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28–30 May 2014

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President

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The Institute has always been at the forefront in valuing recent architecture and this is as it should be. We have a responsibility to lead public opinion in some areas, not just follow it. Our Register of Significant Architecture (previously the Register of 20th Century Buildings of Significance), like the National Trust Register and the Engineers Australia Register, records the profession's systematic analysis of the best work of each generation through a peer-review process. The NSW Chapter’s Valuing Award Winning Buildings in the Long Term policy reinforces that process as a means of encouraging the statutory listing agencies to continually refresh their registers. I encourage all members to make themselves familiar with this as well as the Institute’s national Heritage Policy – both available via the respective policy sections of the Institute website.

Botanic Gardens and the Domain

It is right and proper that there is public discussion and debate about significant public assets. The public consultation the Royal Botanic Garden Trust is currently conducting is precisely about the creative direction of the Chapter’s cultural and public education program.

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Committee is responsible for designing and maintaining the NSW Architects Registration Board requirements. It also has a series of journals, magazines, and newsletters, as well as an online presence. The Institute is also involved in various national and international initiatives, such as the AIA’s Code of Ethics and Professional Practice, which sets a standard for professional conduct in the architecture field.

While the profession and a sizeable portion of the public has no trouble with the heritage conservation and listing of our legacy from the 19th century, things get a little more complicated once you start looking at the 20th century.

The Heritage of the recent past

It is not so many decades ago that Federation style was regarded as either old hat or impossibly cute. How times have changed. Now Federation houses are being snapped up by Chinese investors and the virus of ‘fake Federation’ has spread far and wide in new housing developments. The Californian bungalow is increasingly valued, while Art Deco has had a special and enthusiastic following for many years.

What this seems to reveal is that, like most other cultural artefacts, buildings are least appreciated by the generation that follows their creation. The 1950s are already back in vogue, but only selectively. Liner House was first listed at a state level as long ago as 1986, the AMP Building at Circular Quay, however, has only been listed by the City of Sydney, despite its Award for Enduring Architecture at last year’s NSW Architecture Awards.

Unfortunately, the esteem of the architectural profession was not enough to save the State Office Block in the late 1990s; it was simply not old enough to have won the general approval of the public. At least the building that replaced it is a fine work by a leading international architect.

Modernism and Brutalism also have their adherents, notably through the work of DOCOMOMO, but it is still difficult making the case for some of these buildings in the public arena. The long journey of the Wentworth Memorial Church from recognition by the Institute’s register in 1994 to listing on the State Heritage Register was finally completed 18 months ago.

Chapter Manager’s report

Given recent changes to the Practice Committee now is a good opportunity to reiterate the Chapter’s committee structure and to invite members who are interested in contributing to Chapter activities to do so. Each of the committees has a particular agenda:

•  the Built Environment Committee is responsible for preparing and promoting Chapter policies on the built environment, planning and urban design. This includes submissions to government and industry inquiries, draft legislation and policies.

•  the Education Committee coordinates the formulation of Institute policy on the education of children, up to the point of attaining a prescribed qualification in architecture. It reviews course recognition and accreditation, competency standards and the registration of architects, and provides advice on the implementation of policy.

•  the newly refreshed Practice Committee focuses on issues affecting the practice of architecture. There are various task groups that undertake specific assignments as required such as contract reviews, human resources and gender equity to name a few.

•  the Design/Culture Committee is responsible for the creative direction of the Chapter’s cultural and public education program.

As recently announced in the weekly e-news, the Chapter has been invited to participate in the NSW Government’s exhibition at the China Beijing International Fair for Trade in Services (CIFTIS) in Beijing from 22 May to 4 June. CIFTIS is one of the largest services exhibitions in the world attracting up to 100,000 visitors and representatives from 117 countries. The Institute will be colocated with the City of Sydney, Destination NSW, Screen NSW, University of Technology Sydney and NSW NOW to showcase the talented creative sectors available in New South Wales to China and the world. If your practice has an office in China, or you are planning to visit China during the exhibition and would like to participate in this unique opportunity, please phone Roslyn Irons on 02 9246 4055.

Bate Smart has won a design competition for a new hotel at Canberra Airport. The 4.5 star hotel (pictured above) is situated at the entrance gateway to the airport and will provide 191 rooms, a restaurant and conference facilities over seven storeys.

Inspired by Walter Burley Griffin’s plan for Canberra, the design synthesises circular and axial geometries. The circular form provides a bold entry marker to the airport precinct while the linear façade reinforces the linear approach to the terminal. Internally, the upper level rooms are set around a full height circular atrium. At ground level, the base of the atrium provides a dramatic space for the lobby, bar and restaurant.

Cox Richardson was recently announced the winner of an international competition for the design of a mixed-use residential complex on Puter Harbour in Malaysia. The proposal, called Portoputeri (pictured right), explores a European village typology, applied to the densities of the Asian context. A coherent and clear framework of public streets, pedestrian walkways and public places anchors the projects. Environmental initiatives include seawater cooling from the nearby harbour.

The new hotel, planned for Canberra Airport.

Portoputeri: Image: Bate Smart.

Roslyn Irons
NSW Chapter Manager

Patrons news

Touring the Zoo's new Eco-Retreat, an immersive experience that builds on the zoo's very successful Roar and Snore program. The Eco-Retreat will be carefully nestled into the bushland, taking advantage of the Sydney Harbour views and the unique experience of sharing the evening with the zoo’s inhabitants. Early ideas include timber structures called Portoputeri and restaurant.

Cox is also starting sketch design for Taronga Zoo's new Eco-Retreat, an immersive experience that builds on the zoo's very successful Roar and Snore program. The Eco-Retreat will be carefully nestled into the bushland, taking advantage of the Sydney Harbour views and the unique experience of sharing the evening with the zoo’s inhabitants.

The new hotel, planned for Canberra Airport.

Portoputeri: Image: Bate Smart.

Joe Agius
NSW Chapter President

The ‘new hotel, planned for Canberra Airport.

The new hotel, planned for Canberra Airport.

Portoputeri: Image: Bate Smart.

Joe Agius
NSW Chapter President
Hassel has appointed Ken Maher as its inaugural Hassell Fellow, effective from 1 January 2014. This acknowledges Maher as one of the leading Australian architects of his generation, and solidifies his contribution as a greatly influential figure in the history of the practice. It also reflects a shift of emphasis in his role with the practice; Maher wants to dedicate more time to design, clients, teaching and supporting the development of talented architects both in the firm and across the profession. He remains committed to major projects he is leading and will be a key adviser to other practice leaders in shaping the future of the firm.

The recently opened Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre (pictured above) offers a dignified and reassuring environment for patients receiving specialist cancer treatment in the Shoalhaven region of New South Wales. Hassell worked closely with State Government’s Health Infrastructure NSW to design the centre, which engages with its surrounding natural south coast landscape to deliver a positive healing environment. While the centre is deliberately designed to feel more casual than formal, the Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre delivers the highest quality care through its advanced medical equipment and facilities.

In February and March DARCH hosted its first guided project visits to North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club (pictured above) and Prince Alfred Park Pool in Surry Hills (the second project visited). Rachel Neeson of Neeson Murcutt Architects described the process of working with the City of Sydney to deliver the project, and introduced many of the complexities encountered throughout the design process. A walk around the site revealed the fundamental relationship of the pool, and its associated built forms, to the greater park, with views into and out of the enclosure carefully crafted from the larger landscape surrounding it. Please join the DARCH mailing list or visit us on Facebook to keep informed about future tours – www.darch.com.au. 

Amelia Holliday
DARCH Committee

NSW Country Division

Entries for the 2014 NSW Country Division Architecture Awards open on 4 May and close on 4 July. The June regional CPD seminar will be held in Casarina on Friday 13 June. For more information on the awards and the Country Division events go to the Country Division section of NSW Chapter web page at www.architecture.com.au.

Newcastle Division

Peter Nguyen
National President SONA

NSW Chapter Digital Archive

Architectural documentation is often not nearly as easy to locate as other forms of archival material and is frequently not being utilised when analysing buildings during the conservation planning process or while documenting alterations or additions. In New South Wales, architectural drawings and original specifications are languishing unused, many collections have been accessioned but not indexed and their contents remain unknown.

Leading the way in digitising architectural archives is the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library in New York, whose online collection encompasses a wide range of digital images, drawing collections, photographs documenting buildings under construction, architectural periodicals and e-books. Old York, a substantial personal collection documenting the development of the city of New York, is currently being scanned so it can be made available for researchers. A Built Works Register, documenting both architectural works and the built environment, has also been established.

Individual architects’ works are also being digitised: Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris is progressively adding to its illustrated register of Le Corbusier’s built and unbuilt works. Likewise the IAUU (the University of Venice) in Italy has an impressive digital archive of architectural projects and the work of individual architects, such as Carlo Scarpa and his collaborators. Scanning of notes and drawings allows for an architect’s design process to be made available to researchers.

The NSW Chapter’s Heritage Committee and its successor of heritage officers have been progressively compiling biographical material on New South Wales architects and the buildings they have designed. In 2013 the Chapter received a generous grant from City of Sydney that has enabled a substantial proportion of the Chapter’s varied archival collection to be scanned. The project commenced by scanning the bound volumes of Chapter minutes dating back to 1907, the earlier records of the fledgling Institute of Architects having been lodged with the Mitchell Library. The series of chapter minutes were then lodged at the Mitchell Library.

Records produced by both the Institute and the NSW Chapter, including annual reports, membership registers, practice notes and year books, have all been scanned. Selected Chapter conference proceedings and RAA publications, including the out-of-print architectural guide 24 Sydney Buildings and Australian Outrage: The Decay of a Visual Environment, also form part of the collection.

The NSW Chapter also holds donated archival material from the personal collections of former members including Edley Carr, Anthony Gaskell, Neville Gruzman, Merewether and Bagot and the founding partner of Peddle, Thorp & Walker, James Peddle.

NSW is the first Chapter of the Institute to digitise material relating to its own history and the work of its members. At present, access to this material is by appointment only. Research enquiries, including requests for biographies of architects, should be directed to the Heritage Officer

Dr noni Boyd
NSW Chapter Heritage Officer
Gender equity: a little less conversation, a little more action

For those of us frustrated by gender inequality within our profession, or currently experiencing its maelstrom, 2013 saw a number of positive developments. The Women, Work and Leadership project continued to inspire through research, the Parlour website, and events such as Transform: From a policy perspective the Parlour guidelines to Equitable Practice were issued for comment in draft form, and in December a major milestone was reached when the Australian Institute of Architects released its first Gender Equity Policy. The national policy acknowledges what many of us intuitively sense; that women continue to draw the short straw in the profession. This occurs through both overt discrimination and more subtle forms of gender bias. Invisible barriers can systematically strangle women’s careers, manifesting in an absence of women in leadership positions, significant attrition of women from the profession, inequitable pay between genders, lower rates of registration for women... the list goes on.

“The policy itself is a succinct two-page document that outlines a framework for future activities and foretells of positive interventions to come. It commits the Institute to both heighten its internal consciousness and to advocate more vociferously on the gender equity agenda. At its essence are the following 10 principles:

1. Acknowledge the profession’s obligation to accommodate the diverse needs of the community
2. Recognise and respond effectively to the diversity of members
3. Incorporate provisions to ensure gender equitable outcomes in all new Institute initiatives
4. Communicate the value of women in leadership roles
5. Promote equity of employment arrangements
6. Support the development of alternative and flexible career pathways within the profession
7. Develop cross-gender mentorships and networks
8. Educate the profession about the impact of gender stereotypes
9. Actively seek input on the needs of women members
10. Develop and coordinate specific programs to give effect to this Gender Equity Policy.

“Invisible barriers can systematically strangle women’s careers, manifesting in an absence of women in leadership positions, significant attrition of women from the profession, inequitable pay between genders, lower rates of registration for women... the list goes on.”

While the details are under construction, the principles are a solid start that will contribute to a much wider charter of change within the profession. The Institute is in an excellent position to support this on behalf of members and outside the internal politics of employer/employee relations. What is more, when seen in the context of the National Gender Equity Committee (recently formed), future policy guidelines and various local chapter initiatives, it finally seems as though this issue is gaining momentum.

To focus and support this momentum locally, a group of us established a Gender Equity Taskforce in New South Wales midway through last year. Agi Sterling (Sterling Architects), Maryam Gusheh (University of New South Wales), Natalie Lane-Rose (Bates Smart), Monica Edwards (Cox Richardson), Shaun Carter (Carter Williamson), David Tickle (Hassell), Tarsha Finney (University of Technology, Sydney) and myself have started meeting on a monthly basis to formulate a series of positive local interventions. Our aspirations are unashamedly high and focus on the following objectives:

- Increase the number, quality and type of flexible work opportunities
- Reduce workplace discrimination and subconscious bias against women
- Promote gender equity as an improved business model

We are exploring a range of initiatives to enact these goals. This includes feedback to policy and workplace guidelines, a mentoring program, mechanisms for ‘best practice’ workplace benchmarking, and a series of workshops and talks on issues relevant to both employers and employees. The list is ambitious; it will take us some time, but hopefully, through collective action, we will see change.

Callantha Brigham is an architect currently working for Parramatta City Council. She is a coordinator of the NSW Gender Equity Taskforce.

Footnotes

my goal as Government Architect is to bring to the State Government, to our institutions, the capacity to think widely and creatively, the very skills architecture has given me. In the book The Improvising Society: Social Order in a Boundless World, Hans Boutellier describes ‘organised freedom’ as, “...improvisation, a combination of structure and innovation. A successful improvisation is possibly the highest form of human organisation...it shows lesser and greater degrees of success in both consistency and coherence. And it is based on a continuous process of fine-tuning among all identities...” This is a difficult process to grasp for institutions developed around certainty, clarity, boundaries and a linear methodology. However, this is not a difficult notion for those of us from architecture or the creative fields. The prospect of design processes and methods driving innovation and change is tantatulating and my goal is to establish a strategically focused group in my office to deliver these capabilities across the State Government, and further improve outcomes by developing partnerships with private sector providers and the universities. The ultimate aim is to enhance architecture and the urban realm by having people see value in engaging with architects and designers as creative thinkers.

Good design is the cornerstone of developing healthy, liveable and prosperous communities, and so is important not just to governments but to the whole community. Good design is a matter of public interest. The strategic input from the new group will have a wide impact as we will engage across the State Government, the industry and the education sector. Our work will focus not only on buildings, but on making good places for people; the making of communities. Understanding the scale of our ambition, we recognise the need to involve many other people in the task, hence the need to think of the NSW Government Architect’s Office as ‘enablers’, as a group of people who facilitate the coming together of interesting people, creative organisations and, importantly, ideas; a group of people who can span across ideas and organisations and be the catalyst for the future. This methodology requires structure yet permits freedom; this way of working suggests an ability to ‘organise freedom’ and involve many voices in the process.

Conserving our 20th century heritage

The benefits of retaining and adapting 20th century heritage need to be re-examined and revalued by the profession, government and the community, says Louise Cox AO.

“Architecture wethers into a meaningless formal game when it loses its echo of the timeless myths and traditions of building. Instead of portraying newness, true architecture makes us aware of the entire history of building and it restructures our reading of the continuum of time. The perspective that is often disregarded today is that architecture structures our understanding of the past just as much as it suggests the future.” - Juhani Pallasmaa

It seems our 20th century heritage continues to be under threat from both the public and the private sector in Australia and globally, leading those of us seeking to protect such an important part of our architectural history to ask many questions of ourselves and of those who seek to erase the past. Why is so little value placed on our recent heritage? How can we adapt 20th century heritage buildings to achieve sensible solutions that enhance new projects and allow these pieces of our culture to be available to future generations? How do we restructure our understanding of the very notion of heritage? Where do we want to see heritage today?

From the very beginning of this new century, there has been much debate about the need to redefine the term ‘heritage’. In the height of this debate the NSW Government Architect’s Office, with the support of the Architectural Preservation Foundation, initiated a pilot project which supported the conservation of the Rouse Hill Hospital building.

The project was a key pilot to explore the need for new methods and thinking about heritage and its relationship with our modern structures. The project examined the role of the state and local government to conserve and sustain heritage, both in the conservation of the building and in its use as an educational resource.

The role of the state and local government in conservation and heritage is critical. It is essential that future developments align with the requirements of heritage conservation and ensure that the built environment is protected.

Peter Poulet
NSW Government Architect

Footnotes

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As Past President of the National Trust of Australia John Niland notes, ‘Some see heritage in the icons of the built environment. For others it is more a matter of observing the physical environment. At one level we look at how much of a building’s ‘surroundings’ need protecting beyond the immediate curtilage, at another level context is the collection of things that makes a place feel a particular way, including architecture, food and language.’ I like this statement very much as it goes past looking at a building to the context and to more social issues, a wholeness of looking and feeling.

What is heritage? What is culture? What is sustainability? Sustainability is heritage, and heritage is a great example of sustainability. The retention of the original architect, if it is possible, is an advantage for alterations and extensions to the heritage building. The architect understands the thinking and the philosophy behind the design and setting of the building and should be sympathetic to the original project in any new design. Sensitive
The fiscal advantage of a heritage listing

The financial benefits of heritage listing in New South Wales are many and varied.

**Hector Abrahams** provides an overview of what’s on offer.

**Public grants**

More commonly known are several grant schemes for heritage items. The most consistent and well run is the NSW Heritage Grants Major Works scheme. This annual scheme applies only to items on the State Heritage Register. Under the scheme, conservation projects of a minimum value of about $5,000 can apply for grant funding on a dollar for dollar basis. There is a high level of technical oversight required. Funding is also available for conservation plans, interpretation studies and emergency matters. Some local government authorities run grant schemes, usually to assist with external works to the public face of heritage items. Federal Government grant schemes operate from time to time for items deemed to be of national significance.

**Other support**

Land tax relief is available for items on the State Heritage Register. The Heritage Council of NSW has a scheme to provide support for heritage advisers who operate within local councils across the state. Larger city councils provide professional heritage staff. In the case of smaller local councils in particular, this scheme provides free advice to owners of heritage properties and their architects. Finally, the Heritage Act provided for a special kind of consent that has proved to be most valuable for larger developments on complex sites; the Minister for Heritage can enter into heritage agreements with land owners and developers, in effect becoming the sole consent authority.

**Hector Abrahams** has been working as an architect for over 26 years and established Hector Abrahams Architects in October 2002 after working as a partner with Clive Lucas Stapleton & Partners in Sydney.

**Footnotes**


3. Department buildings on Bridge Street, Sydney. The scheme has been in operation for more than 20 years. In a remarkable example of public transparency, a full history of the scheme’s operation is available on the City of Sydney website.

4. “In 2013 the Sydney Opera House Trust commissioned Deloitte Australia to calculate the value of the Opera House to Australia. The expert study found the icon to be worth a total figure of $4.6 billion.”

**Intrinsic value**

For many buildings that are listed for their architectural importance, the value that is recognised in the listing is reflected in the financial worth of the property. In 2011 the Sydney Opera House Trust commissioned Deloitte Australia to calculate the value of the Opera House to Australia. The expert study found the icon to be worth a total figure of $4.6 billion. This may be an example of the current trend to reduce everything to figures on a balance sheet, but that the study could even be done shows that cultural value is and can be reflected in financial value.

**Incentive schemes**

For heritage items in local government areas there are two schemes that offer opportunities, but only if the project is listed. All local planning schemes provide conservation incentives under section 51.10 (10) in their LEP. Users outside the noning, relaxation of parking and developer contributions, for example, are able to be negotiated under this provision. In the City of Sydney’s CBD, heritage listed buildings can participate in a scheme to transfer the floor space they contain to other developers.

The scheme has been in operation for more than 20 years. In a remarkable example of public transparency, a full history of the scheme’s operation is available on the City of Sydney website.
What early workers’ housing in Sydney can teach us.

This year, the City of Sydney’s inaugural workers’ housing project, the Strickland Buildings in Chippendale, turns 100 years old. With such projects in danger of being seen as outmoded and past their use-by date, Michael Zanardo explores the design of this project, and two other experimental housing blocks, to reveal the aspects of their design that can positively inform the design of contemporary housing.

Frequently we do not recognise the intrinsic qualities of the building stock we have in our city. We often look elsewhere, outwards rather than inwards, for the architectural models that will inspire our designs; however, these precedents, be they from another time, or place, or culture (or all three), are usually somewhat divorced from the particularities of the context we are working in. In the case of housing design in Sydney, we have a rich and continuous tradition of relevant local housing exemplars on which we could draw, however, these projects remain both under-researched and undervalued given their historical significance.

At the time of their construction, the early workers’ housing blocks erected by the NSW State Government, and subsequently the Sydney Municipal Council, were considered to be highly experimental building typologies employing innovative building technologies, the likes of which had not been seen before in Australia. These projects transformed existing housing types to provide site-specific solutions to the problems of urban housing, accommodating larger populations and delivering more shared amenity than the standardised Georgian townhouse or the Victorian terrace house types they replaced.

Understanding the evolution of building types of a certain place over a period of time, as if the city were an ‘urban laboratory’ where projects can be scientifically observed and studied, is not a new concept: Lessons learnt from past projects, the experiments both successful and failed, aid us in the design of future projects. The ability to experience these projects in the flesh – by seeing them, touching them, walking around them and spending time in them – can only assist us to appreciate their attributes.

Looking closely at the design of Sydney’s early examples of publicly sponsored urban housing shows us the problems that housing design sought to deal with over a century ago are not dissimilar to those of today. The design of these projects were concerned with delivering greater density to sites within existing urban areas, improving the quality of light and air to each of the dwellings, and contributing positively to making the streetscape and defining the broader public domain. All of these are familiar and pertinent themes to modern practitioners.

Turn of the century transformations

Housing density first began to increase in earnest in Sydney during the 1830s and 40s correlating with the rapid expansion of commerce and trade. The first instances of terrace housing had appeared in areas like Millers Point and The Rocks in this period and housing construction only continued to intensify around areas of industry throughout the 19th century. Towards 1900, accommodation for the working class in the inner city had become squashed and overcrowded. Middle-class reformers began to agitate for slum clearances.

The crisis of the bubonic plague outbreak of 1900 spurred the State Government into action. Legislation was passed in 1901 to enable the resumption of land and the Sydney Harbour Trust was established to undertake reconstruction. The 1908–09 Royal Commission for the Improvement of the City of Sydney and its Suburbs recommended that the best location to build new workers’ housing would be at the outskirts of the city, and that they should be designed as freestanding homes, however sustained resistance by the waterside workers in Millers Point led to a share of housing being developed adjacent to the wharves. The very first housing projects by the NSW Government Architect, such as the Windmill Street redevelopment in Millers Point, were conceived of as standard terrace houses albeit with superior construction methods, more generous dimensions and improved sanitation, however, the projects that followed began to explore new models with higher densities.

The High Street Flats

The High Street Flats project in Millers Point of 1910, attributed to Sydney Harbour Trust Engineers-in-Chief Henry Deane Walsh, was a clever variation on the terrace house type that effectively stacked mirrored single-storey terrace houses two high, creating blocks of attached four-pack apartments that were then repeated 18 times along the street. The narrow building footprint of each of the blocks allowed the project to step Jimmy with the steep man-made topography. Because the dwelling type was designed in tandem with the block and street layout, the flat buildings had a remarkably close fit with their subdivision, achieving a high density given their height. Each dwelling had excellent access with direct access to the street from a verandah or stair and servicing to the rear lane via a gate or garbage chute. All units had private courtyards at the ground level or on the rooftop, and a playground as the centrepiece of the layout provided additional communal amenity. The project borrowed state-of-the-art technology from the neighbouring wharf projects employing precast concrete slabs for floor construction.

Gloucester Street

In 1912, the Department of Public Works designed a pair of attached four-storey buildings for a very steep infill site in Gloucester Street, The Rocks. The plans for these resemble two-storey terrace houses stacked four wide and two high, giving a total of eight dwellings per building (16 per attached pair). One atypical dwelling, splayed at the ground level or on the rooftop, and a playground as the centrepiece of the layout provided additional communal amenity. The project borrowed state-of-the-art technology from the neighbouring wharf projects employing precast concrete slabs for floor construction.


appears as a tall verandah element and works to pick up the predominant parapet and pinched roof heights within the streetscape. The upper storey stands proud of the base and echoes the upper floor of the Australian Hotel located opposite.

The Strickland Buildings

The Sydney Municipal Council was keen to follow in the State Government’s footsteps. After much petitioning, they were granted resumption powers in 1905 and permission to build workers’ housing came later with the 1912 amendment to the Sydney Corporation Act. Council built in the poor labor-controlled wards of the city but, unlike the Sydney Harbour Trust or the Department of Public Works, it broke with the idea of intensification through traditional building types and instead opted for true apartment building typologies.

Their first project was the Strickland Buildings in 1914 designed by the City Architect Robert Hargrave Bradrick. Located on a resumed long north–south block in Chippendale, this project is actually nine three-storey buildings of three different plan types running alternately along and across the site, attached at light wells. Each building contains between six and 12 units, with a maximum of four units per floor, comprising a total of 72 apartments of many different configurations. Four shops at each end of the block address the busiest street frontages and provide a mix of uses. Although the building was reputed to be the densest housing project in Sydney at the time of its completion3, was reputed to be the densest housing project block address the busiest street frontages and configurations. Four shops at each end of the total of 71 apartments of many different maximum of four units per floor, comprising a site, attached at light wells. Each building on a resumed long north–south block in

Buildings in 1914 designed by the City building typologies.

types and instead opted for true apartment Sydney Harbour Trust or the Department of controlled wards of the city but, unlike the 1912 amendment to the Sydney Corporation build workers’ housing came later with the resumption powers in 1905 and permission to follow in the State Government’s footsteps.

The Strickland Buildings prove to us in bricks and mortar that density and amenity need not be mutually exclusive, and they serve as important touchstones for the positive role that denser forms of housing can play in defining and activating the public domain. Embodied within these projects are the tactics for dealing with our ever-present topography, providing a veritable catalogue of strategies for arranging apartment and circulation types. This is all invaluable knowledge to practising architects and it is specific to the city we work in. It is important that we take care of these buildings, not only so future generations can see where we have been, but also that they may guide future architects to where they are going.10

Michael Zanardo is a registered architect, urban designer and the principal of Studio Zanardo. His practice specialises in the design of denser forms of housing, particularly social and affordable housing. He teaches design in the Masters of Architecture program at the University of Sydney where he is currently undertaking a doctorate investigating pre-World War II workers’ housing in Sydney. Michael is an outspoken and passionate advocate for improving residential design.

Examples of early workers’ housing in Sydney provide us with more than just a window to history. They are enduring, living, working buildings that have withstood the test of time and are at hand to provide sage insight into the design of housing in Sydney today. They are enduring, living, working buildings that have withstood the test of time and are at hand to provide sage insight into the design of housing in Sydney today. These buildings that have withstood the test of time and are at hand to provide sage insight into the design of housing in Sydney today. The High Street Flats, Gloucester Street, and the Strickland Buildings prove to us in bricks and mortar that density and amenity need not be mutually exclusive, and they serve as important touchstones for the positive role that denser forms of housing can play in defining and activating the public domain. Embodied within these projects are the tactics for dealing with our ever-present topography, providing a veritable catalogue of strategies for arranging apartment and circulation types. This is all invaluable knowledge to practising architects and it is specific to the city we work in. It is important that we take care of these buildings, not only so future generations can see where we have been, but also that they may guide future architects to where they are going.10

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Adapting heritage sites for the demands of contemporary use can be challenging; Mary Knaggs explores this further in relation to the transformation of some popular Sydney places.

Australia is recognised internationally for the outstanding philosophy of heritage practice that is the Burra Charter. It’s no coincidence that Australian designers are increasingly respected on the world stage for their adaptive re-use of places; an approach that respects and celebrates heritage values. The Burra Charter encourages a contemporary practitioner to thoroughly understand heritage values and to be very clear in their design as to what is new and what is not.

Paddington Reservoir Gardens

Sometimes sites – particularly ruined sites – speak with immediacy to the design team. When Tonkin Zulaikha Greer (TZG) was first commissioned to convert Paddington Reservoir Gardens into an urban park, the general expectation was that the reservoir would be sealed off and a brand-new park built on top. Julie McKenzie from TZG recalls how the project team was captivated by the possibilities of revealing the 19th century structure as a ruin; an artefact through which members of the public could wander, immersed in the poetic heritage, the dramatic spaces and play of light. The concept for the contemporary overlay was inspired by the original artefact. The imperative was to celebrate the engineering structure and materials at Paddington Reservoir Gardens, and this was greatly assisted by access to the original drawings and specifications.

Adaptation has a lot to do with evolution and sustainability, memory and vision. In awarding the 2010 Australian Medal for Landscape Architecture to Reservoir Gardens, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture jury found: “This is a public ‘garden’ that has the expression, layering of meaning and timeless quality of any poem by Judith Wright or T.S. Eliot. The peeling back of structures to reveal the ‘time past’ is countered by the addition of the new structures making a clear statement about ‘time present’.”

The Wharf Theatres

Interviewed by Sharon Fraser in 1987, Vivian Fraser said of his Sydney Theatre Company project at Walsh Bay: “You have to know the truth about an old building before you put pencil to paper… I like to give insights into the way the building works.” He continued, “Existing buildings lead the designer – rather than the reverse – like the linearity of the Wharf Theatres… under any other circumstances I would not have had the audacity to have a public entrance 200 metres long… And obviously I wanted people to know they were on a wharf.” When constructed, Fraser’s Wharf Theatre and his Sydney Dance Company projects received criticism from some in the architectural community, particularly in regard to their simplicity. In reality Fraser found that: “The problem (of adapting the wharf) was one of the most complex and difficult problems I have ever tackled, and required 12 months of intense design and documentation team work to achieve this, hopefully simple, result… I think it is a success if people think it is a simple job… I am quite happy to have that sort of insult.”

Past informing future

Another challenge for architects working in the heritage site adaptation area is the concept of design as interpretation; how to deal with the contradictions found between the celebration of heritage value and the sustainable future of a place. When considering the communication of heritage value, Richard Johnson of Johnson Pilton Walker believes his best heritage projects have in fact been his exhibition designs. Johnson was involved early in his career in the design of the Australian pavilions...
and exhibitions at the International Expos of 1974 and 1975. He found the best way to communicate the significance of Australia's industry, art and craft was to understand both the historical and the contemporary context. More recently Johnson has designed award-winning exhibitions at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for these projects Johnson has had to grapple with how to communicate the history of objects to a wide community. He does this by taking them on a journey of thought: provoking and life-affirming discovery without “beating them over the head with historical fact.” Johnson says, “History is not an end in itself, it is a means by which to create greater understanding and more relevant design.”

Sustainability

When working on a heritage re-use site, a discussion regarding the connection between the adaptation of existing buildings and sustainability is inevitable. There are the obvious environmental sustainability issues of embodied energy in existing fabric, and the economic sustainability of using existing structures and services, however, Diane Jones from PWJ points to the inherent flexibility of many older buildings to adapt to contemporary demands. For example James Barnett and Walter Liberty Vernon’s courthouses often accommodate the changing needs of our justice system without significant loss of heritage value. Johnson believes we need a new approach to the creation of sustainable places, one that starts with society, heritage and the evolution of change, not just with sustainability achieved by technology. We need to find the embodied poetic energy of places.

The fabric of place

Conservation Plans for heritage sites, which are based on the Burra Charter Process, can be invaluable, mainly for the history and analysis of the place. Johnson urges us that we understand the basic concept of the original designer and maker. She says, “the best Conservation Plans include diagrams analysing the spatial and fabric concepts – diagrams of why a place is and how it is, the composition of solids and voids – not the plan only.”

For most adaptive re-use projects, a celebration of traditional material and craft is critical. To do this we need to retain expertise in traditional building crafts and techniques. Jones also acknowledges the inspiration of traditional fabric in its ability to “convey a sense of humanity and continuance”. For Johnson, the facade of the Museum of Sydney is homage to the use of sandstone in the building of the city of Sydney and was inspired by the knowledge in traditional stonemasonry of NSW Public Works stonemason, George Proudman. Johnson has since been to most of the major quarries in Australia and discussed the qualities of each with the quarry master. He may choose the stone “but the stone comes from the major quarries in Australia”.

Mary Knaggs is currently Senior Heritage Architect at the NSW Government Architect’s Office. She previously had her own practice as a heritage architect in Tasmania. This article is based on a paper given by Knaggs at the Australia ICOMOS National Conference in Canberra in October 2013. The conference theme was Creative Imaginings: How can heritage and creative practice be combined to explore the poetics of place and memory.

Knaggs interviewed four architects working in creative adaptation to prepare her paper.

A house in Hunters Hill

Don Gazzard reflects on the building and subsequent adaptation of his first project: Courtyard House, winner of the first Wilkinson Award for Residential Architecture in New South Wales.

My first completed building was the traditional starting point for most architects, a small house for my in-laws who had a standard suburban block, two kids and a tight budget. Working on postwar housing in London for four years had ruffled home the understanding that if costs were to be kept down there should be efficiency in construction or detailing, that what builders were familiar with was always the cheapest option. Ordinary suburban house construction seemed to me to be a sort of vernacular - tile roofs, brick walls and timber floors – and this was clearly the way to contain costs. Only the interior planning and external appearance needed to be changed.

The street frontage faced west so the house was planned around a courtyard to enable north sun to penetrate the living room from the side. The courtyard was an extension of the living room, and walled so it was private from the street and block out western sun. The roofs sloped inwards and there were no gutters, the rainwater being drained from the courtyard. The roof rafters were exposed internally and the sloping shape of the roof gave the house a feeling of spaciousness. Windows were placed to encourage natural cross ventilation. The materials were simple: white painted common brickwork, polished timber floors and timber doors and windows with a natural finish.

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The straightforward plan and cross section were determined by the position of the sun and way the house fitted into its suburban streetscape. What was different, however, was its use of elements like roofing tiles that were considered ‘unmodern’ by most architects at the time.

The house was awarded the first Wilkinson Award for Residential Architecture in 1961, with the Herbert family living there until its sale to new owners in 2002. The gross enclosed area of this three-bedroom house was only 120 square metres - small by today’s standards. The new owners wanted more space but their initial plans for adding this extra space would have totally destroyed the design concept. Fortunately an enlightened town planner at Hunters Hill Council refused to accept their proposal and suggested the owners should retain the original architect instead. Would there were more planners like this!

Consequently I designed a 90 square metre extension that was built on the rear of the site. The roof of the extension was the same height as that of the existing building so the house was extended seamlessly at the rear of the site using the same external materials. The extension cannot be seen from the street and the original appearance of the house from the pavement is unchanged. The only minor changes made to the original plan were the removal of the corridor and bathroom so that the access to the bedrooms and the kitchen could be enlarged.

Footnotes

3. Sharon Fraser, Power on Fraser, University of New South Wales undergraduate and Honours project, 1985
4. Philip Thalis and Peter John Cantrill, Public Sydney: Drawing The City, Thames and Hudson, 2013
5. David Moore.
A tale of two adaptations

Margi Fallon and Noel Thomson discuss the adaptive re-use of two sites in country New South Wales.

Hidden away for years behind a heavily vegetated garden, the Heatherbrae Cottage became prominent in the new Lawson town centre after the completion of the highway widening works through the township. The 1914 cottage had been left vacant for a number of years and had been subject to water damage and vandalism. The cottage was purchased by the Blue Mountains City Council in 2008 for use by Connect Child and Family Services and The Possum Toy Library, who have been using it since September 2013. Heatherbrae Cottage, Lawson

Noel Thomson

“A tale of two adaptations

The challenges of adapting and restoring this cottage lay in the preservation of the delicate interiors after years of water ingress and minor vandalism to the building.”

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The conversion of the cottage for use as office space required the provision of accessibility, both within the building and from the adjacent car park through the significant garden. These were contained within the kitchen, bathroom and laundry areas, which had already been altered by the previous owners of the cottage. Improved external accessibility was achieved by the use of light framed and removable structures. The works were carried out by the Blue Mountains City Council.

Margi Fallon

Integrated Design Associates

Commercial Hotel, Albury

The former Commercial Hotel in Smollett Street, Albury, listed on the State Heritage Register, closed its doors in 2007 after over 100 years of trading. The building was purchased in 2009 with the idea to convert the hotel and its accommodation quarters to an apartment building (Waterstreet Apartments) which was completed early this year. The two-storey hotel was built in 1885 at the east end of the town due to its proximity to the newly established Sydney to Melbourne railway line and the recently completed Albury Railway Station at the end of Smollett Street. The original hotel was designed by Albury architects Gordon & Gordon, with Louis Harrison, a prominent local architect, designing the 1920 extensions – a bar, parlour and two-storey accommodation wing – as well as internal alterations to the existing Commercial Hotel. With the extensions finalised, the hotel consisted of a main bar, parlour, lounge, dining room, kitchen, toilets and bathrooms, stores, laundry, 32 bedrooms and rear garage for five cars. The adaptation now houses nine apartments – consisting of one one-bed apartment, five two-bed apartments and three three-bed apartments – each with a garage in the new building at the rear of the property.

The challenge in adapting this heritage building to its new use as apartments was to conserve its heritage values. The aim was to minimise changes to the original structure as much as possible and provide new accommodation that was sympathetic to the building’s history as a hotel. The division of the building into apartments needed to recognise the relationship between the principal rooms and install up-to-date services without affecting significant fabric. Another challenge was the unsafe verandah, however, with the assistance of a grant from the Heritage Council of NSW, along with historical research and the study of a 1910 photograph, reconstruction was undertaken and missing elements replaced to return it to an earlier known state.

A statement of heritage impact was prepared for the adaptation of the building that resulted in the approval of nine apartments within the original hotel footprint and the infilling of the central circulation area. Changes were made with the removal of some walls where small hotel rooms needed to be enlarged to suit the requirements of the new apartments. The insertion of new work between the two rear accommodation wings united the building and allowed the new units to achieve natural light from both the east and west sides. Private open spaces were provided through individual entry courtyards and access to balconies at the first floor. The new balcony verandahs were located on the western side of the building and provide shelter to the apartment entry and protection from the western sun.

Noel Thomson

Noel Thomson Architecture

Footnotes

Emeritus Professor and former NSW Government Architect Peter Webber examines the sale of one of New South Wales most historic buildings.

Lining the southern side of Bridge Street in Sydney are three remarkable 19th and early 20th century sandstone buildings, designed respectively for the Office of the Chief Secretary and later the Department of Public Works, the Education Department, and the Department of Lands. All have been continuously occupied by public authorities serving the needs of the state, and for much of that time they also housed the offices of the state ministers responsible for these areas. All of the buildings are of exceptional cultural importance, and, as a group, are considered by the National Trust to be of “the highest heritage significance.” Of the three, the Department of Lands Building is arguably the most impressive, with the National Trust commenting that it is “…one of the most influential and major public buildings ever established during the mid-19th century in Australia’s colonial history.” Since its completion in 1876 it has housed the government department responsible for managing the organisation, surveying and subdivision of land in the entire state, and, until 2000, has been occupied by 19 successive New South Wales surveyor generals.

**Heritage up for sale**

In July 2013 the State Government announced, without open consultation, that it proposed to offer the buildings for sale or lease to the private sector. There remains deep concern about the loss of such precious public property, not least among those who have had a long association with the buildings, in particular the various groups with a strong interest in the professional disciplines involved. In the case of the Department of Lands, the Institution of Surveyors NSW (ISNSW) has been a strong advocate against its “privatisation”, arguing in a letter to the NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell that this would be short-sighted and would mean its “…loss forever, as a public treasure, to future generations”. It has not been an issue since the announcement that the fabric of the buildings would be retained and conserved, and that any new owners would be required to maintain them in good condition as part of any contract of sale. The NSW Department of Finance and Services advised the Institution of Surveyors NSW that the Lands Department Building is on the major state heritage registers and is heritage protected and that its heritage “…will not be affected by the divestment of the properties. As part of the divestment process, a Conservation Management Plan is being finalised for this asset to ensure the potential new owners have a clear plan to manage the heritage aspects of this property”. The Conservation Management Plan is being prepared by the Government Architect; it has been proposed that future uses would be restricted to “tourism”. While this assurance is of some comfort, it does not address the critical issue that the heritage of such a building involves not only its physical structure, viewed as an “asset” which can be divested, but also equally its social and cultural heritage, and the implications if these are no longer associated with the building. From press reports it appears that there is unlikely to be a shortage of “interest” in taking over the properties. Will Deague, Chief Executive of the Asian Pacific Group, whose company controls several boutique hotels, has been quoted in a press report as saying that the Department of Education and Department of Lands sites offered “…one of the greatest sites to come up in Sydney for a hotel”.

**Fabric, context and culture**

We are fortunate that the Department of Lands Building survived the postwar boom when so many superb but little valued Victorian era buildings were demolished, not least the Royal Exchange Building, on the corner immediately opposite in Pitt Street. The heritage of the Department of Lands Building has been comprehensively documented, first by Morton Herman, later by Peter Bridges and Don McDonald in their work on the remarkable Colonial Architect James Barnet, the National Trust (NSW), and recently the Seniors Group of the Institution of Surveyors NSW. The foundation stone for the new building was laid by the then Minister for Lands, Thomas Garrett, on 7 October 1876 and construction commenced in 1877, but by 1888 only the north-west section was completed, with a contemporary reporter complaining that “…an extra lifetime has elapsed without anything being done to complete the work.” However, a most impressive structure was emerging, with three highly decorative Italian Renaissance-style storeys set upon a sturdy base, all faced with warm sandstone from the nearby quarries in Pymont. In scale and character it is similar and complementary to the earlier Office of the Colonial Secretary at the top of Bridge Street “…with arched window and verandah openings and niches for statuary, some of which remain unoccupied.” The building was the entrepreneurial John Young, who trained as an architect but found building work more profitable. With ingenuity he introduced vaulting at lower levels made from coke concrete spanning between iron joists and the then novel concrete slabs. By 1892 the second stage was finally completed and surmounted by both an impressive ‘onion’ dome and the spectacular clock tower.

Many of the interior are significant: marble-tiled corridors, fascinating staircases, splendidly spacious rooms and memorable spaces enclosed below the rooftop structures, none more important than the original Plan Room, which is located at the very centre of the building with a domed skylight to use as much natural light as possible for working on and viewing plans.

While much of its context has changed, and many nearby buildings have been demolished, the Department of Lands Building remains as much loved icon in this historic part of the city. It complements the Department of Education and the Office of the Colonial Secretary public buildings to the east, and with its sandstone facades and comfortable pedestrian scale, provides a sense of continuity along the southern side of Bridge Street and an urban streetscape. Its northern –
Twentieth century heritage: a research checklist

To assist those researching 20th century buildings to develop a clear architectural picture of their subject, NSW Chapter Heritage Officer Noni Boyd shares a list of questions to tease out the relevant information, and provides the leads needed to track the answers down.

Q1: When was the building erected?
In order to find out this information check the following sources:
- Council development application (DA) and building application (BA) registers; maps; subdivision plans; street directories; and rate books. As many council records are not yet online, DA registers may be available in local studies collections. The City of Sydney is the main exception, their rate books have been transcribed, and their street planning cards, which list applications, have been scanned.
- See the historical menu from PhotosAUS.com for other councils.
- Tenders in newspapers or construction journals via the National Library of Australia’s Trove website – www.trove.nla.gov.au
- Subdivision plans can be found online via the Subdivision Plan Index – www.nl.nsw.gov.au.

Q2: Who commissioned the work? Did they commission other similar buildings or works by the same architect?
Sources:
- Government Gazette and Departmental annual reports at the Mitchell Library via the State Library (see Q1).
- Newspaper reports via Trove (see Q1).

Q3: Who designed it and what was the design intention?
Sources:
- Newspaper articles (see Q1).
- Architectural magazines (see Q5).
- Selected oral history transcripts & lists of NSW architects’ works (AJA Digital Archive).
- Past projects are included on a number of NSW architect’s websites, for instance Peter Muller.

Q4: Do the original plans survive?
Sources:
- Various local councils.
- Courtesy drawings of public buildings held by the City of Sydney (from 1972 onwards), see Series 968 Government Building Plans.
- A number of current architects and firms have donated drawings of past projects to the Mitchell Library (see Q1), including AJA+C, COX Architecture and Glenn Murcutt.

It is worth noting that indexes to architectural drawings held at the Mitchell Library and State Records are still hard copy only. A good starting point is the Mitchell Library’s Guide to Architectural Collections (via the manuscripts catalogue). The State Records Plan Index (formerly AO Plan) can be consulted at NSW State Records.

Q5: Was the building unveiled at the time of completion?
Sources:
- The NSW Chapter holds the full run of Architecture Bulletin, most of Cross Section and selected issues of Architecture Australia. Additional holdings at the State Library of New South Wales and the National Library of Australia.
- Popular magazines were also very influential, particularly when it came to the design of houses. The Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection (Sydney Living Museums) has a wide range of material regarding residential design in New South Wales, as has the Mitchell Library.

Q6: Did the design win any architectural awards?
Sources:
**A Singular Vision: Harry Seidler**

**Author:** Helen O'Neill  
**Publisher:** HarperCollins  
**RRP:** $35.99  
**Members:** $34.99  

This, the second biography written in the past 12 years on the architect Harry Seidler, is a handsome publication, even with a somewhat bizarre half-slip cover. Written in a similar narrative style to the first book, this biography also spends a great deal of time describing Seidler’s life in Vienna (Austria), Cambridge (UK), and Winnipeg and Cambridge (US). This is offered as the necessary content in the development of Seidler’s character, as influenced by his father’s determinism, his mother’s ambition and his elder brother who had an ‘eye for design’. His internment in Canada is also discussed in great detail. Some new pieces of information are presented including how he overcame his colour blindness.

Reliance on the books of the university library (and an unnamed private collection that I suspect is Aitken’s own) is both the core strength and greatest weakness of *Cultivating Modernism*. The sumptuous illustrations, which are served well by the excellence of the book design and production, depict ideal projects and international examples of built modernist gardens, however, while some built Australian examples are mentioned – for example the rooftop garden by Paul Sorensen at Pelxus House in George Street, Sydney – they are not illustrated or discussed. The lack of built Australian examples is the greatest disappointment with the book, however, discussion of the as-built results of modernism in Australia was not the aim of the publication, it was the transmission and reception of ideas that was the purpose. The lack of built examples would tend to suggest that the modernist garden was not received in Australia, however, the modernist buildings that were built here were constructed on sites that already had vegetated surrounds, which, by their very existence, were gardens related to these modernist structures. Aitken does depict US West Coast modernist houses in stands of emigrant eucalyptus and suggests that they formed a modernist setting. Likewise, the Woolley House in Mosman, set on its steep bushland site, is also mentioned in the context of the ‘natural’ bush being the adopted and appropriate setting for Australian modernist houses.

The book is arranged in broad chronological chapters that are divided into page-long, thematic snippets. It is not a book with an argued narrative, in contrast to Aitken’s *Garden of Ideas*. The illustrations are rarely mentioned in the text and the captions only occasionally state their relevance to the illustration to which they relate. An example is the book’s cover illustration, from a 1936 Australian House Beautiful magazine, which depicts a pavilion by a pond with white boats riding at anchor on a bay or harbour beyond. Where is this modernist idyll? Is it the UK, the US, Australia or Utopia? But that is the modernist conundrum: it should be anywhere.

**To a wider public, Seidler may well be remembered as being media savvy and assertive, however, O’Neill portrays him as a passionate and generous man. When I declared during my high school days that I wanted to become an architect, my parents, not knowing how to advise, contacted the only architect they had heard of. To my surprise Seidler agreed to my parent’s telephone request and gave up one of his busy mornings to show me his Milsons Point office while speaking knowingly about architectural education, especially in Sydney. In memory of this kindness, I can relate with O’Neill’s observations. On the whole this is a good read about a man whose life was inextricably woven by his architectural convictions and his devotion to his family.**

**Glen Harper**  
PTW Architects

**The Wallpapered Manse: The Rescue of an Endangered House**

**Author:** Peter Freeman  
**Publisher:** The Watermark Press  
**RRP:** $49.99  
**Members:** $45.99  

This book is a testament to the places of cultural significance that enrich people’s lives; those irreplaceable and precious places that provide an inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape. Peter Freeman, a well-known conservation architect with over 50 years of experience, is able to tell the story of a former Presbyterian manse in Moruya, on the south coast of New South Wales, as a result of the Historic Houses Trust (now Sydney Living Museums) Endangered Houses Fund project. A story that is not only about a house on loan to the ministers who occupied it, but also about a dedicated group of people who built both the church and manse, the people who cared for the place long after the ministers left, and the comprehensive survey and documentation of remarkable layers of wallpapers and decoration of a comparatively humble but elegant 1865 cottage. Michael Lech, the wallpaper conservator for Sydney Living Museums, observed: “…although hundreds…of new wallpaper designs appeared on the market every year,… the wallpapers found at Moruya are unlikely to be found in any Australian and possibly any overseas collection.”

The beautifully designed, proportioned and written publication is enriched with colourful maps, pictures and sketches supporting the interrelated chronological development history of the town and its battles with natural disasters, as well as the Presbyterian ministers’ families and events that fashioned the decoration of the manse for 150 years. This long and eventual historic account proved to be the foundation and prelude for the comprehensive documentation of the restoration of the manse, which involved great care and expertise; skilfully and professionally executed traditional trades performed by local tradesmen, a ‘cautious approach’ to intervention, and adaptive re-use by retrieving as many of the 1865 Victorian Georgian-style architectural elements that showcase the principles of heritage best practice. As such the book will be a good resource to both the general public and conservation specialists who wish to learn about Moruya’s historical development or the use of wallpaper at the time, including the documentation, conservation and rescue of such delicate and significant fabric.

This book shows the narrative and skilful presentation of Freeman through another conservation project and is a gift to the town of Moruya as well as the practice of conservation.
Ridley Smith, known as Ridley, had his early education in China and India. Fleeing communist oppression he was brought to Australia in 1951 and matriculated from Katoomba High School in 1953. He attended the University of Sydney between 1953 and 1958, studying architecture under Professor Henry Ingham Ashworth and was also greatly influenced by the input of Lloyd Rees during these formative years.

In 1958, following graduation he worked for a period with the firm of Bruce Brown and Brinsley in Toronto. Moving to England he was employed in the offices of Ove Arup. Returning to Sydney in 1961, Ridley worked for a period with the Commonwealth Department of Works and subsequently became an Associate at Herbert Hely and Noel Bell Architects, working on projects including Bankstown Square and St John's Village, Glebe.

In July 1969 he entered into partnership with Noel Bell under the name Noel Bell Ridley Smith and commenced a practice working on projects including Bankstown Square and St John's Village, Glebe.

His educational projects included appointments at Southern Cross University in Lismore, the University of Sydney, Sydney TAFE Petersham College, The Scots School, Albury and at a significant number of private and state schools and colleges throughout New South Wales. He was a final year design tutor at the University of Sydney between 1982 and 1986.

One of the firm’s first commissions was the redevelopment of Sydney Square and the construction of St Andrew’s House for the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. This important and well-detailed urban environment has left a positive and lasting impact on the historic centre of Sydney. It was in this development that Ridley Smith memorialised the late Arthur Stace with the inclusion of the word “Eternity” in the paving at the base of the Wall of Water fountain adjoining St Andrew’s Cathedral.

Of particular interest to Ridley was the area of church architecture and music and he was responsible for a large number of new church buildings in the Sydney region for a variety of religious denominations, including the Hillsong development at Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill Baptist Church and new worship centres at St John’s Church, Camden and St Jude’s Church, Bowral.

His architectural contribution extended beyond Australia with educational, health and tourist projects designed for China, Singapore, Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia and Ghana.

In his architecture as much as in his office and private life, Ridley connected his office and private life, Ridley connected his human scale in its use of materials as well as being a final year design tutor at the University of Sydney between 1982 and 1986.

Born to Baptist missionaries in Kaifeng, China, in 1936, Frederick John Ridley Smith was established to ‘create life-changing environments’. This approach was deeply influenced by his strong Christian faith expressed in concern for others.

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Of particular interest to Ridley was the area of church architecture and music and he was responsible for a large number of new church buildings in the Sydney region for a variety of religious denominations, including the Hillsong development at Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill Baptist Church and new worship centres at St John’s Church, Camden and St Jude’s Church, Bowral.

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2014 NSW ARCHITECTURE AWARDS

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