’s role with the new Planning Minister Anthony Roberts and Government Architect Peter Poulet. Our new Premier Gladys Berejiklian has said that affordable housing will be a major focus for her, and again the profession has much knowledge and skills that can be utilised to help frame a sensible discussion.

It concerns me that so many good architects active within the networks do not see value in being members of the Institute. I want to strengthen ties with the networks through continuing Shaun’s initiative of taking Chapter Council on the road. These forums allow us to listen, but also explain the work that the Institute does. Likewise, I would like to see A+ membership picked up by more of the larger practices. Membership is the core of the Institute – and the larger it is, the stronger the profession will be.

In the restructure of the Institute, we must acknowledge that Newcastle and Country divisions have not gone without impact. Maintaining member support throughout NSW is a commitment of the Institute, and to this end I want to work in close collaboration with Country and Newcastle to bring former members, and more, back into the fold.

Lastly, I think we need to improve dialogue between the profession and universities. Practitioners have always had a central role in educating and framing what is taught, yet that role continues to diminish.

It will be an honour to fulfil this role on behalf of the NSW members of the Institute.

Andrew Nimmo, NSW Chapter President

‘The built environment, like democracy itself, is contested space: architects are its natural interpreters and guardians. I encourage every member to be involved in deciding how we make our housing, streets, parks, towns and cities as good as they can be. We need to be political to achieve the best result so that our children will inherit the quality places they deserve’

Shaun Carter
A word from the Executive Director

This edition of Architecture Bulletin returns us to that basic architectural unit of the room. The following pages illustrate some beautiful depictions and interpretations – an excellent way to start a year. It suggests that our internal discourse is strong and that we know as well as ever the benefits of quality space. The question posed by this edition has, however, prompted me to consider the room that I am looking at: the street in which our profession and the public come together. We have our books and we have our poetry (with apologies to Simon and Garfunkel), but many of the issues ahead of us in NSW – including housing affordability and design-led planning – will call upon all of our members to step out more stridently and onto this street.

Along with a new focus and an ambitious agenda ahead of us, the Institute remains committed – through its members – to making the world a better place through architecture. This is our basic commission, and we can do this again, only through our members. You are ably represented by your Chapter Council, and with Andrew Nimmo, I look forward to a strong advocacy focus this year.

Joshua Morrin, Executive Director, NSW

Gender Equity Taskforce

As we approach International Women’s Day 2017, we are called upon to reflect on the following question: What can you do to help forge a better, more inclusive, gender equal world for women? GET NSW takes this year’s theme ‘Be bold for change’ seriously. When the group started in 2012, we had five goals: to reduce the number of women who leave the profession, increase the number of women in senior and leadership positions, increase flexible work opportunities, reduce workplace discrimination and subconscious bias against women and promote gender equity as an improved business model.

Since then we have formulated a Champions of Change program, commenced our GET:Together program to support working parents and carers, and on 22 February launched our GET:Talking series – to support the implementation of gender equality in practice. Still, there is more that can be done.

We aspire to create a scholarship for mid-career women and to develop an award for best practice. Though GET’s fundamental goals have remained the same, we continue to refine our approach and look to find new partners who can help expand our impact and make our imprint bigger. Parlour continues to inspire, and Bespoke has become a key supporter.

We invite all members to consider opportunities to collaborate with us, or act within your sphere of influence to achieve gender equality faster. Current rates show it will take until 2095, at least, to achieve gender equality. This is too long and from our perspective suggests a lack of creative thought in how we can implement change. Designers are well positioned to act as the circuit breakers – let’s work together to reduce the 80-year timeframe.

#BeBoldForChange

Callantha Brigham, NSW GET Chair

Policy

In the last quarter of 2016 the former NSW Planning Minister, Rob Stokes, released two design-focused draft documents:

1. Better Placed This draft architecture and design policy anticipates a future regime of design-led planning in NSW. In launching Better Placed, produced by the Office of the Government Architect in its 200th year, the Minister said: ‘To make people’s lives better through sustainable and inclusive growth we need to elevate the role of design.’ The draft policy has been developed to manage the challenges ahead as NSW absorbs an increasing population. It anticipates a series of design guides to support the future design of infrastructure, architecture and the public domain and proposes a NSW State Design Advisory Panel chaired by the Government Architect for key State significant projects.

In its submission, available on the Institute website, the Institute noted that the policy needs to acknowledge and examine the inherent competition between economics, design and community concern. One of its key objectives should be the co-ordination and stronger alignment of the varying government agencies with regards to built environment outcomes, while acknowledging that these outcomes are not the primary objective of most agencies, which have other priorities.

2. Draft Medium Density Design Guide One of the Minister’s key themes since his appointment has been a focus on medium density development, referred to as the ‘missing middle’ between single dwellings and high-rise apartment buildings. The draft design guide has been prepared to encourage the construction of well-designed townhouses, terraces, dual occupancies and manor homes and enable them to be assessed as complying development as long as they meet the design standards specified in the guide.

While welcoming the draft guide, the Institute’s submission, also available on the website, proposes that the medium density code should be universal in its application across the state and should take precedence over councils’ development control plans where there is inconsistency between the two documents. The submission also notes that the success of medium density housing relies on quality strategic planning so that it is located appropriately with respect to public transport and services and that appropriate land is available for this form of development. In particular, successful terrace development will rely on the provision of rear lanes.

Very early in the new year the Minister also released draft amendments to the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, the legislation that governs the NSW planning system. These include some of the least controversial aspects of the 2013 planning bill, such as community engagement, strategic planning and improvements in the efficiency of the planning system.

The one change of greatest importance to architects is that good design is to become a new objective of the Act. This will enable design to work alongside urban planning to help produce a better built environment. An Institute submission is currently being prepared. The Institute is also preparing a briefing paper that proposes a major role for architects in the new planning system.

Murray Brown, Policy Advisor
Emerging Architects and Graduates Network

EmAGN NSW commenced 2017 with a celebration on the rooftop of CO-AP Architects. It was announced there that DARCH had been rebranded to EmAGN NSW, to be in line with the national branding of the Emerging Architects and Graduates Network.

2017 promises to be an exciting year, full of events for EmAGN NSW. Last month, the 2016 National Emerging Architect Prize recipient Amy Muir from Muir Architecture toured around the country. Following her NSW presentation ‘DOING: To do or not to do’, she had a panel discussion with Anita Panov and Andrew Scott (Panovscott), the 2016 NSW Emerging Architect Prize winners; Grace Mortlock (Other Architects); and Casey Bryant (Trias).

Regi(fru)stration is back in March. If you are thinking about registering as an architect but not sure where to start, or if you’ve submitted your log book and are preparing for the exam and interview, then this seminar is for you!

The 2017 National Architecture Conference: PRAXIS: Process. Propositions. Production (4–6 May) is on at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. EmAGN NSW is part of the committee organising the conference fringe events and we are planning some exciting site tours and numerous social events. Keep an eye out for more details soon to be announced.

EmAGN NSW Committee

Continuing Professional Development

The CPD program at Tusculum sets the gold standard for professional development in NSW. Driving the program are ideas firmly rooted in practice and the needs of practitioners: helping members sharpen their skills, keep abreast of legislative changes and helping attendees operate at the frontier of the profession. Structured around a core program, events include in-depth tours of award-winning buildings, technical and legislative sessions to seminars and workshops focused on practice strategies, building typologies and more.

On 9 March, photographer Richard Glover, architect Chris Major (Welsh + Major) and communications expert Helen Tribe will deliver a session about architecture awards and the media – getting your project awards-ready and leveraging it afterwards. On 11 May, Glenn Cunnington (H&E Architects), Felicity Stewart (Stewart Hollenstein) and Luigi Rosselli will discuss the strategies driving practice. What are the keys to running a small practice and creating a strong business foundation? How do you consolidate and grow sustainably? How do you compete with larger firms and use your size strategically? How do you leverage projects to get the next job? See architecture.com.au for our full program of CPD events.

Eoghan Lewis, Continuing Professional Development Officer. After four years in this role, Eoghan is leaving the Institute to concentrate on his architectural practice

Newcastle Division

Over the Christmas break, architect and Newcastle Division committee member Rebecca Whan was invited by the Peter Stutchbury Foundation to join Peter and his partner Fernanda on their pilot project to the north of Brazil to design and construct an extension to a children’s daycare centre.

The site was in a village on the outskirts of Salvador, which was the first city in Brazil settled by the Portuguese over 500 years ago. The project was initiated, designed and constructed over two weeks, with the help of Joseph Belford and William Linehan (two students from the University of Newcastle) and local labourers from the community. The University of Newcastle assisted by donating funds for the construction materials.

The catchment and reuse of rainwater for washing children were the basis for the design. Despite a high rainfall, it is uncommon for the villagers to use rainwater, and many are forced to pay high prices for town water. An aim was to educate the community on the ease and benefit of rainwater harvesting.

The heat was extreme and materials were difficult to source; the design also changed multiple times to meet various constraints, but the outcome was one that all were proud of. This was the first of many planned for this community by the Peter Stutchbury Foundation, with the idea for it to become a showcase village for innovative, low-tech construction methods and environmental initiatives.

Peter Kemp, Newcastle Division Chair

Country Division

At the Country Division AGM last October, Sarah Aldridge completed her two terms as Chair of the CD committee. Sarah has been an incredible advocate for the division over her four years in the position and we can’t thank her enough. We are all grateful that she has agreed to continue as the CD representative on the NSW Chapter Council.

The first ArchiMEET of the year will be held in Katoomba on 24 March and it promises to be an exciting event based on architecture and tourism. Creative Director Cameron Anderson is compiling the presenters. See architecture.com.au for more information about this and other ArchiMEETs later in the year in Tamworth, Byron Bay and Goulburn.

Under the chair of Oliver Gee, a small committee of local members are planning the Country Division Conference called Collaborate, at Coffs Harbour (3–6 October).

We welcome the support of Jo Huxley, based out of the Canberra office, and look forward to working with her to deliver our 2017 program and initiatives. For all things Country Division, please contact Jo: country-nsw@architecture.com.au.

Tricia Helyar, NSW Country Division Chair
Patrons news

Allen Jack+Cottier

When designing the now iconic Jack House with his wife Pamela in the mid-1950s, AJ+C co-founder Russell Jack thoughtfully and very carefully applied a suite of defining modernist principles – in the process, becoming one of the nation’s first architects to adapt these new ideas in a site-specific way for our unique Australian environment.

Russell felt the house, and each room within, should display a modesty of scale. That the house, and each room, offer a strong connection to site and nature; that all spaces should feature an honest, appropriate materiality; and that all should offer a strong inside/inside connection.

This year we celebrate the Jack House’s 60th (and AJ+C’s 65th) birthdays, with the home now widely regarded as not just a classic modernist work but as an inspiring example of enduring architecture – as contemporary and relevant today as when designed and built.

The Jacks’ appreciation for site and context, along with their rigorous critical thinking, innovation and commitment to design excellence on this early project, their family home, continues to inform and define the practice’s work today. Our aim is to create the most appropriate, joyful and enrichingly responsive ‘occupiable spaces’ possible in every project, whether designing for senior living, such as the recently completed Cardinal Freeman Village at Ashfield, or student housing, such as the soon-to-be-completed Urbanest tower in Darling Square, or signature workplaces, such as The Chancellery at Western Sydney University.

BKA Architecture

BKA Architecture is thrilled to announce that, late last year, it promoted four of its most talented and dedicated staff.

New directors Najla Khoury and Mark Khoury in the Sydney office, Allison Burrows in Newcastle and Silvina Medel in Byron Bay have each been with BKA Architecture for between 12 and 16 years, working across a range of different architectural typologies.

In addition to the founding directors John Baker and John Kavanagh, this new leadership team brings increased capability to the business while recognising the significant contribution of BKA’s most talented and dedicated staff.

Going forward, BKA is busy with a diversity of projects in 2017, including hotels, university buildings and apartments, as well as adaptive reuse projects.

Bates Smart

Bates Smart have submitted a development application for 1 Denison Street, Winten Property Group’s new 33 level commercial tower in North Sydney. The three-level podium will contribute to the public realm, presenting a human scale to the surrounding laneways. This is a place where people are comfortable to meet, work and socialise – an active laneway that is an extension of the work environment. This highly open and permeable space is an expression of the modern workplace as work becomes less private and more integrated into the city, responding to the casual nature of today’s tech-savvy generation.

The tower contains highly flexible and contiguous floorplates, based on a side core typology. The premium floorplate maximises connectivity, encouraging communication and collaboration – hallmarks of good contemporary workplaces.

The facades respond to the context through a simple, elegant and timeless design that differentiates itself from the rectilinearity of the existing commercial buildings. The building’s unique form and geometry are derived through careful consideration of how a major tower can reduce its impact on its neighbours.

Cox

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has recently released a Draft Medium Density Design Guide to provide guidance for what Minister Stokes has called the ‘missing middle’: the gap between the traditional house and residential flat building – in other words, the terrace. While this typology is well known in Sydney, contemporary issues such as amenity, energy efficiency, car parking and privacy challenge the typology, in much the same way as the contemporary flat building has.

The terrace, which has the potential to infill and intensify in a more ‘fine grain’ way than other building types is however not covered by the Apartment Design Guide. The new design guidelines address this ‘gap’ and include ten key design principles from context to appearance.

The guide has example projects by over 30 architectural practices, all of whom are acknowledged. It’s great to see our profession making such a contribution to design excellence for this Sydney typology.

Crone

Crone is pleased to welcome Kathlyn Loseby as our new COO, and Steven Donaghey as an associate director. We’re excited for the new directions they will take Crone in the future, as we create a strong focused core of senior staff.

Kathlyn joins Crone as chief operating officer bringing together a sound business acumen and appreciation of quality design. She graduated from architecture at Sydney University, then worked at Foster + Partners, SOM, Allen Jack+Cottier, Building Studio and Turner, while simultaneously pursuing business development skills including her MBA. Her focus in the daily effective operation of the business includes leading Crone’s growth strategy, championing and developing the Crone brand, and mentoring and developing talent. Steven joins the Crone team as an associate director, with a focus on contributing to improved project delivery and management outcomes. With national and international experience across a range of project typologies, he delivers projects with strong conceptual and sustainable objectives. His experience provides insight into the effective planning and delivery of large scale complex projects. Steven believes in the value of architecture in facilitating improved public and private spaces as a commitment to develop vibrant human fabric and futures.

Sandra Furtado, Principal, Crone Architects

Mirvac Design

Stage 1 of the Wharfside Residences and Cargo Homes at Wharfs Entrance are now finished with the first residents moving into the precinct. The dwellings are a distinct and architecturally refined group of 18 residences on the banks of the Yarra River in Melbourne: eleven river-facing terraces, and seven mixed-use terraces to the south. The compositional balance of the form and organic quality of the natural finishes provides a contextual reference to the maritime and industrial history of the site.

The modulation of the facades with regard to materiality and texture, and how each facade relates to each other, draws the eye across the entire composition creating a streetscape of tactility and patina. The alternating three- and four-storey elements utilise a variety of robust natural materials to create a complimentary and tonal arrangement. At the upper levels, the filigree of the pergola elements creates a sense of light and space.
1. The Chanceller by Allen Jack+Cottier at Western Sydney University, Parramatta Campus
2. New directors at BKA Architecture, clockwise from top left: Najla Khoury and Mark Khoury (Sydney), Silvina Medel (Byron Bay) and Allison Burrows (Newcastle)
3. Rendering of 1 Denison St, North Sydney by Bates Smart
4. Newly completed Wharfside Residences and Cargo Homes (Stage 1) at Wharf’s Entrance, Melbourne by Mirvac Design
5. Crone welcomes Kathlyn Loseby as their new chief operating officer and Steven Donaghey as an associate director
Archiving architectural practice

The Australasian group of icam (the International Confederation of Architecture Museums) met in Sydney last October for their annual collections symposium. This event included tours of architectural archives and practices and concluded with a discussion at Tusculum on architectural collections. Hannah Burgess talks to architect and icam member Kevin Liu about his experience at this symposium and his attendance at earlier icam conferences.

How would you compare the holdings of Australian collections to those of other collections you have visited abroad? Do the collections suggest a different way architecture and design are valued in Australia and abroad?

I’d suggest that as Australian architects, we underestimate the importance of maintaining architectural collections, particularly in how they shape over time our professional understanding of practice, our shared traditions and role in society, and public understanding of the importance of place, architecture and cities. Within Australia, aside from some active state and university collections, only South Australia and Victoria have active and funded design and architecture collections with independent acquisition policies.1 Generally speaking, NSW lags behind the other states in securing and valuing their architectural materials. This is problematic, as without a clear acquisition policy or a broad understanding of the material, we will only see Australian architectural materials from established practices and architects within these collections.

Over time, there will be much less attention afforded to everything else in Australian practice – the big picture stuff that I found to be more common abroad. There is a startlingly diverse range (in scale and acquisition agenda) among the international collections which are members of icam, from national archives to small galleries whose collections are built around the output of a single practice or person. Funding for these collections is of course a problem across the world, so it isn’t unique to Australia.

Acknowledging the obvious pressures of resourcing major collections, what do you see as the social and professional importance of maintaining architectural collections?

Putting aside the important benefits to our cultural richness and understanding of history, a professional archive is a valuable practical resource for the profession. Other than through the narratives of individual architects and practices, we have (at least in NSW) a thin sense of a shared profession and tradition, and our shared history is not written or publically accessible. Much of it being locked away or discarded at the architectural practice level.

Being able to understand how the profession functions and has changed over time is of immense value. After surveying the back catalogues of Architecture in Australia and Architecture Bulletin, you can see similar discussions and themes rehashed many times. Our shared professional history and memory don’t seem to exist and this is putting a brake on our architectural identity. I think that given we’ve had one of the best continuous runs of architectural practice in a while, we should turn our attention to establishing a collective memory of the profession rather than privileging histories and collections based on the work of individual practices.

The icam 17 conference hosted by the CCA in Montreal and MoMA in New York, focused on the ‘born digital’ and its impact on contemporary architectural collections. What are these effects on the production and dissemination of architecture?

My original motivation for being involved with icam was the looming issue of the born-digital document and its implications for holding collections. Born digital refers to digital documents, drawings, scripts, and models without an analogue equivalent and were created and can be read or used without translation into physical form (usually printed paper). Following centuries of tradition, archiving practice to date has been based on the preservation and cataloguing of physical objects. The unprecedented challenge for today’s archivists is acquiring and maintaining the usefulness of architectural work that is predominantly born-digital in nature, of which physical prints or models are produced as incidental artefacts only when required for review or presentation.

This was a simpler problem when CAD software imitated physical drawing methods and paper layouts. But as more practices make use of BIM software, 3D models, scripting languages, and cloud- or web-based communication platforms, preservation becomes a thornier and more abstract practice. Just as ‘model space’ overtakes ‘paper space’ in CAD software, the practices of physical archives are becoming increasingly ill-suited metaphors for those of digital archives. There has been much discussion on this topic to date, particularly how to deal with the increasing risks of file loss.2

Some practical hurdles archivists face with digital materials include:

- software licensing models and the challenge of acquiring (and even renewing) the licenses necessary to access files in the future;
- the threat of massive data loss when cloud hosting services are hacked or close for business;
- complex scripts or parametric models, which require very specific working environments to function, such as due to dependencies.

Heritage
Hannah Burgess talks to Kevin Liu
‘Being able to understand how the profession functions and has changed over time is of immense value. Our shared professional history and memory don’t seem to exist and this is putting a brake on our architectural identity. We should establish a collective memory of the profession rather than privileging histories and collections based on the work of individual practices’

on referenced data, plug-ins, plug-ins of a particular version, and plug-ins of plug-ins;
– drawings and models produced in software no longer compatible with contemporary hardware;
– and the version tracking of files, particularly to determine the original or final state of a document.

Do you feel these changes in process have altered how we value the output of our day-to-day work?
Yes, I think we can complete tasks to a certain quality or quantity much faster. But that also means that we’re producing and duplicating files at a rate that currently outstrips our ability to process them. It’s a lot easier to be sloppy with document management when you’re not producing cartons or pallets of paper.

Are you currently engaged in any projects?
NSW icam members, the former NSW Chapter Heritage Officer and I have been working towards making publications held in the Chapter’s collection of archival material more accessible. Retired architects and heritage committee members donated back issues of Architecture in Australia and all the pages from these were scanned as part of a grant received from the City of Sydney. You can view the results of this project online at architectureinaustralia.com.au.

NOTES
1 A list of current architectural collections in Australasia can be found at icam-aus.org
2 An excellent symposium was held on this topic in 2016. For details see www.unisa.edu.au/born-digital

Kevin Liu is an architect currently based on the Central Coast with David Boyle Architect. He is also a member of icam Australasia and icam International. icam’s Australasia group hosts annual symposia on Australasian collections. For more details, please visit icam-aus.org or email contact@icam-aus.org
‘The room’ – it is such a fundamental topic. Probably one we all take for granted, which makes it all the more interesting to think about. What is the room? Gottfried Semper told us in *The Four Elements of Architecture* that architecture has four elements; the hearth, the roof, the enclosure and the mound. For many an architectural education this remains a central touchstone that defines what we do. But it misses some vital stuff that separates mere building from architecture – culture, poetry, memory, beauty, the mystical.

We wanted to explore what the room means to a cross section of practitioners, academics and friends of architecture. We have not tried to define what constitutes a room. That has been left to the contributors. Is it internal or external? Does it provide shelter? Is it public or private? Is it grand or intimate, old or new? Does it have a function? Does it even exist in a literal sense?

At its most elementary it seems reasonable to assume that a room is defined as space – however scale, enclosure, function, form and materiality are all up for negotiation. The other critical thing is that for a room to have any meaning at all there needs to be a relationship to the body, either through inhabitation or observation – and this reminds us that architecture has no meaning without people.

Our contributors have taken this brief and redefined it as they saw fit – which is what we wanted. What is consistent though is the very personal responses that they have penned – and we thank them for that.

Andrew Nimmo
Chair of the Editorial Committee
A room is a yielding space which is described by nature or by humans. It therefore requires structure and a sense of enclosure. There needs to be an entry and there needs to be an opening or access to a view outside as seen from within the structure. There is a need for a surface to occupy – a floor. These are the only requirements.

A memorable room delivers hope as it would relate to the human condition. It delivers a sense of quietness and offers calmness to its occupant. There is no worthy room that does not offer these things and if it doesn’t, it delivers acts of disservice to the human race.

The most worthy rooms remind us of nature: the cathedrals are rooms of tall trees, the temples are columnar forests and the domed churches are the sky. It is therefore important to allow the room to be firstly prompted by nature; a grotto, a cave that would inspire a singing voice and an inlet that would inspire an entire symphony.

Angelo Candalepas is a Sydney-based architect; in 2016 Candalepas Associates won the Harry Seidler Award for commercial architecture (AHL Headquarters – 478 George Street) and another national award for public buildings (St Andrew’s House). Below: entry room of a site for a resort, Yarra Junction, Victoria.
The Phillip Room is the social heart of Sirius Apartments in The Rocks. Conceived by the architect Tao Goffers as communal space for the residents of the building, it has a rare generosity of space and prospect. The double-height ceiling, the mezzanine library, the labour-intensive hammered concrete texture of the structure offset by the warmth of the raw, rich brown timber linings and wall sculptures, talk of a social project that respected and understood the life of the residents. The large terrace adjoining the Phillip Room also supports these ideas.

Over the years, the Phillip Room has held some big moments: 21sths, 50ths, weddings, funerals, anniversaries, Christmas parties and performances. It gave people who live in a modest apartment the possibility of a space to celebrate life’s special moments with many loved ones.

Sirius Apartments succeed as social housing for more than just the qualities the Phillip Room gave the architecture. A front door to the street, a building holding and respecting the street and urban pattern, great amenity and apartments sizes from one bedroom all the way up to four, to name a few other reasons. But it’s what the Phillip Rooms tells you: this is an incredibly well-designed building. A building that fundamentally understood how people with little means could live well and prosper. The Phillip Room is one of the great spaces of any apartment building anywhere. It should be rightly celebrated, copied, heritage listed and preserved.

Shaun Carter (NSW Chapter President 2015–17) is director of Sydney-based practice Carterwilliamson Architects. Photo: Barton Taylor
Our book *Public Sydney: Drawing the City* arose from our fascination with the city’s public life and the under appreciation of Sydney’s fine inventory of public architecture. Uncovering the marvellous diversity of public rooms was one of the joys of preparing the book.

As an architect, now elected as a councillor in the City of Sydney, I am gaining an even deeper appreciation of the Sydney Town Hall as the ‘Place of Democracy’. This building, which had a vexed genesis and realisation between 1842 to 1889, is a collective work of accretion by a succession of city architects.

Being in the Town Hall at various times of day (and night), the design’s organisation creates a multiplicity of distinctive rooms, ambulatories and stair halls that constantly delight. Occasionally when the crowds have departed its halls are empty, allowing a quieter contemplation of its qualities. It evokes Kahn’s observations on the room as the foundation of architecture:

The large room and the small room, the tall room and the low room, the room with the fireplace and the room without, all become great events in your mind. You begin to think, not what are the requirements, but rather what are the elements of architecture that you employ to make an environment in which it is good to learn, good to live or good to work.

Centennial Hall, the building’s central space, accommodates a striking range of uses – constantly adapted for talks, concerts, balls, rallies, school events and a plethora of other activities. The room’s generous volume and fine proportions, its stepped balconies, the rhythms of doorways and arched windows, the ribbed and scalloped ceiling, all set against the backdrop of the monumental organ, create a lucid architecture with a civic character – our city’s great public room.

NOTES
1 Co-authored with Peter John Cantrill
2 The City of Sydney is one of Australia’s oldest democratic bodies, and when completed, the building was commonly known as ‘Place of Democracy’
3 Initial design JH Wilson, carried forward by Albert Bond, Thomas Sapsford and George McRae amongst others
4 See the chapter ‘The garden and the room’ in Louis I Kahn and John Lobell, *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I Kahn*

Philip Thalis is a principal at Hill Thalis Architecture + Urban Projects and an independent councillor at City of Sydney
Choosing Macdonaldtown Station may seem at first to be a perverse inversion of the notion of a ‘room’. However, its particular spatial characteristics recall other types of rooms that have since become a fundamental part of my design vocabulary.

Consider the entry sequence from the street to the platform, which because of the peculiar topography of the area, one enters from below. The entrance to the station is via an underpass from which one travels through a tunnel, up a set of stairs and onto the platform. The platform is an island in a sea of rail infrastructure, completely open to views on all sides, while at the same time fully enclosed by rail lines. The coming and going of trains provide a theatre of movement temporarily altering the sense of enclosure as they pass.

This sequence recalls a particular type of room – the panorama. It was an entertainment phenomenon peculiar to the 19th century that involved the creation of a new building type: a cylindrical building designed to house a 360-degree painting usually depicting an urban or battle scene. The entry to the panorama parallels that of the station precisely: from the street one buys a ticket and enters a dim tunnel, which leads to a stair up onto a platform where a painting surrounds the viewer, creating the illusion of being immersed in the scene.

The experiential effects of the panorama have been identified in the work of architects such as Schinkel and Mies, and there has recently been a renewed interest in the potential for the panorama to develop perceptual relationships between buildings and the city. In several projects over the past few years, I have adapted the spatial configuration of the panorama – as well as other perceptual devices such as Patrick Geddes’s Outlook Tower – to develop larger scale relationships between relatively small buildings and their urban context. Before any knowledge of these precedents, however, was my experience of Macdonaldtown Station, a minor and seldom noticed point on the rail network that exemplifies in a very pure form, the space of the panorama.

Nathan Etherington is an associate at Scale and is actively involved in architectural education and research. He was the inaugural recipient of the Institute’s David Lindner Prize, awarded to conduct research into the urban potential of the Alexandra Canal in Sydney.
Wynyard Walk – selected by Kim Crestani

This room has no windows and is underground. Its floors are coved at the edges and its walls are not orthogonal. Its ceiling is curved. It is 20 times longer than it is wide. It was recently opened and is a public space. 33,000 people go through this room every day. It is one of the most calming rooms I have been in. It celebrates the art of travel and the ability to traverse the city of Sydney whilst mediating a challenging topography from Wynyard Park to Hickson Road – resulting in one of the most beautiful world-class transport connections from Wynyard to Barangaroo. The materiality and detailing is precision rich, clean, light and unashamedly modern and sci-fi. The room (or tunnel) is Wynyard Walk.

I was involved in the initial making of this space as part of the client team at Transport NSW and it was designed and delivered with much passion by Woods Bagot and Aspect Studios along with a huge cast of hundreds of people. It was a joy to read the design tender documents describing how nature and the geology of the region inspired the design of Wynyard Walk.

Making rooms like this is similar to making a movie. It has taken seven years from inception to completion; over 60 options for where it would be located, both in plan and section; and there were ample stakeholders and design charrettes and hotly contested debates with authorities. Complex acquisitions and constructability were de rigueur, but in the end, Wynyard Walk has been well received by the public and privileges the pedestrian as the primary user.

Kim Crestani (Order Architects) is city architect at Parramatta; in 2010 Kim was director of architecture on the Sydney Metro for Transport NSW. She was instrumental in the design of Wynyard Walk, Inner West Light Rail and the North West Rail Link. Images: courtesy Woods Bagot; Photo: Trevor Mein
Chatting with John Cornell, the owner of the shabby pre-1990s Beach Hotel in Byron Bay, the architect Ian McKay said, ‘I can’t design you a pub, John, because I don’t go to them. Can’t hear myself talk. But I have been to plenty of B&S balls, so I can design you a barn.’ And so the Beach Hotel – or ‘Top pub’ as it is known to locals – was transformed in 1991 into a series of semi-outdoor barn-like spaces. It is here where the community gathers to drink, endlessly debate the traffic chaos and listen to the bands for which Byron is rightly famous.

Originally designed with no boundary fences, it had a gentle permeability to welcome punters. Sadly, the licensing laws have no respect for such concepts and it is now ring-fenced in a way that the seemingly unstoppable DJT would approve of.

The ‘barns’ themselves have a modest materiality that elevates them above a simple shed, yet keeps them informal and capable of withstanding the kind of use associated with a pub and music venue. The timber paneling provides texture and a southeast Asian influence that emphasises the indoor/outdoor subtropical way of life. The scale of the spaces varies between intimate and capacious, but in each the acoustics are such that you can actually hear yourself talk – a great legacy indeed.

Sarah Aldridge is director of SPACE studio in Byron Bay and was the former NSW Country Division Chair. With thanks to John McKay

Belltrees shearing shed – selected by Ian McMaugh

I spent some of my childhood on a farm in the central west of NSW. My favourite place on the farm was the shearing shed, a room stripped of trimmings and household excesses and vacant for most of the year. It served as a readymade cubby house, a refuge from the adult world, a space for daydreaming.

That is, until the sweltering month of February, the shearing season, when large corrugated iron window flaps would be swung open and jacked up on poles for ventilation. The space would become alive with the sounds of hundreds of sheep bleating, sheep dogs barking, men shouting commands at them and the buzz and clatter of the electric shears. Despite the searing heat, the design of the shed with its high vaulted ceilings, walls that could slide open or flip up and slatted floors, made for a surprisingly ventilated space.

Thirty years later, after half a lifetime spent in the city, I was camped out in the shearer’s huts on historic Belltrees in the Upper Hunter while I was competing in an equestrian event. Taking a stroll through the empty shearing shed, I was overcome with not just nostalgia for the days of my youth but awestruck by the scale of the space. Designed by Horbury Hunt in 1879, the shed was constructed of local ironbark and corrugated iron, an immense space containing 36 stands. It is still a functioning shed: a testament to the success of its grand, yet utilitarian, design.

Ian McMaugh is a garden designer based in Redfern and the Blue Mountains
Some of the most intriguing rooms are those that form part of the journey through a building rather than the final destination. They are often spaces that connect other spaces and are ambiguous around the edges.

The entrance court at the Art Gallery of NSW is a space that serves many purposes and is inhabited in various ways. It is a foyer, a room to both stop in and pass through. There is an ambiguous invitation to both stay and also to move on. It serves, connects and frames other spaces while boldly stating its presence.

I love the sense of arrival that this space engenders. Entering from Gallery Road up the steps to the Gallery, one moves through the vertically-proportioned space of the 19th-century entry portico by Walter Liberty Vernon, dark and heavy with history. From here the entrance court is immediately confronting and yet welcoming. The dominant horizontal planes of floor and ceiling define the foyer; and the ambiguity of the edges extend the room, inviting you to move into the spaces beyond.

The entrance court – designed by Andrew Andersons and the Public Works Department and completed in 1972 as part of a major extension – is in no sense deferential to the 19th-century building at the front and side of the Gallery. The tension created between the old and new heights the impact of both. Andrew Andersons has said of this relationship: “That the two might collide wasn’t a problem at all.” The horizontal planes and open edges of the foyer accentuate the containment and verticality of the Vernon structures. The light that floods down the wall of the old wing mediates the junction and brings the detailing into relief. The concrete and travertine have a refinement that is at ease with the sandstone and marble of the old building.

The entrance court embodies many of the ideas we choose to explore in our work at Welsh + Major: the ambiguity of the spatial edge; the layering of materials, elements and spaces; manipulation of natural light; connections to other rooms and external spaces; and spaces that play with openness and protection.

The plans for the new Gallery extension by SANAA will have a significant impact on the entrance court and its use. As the next stage in the life of the Gallery unfolds, it will be interesting to watch how these rooms will evolve once more.

1. Andrew Andersons interviewed by Leon Paroissien, from an edited transcript of interviews held on 19 April and 25 May 2007, reCollections, vol. 4, no 1, April 2009

Chris Major is a co-founder of Sydney architecture practice Welsh + Major, whose work has been recognised with many awards, across a range of public and private projects. Chris speaks at industry talks, conferences and events, and is currently teaching at the University of Newcastle. Photo: Max Dupain. Courtesy National Archives of Australia

Completed in 1928, on the eve of the Great Depression, the banking chamber of the former Government Savings Bank of NSW, represents the pinnacle of early-20th century commercial interiors within the Australian context. Designed by the Australian architectural firm of Ross & Rowe – and recently restored by Tanner Kibble Denton Architects – it was modelled on examples from the United States, and in particular, the grand banking chambers of Chicago. The room could be considered more as a hypostyle temple than a bank, with its coffered ceiling and grid of columns. These glistening serpentine-green scagliola columns were crafted under great secrecy by the Molocco Bros. of Annandale, and together with the assortment of local marbles and bronze, form a truly sumptuous interior. The Great Depression and the arrival of Art Deco on Australian shores ensured that this room was the last of its sort to be built in Sydney.

This room made a particular impression on me as a child. I remember entering the temple-like space when I was about six or seven. It was the first ‘classical’ space that I had ever seen and was by far the biggest and grandest interior I had ever entered. After reading books and seeing films on the ancient world, it was as if a piece of Rome had been transported into the heart of Sydney. Even after all those years, every time I pass through Martin Place I can’t help but enter and marvel at the magnificence of the space.

Though numerous incarnations of banks have come and gone – the current custodian is Macquarie Bank and the Commonwealth have maintained banking operations in the chambers – the space is still dedicated to providing financial services in a grand civic room. Unlike the other banking chambers in Martin Place that have been transformed into bustling retail spaces or unfortunately demolished, 48 Martin Place has continued its operation as a bank for nearly 90 years amidst that incredible forest of green columns.

Sing D’Arcy is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Built Environment USNw Sydney. He is also a contributor to Architecture Australia, Artichoke and Houses reviewing new interior design projects in Sydney, and has published on the history of Sydney interiors.
The atrium at Kinghorn Cancer Centre – selected by Joseph O’Meara

The dynamic seven-storey public atrium at the Kinghorn Cancer Centre in Darlinghurst is one of my favourite spaces designed by BVN. The room is far from the stereotype that research spaces are sterile in nature. It’s full of natural light and timber stairs, walkways and decks; projecting meeting rooms activate the interlocking volume. I think the composition of vertical circulation achieves an asymmetrical balance which encourages the eye to explore. Strategically located meeting points and kitchenettes are designed to accommodate an experience, facilitate communication and the transdisciplinary exchange of information. The pinnacle for me is the dramatic earth-based artwork, painted insitu by British artist Richard Long, titled White Water Falls. This piece stretches the full height of the atrium and ties the space into a room. I took this photo at the EmAGN NSW site tour of Kinghorn, led by BVN’s CEO James Grose back in October 2015.

Joseph O’Meara is a project architect at BVN and is also co-chair of EmAGN NSW

Sydney Masonic Centre foyer – selected by Glenn Harper

Lesser known and by no means insignificant is the main foyer within the Sydney Masonic Centre (1973–78) by Joseland and Gilling and Associates. With a glazed entry poised between two concrete columns off Castlereagh Street this foyer gives access to some meeting halls, a library and offices.

As a late modern vestige, this space demonstrates how the Brutalist ethos was translated into a remarkable and dramatic sequence of interior experiences. Edged by overscaled drum-shaped meeting hall walls the temporal nature of the foyer is enhanced by monumentalised concrete ‘set pieces’. Underpinned by experiences of promenade and illuminated by a series of skylights, circulation is orchestrated by the sculptural elements of the lifts, stairways and cantilevered balconies. Regulated, yet with an open-ended sequence, this is a social space where everything and everybody are on show.

Assured craftsmanship and the integration of ‘concrete pours’ up to five metres high are perfect. With differences between smooth, pitted and board marked ‘off the form’ concrete, each element is distinguished yet unified.

In an age now focused on the design of a ‘civic architectural room’ as a space defined by overt over cladding and meaningless patterns, the foyer to the Sydney Masonic Centre is heroic in its scale, authentic in its finish and representative of an architectural conviction that is now sadly much maligned.

Glenn Harper is a senior associate and urban designer at PTW Architects. He received the 2015 Byrea Hadley Travelling Scholarship with the project @Brutalist_Project_Sydney
Nicholson Street is a very gracious and beautiful street in Woolloomooloo, two blocks back from the bay. Mature plane trees temper the summer sun with a green shade and cast shapely shadows in the winter. Facing north directly onto this street is a public room, the entry space to the newly refurbished Juanita Nielsen Community Centre. It is at once a reception or welcome space, a community lounge, a gathering space, and a place to be ‘alone’ – comfortable at its edges, observing from the sidelines activity in the adjacent spaces and on the street.

This room is made and found within the heart of a two-storey warehouse built in 1888. It reaches through its double-height volume to the folded ceiling of the upper level, which lifts here to bring essential live daylight to animate the room and register the changing day. The face brick walls bear their age (many people find comfort in the layering of time). The yellow concrete floor is clearly new – the golden sands of Woolloomooloo – rising as a yellow concrete stair, conspicuous and theatrical, inviting you up. It is fundamentally a ‘happy’ room – open, vibrant, safe.

Rachel Neeson is director of Sydney-based practice Neeson Murcutt, who won the 2016 Sulman Medal for public architecture in NSW for the Kempsey Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club. Photo: Brett Boardman
Every day I have the opportunity to visit this special room. Like all great rooms it is a room of character, unlike any others, simultaneously intimate yet uplifting; inspiring yet reassuring. It is a room that possesses the best of old and new heritage, a highpoint of innovation at different specific historic points in time, from the 1850s to the best of 21st century architecture and heritage practice. It is a precious room but not pretty. Its materials of sandstone, timber, iron and terracotta are raw and true; it is a beautiful room without pretentions.

The room began life as the upper floor of the two-level Superintendent’s Office of the Mint, a group of factory buildings built in 1854 behind the southern wing of Sydney Hospital. The 1816 Macquarie Street structure was repurposed as the new Mint’s offices but the Superintendent’s Office was in the productive heart of the factory, overlooking the coining and rolling rooms where gold ingots were rolled into thin sheets before being stamped into coins.

Set on the eastern side of the Mint courtyard, the Mint factory was enclosed within walls of locally-quarried sandstone assembled with the classical symmetry favoured by the royal engineers who designed and built it. In contrast, the interior borrowed the technical innovations of Joseph Paxton’s 1851 London Exhibition building, using a prefabricated iron frame to support walls, floors, windows and the intricate pre-cut iron truss roof.

This amalgam of tradition and innovation survived years of modification following the Mint’s 1927 closure, disappearing behind bookcases, partitions and other hasty courtroom and office fitouts, finally to be given new life so beautifully and so meaningfully by FJMT Architects, working with heritage architects Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners, as the Caroline Simpson Library & Research Collection at the home of Sydney Living Museums. At the heart of what’s important to me is that it’s a public room, a place that attracts visitors exploring the history of houses, interiors and gardens, providing a unique space for research, recharging and reflecting.

Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon is the director of curatorial and public engagement at Sydney Living Museums. Spanning 20 years, her career has been dedicated to connecting diverse audiences to architecture, arts and heritage through a broad range of public engagement programs including festivals, exhibitions and books.
The Council Chambers at Sydney Town Hall is where I spend most Mondays since being elected as a councillor last September. Sitting at the table in the centre of the room, I look out on Druitt Street through three big arch windows and past liquid amber trees, to the Queen Victoria Building. The grand shopping arcade sits on the site of the original Sydney markets, where the Council first met in 1842.

In the chamber, the ceiling soars to the raised audience gallery: ornate plaster vines trail across vents, plaster wreaths drape around urns on the cornices, cake-icing flourishes trace arches above the lighting trays. Designed by assistant city architect John Hennessey and built as part of the original Town Hall in 1884, this room has been in service of the people of this city for 133 years. As the city develops outside, this room remains the same. More or less.

Tzannes updated it in 2003, with new furniture and a few modern touches, stripping out heavy curtains and benches and adding a spectacular Imants Tillers carpet – a lush game of snakes and ladders that, for this novice, might also serve as a visual metaphor for the planning process.

Comparing historical images of the Council Chambers to today, much has remained the same, but one thing has changed: the wall-to-wall blokes are gone. The first female alderman was Joan Pilone, elected in 1965, and now seven of our ten councillors are women, led by Lord Mayor Clover Moore.

The formality of proceedings has taken getting used to, but I’m coming to appreciate it; there’s gravity to the work that happens here and a respect for the process and those who come to state their case. Embedded in the history of this room, the grandeur of the space, there is an awareness that decisions we make here might impact on how people experience their streets and public spaces, their homes and communities, for decades to come. I’ve learned a lot in this room already. The first lesson was that there are no easy decisions: that the business of council is to consider the pull and push of different parties in a broader context, thinking of those who can’t speak their case on Monday nights.

It’s a place we ask, how do we balance risk and innovation? How do we weigh the needs of young and old, quiet enjoyment with activity and energy, the conveniences of today with the demands of the future? These questions, like this room, will continue to stand long after my term at this table is over.

Jess Scully is a creative industries expert, event director and public art curator who is passionate about using creativity to inspire social change. She was elected to the City of Sydney Council in 2016. Photo: courtesy City of Sydney Archives
Dawn Fraser Baths – selected by Tom Rivard

In 1880, the siding was painted Kentucky Green. There’s a hole in the floor where the sea comes in. There’s another in the roof; sky is rampant. The walls have no insulation – that’s the point. At the Dawn Fraser Baths, you’re not isolated from anything: sea, sun, squalls, seagull shit, sediment or even sentiment.

Open one of the hatches in the north wall to frame – across 500 metres of harbour – lounge room-ready vistas of Cockatoo Island, which was once the colony’s prison within a prison within a prison. The crossing was formerly not so benign, flush with sharks attracted by the food scraps dumped into the harbour by the guards – another effective disincentive to escape.

In sight of this Russian doll of a gaol, at the Baths you are, however, both sheltered and exposed at the same time. And if those contradictions weren’t enough, you are also in the temporal presence of two of Australia’s aquatic legends. ‘Our Dawn’ toughened her stroke swimming against tides rushing into the water intake channels at the nearby White Bay Power station. Her eponymous complex is the oldest colonial pool in Australia.

The pool is an absence of architecture, of footings and flooring, and allows the sea to slip under and into this deep green room. And if you stand next to this hole in the deck and look up to the northwest, you’ll see a large fig tree at the end of the adjacent White Horse Point.

This was the landing point of the only escapee from Cockatoo, Frederick Wordsworth Ward. Here, his girlfriend, local lass Mary-Ann Bugg swung a kerosene lamp, guiding his way in across the waters. He later became a bushranger. Captain Thunderbolt was the longest roaming bushranger in the colony’s history. In 1870, he was killed at Kentucky Creek.

Tom Rivard is an urbanist, academic, creative and architect, and a senior member of the urban design team at McGregor Coxall. His work in the fields of architecture, public art, performance and media is dedicated to re-imagining the potential links between provocative cultural acts and the urban environments in which they thrive.

Illustration: Nicola Balch

The confessional – selected by Philip Coxall

I was raised as a Catholic and sent to a Catholic school, and every month we were marched to the local church to go to confession. The monthly gap, one assumes, allowed us just enough time to build up a solid list of sins. The act of going to confession was a reasonable enough experience: guilt, retribution and redemption all rolled into one. I have not been back since leaving school.

However, as a place, a space and an experience ‘the confessional’ is still rich in my mind. The transition from the light and noise of the outside to the quite dominating presence of the church’s inner volume. The anxious wait in the pews, with the shafting light drifting in dust. And then, with a dry throat, the transition to the confines of the confessional itself. The heavy varnished timber doors with worn brass handles, a portal to that other world.

I remember the solid wood seat, simple in detail and stained with use. The dim glow of yellow light, shading all from embarrassment. The timber wall panelling and of course the finely detailed, small timber lattice sliding screen through which all communication was handled.

When I think back on it, this sequence of arrival could not have been conceived any better; the compression of space, light and detail. I meditate on the power of design’s ability to take you through the gears of emotion envisioned in the brief.

Philip Coxall is director of McGregor Coxall and has over 26 years experience in landscape architecture, urban design and planning. Illustration: Nicola Balch
A room for this and that – selected by Ross Anderson

‘This will kill that. The book will kill the building.’ Victor Hugo’s mid-19th-century assertion in *Notre Dame De Paris* that the slow embodied practice of architecture would be fatally undone by the detached intellectual practices of writing, printing and reading, proved premature.

In the early 20th century, modern architects like Le Corbusier wrote their way *Towards a New Architecture* before setting out to build it. In *Unpacking My Library: Architects and Their Books* some contemporary New York architects and academics were interviewed on the meaning of their vast personal libraries to their work. They were also asked to venture their top ten books. The most commonly cited book, by a long way, was Robert Venturi’s postmodern *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Venturi had asserted architecture’s obligation toward what he termed the difficult whole – a creative accommodation of the often messy or awkward contingencies of history and its buildings.

In some ways, this is what an architectural library does customarily. A rare heavy hardcover on the Baroque might lodge next to a slim volume on the Bauhaus. That in turn neighbours an exhibition catalogue on recent Australian architecture, simply because they are all the same size or colour, or because their author’s surnames begin with ‘T’, or because they happened to be bought at the same time. They might then collude in unexpected ways as the unusual adjacencies stimulate leaps of imagination. My office at the University of Sydney is a room dedicated to buildings and books.

Ross Anderson is a senior lecturer in architecture at the University of Sydney and is the director of Bachelor of Design in Architecture (Hons) / Master of Architecture degrees.

Robb College dining room – selected by Stephen Davies

Robb College at the University of New England, built 1958–1964, is associated with the post-war modern movement in a regional setting. Designed by Michael Dysart, working in the office of the then Government Architect Ted Farmer, the College was subject to post-war cost restrictions. The dining room maintains its original interior, including the furniture designed by Dysart.

Stephen Davies is a heritage consultant, director of Urbis and chair of the Heritage Council of NSW. Photo: courtesy University of New England Regional Archives, c1960.
Get a room

This image of Donovan Hill’s D House, taken from a series by Jon Linkins in 2007, speaks in part of the experience of the house itself, of the architectural object and climate. It speaks about the humid Brisbane half-in/half-out life of subtropical rooms, of cross ventilation, of timber floors and bare feet.

But more interesting than that is the image’s framing of the room: it focuses on the relationship between two rooms. The living room on one side of a domestic wall and the other – through a low, wide open window – the room of the street. Juxtaposed like this by the image one is struck, in the proximity of these two rooms, by the creation of a new kind of hybrid room. Or space, as we like to say as a profession, as a way of ducking and weaving out of modernity’s relentless programming and predefinition of our lives spent in rooms (as if that was even possible). It suggests a kind of civic living room: open to the street with a large horizontal sliding timber-framed window, bench seat implying a lounging intimacy with the world of commerce and public life. The latter now just within reach and indicated in the fast-moving figure visible to the left and coming toward the viewer (or perhaps the figure is just passing by, in a kind of civilised anonymity).

It is clear to us as inhabitants of late modernity, that everything about this image suggests occupation. One imagines into this image of the good life: the espresso machine just out of sight for offering up coffee to share with neighbours passing, the casual chat and catch up. The direct contact through the open window soothes the rough abstract edge left from a day spent otherwise pinged by a constellation of virtual notifications, email and instant messaging. In the space between these two rooms, neighbours, friends, workmates and children muscle open a third and new kind of hybrid space of civic, domestic life – just visible in this image – framing the space as it does, as a projection of a better possible future.

When we speak about ‘room’, modernity doesn’t allow us to speak about a room unallocated (despite what we tell ourselves as architects). What kind of room? What does it do? How does it tell us how to act? The ubiquity of the apparent pragmatics of the kitchen, for example, or the established relationship between formal and informal living spaces.

Compare this to the room as it is presented in the 18th-century Chinese novel The Story of the Stone, which in describing through four volumes the daily life of an aristocratic Hutong household in Imperial Beijing, spends considerable time describing the daily life of rooms and occupants.1 In the opening chapters, it becomes clear that a room might be understood to be defined less by the hierarchies and uses assigned by the houses we are familiar with of modernity – the D House for example – and more via the constellation of relations moving in and out of rooms.

Take the boy’s relationship with his four companions: four teenage girls, slightly older than him, his body servants. These girls (a gift from his grandmother) are tasked with taking care of his body, his sleep, his clothing – they sleep with him, bath him, organise his clothes and dress him. Here a room encloses a constellation of relationships and the complex dynamics of power, and one imagines, teenage desire between the boy heir and these four teenage girls: playmates and workers, but not peers. In this instance, it seems to be the complex socio-political universe of these young teens together that defined their space within the courtyard house.

One could read this set of relationships through the lens of class and of repression, gender and exclusion, and of course, that wouldn’t be wrong. But equally the dynamics of such a posse of teenagers cut through with desire, care, intimacy, restriction and inequity would have a productive dynamic all of its own. Of course the room has a material quality; it encloses and defines. But this Hutong room is without the kind of spatial agency and instrumentality in placing bodies in space that we are engaged in within modernity. And that is visible in the image of the D House – even without bodies visible, experience and etiquette tell us exactly where they should go.

As Robin Evans pointed out in his definitive 1978 essay ‘Figures doors and passages’, it is the advent of the corridor as circulation that starts to clarify and divide space and identify program and function out of what had been an undifferentiated spatial field of interlinked rooms. At first, this is a simple separation of servant from served in housing; the room is no longer passage, and instead becomes cul-de-sac: privacy, individualisation and isolation. Later, the more complex hierarchy of domestic rooms that is the house promoted by social reform movements of the 19th century is established: equitable in size the boy’s room and the girl’s room, living room, the larger parent’s bedroom.2 But it’s also possible to see this allocation of spatial hierarchy and use in the development of institutional forms other than the family and the domestic: for example, the factory, workspaces, hospitals, schools, and in the penitentiary with Bentham’s instrument for room-by-room individuation and surveillance, the panopticon.

The room is co-opted into the careful placing of bodies in space and specific relationship to one another: parent/child, student/
teacher, boy child/girl child, jailor/jailed. By the 1910s, historian Katharina Borsi argues that visible for the first time in the urban plan of Berlin – and out of what had been an undifferentiated field of rooms distributed across the old city with its courtyard block housing – is the set of distinct spatial hierarchies of domesticity: larger bedroom, smaller bedrooms, living room, service rooms. Like all good ideological accounts, domesticity typically claims legitimacy for itself via an historical claim back to a prehistory: family, cave and hearth. What Borsi’s identification in the plan in Berlin suggests, is that the institution of the modern family and its hierarchy of rooms – carefully separated both from other families, but also from the world of commerce and politics of the street – is in fact the beginning of the fundamental divisions between public and private. These define the way we think about the city today and only emerged in the first decades of the 20th century as a normalised condition.

And this is where the power of Donovan Hill’s room sits. It notices the historical burden that architecture carries and where our greatest agency for social and political transformation is. Not in the formal politics of elected democracy, or as part of the municipal approvals process that take up so much of our time in practice, though of course, these are important. And not despite the allocation of rooms, as if there was an outside to our disciplinary practice from where we could start anew, in an ambiguity of room for example. Rather, the process of making room, as the D House demonstrates, is one of radical disciplinary self-awareness. It requires that we engage in the act of removing content already there before we can start to question, reflect and move incrementally toward the new. Real change is slow and it is rarely linear.

But why does it matter? Because if we are to ask the very serious questions of how to address the issues coming at us with speed – of ageing populations and the attendant issues of isolation, loneliness and care, or resource consumption, biodiversity and species loss, population growth and social, political and economic resilience – it is the spatial arrangement of ourselves together that needs to be challenged. How do we find room for new collectives of intimacy and care that look beyond the current arrangement of rooms?

‘The process of making room, as the D House demonstrates, is one of radical disciplinary self-awareness. It requires that we engage in the act of removing content already there before we can start to question, reflect and move incrementally toward the new’

NOTES


OTHER REFERENCES


Dr Tarsha Finney is an architectural urbanist. Her research interests include domesticity, the housing project, disciplinary agency and the socio-political discourse of urbanism. She is senior lecturer at UTS and visiting professor at the RCA, London where she is leading the Intergenerational City research project

Photo: Jon Linkins. Courtesy BVN Donovan Hill, Brisbane
In 1944, Sydney Ancher planned a compact house in Killara’s Maytone Avenue for his family but was forced to sell on completion as the final construction costs were beyond his means. He subsequently designed a second house for his family on the opposite side of the road.

Influenced by the planning of houses he had visited while stationed in the Middle East during the war, Ancher planned his house to comply with austerity regulations, placing the small bedrooms at one end to maximise the area for a living space. He separated the large living room from the bedrooms by a kitchen/working area using a linear plan form that continued to be used in project homes for decades. A glass wall created a light-filled living area that overlooks the bush lined creek. Large timber sliding doors allowed both the indoor and the semi-outdoor sections of the living area to be openable to the flagged terrace, which ran the length of the house. The section of wall separating the stone flagged area between the living room and the garage could be opened entirely creating the ‘perfect weather-protected living area’.

Indoor and outdoor living areas are typical in Australian homes today, but in the immediate post-war years, Ancher’s design was revolutionary. Described in the Melbourne Argus as departing from the conventional suburban layout, the plan and views of the living room with the doors open to reveal the full extent of the living area, repeatedly appeared in the press in the late 1940s. This is one of the first truly modernist rooms in Australia and it was the glass wall that earned Ancher the 1945 Sulman award. Descriptions of the interior note that the internal walls were painted a light grey, with the woodwork picked out in white.

Noni Boyd is an independent heritage architect; she was formerly the heritage officer at the Institute’s NSW Chapter. Images of 3 Maytone Avenue from Connie Boesen’s thesis ‘Sydney Ancher, A Profile’ (University of Sydney, 1979), NSW Chapter archive. Photo: Max Dupain
Marshall House ‘room’ – selected by John Gamble

Marshall House (1967) by Bruce Rickard is located on a steep south-western hillside in Clontarf that descends to Middle Harbour. A private road leads down to the upper level of the house, the interior of which accommodates an expansive open ‘room’ comprising four activity spaces: entry, dining, living and multi-use ‘hall’. A large centrally located brick fireplace formally anchors the room into the hillside.

Organised around and extending from the fireplace are several settings. The hearth provides a focus for intimate gatherings in the immediately adjacent space. The larger living space is defined by the elongated fireplace and the folded western brick wall, establishing two centripetal orientations: a frontal facing towards the fireplace and an inward focus for occupants distributed around the space’s perimeter. These orientations are reinforced by the space’s lack of immediate contact with the exterior.

The living space, with its subdued light, provides sanctuary from the outside world. The space’s configuration draws it towards the entry, acknowledging the public realm and enabling the expansion of its activities into the northern sunlight and out to the terrace. The entry space extends across to the dining, which, located in the most open corner of the interior, faces the hillside and captures the sunlight for morning events. This extension orients the living space towards the dining, melding the two into a single social setting.

Integrating architecture and landscape, the living/entry/dining’s centripetal and centrifugal relationships with the fireplace are reinforced and countered by the semi-enclosed terraces and enclosing hillside. In contrast, the more enclosed southern end of the living space opens onto the clearly defined area of the verandah-like hall with its south-western harbour outlook and direct access to the elevated deck.

The juxtaposition of the intimate hearth space and the distantly oriented hall highlights their different qualities while making possible their fusion into a single setting. The hall/deck’s axial extension from the fireplace accentuates their release from the enclosing topography. In the Marshall House, the ‘room’ presents as a rich ensemble of diverse, overlapping settings accommodating and representing likely and shifting human situations in a particular place.

John Gamble is a lecturer in the architecture program at UNSW. His PhD thesis is titled ‘Alvar Aalto: formal structure and a methodical development of an inclusive architecture’.

Photo: Richard Powers

A monograph on the work of Bruce Rickard will be published by NewSouth Publishing in early 2018.
It’s 7am on a summer’s day at Coonerang and we’re headed for the verandah – the most valuable room in this, and arguably any, old country farmhouse. Loved here, not for the beauty of the space itself but for its power to connect all to the unique, overwhelming wonder of the Australian bush. A retreat for four generations of Croakers over the past century, it symbolises the most unpretentious, uncomplicated of shelters from which to intimately experience the sublime. To be as one with the very gentleness and savagery that is country. Unselfconscious, liberated and liberating, this is a space in which to be transcendentally immersed in landscape, nature, community and family. An elevated but immediately connected viewing platform that in any one day may host those seeking solitude or company, a cool dining space or sunny office, a workbench, a place to play or read, or to gently lie. Always, connected and alive to weather, the wildness and smell and feel of untempered wind and rain, piercing frosts and cold, and inescapable heat. Physically edging the house on all elevations, yet emotionally core. The very heart of the home in every way.

Trisha Croaker is a freelance writer and communications advisor, specialising in architectural design.

Every room has a story. The front parlour room of the 1840s St Clair Villa in Goulburn has more stories than most. The Villa that houses the parlour has also had more names than most houses, having been known as St Clair cottage, villa, ladies school, boarding house and museum.

The room’s most impressive story is the integrity and beauty of the parlour’s space and its details. Designed and built by the Scot James Sinclair from 1843 on, the villa and its parlour are a demonstration of the innate Georgian design sense of an early 19th century aesthete, who had a role in building much within the growing town of Goulburn in the 1840s. Sinclair also had access to the architectural pattern books of the time, and he playfully added a beautifully detailed Greek revival verandah to his Georgian cottage.

But back to the parlour room, with its red Cedar joinery to the room’s doors, windows, skirtings, cornices and entablatures, with rendered walls and cornices and formal niches and fireplace surrounds, all of which hint at the high quality of materials and trade expertise available at that time. When James Sinclair died in mysterious circumstances the cottage was procured by a succession of Goulburn luminaries including businessman and Mayor Joseph Bull, businessman and Mayor Edward Joseph Ball, hotel proprietor Bridget Bruton and the sportsman and hairdresser Horace Oliver (Ollie) Pursehouse and his businesswoman wife Kate Pursehouse.

In those years from the 1850s to the 1960s years the parlour room functioned as a formal living room, a classroom within a school for girls and for many years as a bed-sitting room within the St Clair boarding house. After 130 years of private ownership the Goulburn Council on behalf of the Goulburn and District Historical Society acquired the property, and the Society members restored the drawing room with great care and attention to detail, and that is another story.

The parlour room now serves as the ‘Sinclair’ room within the GDHS museum. St Clair’s history, and the history of the drawing room in particular, reflect the rise and fall of the fortunes of the individual owners and the surrounding society as a whole. It is really not a room at all, but a repository of stories and an archive of the life of Goulburn.

Peter Freeman is a conservation architect based in Moruya and author of several historical publications. Tricia Helyar is an architect based in Bellingen and is also the NSW Country Division chair.

I have always thought this room was like a lighthouse. Wrapped in glass, it has views to the sea in the east, to the hills in the south and over Coffs Creek to the mountains in the west. When the southerlys come through, the windows and doors shake and rattle. I like sitting cosily inside when the rain hammers the glass. The tides of the creek are the most wonderful of clocks, measuring time from this room high up in the air.

This is my studio in Coffs Harbour, northern NSW and this is my happy place. I wake up here every morning with my partner in life and in work. We both get to work (sometimes at dawn) by walking a couple of metres to our desks sitting side by side. This is where we do the pre- and post-production on films together.

We make films in Aboriginal communities, which you could easily see from the art pieces on the walls. We both make timber furniture, which we have populated the room with. It has clutter too: production equipment, records, piles of ochre, eclectic collectables and tools.

A balcony wraps around the room and lets us get outside to the feel the elements. We eat, bathe, socialise and even sleep sometimes in this outdoor area. At the moment there is a garden growing vegetables, herbs and flowers. It’s summer, so it is thriving. Going outside to check the progress of the plants is a tonic to the click, click, click in the editing suite. There are so many birds that visit. This is the best place that I have ever lived.

Alison Page’s past work with Merrima received an award from the International Federation of Interior Architects for its social awareness and responsibility. Recent work is in collaboration with cinematographer Nik Lachajczak in production studio Zakpage, which converges film with the built environment to create place-based narratives.

Trisha Croaker – Room to experience the sublime – selected by Trisha Croaker

The Sinclair Room – selected by Peter Freeman & Tricia Helyar

Coffs Harbour studio – selected by Alison Page
Three years ago I started collaborating with architect Tomek Archer on some serious thinking about how to make the central room in my Bondi Beach apartment ‘work’: how to bring the energy of contemporary life to this room. And think we did, over the course of twelve months. This might seem like a long time to arrive at a table for the solution, but it was the sheer refinement and discipline of our thinking – and the architectural process we went through – that makes this room.

My apartment, in a small art deco-style block on Bondi’s Ben Buckler, was built in 1929. Nearly 90 years on, the etiquette and gender roles in our lives and culture have changed dramatically. My apartment’s architecture, particularly the central room, seemed to have struggled to keep pace with the evolution of who I was, and wanted the opportunity to become. How could we bring optimism to the space? Could an architectural intervention, such as a table, shape optimism? Traditionally, views signal hope, wonder and new horizons. Why not bring this positive energy inside a home?

The bespoke table (designed by Archer) moves across the space, sliding along its frame, but it is in this central spot that it usually sits. Here it is all things: elegant bench, coworking space, dinner table, conversation-space, place-to-pause, companion and refined object. Its simplicity, fluidity and lightness have transformed the whole energy of my apartment and life. It’s my favourite room.

Janne Ryan is an ideas curator, writer and producer; she produces ABC Radio National’s By Design and is executive producer, TEDxSydney. Photo: Kasia Werstak
The word ‘room’ means space – specifically, ‘cleared’ space; space made available by being contained and held. As in Old English rum, German Raum: a span of space or time; and Dutch ruim: the hold of a ship, cabin; or cove as sheltered anchorage, as a place to remain (for a time). These senses derive from the etymons reue, to open, and rheu, to flow, move, convey, weigh. The room: a confluence of space, time and travel; a fluxion of opportunity; a place of expanded horizons, open and safeguarded – room to spread out, to take up space; room to take one’s time; room to breathe.

I don’t know who designed this room in Lane Cove. It is one of the rooms we live in (provisionally, as we are only passing through). The room is filled with objects. Each one gathers and conveys memories, traces, lineage; each recalls acquaintances, moments, places: an archive, a cabinet of curiosities I can occupy, to which I can repair. My daughter secretes herself in there sometimes, to dance (unobserved). I fade into its cool darkness on hot days. There is a high wainscot all around – recessed paneling; deep skirting; paired brackets; capping and capitals. Stained oak. The room makes it possible to house these things, to give them place, to produce neighbourhoods and collections. The word ‘wainscoting’ is from Low German wagenschot; the practice was adapted into architecture from coachwork. Here is the vehicle again, and the journey: carriage, ship, wagon. Wainscoting is a devalued thing, sadly – as is the room more generally.

Now the focus shifts from form to furniture, from prospect to introspection, from container to contained. The room becomes an apparatus for equipping life; for provisioning and enabling reverie.

Michael Tawa is professor of architecture at the University of Sydney.
Orange Tree Grove was designed by architect Bill Lucas, assisted by Michael Coote and Kevin Dash circa 1968. During his time, Lucas’s small two-room studio was just a short distance away and he would regularly visit flat 17 for long conversations. We would work together on designs for civic artworks and installations, and study his experimental management systems. Internally, each of these modest-scale worker’s flats is configured like small cottages. Outwardly they couldn’t be more different from the surrounding Victorian terrace houses in Paddington.

Shortly after returning from the war, Lucas studied with Professor Leslie Wilkinson. He often referred to Wilkinson’s Ways Terrace, a block of workers flats in Pyrmont commissioned by the City of Sydney, completed in 1925. Orange Tree Grove has a similar density and capacity to Ways Terrace. OTG is configured on four levels of concrete slabs in three distinct interlinked sections. The northern facade displays a uniform minimalist system of glass curtain walls punctuated by plantings contained within the extended concrete formwork.

My bedroom is on the southern side of the building, in the smaller of the two bedrooms, and a three-panel window spans its width. Beneath the window is a double bed and opposite, the architect’s son Peter has designed bookshelves and a clothes storage unit. Decorating the walls are two Hermannsburg Namatjira School watercolours by Otto Pereroutjka and Benjamin Landara, along with one of my transcription paintings called Jerusalem Sonnets, James K Baxter 1971. A Mushwani rug made near Herat in Afghanistan covers the floor. Reading, drawing and occasional ‘bed’ painting are my nocturnal preoccupations. Outside of the room is an extensive collection of Australian bush orchids thriving alongside aromatic herbs and spices and African cherry guava bushes. This is where I have lived for the last 31 years.

Ruark Lewis is an artist who works in painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, poetry, performance, installation and public artworks and is represented by Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne. A catalogue raisonné of his 30-year practice, THOUGHTLINES will be published by SNO Contemporary Art Projects in 2017.
Indigo Slam stair hall – by William Smart

The stair hall of Indigo Slam is a space unique in Australian residential architecture – grand and austere in its size and sparseness, but inviting and exciting as it leads one upwards through the building. A piece of sculpture to be lived in, Indigo Slam fronts newly-built Central Park in Sydney’s Chippendale, creating an inspiring residence for an art collector. Behind a facade of sculpted concrete, serene living spaces and monumental halls create a dynamic interplay of spare interiors in which the main decorative element is light.

Approaching from O’Connor Street, a patterned steel screen opens to lead the visitor into a generous coved vestibule. From here, the space compresses to a low and narrow corridor before suddenly opening to a cavernous stair hall lit from concealed roof lights overhead. As a counterpoint to this dramatic spatial sequence, the living areas leading off it are informal and intimate. Spaces are large but not ostentatious. Internal finishes are pared-back: floors are dry-pressed brickwork, loose-laid to clink as you walk across the room and intended to endure and show wear. Handrails are white leather wrapping brass rails, fittings are simple and brass frames hold and display selected artworks.

Indigo Slam represents a rare opportunity to add a large residence of architectural merit to a diverse neighbourhood, participating in its reinvention as one of Sydney’s artistic and cultural hubs.

William Smart was the principal architect of Indigo Slam, which won the 2016 Robin Boyd and Wilkinson Awards for residential architecture. Photo: Sharrin Rees
My studio – selected by Janet Laurence

My studio is a sanctuary
a space for dreaming
a space for thinking
a space for performing
a space for overlapping
a space for working
a space for elements
a space for deposition
a space for distillation

Janet Laurence is an artist whose practice examines our physical, cultural and conflicting relationship to the natural world. Her work is included in museum, university and corporate collections as well as within architectural and landscaped public places. Photo: Adrian Cook

a space for invention
a space for incubation
a space for past and future meeting
a space of transformation
a space of generation
a space of transience
a space of changing light
a space of transparency
a space of translucency

a space of diffusion
a space of veiling
a space of alchemy
a space of air
Modern kitchens are the hardest working room in the house. They are the natural gathering place for a multitude of functions, from entertaining to business. It is the room where most people spend the majority of their time – they need to look good as well as handle the daily chaos of life. Designing the perfect kitchen takes both an aesthetic and scientific skill, and the Mirvac Design team has been honing their craft across houses and apartments for decades. ‘Detail-oriented planning is critical and the right kitchen design is one which will adapt to the user’s changing needs and high expectations’, says interior designer Anita Tyler.

Designing a kitchen that functions for a diverse user group can be challenging, and when establishing the layout for a residential apartment building, flexibility, functionality, durability and timeless-ness are crucial for the Mirvac Design team. Multi-residential apartment and home usage are changing, with multi-generational and dual-key dwellings in demand alongside the more traditional designs. People are more design conscious than ever, and many are passionate home chefs, so the design of the kitchen is critical to the success of every home.

The key components to a successful kitchen design are the floorplan, finishes and the flooring. In houses and multi-residential buildings, the kitchen design and finishes are high on the checklist for potential purchasers, so allowing a level of personalisation with a strong and ageless aesthetic is key.

‘The finishes need to be robust as well as beautiful, and before specifying any material for a Mirvac apartment or house, it undergoes extensive testing in the Mirvac Design lab’, says Victor Wong, leader of Mirvac Design’s interiors team.

From shoe polish to soap, a vast range of common household products is applied to each surface. They are then removed at various time intervals and examined over extended periods. Surfaces that cannot be completely cleaned at each interval are deemed unsuitable for use.

With this attention to detail, the Mirvac Design team also undertakes extensive national and international research and benchmarking to ensure the kitchens that we design lead the market and exceed the expectations of the end users. Our kitchens are designed for real life, with all of the mess and everyday challenges. Our scorecard of success is when customers still love their kitchens after ten years.

Designing spaces for people to enjoy is what the team at Mirvac Design love to do and what we do best. We meet with the end users and residents of the homes we design and this feedback informs and strengthens our designs and innovations. Kitchen design is an integral part of this process. Getting the design right for this room has never been so important: it is the centre of daily life.

Anita Tyler and Victor Wong are senior associates at Mirvac Design.
‘From shoe polish to soap, a vast range of common household products is applied to each surface. Surfaces that cannot be completely cleaned after various time intervals are deemed unsuitable for use’