



Photo: Kendall Street, Cowra NSW State Archives

October Long Weekend 2023

EXPLORING COWRA

A CELEBRATION OF LANDSCAPE

The Sydney Bush School of Landscape Design

STORYTELLING ARCHITECTURE

The work of Koichi Takada

HMAS CRESSWELL

Less grand than Dartmouth, but with more kangaroos



FROM THE EDITOR

It is extraordinary that as I again have the pleasure of compiling an editorial for *The News*, I note that it has been more than 18 months since the last one, and at that time I said:-

"It has been more than 2 years since I have had the pleasure of writing an editorial for an edition of The News. I can only but echo Roy's sentiment that it is a great feeling to finally see what seems to be a permanent easing of the terrible restrictions we have all been living under since the worst pandemic in a century arose in late 2019."

Little did I think at that time that we were to suffer a relapse such that this is the first winter in four years where the routine annual bout of flu is taking precedence over COVID-19. It is wonderful to see the walks and talks returning with the vigour of old.

In this second comeback edition we again have several excellent feature articles, ranging from a detailed look at the Sydney Bush School on page 4 to an exploration of the work of renowned architect Koichi Takada on page 14. We were privileged to be able to inspect one of Mr Takada's recent works, Arc, at 161 Clarence Street, during an expertly curated walk arranged by Zeny Edwards earlier this year.

It is good to see a contribution from one of our more recent members, Michael Hauptman, who introduces us to the twentieth century architecture to be enjoyed at HMAS Cresswell at page 18.

One of our regular contributors, Larisa Sarkadi, recounts her travels through Spain and the incredible ironwork that may be found there at page 24.

As well as alerting us to the perilous existence of North Sydney's MLC building, our esteemed President Roy Lumby reminds us in his note on page 2 that we have a fascinating October long weekend lined up for you, exploring the delights of Cowra and Canowindra.

We encourage contributions of any sort from all of you. We are also happy to have news of upcoming events etc., so please feel free to let us know.

The next edition is sure to be something special, so why not be part of it?

John Dymond



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The landmark MLC Building in Miller Street, North Sydney is safe ... for now. Around the beginning of May the Land and Environment Court refused a proposal to demolish the building and replace it with a 27 storey tower.

The sleekly Modernist MLC Building was North Sydney's first large office building. Designed by architects Bates Smart McCutcheon and completed in 1957, it is widely regarded as a building of state and national significance. According to The State Heritage Inventory entry for the building, it is significant for the following reasons:

The first high rise office block in North Sydney and the largest for a number of years after its construction, the MLC Building in North Sydney is a seminal building on subsequent high-rise design in Sydney and utilised construction and structural techniques not previously used in Australia.



MLC Building, Miller St, North Sydney.

With the first use of a curtain wall design and the first use of modular units in Australia, its use of exceptional modernist building materials in the curtain wall facade and terracotta glazed bricks are representative of the Post-War International style of architecture that predominated in these early commercial high-rise buildings.

The architect, Walter Osborn McCutcheon's desire for his buildings to integrate modern art within the fabric of the design is demonstrated by the inclusion of significant artists such as Andor Mészáros and Gerald Lewers.

As a result, and despite subsequent modifications, the interior, exterior and landscape setting are of high aesthetic, technical and representative significance.

The building is also of historical, associative and aesthetic significance as an important work by a significant firm of architects



51 Rue Campagne Premiere.

Bates Smart and McCutcheon, and master builders Concrete Constructions, and as a landmark site at North Sydney which signified the transformation of the centre of North Sydney from Nineteenth Century town to the second commercial hub of metropolitan Sydney from the late 1950s.

Cowra and Canowindra

Planning is well underway for the Society's next Labor Day weekend excursion into regional NSW. This year we are targeting the towns of Cowra and Canowindra. This year Labor Day weekend falls from 30 September to 2 October.

Both towns have great centres that are well worth exploring, while Cowra has the distinction of one of the finest Japanese gardens anywhere outside of Japan.

World Congress on Art Deco, Paris 2025

A World Congress on Art Deco is to take place in Paris commencing 28 April 2025, marking the centenary of the great *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels* that took place there between April and October 1925. Other cities taking part will include Reims, Saint Quentin, Lille and Brussels.

The Art Deco style is an integral part of the fabric of Paris, perhaps more so than is realised. I was fortunate to have briefly visited the city this past May and was stunned by the richness of its early twentieth century architecture (along with all of the rest of it, of course).

The World Congress promises to expose attendees with a wealth of splendid architecture, art and design.

Roy Lumby



29 Avenue Rapp.



Rue Falguiere and Rue de Vaugirard.



Samaritaine Department Store.

A CELEBRATION OF LANDSCAPE

THE SYDNEY BUSH SCHOOL OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

By Roy Lumby



The UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus.

Amongst the very earliest architects and town planners to respond to the Australian landscape were Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, who were astonished by the beauty of the flora of the Sydney region.

Their response is exemplified at Castlecrag, which was initially developed during the 1920s and 1930s. Here houses were integrated with the surrounding landscape, rocks and native flora. Professor Richard Clough recalled being taken to Castlecrag as a young architecture student in the late 1930s or early 1940s and being impressed with the Griffins' building into the landscape. Clough studied landscape architecture in England in the early 1950s, became the first landscape architect to work for the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra and was subsequently appointed Professor of Landscape Architecture and Head of School of Landscape Architecture at the University of NSW.¹

The Griffins were not alone in promoting Australian plants as an important part of residential development. Starting in the 1920s, well-known and influential Melbourne landscape designer Edna Walling (1895-1973) regularly included Australian plants in her designs. Her interest intensified during the 1940s and she advocated their use in her book *The Australian Roadside* (1952).

The use of local plant species in private gardens was further popularised by Sydney-based biologist, educator and wildlife preservationist Thistle Harris in her book *Australian Plants for the Garden* (1953). Other important publications included Betty Maloney's and Jean Walker's books *Designing Bush Gardens* (1966) and *More About Bush Gardens* (1967), and landscape architect Ellis Stones' book *Australian Garden Design* (1971). The garden of Betty Maloney's home at Frenchs Forest, on which she and her sister Jean Walker began work in the mid-1950s, "would become famous as one of the earliest naturalistic Australian native gardens".

Here the existing woodland and boulders were retained and nurtured, and augmented by winding paths, drystone walls and indigenous planting into a unified composition. It was apparently the best known and celebrated bush garden in Australia during Maloney's lifetime.²



Peter Muller's Audette House at Castlecrag.

At the same time as attention was increasingly being drawn to Australian plants and landscape in the post-World War II decades, young architects in Sydney were building on the precedent established by early Modern Movement architects Sydney Ancher and Arthur Baldwinson, who rose to prominence in the 1930s. Their houses were planned so that they opened up to the sites on which they stood and allowed a relatively seamless flow of space from inside to outside. Many were located on rugged and bushy blocks of land on Sydney's North Shore. It wasn't a one-way process, as their clients were also seeking to conserve as much of the environment on their properties as they could.

Arthur Baldwinson endeavoured to integrate house and landscape in his designs. According to landscape heritage expert and historian Colleen Morris, Arthur Baldwinson:

...who returned from experience with the British and European architects of the Bauhaus in 1937, demonstrated an understanding of the integration of building with landscape using Modern Movement principles far in advance of the majority of his Australian colleagues. His use of asymmetric rock retaining walls for terraces that projected into natural-



Arthur Baldwinson's Kingsford Smith House at Taylor's Point, 1939 (top); Sydney Ancher's own house at Maytone Avenue Killara 1951.



Two views of Betty Maloney's garden, photographed in November 2002 after she and her husband had died the previous year.



Peter Muller's Walcott House at Whale Beach.

Photo: Peter White / State Library Victoria

The Johnson House at Chatswood, 1963, exterior (right) and interior (below right). The house is unified by the extensive use of bricks externally and internally.



Photo: docomomoaustralia.com.au



Photo: architecture.org.au



Portion of a 1985 photograph taken at a luncheon for Bachelor of Landscape Architecture student Galina Chekalin, at left. Her entry for redesigning gardens at the University of Sydney campus won a prize. Landscape architect Alan Correy is between Galina and Professor Peter Johnson, at right.



Bruce Rickard at his North Sydney office, 1979.

Photo: George Lipman / domain.com.au



Bruce Rickard's family home at Warrawee, 1959.

Photo: Mias Dupain / docomomoaustralia.com.au

*istic landscapes married the geometry of his houses with the inherently organic forms of the Australian landscape.*³

Sydney Ancher was no less responsive to the landscape qualities of a site:

*When Sydney Ancher built his white washed international style houses in naturalistic landscape settings single trees became living sculptures. Slender eucalypts or twisted banksias were retained on bush sites, houses were planned around courtyards, flowerbeds were banished or kept to a minimum and vine covered trellis or pergolas shaded large windows in summer. These were modest, responsible houses with a well-designed use of space in simple gardens.*⁴

A new breed of young Australian architects studied overseas during the 1950s, returning with international experience and qualifications in landscape architecture. Apart from Richard Clough, they included: Peter Muller (1927-2023) and Bruce Rickard (1929-2010), who studied in America and England; Peter Spooner (1919-2014), who studied in England; and Allan Correy (1931-2016), who studied in England and America. In addition, other young architects travelled during the 1950s and brought back a wealth of experience from overseas and were to prove influential in terms of their response to the natural realm.

Adelaide-born Peter Muller (1927-2023) moved to Sydney at the age of 21, then won a Fulbright Scholarship and studied for two years in America. After Muller returned Sydney, the house he designed for Robert and Nonie Audette at Castlecrag in 1952 shows the pronounced influence of Frank Lloyd Wright. This was picked up not from what he saw overseas but through contact with architect and scholar Adrian Snodgrass (b. 1931), then a student but already influential - during the 1950s he introduced Japanese architecture to Muller and several other contemporary architects. Muller paid profitable attention to his client's interest in passive solar energy, with a court and living areas facing north to allow the penetration of winter sun. As well, Robert Audette apparently insisted on retaining trees on the site.

Muller's own house at Whale Beach was contemporary with the Audette House and confirmed his philosophy of intimately relating buildings and site, in this case one characterised by a huge angophora tree and rock formations. Designed to accommodate the tree, the pavilions making up the house provided free-flowing

spaces and extensive glazing which gave a sense of minimal enclosure. Rocks and trees came into the house while flooding flat roofs over the living areas mirrored the landscape and dematerialised the house when viewed from above. In 1955 a holiday house by Muller was completed on the site next door for Barbara and Tony Walcott of Bombala. The house has two separate and compact sections - a glassy living section and enclosed bedrooms - between which space flows across the site.

Bruce Rickard studied overseas between 1954 and 1957. He completed the Landscape Design course at University College in London and won a fellowship to study landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania under influential Scottish landscape architect and writer Ian McHarg (1920-2001). McHarg brought environmental concerns to the wider public and ecological planning methods into the mainstream of landscape architecture, city planning and public policy. He also wrote on regional planning using natural systems. Perhaps his best-known work is *Design with Nature*, first published in 1969.

Rickard also experienced at first hand the architecture of the major twentieth century architect Frank Lloyd Wright while in America. Following his return to Sydney he introduced, via architectural design, his understanding and interpretation of what he had learnt overseas to a local audience.⁵ Describing the house that he designed for his own family at Warrawee (1959), architectural historian Jennifer Taylor noted that areas of glazing and the continuous planes of ceiling and floor meant that the important space comprising the living area was "made visibly continuous from the entry to the natural bushland of the site."⁶

Rickard is acknowledged to have influenced prominent architects and landscape architects such as Ian McKay, Philip Cox, Harry Howard, Neville Gruzman and Bruce Mackenzie, and is said to have been notable in Sydney for his "espousal of the ideology of the native landscape."⁷

According to architectural historian Jennifer Taylor, "fundamental to the development of the new architecture was an appreciation of the native landscape."⁸ An important influence on the rising generation of young architects was Miles Dunphy, an avid conservationist and lecturer in building construction at Sydney Technical College, where Rickard and other young architects who were to become prominent studied. Dunphy encouraged students to

appreciate the landscape by undertaking bush walks.⁹

What ended up emerging in Sydney was what has been termed the Sydney School of architecture. It was less a “school”, more a “confluence of commonly held beliefs and ideas”.¹⁰ These included honest expression of materials and minimal disturbance of the site, and buildings that were inspired by and responded to Sydney’s topography, landscape and flora. Influences included the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, traditional Japanese architecture, the architecture of Southern California exemplified by the Arts & Architecture Case Study House program in Los Angeles, Scandinavian architecture and Brutalist architecture. “While their methods and materials varied considerably, their work expressed a consistent concern for modernist design, layered spaces, unpretentious informal living, a desire to coexist with ‘the bush’, a strong inside–outside relationship, north orientation and sun control, natural materials and warm, earthy colours.”¹¹

Notably many houses associated with the Sydney School were built on sites that were considered unbuildable by many people, such as those on bushy steep slopes on Sydney’s Upper North Shore. The Sydney School emerged at a time when concerns with environmental degradation were emerging, which was made apparent in books such as Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) and Ian McHarg’s *Design with Nature*.

Architect Peter Johnson (1923-2003) encapsulated the “Sydney School” philosophy when talking about his own home, completed in 1963. He was one of the founders of the highly regarded architectural firm of McConnel Smith & Johnson (in 1954), later Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney and head of undergraduate studies in architecture at the University between 1967 and 1986. According to Peter Johnson, “At that time I had a strong conviction that we needed to take more interest in a local sense of place. The qualities of the Sydney landscape could be protected and exploited.” It was hoped that the house would become an inte-

Photographs taken at Illoura Reserve about 18 to 20 months after completion of planting. Stone flagged paths and curved stone walls, albeit less finished than at West Head, are shared elements with the earlier scheme (reproduced in *Architecture in Australia*, August 1972.

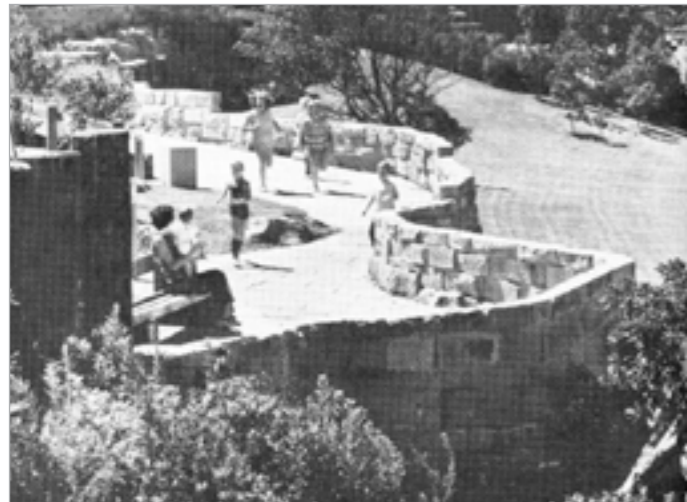


Photo: BBC



Photo: BBC



Pettit + Sevitt houses at Richmond Avenue, St Ives.

Photo: Mae Dupany / abocommonwealth.com.au



The lookout at West Head. The low stone wall is reminiscent of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Photo: Roy Lumby



Stone paths and steps are integrated into the landscaping at West Head. Boulders are effective elements within the grasses, shrubs and trees.

Photo: Roy Lumby

gral part of the surroundings and “look as if it had always been there - as if it belonged to that area.” The materials used in the construction of the house - clinker bricks, unpainted off-sawn timber - and the selection of colours and textures to blend with the native bush surrounds were characteristic of “Sydney School” domestic architecture.¹²

Apart from architects who had qualifications in landscape design, there was strong interaction between architects and professional landscape architects. The small understated office building at 7 Ridge Street, North Sydney, designed by architect Ian McKay and completed in 1969, was a pivotal location.¹³ Here, “from 1969-1977 the fervour for shaping this modern, ecological approach to landscape design was centred”.¹⁴ The building was occupied by several significant individuals including graphic designers Gordon Andrews and Harry Williamson, photographer David Moore, architects Ian McKay, Harry Seidler (for a short time) and Bruce Rickard, and landscape architects Harry Howard and Bruce Mackenzie. Landscape architects including Helen Evans, Finn Thorvaldson, Catherin Bull, Nell Rickard, Victoria Grounds, Ian Olsen and Jane Coleman worked in Mackenzie’s office. The building became a creative social nucleus - prominent architects and landscape architects along with landscape contractors and overseas visitors attended gatherings and parties held there.¹⁵

What came out of this was what landscape architect Dr Barbara Buchanan has called the “Sydney Bush School”, a term she coined to distinguish it from its “parent”, the so-called Sydney School of architecture:

...the term ‘Sydney Bush School’ refers to a group of modernist landscape architects led by Bruce Mackenzie, Harry Howard and Bruce Rickard, who ran individual practices but shared an office building at 7 Ridge Street, North Sydney, between 1969 and 1977. Allan Correy, the fourth member of the group, worked for the NSW State Government but was pivotal to the School’s establishment. The four men had shared a similar upbringing in and around Sydney and developed similar values, ideas and lifestyles. Shaped by environmentalism, their design ethos grew out of a distinctly non-horticultural approach to planting and a dismissal of modernist featurism. Their work was focused on the public domain and sought to reconcile universal modernist principles with the specific ecological, social and aesthetic qualities of place.

*The identifying features of the ‘Sydney Bush School’ include a modernist approach to the definition of space; simple, robust, rectilinear forms; the preservation and expression of the original geology, topography and hydrology of a site; the use of local, natural materials with simple finishes; the use of local and Australian plant species as an abstracted version of their natural associations; a concern for human comfort and purpose; an early concern for sustainability through low maintenance and low water use; and an understated and informal appearance.*¹⁶

It has been suggested that a “feeling of intense optimism, experimentation, nationalism and environmental awareness illuminated the work of the Sydney Bush School.”¹⁷ A desire to express a sense of place and an Australian identity would become a defining part of the design philosophy of the Bush School as well as the Sydney School of architecture.¹⁸

Australian landscape architecture emerged in the 1960s from an array of associated disciplines – combining the expertise of architects, planners, foresters, environmental activists and academics. Amongst the best-known of this generation of landscape architects and designers is Bruce Mackenzie (born 1932). His first experi-

ence of being closely involved with building in a bush setting was the design of his own house with his wife Beverley on a bushland block at Thornleigh. In 1960 he opened a landscape contracting business and began working with leading modernist architects such as Harry Seidler, Sydney Ancher, Ken Woolley, Don Gazzard, Michael Dysart and Peter Johnson. He also developed a close relationship with architect Alistair Knox and landscape designer Gordon Ford in Melbourne, and through them he experienced the “bush garden” movement, originating in the work of Edna Walling and Ellis Stones.¹⁹

The West Head Lookout in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is considered a benchmark in the evolution of Australian landscape design.²⁰ The lookout was designed by architect Russell Smith working in association with Bruce Mackenzie and was completed in 1964. In March 1964 the architectural practice of C.H. Smith & Associates was appointed honorary architects to the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park Trust.²¹ Russell Colin Smith (1932-1991) registered as an architect in July 1957 and subsequently graduated in Landscape Design at the University of NSW in 1969.

In 1971 he became president of the NSW section of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Three years later Smith took up the position of senior lecturer at the School of Landscape Architecture at the University of NSW and became part of the team that developed the undergraduate course in Landscape Architecture. He is remembered by many landscape architects for his kindness and sympathy as a teacher. Smith designed the visitor’s Centre at West Head and was active in the ongoing planning and de-



Photo: Landscape Australia, Volume 13 No.3, August 1991



Photo: cealibordesign.com.au



Photo: sarahsore.com.au

Top to bottom: Russell Smith; Allan Correy in his later years; Harry Howard, photographed circa 1998.



The UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus.

sign of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. He was also a member of the Planning Committee of Kakadu National Park, where his work included early planning; he was instrumental in the Kakadu National Park retaining an Aboriginal name.²²

Bruce Mackenzie was involved in several highly regarded projects during the 1960s and 1970s. Amongst them were a roof garden for the 1968 Reader's Digest building in Surry Hills, designed by architect John James, landscaping works associated with the Pettit + Sevitt Demonstration Village at St Ives to provide a mature landscape on opening for the Sydney School project homes designed by Bryce Mortlock and Ken Woolley; and the transformation of an abandoned waterfront timber pole depot at Peacock Point, Balmain, into a public park. This is better known as Illoura Reserve. Mackenzie's numerous consultancies over the years included his advisory role to the National Capital Development Commission and for the Millennial Parklands, undertaken prior to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

The work of other landscape architects was no less significant and ground-breaking. In the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, Peter Spooner worked for the Department of Main Roads and the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board. Perhaps his most notable work, the Sydney to Newcastle Expressway (1967), was far removed from the landscapes of Bruce Mackenzie.

This involved the creation of enormous rock cuttings to form massive sculptural masses and paved the way for collaboration between landscape architects and engineers and heightened the aesthetic experience of high speed motor travel.²³ Spooner developed a master plan for Wollongong Botanic Garden in 1963, was appointed to the Architecture Department at the University of NSW where he started a postgraduate Diploma of Landscape Design in 1964, and then, as the first Professor of Landscape Architecture, instigated the first undergraduate course in landscape architecture in Australia in 1974.²⁴

During the 1960s the NSW Government adopted positive policies relating to the engagement of landscape consultants. The Government Architect's Branch of the Public Works Department played an important part in establishing sound landscape design and in 1967 a policy was introduced requiring input from a landscape consultant for each project designed for the Government. The

first full time position was established in the newly formed Landscape Section, which was filled by influential landscape architect Allan Correy. It became the largest landscape office in the country.²⁵

Allan Correy (1931-2016) was not part of the coterie at 7 Ridge Street. He worked for the Adelaide Botanic Garden after returning from overseas in 1961 where he prepared the master plan for the Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens. Between 1967 and 1970 he headed the Landscape Section of the Public Works Department of NSW and amongst other things, was involved with the re-design of Taronga Park Zoo (1967-1970) as well as several public domain projects. He was subsequently appointed inaugural Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the University of Sydney.²⁶

Two of Allan Correy's best known projects were the William Balmain Teachers' College at Lindfield (later the UTS Ku-ring-gai Campus) and the redevelopment of Taronga Zoo (1967). The Ku-ring-gai Campus, designed by architect David Turner in the Government Architect's Office, was built in several stages between 1973 and 1985. The building is considered to be significant because it convincingly translated Sydney School principles into a large concrete building that carefully integrated massive structures into a splendid bush-covered site.

Turner endeavoured to keep the building as compact as possible; Allan Correy undertook the site planning while landscaping was undertaken by Bruce Mackenzie. The building footprint was mapped out and the required clearing was undertaken before tenderers entered the site. According to Bruce Mackenzie the scheme was so successful that little additional planting was needed.²⁷ Landscape and architecture were fused together, admirably assisted by sympathetic planting in rooftop gardens.

Systematic replanning of Taronga Zoo commenced in March 1967. It has been suggested that at the Zoo the landscaping was destined to have a "profound influence on the emerging profession of landscape architecture in Sydney" and is comparable to Mackenzie's landscaping at Peacock Point.²⁸ Careful site analysis contributed to



Bruce Mackenzie.

design principles that included retention of natural topography and existing vegetation or its re-establishment where it was partly destroyed or hidden.

All planting material was to be indigenous to the Sydney area, to preserve continuity of the adjoining harbour foreshore. Views to and from the Zoo from the harbour were of paramount importance and new buildings were to be subservient to landscaping. Planting in the exhibits was intended to be sympathetic to the biological requirements of the animal and bear some resemblance to its native habitat.²⁹

Harry Howard (1930-2000) worked for Lane Cove Council for over two decades (1969-1993), where his work included several parks.

His response to the spread of home unit development was to produce a network of parks and street enclosures that brought "the bush" back to Lane Cove. Of this work, the most impressive part and arguably that which had the greatest impact, is his work at Lane Cove North (1969-1977), including the Helen Street Reserve (1974).³⁰ Howard also designed a series of parks for North Sydney Council. Amongst them was the harbourside Sawmillers Reserve (1982) at McMahon's Point, which is considered one of his greatest successes.³¹

It is located on the site of a former sawmill, which had been vacated in the early 1980s. Howard, working in association with Barbara Buchanan, prepared a landscape design based on Sydney School principles of integration with the natural landscape.³²

Although Harry Howard and Bruce Mackenzie shared a similar design philosophy, Howard's approach to planting was different from Mackenzie's. Howard massed groups of large trees randomly intermixed with an understory of smaller trees to create multi-layered effects, which contrasted with Mackenzie's more controlled and sculptural approach.³³

Howard's finest work, carried out in association with Barbara Buchanan, is considered to be the Sculpture Garden at the National Gallery in Canberra. In New South Wales, it was his sensitive handling of the environment in Lane Cove that is a lasting legacy. Completed in 1982, it was designed with a clear strategy expressed



The Aviary (above) and Platypus House (right) were two of the significant buildings forming part of the development at Taronga Zoo. D M Coleman in the Government Architect's Office was the architect for both structures; prominent structural engineers Taylor Thompson & Whitting were involved with the Aviary.



through "an understated modern geometry and a planting design with strong naturalistic elements".³⁴

The National Capital Development Commission's agent architects for the Gallery building, Edwards, Madigan, Torzillo and Briggs, were briefed on the parameters for the design of the Sculpture Garden in April 1978; and landscape architects Harry Howard and Associates were subsequently appointed to the project. Howard had graduated in architecture from Sydney University in 1954 and was an associate of Edwards, Madigan and Torzillo between 1959 and 1965 before moving to landscape architecture. Architectural and landscape concepts were developed and refined, leading to a meeting held in October 1978 to assess the Gallery's requirements for the Sculpture Garden. In July 1979 the approved final sketch

The landscape of the Sydney to Newcastle Expressway, the outcome of Peter Spooner's involvement with the major infrastructure project. It was also one of the ten significant works of landscape architecture selected by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects in 2017.





Photo: National Archives of Australia

The Sculpture Garden at the National Gallery shortly after its establishment.



Photos: Roy Lumby

First Australian Pukamani poles in the Summer Garden (left) and Clement Meadmore's Virginia in the Spring Garden (above).



Sawmiller's reserve at McMahon's Point (left) and Helen Street Reserve at Lane Cove (below).



Photos: tipsydog.com.au - sathvik, Colleen Morris



Photo: Roy Lumby

Emile Antoine Bourdelle's Penelope in the Winter Garden

plans were presented to the Gallery.³⁵ The Sculpture Garden has been ably described by landscape architect Elizabeth Mossop:

The design of the Sculpture Garden was shaped by Howard's appreciation of the site and his desire to work with the natural phenomena. His aim was to make a garden where, through 'dappled light, heavy shade, bright patches- moving, enclosing, changing with the time and seasons - a sense of place is created'. The design works with the movements of the sun and the wind to provide shade and shelter, and uses the character of the indigenous plants, and the relationship with the water, to create a series of different spaces in which to site the sculptures. The structural elements de-

fining the project are determined by the Parliamentary grid and the Kings Avenue axis. The spaces are organised into a Winter Garden, closest to the Gallery, a Spring Garden, at the edge of Lake Burley Griffin, and a Summer Garden, centred on a reed-filled pond. ... The Sculpture Garden has a clearly defined circulation system around a central axis which starts at the Gallery and terminates, visually, on the other side of the lake. This axis acts as the anchor to a sequence of outdoor rooms: an open, rolling lawn with a view of the lake, a desert-like space, a paved area which is the forecourt to the Gallery, several intimate clearings in the bush, and a series of terraces ...³⁶

As time went on the original creative energy generated by these outstanding individuals was diluted and eventually this approach to landscape design fell out of favour:

The 'Sydney Bush School' design philosophy was quickly taken up by other landscape architects and local governments throughout the Sydney region. By the early 1980s 'bushland parks' had replaced the gardenesque paradigm which had dominated municipal parks since the early 20th century and many of the practices pioneered by the 'Sydney Bush School' designers were absorbed into mainstream practice. As time went on, however, it was reproduced unthinkingly as style rather than a design process. By the mid to late 1980s, the design pendulum had swung towards post-modernism with a focus on aesthetics, and the 'Sydney Bush School' design philosophy no longer seemed relevant to a new generation of landscape architects.³⁷

This article is based on material contained in the *West Head Lookout Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park Heritage Assessment* (October 2021) with the gracious permission of its author Sue Rosen Associates.

Endnotes: **1** Colleen Morris, "Modern Movement Landscape in NSW" in Hericon Consulting, *The Modern Movement in New South Wales: a thematic study and survey of places*; <https://www.unsw.edu.au/news/2014/12/vale-richard-clough>, accessed 9 October 2021; **2** Peter Timms, *Australia's Quarter Acre: The story of the ordinary suburban garden*, p.170; "Betty Maloney's garden" at <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/betty-maloney-garden>, accessed 13 October 2021; **3** Morris, p.103; **4** Morris, p.108; **5** Jennifer Taylor, *An Australian Identity: houses for Sydney 1953-63*, p.48; **6** *An Australian Identity*, p.50; **7** Jacqueline Urford, "Rickard, Bruce" in Philip Goad and Julie Willis (editors), *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p.595; **8** Jennifer Taylor, *Australian Architecture Since 1960* (second edition), p.35; **9** *ibid*; **10** Jacqueline Urford, "The Sydney School" in Goad and Willis, p.674; **11** Urford, "The Sydney School", pp.674-675; Barbara Buchanan, "Modernism Meets the Australian Bush: Harry Howard and the 'Sydney Bush School' of landscape architecture", PhD Thesis, Faculty of the Built Environment, University of NSW, 2009, p.20; **12** *An Australian Identity*, p.67; **13** Bruce Mackenzie was to work on the landscape planning and design of Ian McKay & Partners' Swinger Hill town house development in Canberra, designed in 1969; **14** Morris, p.115; **15** Buchanan, pp.146 and 149; **16** Buchanan, pp.20, 23; **17** Morris, p.115, quoting Catherine Evans and Barbara Buchanan, "Conserving Post World War II Designed Landscapes in Sydney, Australia", Max Bourke and Colleen Morris (editors), *Studies in Australian Garden History*, Australian Garden History Society, 2003 p.25; **18** Buchanan, "Modernism Meets the Bush: Harry Howard and the 'Sydney Bush School' of landscape Architecture", p.133; **19** State Heritage Inventory entry for Illoura Reserve, citing Buchanan, "Modernism Meets the Bush:

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STORYTELLING ARCHITECTURE

THE WORK OF KOICHI TAKADA

By Zeny Edwards



The atrium at Arc's entrance foyer.

Arc (2018), on 161 Clarence Street, in the heart of Sydney's CBD, presented a personal challenge to architect, Koichi Takada on how to amalgamate colonial past with Sydney's contemporary history in the one building. The mixed-residential scheme is in a historic area of Sydney's central business district on a street lined with 19th and early 20th century buildings comprising mainly what were once mostly small-scale warehouses.

Koichi considered the site from a contextual and elemental point of view and, at the same time, wanted to be able to express himself by creating something contemporary yet empathetic to the historical elements of the surrounding area. When completed the building managed to validate its transition from one century to the next – from the use of traditional materials and skilful craftsmanship through to the implementation of technological advances in modern design.

Arc rises above Skittle Lane, a historic and largely forgotten laneway of Victorian Sydney where soldiers once played bowls. In the early European colony of Sydney, this site was originally set aside for soldiers' huts to service the military occupation of the area. British regiments served an average of 4-7 years in the colony and were garrisoned at the Military Barracks on the site which is now Wynyard Park. When the military presence left most of the soldiers' huts changed hands and became owned by civilians and were later subsumed for commercial development.

Kylie Christian, President of Interpretation Australia which oversaw the archaeological investigations, sums it up: Skittle Lane provides "a snapshot or time capsule of a period of history which is quite unique in the progression from military through to residential to commercial. And what we can see is the change in use and shows a different perspective on how Sydney streets have changed leading to the evolution of urban Sydney in the one location."

To comply with Sydney City Council requirements, archaeological diggings were carried out and unearthed 240 boxes comprising 9280 artefacts including bowls, keys and locks and a gunpowder store which ignited and temporarily halted excavation. Two underground wells were uncovered and are now marked with com-



Arc, Clarence Street façade. Arc acknowledged the adjacent Red Cross House (155-159 Clarence Street, originally S. Hoffnung Building 1937-38, designed by Samuel Lipson in conjunction with Robertson and Marks and McCredie) but rather than mimicking its blond face bricks facade, Koichi used terracotta – 280,000 hand-formed bricks formed 59 stepped arches in subtle gradations at the openings and illustrate the meticulous craftsmanship of the bricklayers who had to learn new methods of laying and cutting bricks.

According to Koichi, the brickwork was inspired by the russets of Uluru in the Northern Territory in the way that "the colour and texture echo the oxidation of red earth found in the heart of Australia; as well, the erosion of its landform over years is depicted [here] as a series of organically shaped ribs and arches." Similar buildings

Throughsite link from Clarence Street, showing the bands of dark brick on façade.



Aerial view of the Arc.





Photo: Tom Ferguson for Koichi Takada Architects 2018

The Arc exterior.

along Clarence Street may have borne some influence for Koichi including the stepped fenestrations of 144 Clarence Street and the red-brick and arched façade of 120 Clarence Street diagonally opposite, to help visualise how his building would sit well within the historical built scape of the street.

Arc is made up of two 26-storey, 80-metre-high towers. Erected on a 1,447-square metre site the mixed-use residential project includes 135 apartments (Arc at 161-165 Clarence Street), 86 boutique hotel rooms (Skye Suites at 304 Kent Street), cafes, restaurants, and a retail precinct. The floor area of the project is 17,400-square metres. The twin towers rest on a four-block brick masonry podium, while in the main building the lower levels provide hotel accommodation, and the upper levels serve as residential apartments. Blank exterior walls which would have otherwise been overlooked were made more interesting with the side facades featuring vertical bands of dark-coloured bricks on the lower levels and with arc motifs blind-embossed on the towers' façades.

To make the building more environmentally sustainable Koichi incorporated an air well in the centre of the central atrium to provide natural ventilation while its glass elevator core lets daylight in. A nod to modernity and conforming to Sydney City Council requirements to include artworks in new buildings is "Reflect," a 12-metre-high light sculpture that illuminates the laneway connecting Clarence Street with Kent Street and bisecting cobblestoned Skittle Lane. The art installation was designed by Melbourne-based art creators Ramus Illumination and comprises 2,200 led lights programmed to provide a continuous light show.

The extraordinary hotel's entrance foyer welcomes visitors to an intimate space made more dramatic with subdued lighting. Precisely engineered curvatures give the impression of a three-dimensional pressed relief tunnel which leads to the swimming pool (an unusual layout). The foyer and pool area have been described as an "ice cave" by some, although it is more akin to entering the mouth of the baleen whale, the pale-coloured fringes highlighting the interplay of light and shadow within.

At the top level of the building, Koichi surprises with something spectacular. A series of 59 steel arcs form a crown which hovers over the reception area and opens vistas of Sydney Harbour and city views. The crown arcs have been compared to a "whale bone" structure but are also somewhat reminiscent of the skeleton framework of a boat – its fragile appearance belies its strength. It was a feat of perseverance and ingenuity from its engineers to be able to construct a structure that is solid yet refined to conform precisely to the architect's brief.

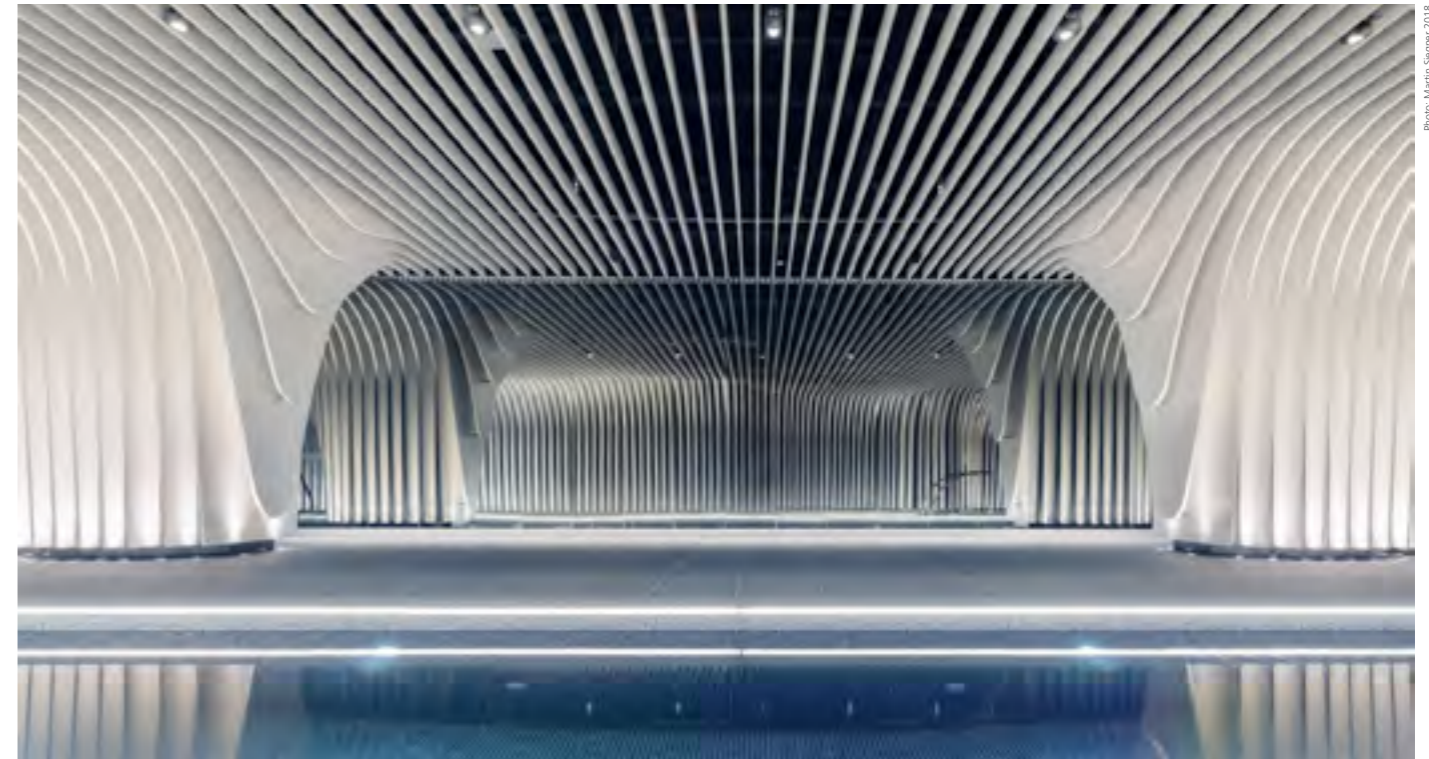
At this rooftop level comes the realization of why the building was named so. Perhaps subliminally inspired, the top-level arcs billowing through the Sydney skyline are iterations of the grounded brick arches on the lower level, but which are now here transformed in floating steel curves. One of Arc's important achievements is in breaking the mould of flat-roof-topped buildings proliferating across Sydney by transforming an otherwise superfluous space into an elegant gathering place open for the residents to enjoy. It should serve as a model for other developers to emulate.

Arc has won 18 international and national awards and is still winning awards and accolades and so it is the same for architect Koichi Takada who has achieved international acclaim. Iwan Sunito, head of Crown Group and himself an architect, reckons that Arc presents "a defining moment" for his company and considers it as a precursor of "future heritage".

The whole project could not have been achieved without the vision and exacting brief of Koichi Takada, and the trust and support of its developer (Crown Group), the engineers (VDM), builders (Hutchinson), bricklayers (Fazetti) and other technical experts involved in the project all working together collaboratively.

The end result is an architectural icon that tells the story of Sydney in the language of architecture – of how its past is retold in the present and of how its enduring quality ensures a future in the pages of Sydney's history.

The Society conducted a guided tour of the Arc in May 2023.



The Sky Suites, 'ice cave' pool.

Photo: Martin Segner 2018



Arc rooftop.

Photo: Tom Ferguson 2018

Acknowledgements & references: Koichi Takada Architects – koichitakada.com; Tom Ferguson, photographer; Arc by Crown Group – arcbycrown.com.au; Hutchinson Builders – hutchinsonbuilders.com.au; Ms Prisca Edwards, Head of Sales and Marketing, Crown Group Holdings Pty Ltd; Ms Anne Higham, Architect, for heritage and comparative analysis.

HMAS CRESSWELL

LESS GRAND THAN DARTMOUTH, BUT WITH MORE KANGAROOS

By Michael Hauptman



HMAS Creswell today.

You might have visited Jervis Bay south of Sydney, and noticed, tucked in the curve of the bay, an intriguing collection of gracious old buildings. This is the Royal Australian Naval College, also known as HMAS CRESSWELL. It's a significant example of early twentieth century Australian architecture and deserves to be known by the Society.

The Author has a fond sense of attachment to the place as he attended the College as a callow Midshipman in the early '80s and is pleased to have the opportunity to share some of its fascinating history. Especially as the politically charged atmosphere at its founding has echoes today in our current political tensions with China and Russia.

Federation, international tensions and the "Dreadnaught Fund"

Soon after Federation in 1901, the new nation of Australia decided it needed a navy. This was not part of the original federation project: a squadron of British ships on the "Australia station", part-funded by a subsidy paid by Australia, was to have been the nation's bulwark against foreign aggression.

But in 1905 Japan's lopsided victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese war inflamed the fear of the "yellow hordes" that had been a key motivation for Federation in the first place. Labour senator George Pearce summed up the prevailing attitude to the Parliament in 1906 "Japan has shown that she is an aggressive nation ... Is there any other country that offers such a temptation to Japan as Australia does?"

A reluctant Britain – they would have preferred that Australia continue the system of subsidies – agreed that Australia could form a small navy of (non-nuclear) submarines and light destroyers. But a visit by the US Great White Fleet to Australia in 1908 fanned enthusiasm that Australia should have a battleship and cruiser navy. Orders were placed accordingly in 1909, and finally in October 1913 the new Australian fleet entered Sydney harbour to great acclaim, led by the new battlecruiser HMAS AUSTRALIA.

The rise of Japan was not the only naval concern for Australia. On

the other side of the world a rising Germany sought to build a navy to rival Britain, with both nations racing to build more and better battleships.

Australia, newly federated but still a loyal element of the British empire, established the "Dreadnaught Fund" to assist, which by 1909 had raised £84k pounds, donated by towns, shires, organisations and individuals throughout the state. But it fell well short of the £250k pounds a battleship cost back in those far-off low-inflation days, and in 1912 it was decided instead to contribute half to the building of a new naval college.

An Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay

Pre-Federation Australia had been training local sailors for British service, but all officers in the Australia squadron had been British. Australia's new Navy would also need properly trained officers, but now they would be home-grown. In 1910 the government decided to establish both an Army officer training college and a naval college.

The site of the army college was quickly decided to be Duntroon in the ACT, but the site of the naval college was hotly debated. Middle Head, Port Hacking and Barrenjoey were all considered, but

Captain's Residence.



Photo: The Naval Officers' Club of Australia

the matter was finally decided when in November 1911 the Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher announced that Jervis Bay had been selected as the site for the proposed Naval College; a decision for which he offered no explanation.

Jervis Bay though had much to recommend it. A large and well sheltered bay, it was designated as Canberra's "port", indeed Jervis Bay is part of the ACT, and tentative plans were made for a rail link to the embryonic capital. Placing the new college in the ACT would avoid inflaming state jealousies, but it was also remote, 180km from Sydney. Nowra, the closest town, was 33 km away; the closest rail station at Berry 52km distant, all along very basic dirt roads. Worth noting that the Hume Highway was only fully sealed in 1940.

The isolation would ensure the naval cadets would not be distracted by the temptations of town, but it complicated construction enormously. Most of the access was by small coastal freighters, with many of the materials sourced locally: The stone breakwater was quarried on site, and multiple sawmills were set up to process the local hardwood.

A temporary light railway transported materials around the site, supported by teams of horse and bullock. At its peak the workforce and their families numbered 350, housed in tents. Electricity came from a coal-fired power station, fuelled by regular visits from coal ships. Needless to say, the proposed rail link to Canberra was never completed.

Construction commenced in 1913 and the college was finally completed in 1917. The first class included 31 thirteen-year-old cadet midshipmen, plus a further 60 slightly older boys who had relocated from the temporary naval college, Osborne House, established in Geelong in 1913.

John Smith Murdoch and the "Garden City" Plan

The Naval College is laid out according to the principles of the "Garden City" movement that was popular in the western world at the time, though "city" seems too grand a moniker for a space of 40 hectares. According to Garden City principles, the main in-

Administration building/museum.



Photo: The Naval Officers' Club of Australia

Commandant's Residence, Duntroon.



Photo: Canberra and District Historical Society



The Australian fleet enters Sydney Harbour 1913

Photo: Australian War Memorial



Married quarters

Photo: Australian Heritage Database



Britannia Naval College Dartmouth

Photo: Cetaria Design



Cerberus House

Photo: Australian War Memorial

in 1914 and then Chief Architect in 1919 at the age of 55. Murdoch was devoted to his calling: he never married, living alone at the grand Commercial Travellers' Association building on Flinders Street Melbourne (still standing and definitely worth a visit).

And he shunned the limelight, we have only two photos of him. His energies he poured into his work, famously working even on Christmas Day. Despite a rocky relationship with Walter Burley Griffin, he designed many of early Canberra's key buildings, most notably the provisional Parliament House and also the Hotel Kurrajong and Hotel Canberra.

Key buildings

The College's main building is the gymnasium and clock tower. My research doesn't specifically credit Murdoch as the gymnasium's architect, but I cannot believe a person as meticulous as Murdoch – for Parliament House he designed every aspect down to the wastepaper baskets and hatstands – would have delegated the task.

This rectangular building with a prominent central clocktower overlooking the parade ground ("quarterdeck" in navy parlance), echoes the main building of Britain's naval college at Dartmouth. Dartmouth had recently opened in 1905, and Australia borrowed many ideas from Dartmouth for the College's training program.

structional buildings of the College were situated in a civic core of formal geometry, surrounded by informal residential areas with a more organic and irregular layout.

The College was designed by John Smith Murdoch. Murdoch was Chief Architect of the Commonwealth of Australia at the time, the culmination of a professional journey that began in his birthplace of Scotland, where he trained as an architect before migrating to Melbourne and then Queensland, working with the State Department of Works there. He joined the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne in 1904, promoted first to Architect

Murdoch's gymnasium and tower are naturally much humbler than its Dartmouth cousin, a grand Baroque Revival building designed by Aston Webb. Britain after all was the largest navy in the world at the time, Australia merely the newest. The gymnasium building is hardwood timber, the tower masonry and render, with terracotta roof tiles. It is a Free Classical design with small Doric columns and rusticated pilasters at the base and classical mouldings.

The cadets were originally housed in two blocks on the other side of the "quarterdeck" parade field: Cerberus House, which is still standing, and Geelong House, now demolished.

Standing somewhat isolated on the boundary of the training precinct and the teaching staff buildings is the Captain's Residence, an imposing two-storey building with stuccoed brickwork beneath a weatherboard upper story and a red terracotta roof. The form is articulated by the attached structure of the colonnaded ground-floor veranda and the first-floor balcony with patterned balustrade.

It strongly resembles the Commandant's Residence at Duntroon Military College, another of Murdoch's designs. The Captain's Residence is altogether grander plus the temperate climate of Jervis Bay allowed larger windows.

Teaching staff with families were accommodated in a collection of single-storey Federation bungalows, a simplified version of the Queen Anne cottage of the late Victorian era, arranged in an irregular grid. Five date from 1915, with more added in 1920. Built from hardwood weatherboard, they originally had terracotta tiled roofs, though some now have corrugated iron,

A cadet's cabin 1924



Photo: Naval Historical Society of Australia



RANC gymnasium and tower. Less grand than Dartmouth, but with more kangaroos.

Photo: Reddit

plus low chimneys, double or single gables and simple slatted balustrades.

The main administration building, an eclectic mix of Federation and Classic Revival, now houses a small museum, which includes an extensive record of the initial planning and construction of the College.

From naval college to holiday resort

The Great Depression hit an Australia heavily indebted from WW1 and post-war reconstruction particularly hard – amongst developed economies we had an unemployment rate second only to Weimar Germany – and as part of cost cutting in 1930 the College moved to the Navy's sailor training base near Melbourne at HMAS CERBERUS.

Reflecting the growth of the Shoalhaven region as a tourist destination, the buildings at Jervis Bay were then leased to a variety of hotel proprietors and the College became a holiday resort.

At the top end of choices was the Captain's Residence, renamed Canberra House, costing four pounds and four shillings a week but boasting "... every convenience including hot and cold running water, electric light and sewerage."

The cadet accommodation blocks Cerberus House and Geelong House became "Westward Ho Guest House" and "Jervis Bay Guest House". The cadet dining hall was repurposed as a cinema, and the officers' wardroom became a pub, "Foley's Hotel". For the budget end of the market the senior sailors' quarters were renamed the "Naval Lodge Hotel". Indeed, the Warrant Officers' Mess still retains the initials "NLH" on the front door as a reminder of that period.

The Government resumed control of the College in WW2 and it was used by all branches of the military for a variety

of training purposes. The Air Force continued to use the site until 1946 for the rehabilitation of airmen and prisoners of war, after which it recommenced its holiday camp activities.

The College returns to Jervis Bay

As the Cold War took hold, Australia's defence spending increased, and in 1958 the expanded navy once more relocated the College to Jervis Bay. It was at this time the facility got its name HMAS CRESWELL, named for Vice Admiral William Creswell, a Royal Naval officer who emigrated to South Australia in 1879 and was instrumental in the conception and formation of Australia's navy.

Now, junior entry cadets entered the College at 16 rather than 13, completing years 11 and 12 of high school before commencing professional studies as a midshipman. The junior entry was phased out in 1980, and women were allowed to enter with equal status to men from 1984.

In 1986 officer training at HMAS CRESWELL largely ceased with the establishment of the ADFA tri-service officer training academy in Canberra. But in 2000 the initial officer training recommenced at CRESWELL – a 22 week New Entry Officer's Course, or NEOC – and currently a variety of officer training courses are conducted there.

A wayward clock bell finally returns home

The College's clock tower had a complicated mechanism that sounded on the half-hour in traditional naval fashion, installed by John Danks and Sons of Sydney. It was removed when the College relocated to CERBERUS in 1930, and the clock's bell, which weighed over 200 kg, went missing.

Eventually in 2013 the bell was returned to the College and the mystery of its disappearance at least partially solved. In the mid 1960's, the bell turned up at an engineering works owned by Mr Hopkins in Chatswood. Mr Hopkins decided to take the bell home, where he had it mounted as a display in his foyer. After Mr Hopkins died, his son held onto the bell for some time before reaching out to the College.

The bell had faint markings that indicated it had come from the Naval Training College. It also bears the initials of 4 midshipmen from the 1914



Return of the bell.

Photo: South Coast Register



HMAS CRESWELL Gymnasium and pool.

Photo: TTV

intake who surreptitiously climbed the clocktower – a time-honoured practice testified by the layers of graffiti inside the clocktower – and left their mark in crayon which has etched the metal. The clock now resides in the College's museum.

Protecting the College's heritage

The College is listed on the National Register as a significant heritage site, and a quarter of HMAS Creswell's buildings are heritage listed. Being a working defence facility, many new buildings have been added in recent years, but these have largely been designed to minimise impact on the historical precincts. A good example is the gym and pool, built in 2011 by Hansen Yuken, partially buried and located some distance from existing buildings.

The College has a small museum with an extensive archive, currently under the very able direction of LCDR David Jones, who combines his curator duties with a day job as one of the College's instructors. Unfortunately, the base and museum are not open to the general public, but private tours can sometimes be arranged during weekdays. The College's website has contact details if you want to try your luck.

Situated on beautiful Jervis Bay, the College is definitely worth a visit if you do have the chance and is a unique example of early Federation government building and town planning.

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The restrained Functionalist style of the Country Women's Association restroom (c.1954) in Robertson Park.

Photos: Matt Stone

EXPLORING ORANGE

During the October Long Weekend in 2022, members and friends explored the picturesque streetscapes of Orange, NSW.

Walks were led by heritage architect Roy Lumby, with support from landscape specialists Stuart Read and Matthew Taylor.

We were introduced to many fine buildings, in a range of styles including Art Deco, Arts & Crafts, Inter War Functionalist, Federation Free Classical and Modernist.

Along the way, we visited three historically significant parks, and learned why particular trees and plants had been selected.

We enjoyed indulgent diversions to wineries and restaurants. The weather was pleasant, and most walks were fully booked. View more pictures at twentieth.org.au/orange

This year, we'll be delving into the architecture and history of Cowra and Canowindra during the October Long Weekend.



Roy Lumby leading the way.



Stuart Read and Matthew Taylor.



Begonias blooming in the Blowes Conservatory (c.1934) in Cook Park.

Attendees gather at the Lands Office (c.1910) designed by Walter Liberty Vernon.



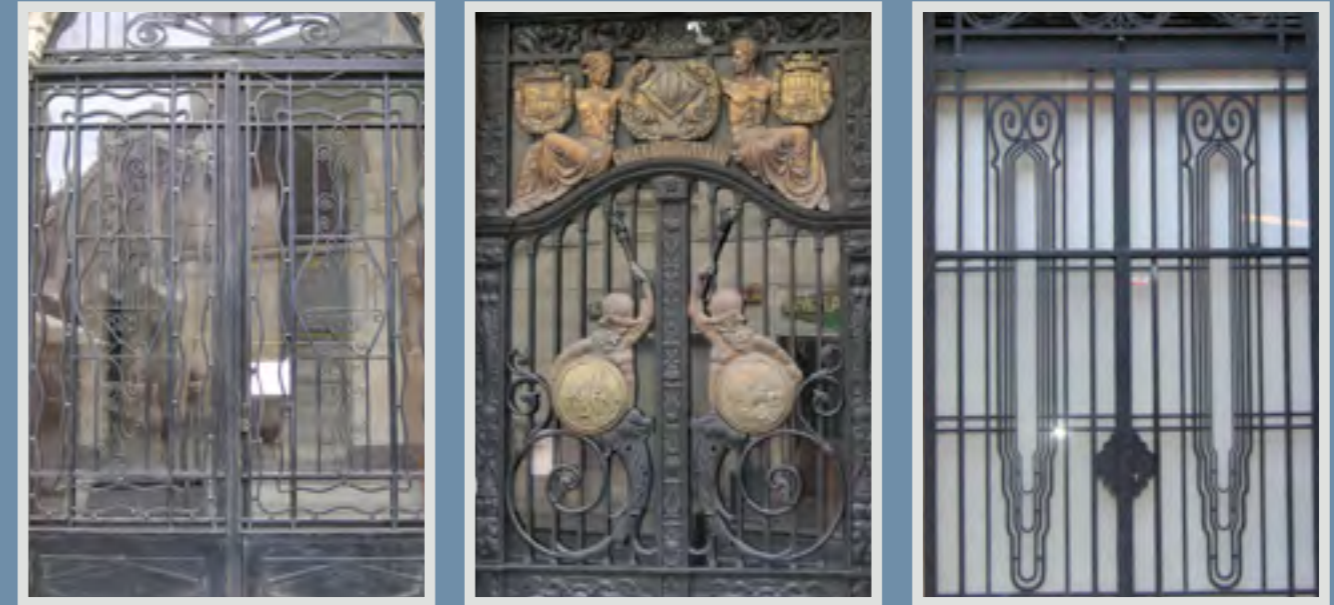
The former Canobolas Shire Council Chambers in Federation Arts and Crafts style (c.1911).



IRONWORK, THE GLORY OF SPAIN

...AND WOOLLAHRA

By Larisa Sarkadi



Examples of ironwork in Valencia, Spain.

A few years ago, on our travels through Spain, I was quite taken by the incredible iron gates and grills on many historic facades. Subsequent checking verified that the tradition of incorporating ironwork into an architectural design goes back many centuries, to the time of Spain under the Moors.

In fact, decorative patterns of ironwork in Seville, Valencia and other cities of southern Spain display the definite debt to the Moorish blacksmithing traditions. It is revealed in exquisite all over swirls within the gates and grills of the doorways leaving almost no empty spaces.

With passing years and trends, designs of the locally made ironwork continued to reflect the changing architectural styles. The photographs included in this brief overview were taken in Valencia and depicted mainly examples of wrought ironwork dating from the turn of the twentieth century until the later part of the 1930s. Their designs at the time were clearly influenced by the decorative vocabulary of the trend-setting France.

Surprisingly, the coastal parts of the Woollahra Municipality in Sydney, New South Wales, especially Point Piper, Rose Bay and Darling Point suburbs, have something in common with Moorish Spain.

In 1920, the founding Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Sydney University, Professor Leslie Wilkinson, introduced the Mediterranean style in his lectures on the aesthetics of architectural design. British-born and educated, Leslie Wilkinson fell under the spell of this romantic type of architecture on his many travels through Southern Europe.

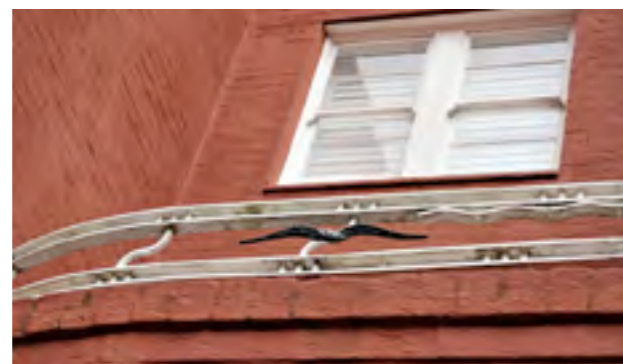
From then on until the late 1930s, numerous private residences and apartment buildings of coastal Woollahra were designed by successive generations of his graduates in the then fashionable Mediterranean and closely related Spanish Mission styles.

Rustic-style ironwork details – essential attributes of this domestic decorative concept, could be seen in window grills, balcony railings, door fixtures and weather vanes topping the ornamental turrets of constructions in these styles. Besides his major residential apartment project – ‘Silchester’ at 4 Tralee Road, Bellevue Hill – in

9-23 Plumer Road,
Rose Bay (c.1935),
architect PW Ritchie.



472 New South Head Road, Double Bay (c.1934), architect Prof L. Wilkinson.



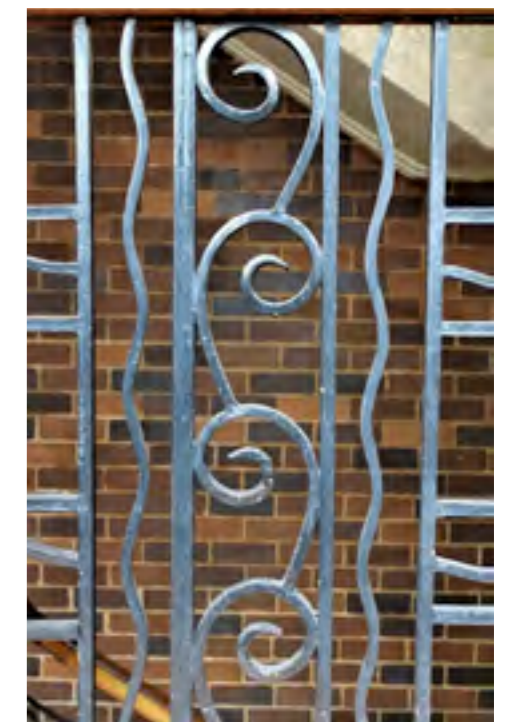
78 Wolseley Road, Point Piper (c.1937), architect B. Partridge.



15 Ocean Avenue, Double Bay (c.1935), architect AE Stafford.



30 Balfour Road, Rose Bay (c.1938).



7 Wallaroy Crescent,
Woollahra (c.1935),
architects HE Ross & Rowe.

Corner of Darling Point Road
and New South Head Road,
Edgecliff (c.1938).



7 Longworth Avenue, Point Piper (c.1929), architects Bohringer, Taylor & Johnson.

the Mediterranean style, Professor Wilkinson designed another one nearby. The tiny, but exquisitely decorated apartment block 'Carinya' at 472 New South Head Road in Double Bay, a 1934 design by Professor Wilkinson, proved that he 'practised what he preached'.

From the late 1920s wrought iron was increasingly used not only in exteriors but also in interiors of buildings designed in other contemporary styles. Stylised swirls in wrought and forged iron were often incorporated in banister designs for staircases in Modern Gothic and especially Streamline Moderne style buildings.

With advances in production technology, later projects in the Functionalism and Ocean Liner-inspired styles featured slick continuous iron handrails.

4 Trahlee Road, Bellevue Hill, architect Prof L Wilkinson (1929)



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Facades of numerous residences and apartment buildings of Woolahra feature smartly understated ironwork designed during the Art Deco period of 1920 to 1940.

So, next time you see an early twentieth century building featuring skilfully crafted ironwork, think of Spain.


34 Drumalbyn Road, Bellevue Hill (c.1940), architect JR Brogan.



The Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW & ACT, Inc.

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Cowra & Canowindra



October Long Weekend 2023

Join us as we visit two delightful towns on the NSW Central Tablelands. Cowra and Canowindra both feature architecturally diverse streetscapes and embrace a wealth of 20th century history. We'll keep you updated by email and online.

twentieth.org.au/cowra



Photo: Kendall Street, Cowra (NSW State Archives).

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ADVERTORIAL

Would the implementation of a national rent freeze improve housing affordability or convey other benefits?

Housing affordability has been a “hot” topic for a number of years in Australia and now the Greens have proposed a national rent “freeze” to ease cost of living pressures for renters. Would a moratorium on rent increases, or even a rent “cap” of say 3%-5% actually help or hinder renters?

Berlin introduced rent regulation in 2020 and Scotland in 2022. Let us examine the results of these two recent experiments.

The Berlin Experience

Berlin introduced a five year rent cap for all apartments built before 2014 that came into force from February 2020. In stage one of the scheme, which went into effect on 23 February 2020, the rents for about 1.3M flats were frozen at their level of June 2019. When stage two was enforced on 23 November 2020, landlords were obliged to reduce any rents that exceeded by more than 20% a list of newly defined caps, set at anywhere between 3.92 and 9.8 euros per square metre, depending on the quality of the flat and the fittings that came with it. Any future contracts would have to stick within the caps, so landlords couldn't use vacancies or new renovations to get a market increase.

One year on, a study by the German Institute for Economic Research found that rents in the newly regulated market of flats built before 2014 had declined by 11% compared with the still unregulated market for newer buildings¹.

Unfortunately, whilst rents had decreased, the rental housing crisis hadn't been resolved. In fact, it had got worse for all those renters not lucky enough to already be dwelling in a regulated property. Whilst they were fine, the supply of rental housing had fallen as landlords used the regulated flats for themselves, sold them or simply kept them empty in the hope that the court or community pressure would bring an end to the regulation (in the end a court did).

Where a flat was sold to an owner occupier, that sale typically was not to a former renter, as even with rental controls the capital value still rose as the rental housing crisis was not due to price gouging but rather the rationing effect of insufficient supply of housing generally, and that situation worsened with rent regulation.

Whilst post 2014 flats remained unregulated, the drop in supply caused by the actions of existing landlords overwhelmed any new building activity in Berlin. As a result, capital prices and rents for newly built apartments rose faster in the first year of implementation of the freeze than in the next 13 largest cities in Germany, according to Munich's Ifo Institute.

So, essentially, one group of people, those renting regulated apartments, benefited at the expense of all others, especially those still seeking to rent, who

were effectively shut out of the market². Similar results were found as a result of a study conducted by PwC Germany³.

The Scottish Experience

Legislation was introduced with effect from 6 September 2022 that froze rents in Scotland until 31 March 2023⁴.

In February 2023, prior to the end of the freeze, a report was commissioned for the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland which found that private sector housing provider and landlord business plans had been altered to account for a reduction in housing supply⁵.

By April, as was found in Berlin, the freeze worsened the supply shortage. Like Berlin, rents unaffected by the regulation rose faster than historically or elsewhere, so arguably faster than would have been the case had the freeze not been in place⁶.

Conclusions

Based on two recent examples (Berlin in 2020 and Scotland in 2022) of a rent freeze having been implemented in order to address rental housing affordability and supply, it appears that such measures have results opposite to what is intended. That is, rather than having the result of generally lowering rents and improving the supply of rental housing, it actually has four negative effects in that:-

1. it reduces rent only for those renters already in a regulated property but increases rent for all others looking to rent by more than would be the case in an unregulated market;
2. it reduces the supply of housing generally as a result of discouraging new building at least in the regulated area if not generally as some potential housing providers exit the market entirely;
3. it particularly reduces the supply of housing to renters as landlords sell at higher prices unaffordable to renters due to the worsened housing supply generally; and
4. due to worsened housing supply generally, housing prices go up by more than would otherwise be the case, putting acquisition of a home by current renters further out of reach.

It would seem that a rent freeze in any jurisdiction is an unequivocally bad idea and that rather than implement a rent freeze, legislators should instead look to resolve the supply issues directly.

¹ National Apartment Association, Arlington VA USA – Berlin's Rent Control Effort: A One-Year Lookback - 8 March 2021; ² The Economist Europe – After a year, Berlin's experiment with rent control is a failure - 9 March 2021; ³ PwC Germany - PwC Study 2021: Economic impacts of rent regulation on the residential real estate market; ⁴ Lexology UK - Temporary rent freeze introduced for residential tenants in Scotland – 9 December 2022; ⁵ Savills Affordable Housing Consultancy - IMPACT OF RENT CONTROLS: A report prepared by Savills for the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland; ⁶ BBC – Rental health: Scotland's landlords versus the rent freeze – 1 April 2023.

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