



This is Modernism

**Symposium presented by the AASA
Modernism Collaborative**

16 February 2024, Adelaide

**Edited by
Christoph Schnoor
Julie Collins**

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February 2024

This is Modernism. Symposium presented by the AASA Modernism Collaborative.

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Cover photo by Ann Cleary. Churchill House, Canberra, 1972

‘This is Modernism’ is being held at the University of South Australia on Kurna Country, the traditional country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship with the land, and we acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kurna people living today. ‘This is Modernism’ is being held in the Pridham Hall function room and we acknowledge the generosity of alumnus Andrew Pridham, benefactor of Pridham Hall.

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Hosted by the Association of Architecture Schools of Australasia,
the University of South Australia, and Unitec | Te Pūkenga,
Auckland (New Zealand).

Convened by
Julie Collins
Christoph Schnoor

Schedule

Time	Presenter	Presentation: architect, building, place	Date
9.00-9.15	Introductions		
9.15-9.30	Stuart King	Edith Emery: Own House in Hobart, TAS	1958
9.30-9.45	Catherine Howell	Alexandra Mokwinska: House in Eden Hills, Adelaide, SA	1961-62
9.45-10.00	Kerry Francis	OHU Collective: Cookhouse in Waipū, Northland, NZ	1975-85
10.00-10.15 Discussion			
10.15-10.30	Philip Goad	Paul Couch: House at Toolern Vale, VIC	1972
10.30-10.45	James Curry	John Chappel: Billam House, Adelaide, SA	1964
10.45-11.00 Discussion			
11.00-11.15 BREAK			
11.15-11.30	Elsie Telford & Akari N. Kidd	Jackson Walker Architects: City Edge, Melbourne, VIC	1971-74
11.30-11.45	Edwina Jans, Rachel Jackson & Amy Jarvis	Michael Dysart & Partners: Urambi Village, Canberra, ACT	1974
11.45-12.00	Amit Srivastava, A. Humphrey, S. Cook, J. Curry & B. Nicholls	John Chappel: Bonython House, Adelaide, SA	1965
12.00-12.15 Discussion			

12.15-13.15 LUNCH BREAK			
13.15-13.30	Deborah Ascher Barnstone	Neville Coulter: Electricity House, St. George, NSW	1939
13.30-13.45	Silvia Micheli, Antony Moulis & Virginia Rigney	Enrico Taglietti: Canberra Cinema Center, ACT	1966
13.45-14.00	Isabel Rousset	Julius Elischer: El Caballo Blanco, Wooroloo, WA	1973-86
14.00-14.15 Discussion			
14.15-14.30	Lisa Marie Daunt	Raymond Stephens Smith, Townsville Law Courts, QLD	1975
14.30-14.45	Ann Cleary	Robin Boyd: Churchill House, Canberra, ACT	1972
14.45-15.00	Daniel Ryan	Stephenson & Turner et al.: Lucas Heights, Sydney, NSW	1954-61
15.00-15.15 Discussion			
15.15-15.30 BREAK			
15.30-15.45	Chris Burns	C.W.: Peters: St. Alphonsus, Millicent, SA	1966
15.45-16.00	Julie Collins	Arthur Philpot: John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs, NT	1953-56
16.00-16.15	Christoph Schnoor & Sinead McClay	Paul Pascoe: Te Rangimārie Māori Youth Centre, Christchurch, NZ	1968
16.15-16.30 Discussion, Conclusion			

This is Modernism: Introduction

Unknown / underexplored / one building case study /
lost buildings / building with landscape

Many recent publications both in Australia and in New Zealand have investigated, summarised and re-evaluated modernist architecture in our part of the world. Despite these efforts, there remain gaps. Buildings that might have gone unnoticed a while ago, might create interest today.

In 1963, architect Ernst Plischke described the aim of modern architecture as achieving unity of space and sculptural quality, which needed to be based on a fulfilment of functional and structural needs. The main quality of such an architecture, he claimed, lay in the tension between these four cornerstones of architecture, and they needed to be carefully balanced. Plischke's fascinating and durable definition appears as an extension of the Vitruvian triad (*venustas, firmitas, utilitas*), achieved by splitting *venustas* into space and sculpture (inside and outside).

But despite Plischke's experiences of two entirely different architectural cultures in his life, what remained missing from his definition was the consideration of *place*. Local social, physical, material and cultural factors influence architecture, and always have.

The symposium therefore has asked contributors to consider the relationship between modernist architectural ideas and the places in Australia and New Zealand where specific buildings were designed. We invited submissions of case studies of single buildings that demonstrate a specific relationship to place, whether they were well-kept buildings, buildings in danger or even lost or unbuilt buildings.

The Modernism Collaborative (Deborah Ascher Barnstone, Ann Cleary, Isabel Rousset, Stuart King, Julie Collins and Christoph Schnoor) chose seventeen of the submitted abstracts, which show a broad range of functions, from residential to commercial to governmental and religious buildings, located across from Western Australia to the South Island, and from Alice Springs to Hobart.

We thank Martha Liew from the AASA Secretariat for her sterling help with the event's organisation.

These abstracts as presented here will form the starting point for larger research projects to record and discuss under-explored modernist buildings across New Zealand and Australia.

Christoph Schnoor and Julie Collins
for the AASA Modernism Collaborative

Table of Contents

- 4 Schedule**
- 6 This is Modernism: Introduction**
- 10 Stuart King**
Edith Emery's Practice in Place: "A Bridge into the Life of Others"
- 12 Catherine Howell**
Exile or Eden? Contextualising Alexandra Mokwinska, Pioneering Émigrée Architect in Adelaide, South Australia
- 14 Kerry Francis**
The Cookhouse, Waipū
- 16 Philip Goad**
Late Modern in the Landscape: House at Toolern Vale, c.1972 by Paul Couch
- 18 James Curry**
'A Spectacular Adobe House': John Chappel's Billam House (1964)
- 20 Elsie Telford and Akari Nakai Kidd**
City Edge by Jackson Walker Architects – Architecture, Landscape, and Social Value
- 22 Rachel Jackson, Amy Jarvis and Edwina Jans**
Modernist Medium Density: Urambi Village, Canberra – Michael Dysart & Partners, 1974
- 24 Amit Srivastava, Aaron Humphrey, Steve Cook, James Curry and Benjamin Nicholls**
Modern Architecture as a Stage for Modern Art: the Lost History of Bonython House and Adelaide Cyclorama

- 26 Deborah Ascher Barnstone**
Electric Modernity: Electricity House in St. George, New South Wales
- 28 Silvia Micheli, Antony Moulis and Virginia Rigney**
Place and the Intangible in the Making of Canberra: Enrico Taglietti's Cinema Center (1964–66)
- 30 Isabel Rousset**
Placing El Caballo Blanco (1973–86)
- 32 Lisa Marie Daunt**
Townsville Law Courts: Designed in Brisbane, Conceived in Japan
- 34 Ann Cleary**
Churchill House, a Lesser Known Work of Robin Boyd Within Canberra's Modernist Canvas
- 36 Daniel Ryan**
Conforming to the Future: the Australian Atomic Energy Commission Research Establishment at Lucas Heights
- 38 Chris Burns**
Plan, Form, Structure and Light: St Alphonsus' Catholic Church at Millicent, South Australia
- 40 Julie Collins**
'Inland Sanctuary': The John Flynn Memorial Church, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), 1953–56
- 42 Christoph Schnoor and Sinead McClay**
Te Rangimārie: Catholic Māori Mission Centre in Christchurch

Stuart King

University of Melbourne



Edith Emery, own house in Hobart, 1958. Photo by Stuart King.

Dr Stuart King is a Senior Lecturer in architectural design and history in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. He is a member of the University's Australian Centre for Architectural History, Urban and Cultural Heritage (ACAHUCH) and undertakes research in Australian architectural history. He is a past editor of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand's journal *Fabrications: JSAHANZ* (2014–2017) and past SAHANZ President (2011–13).

Edith Emery's Practice in Place: "A Bridge into the Life of Others"

In 1958, Edith Emery (née Wellspacher, 1909–2004), just graduated with a diploma of architecture from the Hobart Technical College, launched an independent architectural practice with the design of her own home on a hilltop site in Longview Avenue, Sandy Bay, overlooking Hobart's Derwent Estuary. It was a modest family dwelling, attentive to its site and domestic program. Constructed in brick, timber and glass with a butterfly roof, it was easily overlooked among the buildings which are typically used to characterise post-war modern architecture in Tasmania. Nonetheless, in recent years, and especially following additions by Taylor + Hinds Architects, it has gained a profile allied to recognition of Emery's place as the first (currently known) locally trained and independently practicing woman architect in the state.

Emery's path to architectural practice was peripatetic. Born in rural Austria, her study in art and architecture extends from subjects undertaken at the Vienna *Kunstgewerbeschule* (School of Applied Arts) in the mid-1920s, under the tutelage of prominent modernist educators including and Franz Čížek and Oskar Strnad. However, she subsequently studied and practiced in medicine before fleeing Austria, following Hitler's invasion, for Tasmania in 1938. She spent the following decade in Australia, Africa and Europe, including a period as a World War II civilian POW, before resettling with her family in Hobart in 1948. Aged in her early forties and unable to gain professional recognition for her medical training, she returned to architectural studies in 1951.

This presentation analyses the design of Emery's own house, as part of ongoing research into her architectural legacy. It argues the imprint of formative educational experiences under Čížek and Strnad in Vienna playing out in Hobart, evinced in the spatial planning at Longview Avenue and echoed in a subsequent series of Tasmanian houses mainly for women clients. For Emery, architecture was a social and spatial practice bound by the contingences of place.

Catherine Howell

University of South Australia



Eden Hills Residence, Alexandra Mokwinska, 1961–62. Photo by Catherine Howell.

Catherine Howell (PhD, University of Cambridge) is Senior Heritage Officer at Heritage SA and a Postgraduate Student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning, University of South Australia. She has published articles and reviews on modernism, visual research methods, and colonial visual cultures in *Public, Modernism/Modernity*, *Research Ethics*, and *Visual Methodologies*, among others. Howell is an associate member of ICOMOS and the Planning Institute of Australia.

Exile or Eden? Contextualising Alexandra Mokwinska, Pioneering Émigrée Architect in Adelaide, South Australia

The case of Alexandra Mokwinska (1917–2002) represents a central dilemma for contemporary attempts to exhume local histories of modernism: how to identify and represent the work of women in the design professions, when documentary traces of their professional contributions remain scant. In the context of research on the life and work of Mokwinska, this paper introduces the case of an extant residential project from 1961–62, a single-family residence in Eden Hills, Adelaide. Commissioned for a Polish Ukrainian couple, the house evokes important aspects of the Eastern European migrant experience in Australia, forging a design language that combines memories of ‘home’ with an innovative response to the environmental and social contexts of post-war Australia.

There are several lenses one could use to view Mokwinska’s design work, but an important one is that of displacement and forced migration in the context of World War II. Born in Poltava, Ukraine, of Russian parentage and educated in architecture in Kharkiv, Mokwinska came of age during north-eastern Ukraine’s fraught transition from Imperial Russian rule to its absorption within the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Graduating in 1939, she fled the military conflict in her homeland and, eventually, made her way to Australia with her Polish husband. Her first known project was the Mokwinska’s own home; her second, a home for émigré clients.

Recent research on women’s professional participation in architecture, including the Parlour project, has questioned the relationship between gender, visibility, and office work. The paper accordingly identifies Mokwinska as a pioneering woman modernist architect who has largely escaped notice, in part due to her work as a sole practitioner.

Kerry Francis

Unitec | Te Pūkenga



The Cookhouse, Waipū, ...approach from the east. Photo by Kerry Francis.

Kerry Francis is a Registered Architect who currently teaches in the Architecture programme at Unitec | Te Pūkenga. His research interests are in design studio pedagogy, architectural education and construction technology. Amongst others, he has published on émigré landscape architect Odo Strewe.

The Cookhouse, Waipū

In February 1974 the New Zealand Labour Government unveiled the Ohu Scheme, an historic programme that leased unalienated Crown land to groups who wished to live a collective lifestyle and to have “the opportunity to experience the earth, the country and each other in a new fraternal unity” (Matiu Rata, Minister of Lands). Five years later, one of those groups who gained a land lease and who had occupied a bush-covered block in Durham Road, Waipū since May 1975, commenced construction of their core building. Intended as the community centrepiece, the building was collectively designed to house cooking, eating, lounging, bathing and storage. The group constructed the building over a period of six years using a structural system that connected a grid of ten metre long, embedded timber poles with double *pinus radiata* bearers at floor level and single second-hand *kauri* beams at roof level. This construction system allowed the exterior walls to be free of load bearing capacity; a kind of free façade with transparent connection to the surrounding bush. Full length poles and oblique walls form a rotational, interior spatial condition. Suspended on poles, the place flows continuously beneath the building. This building has been occupied since 1985 by one family, and continuously modified to meet their changing needs.

The paper examines the building’s relationships with the traditional tenets of modernism, the impacts of this construction system on spatial planning, multiple design authorship and the many contributions that have made the building what it is today.

Philip Goad

University of Melbourne



Couch House, Toolern Vale, Victoria, 1975- (architect: Paul Couch). Photo by Tom Ross.

Philip Goad is Chair of Architecture, Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor, and Co-Director of the Australian Centre for Architectural History, Urban and Cultural Heritage (ACAHUCH) in the Melbourne School of Design at the University of Melbourne. An authority on Australian architecture, he is the co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (2012) and *Australia Modern: Architecture, Landscape and Design, 1925–1975* (2019), and co-author of *Architecture and the Modern Hospital* (2019) and *Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond: Transforming Education Through Art, Design and Architecture* (2019). His next book, co-edited with Alan Pert, is *Merchant Builders and the Total Environment* (forthcoming 2024).

Late Modern in the Landscape: House at Toolern Vale, c.1972 by Paul Couch

The buildings of Paul Couch have been known about for decades – but only by a very small section of the architecture profession. They have been very rarely experienced, and even more rarely published. Their special qualities have earned him and his work a measure of mystique – largely because of the modernist convictions in their uncompromising demonstrations of structure, space, and materiality. Their formal and technical ruggedness is at once confronting but utterly at one with the toughness of often-unforgiving landscape settings – that many now understand as typifying the sublime in the Australian landscape.

Self-trained within the East Melbourne office of Grounds, Romberg & Boyd, then becoming one of Robin Boyd's most trusted design documentation assistants right up until his employer's death in October 1971, Couch began sole practice the next year. One of his first commissions was a house for himself and his young family in virgin bush at Toolern Vale, 40 kilometres west of Melbourne's centre. This paper describes the house, which took more than ten years to realise, and its landscape, and places it within the context of Couch's larger body of work, his experience with Australia's best-known architect-critic Robin Boyd, and the trajectory of Late Modernism in Australian architecture. What one finds is the apotheosis of the so-called 'Functional Tradition' of Australian architecture.

James Curry

University of South Australia



Living Room, R.J. Billam House, Brighton South Australia, John S. Chappel Architect, 1964.
Photo by Jan Dalman SLISA BRG346_29_17_8.

Dr James Curry PhD is Director of the Architecture Museum at the University of South Australia. As a researcher Dr. Curry has published on the architecture of Rudolph Schindler, Australian architecture and contemporary spatial practices in art. James's most recent exhibitions include 'Lust for Lifestyle: Modern Adelaide homes 1950–65' at the State Library of South Australia and 'Modern beach Homes: 1950–75' at Victor Harbor. Dr. Curry was a member of the Adelaide City Council's Great Buildings Panel and has been a Juror for the AIA South Australian, Architecture awards.

'A Spectacular Adobe House': John Chappel's Billam House (1964)

John Chappel (1923–2015) was a prominent architect who made a substantial contribution to modern architecture in South Australia. Having published over 400 articles prior to 1964 within the popular press, no other architect had this kind of presence within Australia. In May 1965 Chappel's Billam House (1964) was published in *Australian House and Garden* as a "A Spectacular Adobe House" in which a brick house was presented as adobe construction.

This paper is an attempt to articulate a detailed reading of the Billam House within a reorientation of cultural horizons towards America and a changed media environment.

Three levels of consideration are involved: the contextualization of the house within Pax Americana and of an imperial aesthetics in south-east Asia; the reading of archival documents to reveal forms of misunderstanding in relation to California and the work of Cliff May; and a symbolic exchange in which owning 'a Chappel' had considerable cachet.

Elsie Telford and Akari Nakai Kidd

Deakin University



Jackson Walker Architects, City Edge, South Melbourne, 1972–74, from the opposite side of Kings Way. Photo by Elsie Telford.

Elsie Telford is a PhD candidate in the School of Architecture and Built Environment at Deakin University. Her research considers the connections between cultural landscapes, the built environment and Australian identity, and how these influenced Melbourne architectural practices from 1956–1999.

Dr Akari Nakai Kidd is Senior Lecturer and researcher in architectural design and theory at Deakin University. Her work aims to construct a creative and critical dialogue between architecture, its practice, and embedded socio-ethical processes. Her recent publications includes sole-authored book *Affect, Architecture and Practice* (Routledge 2021).

City Edge by Jackson Walker Architects – Architecture, Landscape, and Social Value

Through an exploration of City Edge in South Melbourne, this paper reveals the significant influence that social and community values have had on the design and construction of this housing project. Architects Evan Walker and Daryl Jackson cultivated a design focused on residential buildings, replacing the existing housing stock that had been lost in the Housing Commission slum reclamation program, while developing a proposal for new, high density medium rise flats on the site. City Edge sits in stark contrast to the high-rise flats that the Housing Commission was designing during the same era.

City Edge was completed over three years, commencing construction in 1971, and finishing in 1974 in a period of political, social and cultural flux. Its design and construction responded to the growing public awareness of the importance of urban design and the role that this plays in perpetuating the values of neighbourhood communities. In the midst of this period of change, three figures loom large: Andrew McCutcheon (1931–2017), Evan Walker (1935–2015), and David Yencken (1931–2019). Each had strong allegiances to architecture, as well as commitments to politics and diverse social causes, including heritage, planning, and religion. This paper explores how the actions of these three figures embody elements of a cross-disciplinary understanding of landscape and how this emerges in nurturing community values, embodying these within the built fabric through heritage.

Drawing on McCutcheon's, Walker's and Yencken's own recollections of this time, the paper uses their memories and reflections to develop a narrative-based understanding of social concerns to broaden architectural conceptions. It examines how their awareness of the social context of their architecture resulted in an alternative Australian design style: "the architecture of social responsibility", as Daryl Jackson said in 2006.

Rachel Jackson, Amy Jarvis and Edwina Jans

Canberra Modern



Urambi Village Courtyard House, Canberra. Michael Dysart and Peter Bell, 1974–76. Photo by Canberra Modern.

Jackson, Jarvis and Jans are co-Founders and Creative Directors of Canberra Modern. Canberra Modern is a non-profit association that promotes Canberra's unique mid and late twentieth century places and spaces. Our vision is 'Conservation Through Participation' and our innovative events aim to increase awareness of Canberra's modernist character, value and uniqueness. Through event-based advocacy and engagement with the community, Canberra Modern aims to promote protection and appreciation of the places which make an irreplaceable contribution to Canberra's historic urban and designed cultural landscape.

Modernist Medium Density: Urambi Village, Canberra – Michael Dysart & Partners, 1974

Designed by Michael Dysart and Peter Bell [Michael Dysart & Partners] in 1974, Urambi Village is a medium-density housing complex, that responds directly to its place: Canberra's bush setting and the ideals of the new capital city. Urambi Village started as an idea – an experiment – to develop a new style of co-operative housing which was environmentally-friendly, communal and affordable.

Dysart and Bell's design, characterised as late twentieth century Sydney regional style, is a complex of multiple-sized townhouses set within natural bushland and close to the Murrumbidgee River. Townhouses are connected by a green pedestrian spine, which was designed to create casual meetings and link houses with the communal hall, pool and tennis court. Cars are kept to the outer perimeter. The housing cooperative was built on land provided by the government for this purpose; at a time when the national capital was a city experimenting with new ways of designing houses and communities, to build its population.

Fifty years on, Urambi Village is significant as an enduring and rare communal and co-operative approach to housing. Has the experiment worked?

In the context of the global housing crisis and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, this paper asks what the ideals and design intent of Urambi Village from the 1970s can teach us about housing for the future.

Amit Srivastava, Aaron Humphrey, Steve Cook, James Curry and Benjamin Nicholls

University of Adelaide and University of South Australia



Interior view of gallery space displaying modern art collection, Bonython House (1965) by architect John Chappel. Image: State Library of South Australia SLISA: BRG 346/29/24/4.

Amit Srivastava and James Curry are architectural historians based at the University of Adelaide and University of South Australia respectively, who collaborate on researching the history of Modern Architecture in South Australia. Amit Srivastava is Director of Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA) and James Curry is Director of the Architecture Museum in Adelaide. Aaron Humphrey and Steve Cook are researchers in Media Studies at the University of Adelaide. Aaron Humphrey is member of J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice and Steve Cook is Head of the Realities Extended unit specialising in immersive technologies. Benjamin Nicholls is a postgraduate history researcher with an interest in the role of sounds in urban environments.

Modern Architecture as a Stage for Modern Art: the Lost History of Bonython House and Adelaide Cyclorama

Architectural historians work closely with a range of archival sources to aggregate relevant information and develop a compelling historical narrative of buildings in history. Digitisation of archives makes the information more widely available, but the technical data is difficult for the general community to interpret in a meaningful manner. Without a means to interpret or experience its situated nature, the information on the built environment becomes disconnected from its socio-cultural context and loses its sense of *place*. By making the historical material more intuitive and immersive we can make it more accessible to the community at large and allow them to better connect with the history of the built environment.

This project takes a particular function of modern architecture – as a stage for modern art – to explore this intimate connection between the nature of space and the displayed object, and revisits the case of Bonython House in Adelaide. This private residence for art collector Kym Bonython, designed by famous local architect John Chappel in 1965, also served as an art gallery for one of the largest private collections in Australia. The project brings together archival information from the State and City Archives and uses a new digital information architecture to create interactive Virtual Reality (VR) models. The VR experience captures the architectural spaces with the original art collection and allows the viewer to experience the art in its spatial context, recreating the lost sense of place. The project further extends this method to capture the lost history of Adelaide Cyclorama, which used the spatial and artistic techniques of late 19th century to create similarly immersive environments. The paper provides a brief history of both architectural projects and discusses the new methods and processes used, along with a demonstration of the immersive VR model in development.

Deborah Ascher Barnstone

University of Sydney



Electricity House, Hurstville, NSW on its opening in 1939. Courtesy of Georges River Archives.

Deborah Ascher Barnstone is Professor and Head of Architecture at The University of Sydney. She holds a PhD in architectural history and theory from the Technical University, Delft; a M. Arch degree from Columbia University; and a B. A. degree cum laude with high honours from Barnard College. She is a licensed architect as well as an historian. Barnstone's primary research interests are in interrogating the origins of modernism and exploring the relationships between art, architecture, and culture more broadly. Her recent monograph *The Color of Modernism* was published in 2022.

Electric Modernity: Electricity House in St. George, New South Wales

The blue neon lettering, numberless abstract clock, sleek lines, and asymmetrical massing of *Electricity House*, pictured with three shiny new automobiles out front, all proclaim the building's optimistic modernity and the progressive nature of Hurstville, NSW. By its own description, 1930s Hurstville was "young... progressive...and enterprising..." as well as industrial and cultural – all because of ready access to electricity. Inaugurated in December 1939 by St. George County Council, *Electricity House* had the express purpose of "serving the public adequately in electrical convenience and education." Local architect Neville Coulter touted the building's Art Deco aesthetic as "the very latest in contemporary architecture," deemed a fitting approach for a building designed to promote the cutting edge in modern science and technology. *Electricity House* was intended to double as a showroom for new electrical appliances and as an instructional facility where local residents could learn how to cook with electric appliances. The Council also offered the theatre space free of charge to public organizations and charities so that in addition to its promotional functions, the building was conceived as a community hall. Here is the marriage of modern convenience with community service. St. George's investment was more than mere show, the council electrified faster than the rest of Sydney facilitated by a novel investment instrument, so that the up-to-date mantra was not just an advertising and marketing stunt, but a reality. In 1939, Hurstville really was ahead of its time.

Silvia Micheli, Antony Moulis and Virginia Rigney

University of Queensland / Canberra Museum and Gallery



Enrico Taglietti outside the Centre Cinema, Civic, Canberra 1965. Image Courtesy Taglietti Studio Archive.

Dr Silvia Micheli (BArch Politecnico di Milano; PhD, IUAV, Venice) is Senior Lecturer in Architecture and Program Convener of the Bachelor of Architectural Design at the University of Queensland (UQ). Dr Micheli's co-authored book *Paolo Portoghesi: Architecture between History, Politics and Media* (London, 2023) has just been released for Bloomsbury. She has collaborations with Triennale di Milano, Centre Pompidou, Alvar Aalto Foundation and Vitra Design Museum amongst others.

Associate Professor Antony Moulis teaches and researches across architecture, urbanism and design in the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at UQ. Amongst his recent books are the co-authored *John Andrews: Architect of Uncommon Sense* (Harvard, 2023) and the sole-authored *Le Corbusier in the Antipodes: Art, Architecture and Urbanism* (London, 2021).

Virginia Rigney, Senior Curator Visual Art at the Canberra Gallery and Museum (CMAG), is a curator, writer and Creative Producer who has worked to develop exhibitions, publications, digital platforms, short films, installations and public programs within museums. Their collaboration involves a project on the architect Enrico Taglietti for CMAG slated for 2025.

Place and the Intangible in the Making of Canberra: Enrico Taglietti's Cinema Center (1964–66)

In 1966, Canberra's Civic district was enriched by the completion of the new Cinema Center, according to Doug Anthony, then Minister of the Interior, a building with "an imaginative approach to the design of a modern business, shopping and entertainment facility". Developed by entrepreneur Darrel Killen and designed in close collaboration with architect Enrico Taglietti (1926–2019), the building offered a new concept of civic experience while symbolising the growing involvement of private enterprise in the making of Canberra. Not only did the Cinema Center provide Canberra with a new typology of cinema theatre, it articulated a complex urban setting through its interiors, street edges, lanes and courtyards.

Cinema Center soon became an urban stage that attracted, incubated and displayed the intangible values of Canberra's civic life at a key-time when the city became a much more layered expression of national identity as Australia's capital city. Cinema Center enhanced Canberra's cultural experience in entertainment (cinema theatre); arts (exhibition gallery) and politics (Charlie's restaurant hosting gatherings of the Australian Labor party). For its commercial essence, the building's second nature – that of an urban centre of civic character – is overlooked and today Cinema Center sits in a twofold state. On the one hand, it is a building in danger, with its exteriors nominally preserved and the interiors drastically changed. On the other hand, Cinema Center is a lost building, as its original role as a stage for Canberra's social life has now faded.

Drawing from original materials from the Taglietti studio archive; Canberra Museum and Gallery (including the rare original model); ACT Heritage Library and the authors' personal accounts, this paper discusses the intangible cultural life that Cinema Center brought about in the 1960s and 1970s, showing how the building offered a key backdrop to the political, artistic, and entertainment life of Canberra.

Isabel Rousset

University of Technology Sydney



El Caballo Blanco, January 1984. Photo by Betty Smith. Courtesy State Library of Western Australia.

Isabel Rousset is an architectural historian and a Research Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney. Her research explores historical cross-sections between art, architecture, and social politics. Her book *The Architecture of Social Reform: Housing, Tradition and German Modernism* was recently published by Manchester University Press and she has published articles in *Architectural Histories*, *Journal of Architecture*, and *Architectural Theory Review*.

Placing El Caballo Blanco (1973–86)

“Spain is alive and well and located in Western Australia”; thus announced a 1975 issue of *The Canberra Times* the recent opening of El Caballo Blanco equestrian theme park and hotel, located in the suburb of Wooroloo, 60 kilometres north-east of Perth. El Caballo Blanco was the latest venture of Perth meat entrepreneur Ray Williams, who, after travelling around Spain in the hope of purchasing a pure bread Andalusian stallion, returned with dreams to establish a world-class stable that could also serve as a lucrative tourist destination. The complex’s decadent neo-Moorish design distinctly captures the cultural energies of Western Australia in the 70s, as the state’s Tourist Development Authority seized upon the relaxed imagery of the Mediterranean to recast Western Australia as a leisure destination.

This complex nonetheless stands as an outlier in the oeuvre of its architect, the Hungarian-born Julius Elischer, who otherwise remained committed to bringing a version of International Style modernism to the region. Drawing from the archives of Elischer and the Western Australian Tourist Development Authority, this paper reflects on the difficulties of “placing” El Caballo Blanco, both in the history of Western Australia’s regional architecture and in the oeuvre of a migrant architect.

Lisa Marie Daunt

Phillips Smith Conwell



Townsville Law Courts - Edmund Sheppard Building (1975). Photo by Richard Stringer.
Courtesy of Phillips Smith Conwell.

Lisa Daunt earned her PhD in March 2021. Her dissertation, “Communities of faith: Modern church architecture in Queensland, 1945–1977”, offers a fresh perspective on modernist church architecture, differing from accounts of such churches built for the largely settled communities in the northern hemisphere. It highlights how the development of church architecture in Queensland was very specific to its time and place – a young, developing state covering a vast area of land, sparsely populated and highly multi-denominational. Daunt’s career now straddles architectural practice, architectural history, and heritage consultancy, complemented by research publications. She joined Phillips Smith Conwell as a design and heritage architect in early 2022.

Townsville Law Courts: Designed in Brisbane, Conceived in Japan

In 1975, the Townsville Court of Law Edmund Sheppard building opened. In 2018, the project gained both the Queensland and the National RAAIA enduring architecture awards, recognising its meritorious form, function and quality. However, the architecture's relationship to place is harder to define, a surprising duality, an architecture of elsewhere and of Queensland.

The Townsville Law Courts comprises a five-storey Supreme and District Courts wing, a two storey Magistrates Court wing, a basement Watch House, internal courtyard and a deep street frontage forecourt. Located within the urban centre of Townsville, on a foothill of Castle Hill, the township's geographical beacon, the Law Courts are a bold and imposing civic architecture, of brutalist concrete materiality, adapted to tropical Queensland. However, the architecture is also of oriental origins.

Whilst Great Britain claims to have been the birthplace of Brutalism, the Brisbane-based design architect for this North Queensland exemplar, Raymond (Ray) Stephens Smith (1925–2018), of Hall Phillips & Wilson (now known as Phillips Smith Conwell) found inspiration elsewhere. Smith visited the 1970 World Exposition in Osaka, where he was exposed to the Japanese architectural movement of Metabolism; on his return to Brisbane, he integrated themes of megastructures with organic movement into his design for the Townsville Law Courts. The Japanese examples of precast and in-situ concrete Smith had visited, he recast as articulated roughcast fascias, a sweeping concrete ramp, finely finished precast concrete wall panels, and the cantilevering floor slabs that shade its facades and offer shelter during tropical rains.

Based on a detailed review of the architects' archive, oral histories taken by others, plus further by the author, this paper examines the Townsville Law Courts's various architectural relationships to place – the places that inspired its architect, how it was designed for Townsville and its enduring relationship within its township.

Ann Cleary

University of Canberra



Churchill House, Canberra, 1972. Photo by Ann Cleary.

Ann Cleary FRAIA is a Senior Lecturer in Architecture at the University of Canberra, with architectural practice background in both local and international contexts on projects realised in Australia, Sweden, Belgium, USA, and Singapore. Her teaching draws out an understanding of enduring architectural value, explored in studio projects of spatial resonance, adaptive re-use and cultural context, to bring forward propositions for the city's future thinking and creative dialogues.

Churchill House, a Lesser Known Work of Robin Boyd Within Canberra's Modernist Canvas

Amidst the gems of the modernist era in the designed city context of Canberra, a raw brutalist exemplar of disparate clarity still stands – its value at risk as development pressures encroach ever more purposefully. A little known work of architect and author, Robin Boyd, Churchill House (now known as Open Systems House) was one of his last projects and still in construction when he died in 1971. Commissioned by the Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia, the aspirational brief presented to Boyd was to provide premises for the Trust and its research scholar program, with a showcase space to exhibit the outcomes of the research projects, and amenity and hosting spaces.

Boyd's architectural ingenuity lay in transcribing the major avenue urban design parameters, set by the National Capital Development Commission, into a cross-sectional solution. The design strategy of a sunken court, two built edges, and a pavilion terrace, gained a ground-floor volume within the prescribed podium height limits, and a sun-filled, quiet buffered landscape space (in a city of landscape). A water plane element filled the court space to enhance the tranquil setting, edged with steps and terracing to integrate level shifts. The *béton brut* of the innovative façade profile which Boyd developed for the north- and west-facing frontages forms a robust sun screen of hung concrete fins, designed to interlock in a rhythm of light and shadow.

This boldly assured set piece is at risk of loss and is at a critical point of intervention as an urban artefact of enduring value. Approaches implemented in an attuned way will reinforce intrinsic rhythms and sensibilities for light and tonality, while also ensuring architectural intent and clarity within the soft 'brut' robustness.

Daniel Ryan

University of Sydney



Bunning and Madden, Nuclear Science Studies Building, view of lecture theatre looking north, 1958–1960. Photo: Daniel J. Ryan.

Daniel J. Ryan is an architectural historian, environmental designer and scholar whose research and teaching look at the changing meaning of climate and building science for architecture. He is program director of the Master of Architectural Science at the University of Sydney, Australia. His recent work explores the history of architectural science, architecture and its media, with a focus on Australasia and the Pacific. With Jennifer Ferng and Erik L'Heureux he co-edited the book *Drawing Climate: Visualizing Invisible Elements of Architecture*, published by Birkhäuser in 2021.

Conforming to the Future: the Australian Atomic Energy Commission Research Establishment at Lucas Heights

The architectural legacy of Australia's flirtation with nuclear power has received only passing comment by architectural historians. As a legacy of the Cold War, The Australian Atomic Energy Commission Research Establishment at Lucas Heights, on the outskirts of Sydney, may be thought of as both the culmination of Australian lobbying for access to nuclear technology and as a secret showcase for Australian post-war modernism. Lucas Heights was designed and constructed between 1954 and 1961, with buildings by Stephenson and Turner, Bunning and Madden, Collard and Clarke, and, Edwards, Madigan and Torzillo. Despite Australia's nuclear program being shrouded in secrecy, the Lucas Heights campus was the focus of a special issue of *Architecture in Australia* in June 1961. Despite this, the site has received far less attention by architectural historians than other Cold-War projects, such as the long-range weapons testing site at Woomera in South Australia. Yet unlike Woomera, Lucas Heights remains an active site for scientific research, one that has been maintained for 60 years with the possibility that its *raison d'être*, of industrial exploitation of nuclear energy, might scale into the future.

This paper considers the buildings in relation to Australian responses to post-war energy crises, nation building, nuclearity and inland cities and cultures of scientific research in the initial aftermath of World War 2.

Chris Burns

Heritage South Australia



St Alphonsus' Catholic Church, Millicent, Bunganditj Country, South Australia, 1966, architect C. W. Peters. Photo by Chris Burns.

Chris Burns is an historian at Heritage South Australia. While associated with the University of South Australia Architecture Museum in 2018, he was invited to prepare a survey for Heritage South Australia on new places of worship built in South Australia during the years 1945–1990. This research, funded by the Department for Environment and Water, identified over 650 new churches built during that period, and produced a thematic history. The report is available from the Heritage South Australia website.

Plan, Form, Structure and Light: St Alphonsus' Catholic Church at Millicent, South Australia

St Alphonsus' Catholic Church, completed in 1966 and one of the largest regional churches ever built in South Australia, is an imposing landmark surmounting a hill at the eastern end of Millicent's main street. Designed by Adelaide architect C. W. Peters, the new St Alphonsus' was built during a period of radical experimentation in the plan and form of Catholic places of worship following the opening of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (1962–65) (Vatican II), which sought to reinvent Catholicism for the twentieth century as outward-looking and progressive.

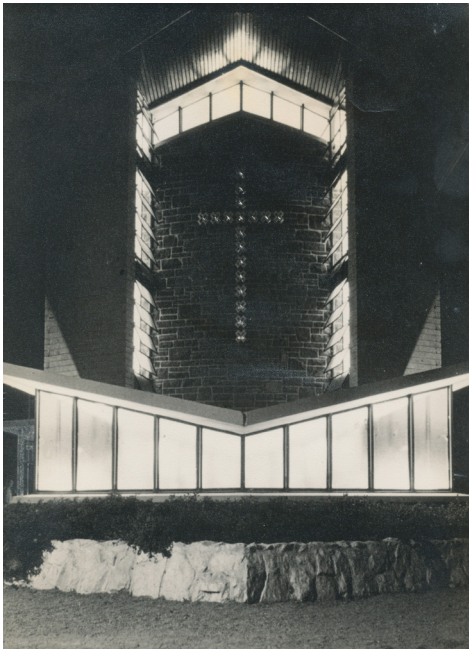
Peters' design is believed to be the first in South Australia to respond directly to the Instruction on the Liturgy, a key document arising from Vatican II, which had a profound impact on the design of Catholic churches globally. St Alphonsus' Church is especially noted for its innovative plan, structural system, sense of light, and concinnity of internal space with external form.

After the Second World War, the forestry industry had expanded in South Australia's South East and two large pulp mills opened near the small service centre of Millicent. The town population skyrocketed, and the local Catholic church could no longer accommodate a swelling congregation, comprised increasingly of non-English speaking migrant workers and their families. Rather than extend his existing church along the lines of plans devised in the mid-1880s, parish priest Fr James McSweeney chose, controversially, to demolish the first St Alphonsus' Church and replace it with a new Modernist building.

Little-known until recently due to its geographical distance from Adelaide, St Alphonsus' Catholic Church was identified during a heritage survey of post-war South Australian places of worship conducted in 2018–19 and entered in the South Australian Heritage Register in March 2023. This paper introduces St Alphonsus' Catholic Church in the context of South Australian post-war church architecture.

Julie Collins

University of South Australia



John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs, 1956, unknown photographer, Arthur Philpot collection S354, Architecture Museum, University of South Australia.

Dr Julie Collins is Curator and Research Fellow at the University of South Australia's Architecture Museum. With a background in architecture and a focus on architectural history, she is the author of *The Architecture and Landscape of Health: A Historical Perspective on Therapeutic Places 1790–1940* (Routledge 2020), and with Christine Garnaut, *'Not for Ourselves Alone': the South Australian Home Builders Club 1945–65* (Crossing Press, 2013). Other projects have focussed on the history of South Australian department stores, designed environments for children, architect designed modern houses in South Australia, prefabricated housing in the post-war period, and South Australia's female architects.

'Inland Sanctuary': The John Flynn Memorial Church, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), 1953–56

When the John Flynn Memorial Church was opened in 1956, it realised a long-held ambition of the Presbyterian Church's late Reverend, Dr John Flynn, (1880–1951) of the Australian Inland Mission and founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. Flynn had dreamt of an ecumenical 'Cathedral' to serve the people of Alice Springs, and fundraising for this began not long after his death in 1951 under the eye of his successor, Reverend Dr Fred McKay.

The Modern 200-seat church was designed by Adelaide-based architect Arthur Philpot (1915–84) of Evans & Bruer, Philpot & Partners. Philpot himself was a devout Presbyterian, and the building expanded his church design oeuvre (which also included Ernabella Mission, 1952). The plan for the John Flynn Memorial Church was based on a geometrical interplay of shapes. Designed 'to speak of Flynn', the overt symbols of the man, his work, and the Christian faith began outside, where a forecourt featuring an outdoor pulpit signified the Preacher without a Church, while a bridge over a pool of water spoke of life for the Inland as well as having associations with Christianity. The butterfly roof of the vestry itself was intended to evoke the wings of the flying doctors' planes. Inside, roughhewn sandstone shields dominated its interior, with one incorporating a carved mural *The Mantle of Safety*, designed by Philpot.

The structure responded to the climate of Alice Springs with abundant windows, overhanging eaves, and the landscape design reflecting the open-air aspect of Flynn's work. Glass walls enabled both light and airflow while the upper nave included grilles with coloured glass louvres enabling ventilation. The church materially responded to place through its incorporation of local materials, with their colour and texture reflecting the local environment – walls of white and pink Strangways Ranges' marble-faced concrete blocks, local marble terrazzo floors, and the massive shields of local sandstone. Regarded as Philpot's major work, the iconic church has become one of Central Australia's best-known built architectural landmarks and is heritage listed in the Northern Territory.

Christoph Schnoor and Sinead McClay

Unitec | Te Pūkenga



Te Rangimārie Centre, Christchurch, 1968. Photo by Christoph Schnoor.

Associate Professor Christoph Schnoor teaches history & theory of architecture and design studio at the School of Architecture, Unitec | Te Pūkenga in Auckland. He is a past SAHANZ President (2015–17); his research focuses on colonial and indigenous architecture in the South Pacific, and on modernist architecture in Europe and New Zealand. Recent book publications include *Le Corbusier's Practical Aesthetic of the City* (Routledge, 2020) and *Ernst Plischke: Architekt zwischen den Welten* (Park Books, 2020).

Sinead McClay is a Master of Architecture (Professional) student at Unitec | Te Pūkenga in Auckland.

Te Rangimārie: Catholic Māori Mission Centre in Christchurch

The first Catholic Māori Mission centre in the South Island was designed by Christchurch-based modernist architect Paul Pascoe. Te Rangimārie opened in Christchurch 1969. It is still in use today, even if it is in need of repair. Little, however, has been documented of the building's coming into being.

Te Rangimārie was built during an era that was not yet entirely sympathetic to Māori-based projects; thus it raises questions why and how Pascoe was commissioned for this project. It appears unusual that, as a Pākehā (New Zealander of European descent), Pascoe became involved in designing a building for the Māori community. Were there any existing relationships that led to his appointment as architect, and how did the cultural context influence the design of the project?

Literature on Paul Pascoe is sparse. Robyn Ussher's thesis "The Modern Movement: The Architecture of Paul Pascoe" of 1986 gives insights into Pascoe's career and his influence on the modernist movement in New Zealand. Her discussion includes other religious buildings by Pascoe which predate Te Rangimārie. This helps to establish some of the circumstances of the commission, yet it does not delve into information about the building in question.

This paper analyses published works by Pascoe and makes use of archival records held at the Macmillan Brown Library in Christchurch, in order to understand how the relationship between Pascoe and the Māori community of Christchurch came to be. These documents help to evaluate how Pascoe worked collaboratively with Māori to integrate both cultures and create a purpose-made space. Newspaper articles help gain a perspective on the cultural climate in the South Island at the time, demonstrating the necessity for a place like Te Rangimārie. Ways in which this history shaped and directed the design process are examined to appreciate the complex journey to the completed project.



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