

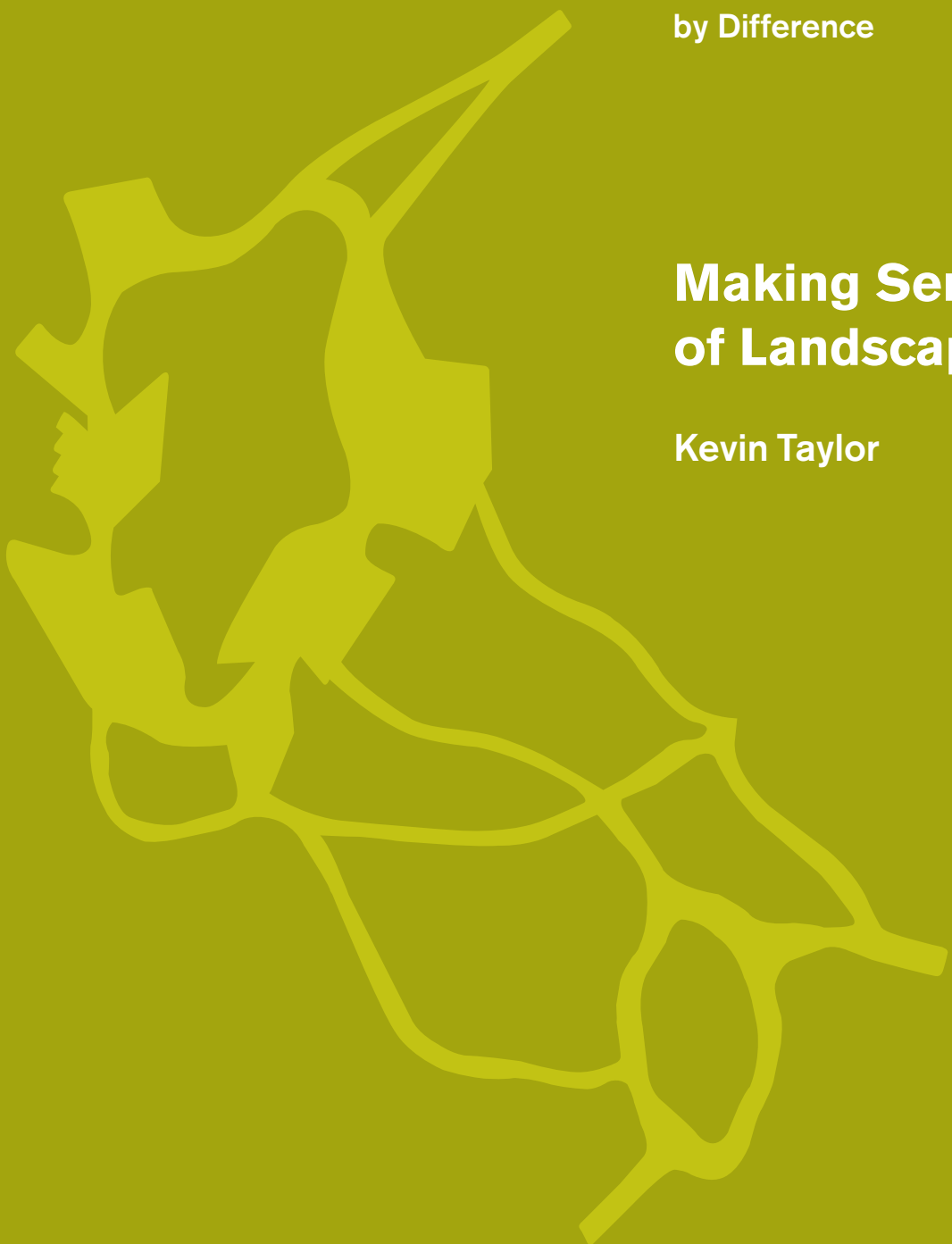
Taylor Cullity Lethlean
Doctor of Philosophy
2013
RMIT University

02

**Braided Pathways:
A Practice Sustained
by Difference**

**Making Sense
of Landscape**

Kevin Taylor



Sustaining the Square
Food Production

Sustaining the Land
Regeneration Seedlings

Sustaining the Co

Decomposition
Garden

Light

Sound

Light

Sound



Taylor Cullity Lethlean
Doctor of Philosophy
2013
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01

**Braided Pathways:
A Practice Sustained
by Difference**

Kevin Taylor

Taylor Cullity Lethlean
Doctor of Philosophy
School of Architecture and Design
RMIT University
August 2013

01

**Braided Pathways:
A Practice Sustained
by Difference**

Kevin Taylor

BLArch RMIT BArch UniSA FAILA

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Kevin Taylor
August 2013

Acknowledgments

Written by Kate Cullity on behalf of Kevin Taylor.

This has been a wonderful journey of discovery and reflection. Kate, Perry and I have felt privileged to have been given the opportunity to examine our practice and uncover the mysteries of why we design the way we do.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Leon van Schaik and SueAnne Ware, for inviting TCL to joining the PhD Architecture and Design program at RMIT.

I particularly wish to thank my supervisor, SueAnne Ware for her invaluable critique, her perseverance, patience and inspiration.

An undertaking of this significance must come with the support of both family and colleagues. As does the team at TCL who have not only been an integral part of many of the projects describes in this PhD, but also a constant source of creative collaborations.

Special credit must go to Lucas Dean who has been the internal driving force behind the delivery of this PhD, and who has patiently provided Perry, Kate and myself with dedicated and skilled design and management.

Additional Credits:

TCL: Natasha Morgan, Katie Cudal, Alex Lock

Sean Hogan, Trampoline

Anne Findlay, Editing Works

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WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following document may contain images and names of deceased persons.

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1.0



The research methodology of this PhD, is captured in Professor van Schaik's seminal text *Mastering Architecture: Becoming a Creative Innovator in Practice*. Candidates are asked to undertake an examination of their own particular journey, history and influences, which have informed their mastery. In addition, through critical reflection, candidates seek to communicate their contribution and new knowledge gained by the PhD to the broader discourse of their discipline.¹

The practice of Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL), Landscape Architects, were invited to undertake a PhD by Project. The research has involved a period of collective reflection and personal examination. The PhD also involved an invited peer review and a peer interview which assisted the PhD by positioning TCL in a contemporary design context and discourse.

The purpose of this PhD is to discover, reveal and document the particular knowledge and skill of the individual directors and their combined collaborative practice in creating the body of work that exists today and to foster possible trajectories into the future.

¹ van, Schaik Leon. *Mastering Architecture: Becoming a Creative Innovator in Practice*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005.



Kevin Taylor

13.11.53 – 07.08.11

Kevin Taylor, the founding Director of TCL died in a tragic accident in Darwin in August 2011. This PhD process was undertaken as a partnership between all three Directors and was substantially complete at the time of his death.

Introduction

Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity and Perry Lethlean, Directors of the Landscape Architecture Studio of Taylor Cullity Lethlean, have collectively undertaken a PhD by project.

The catalogue documents the journey of reflection and discovery over the last three and a half years and is loosely structured chronologically on the research methodology and the Practice Research Symposium (PRS) process over the course of the PhD. The PhD identifies contributions to the field that have resulted from this shared practice a collective authorship if you like, and then goes on to establish the authors specific and individual contribution 'sense making' and the civic realm in Landscape Architecture.

The landscape architecture practice of Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL) began in 1990 as a modest enterprise, with just Kate Cullity and myself, working on a range of small to medium community design-based projects from the front room of our house.

Perry Lethlean joined the practice in 1995 at a time when the practice established a studio in Adelaide as well as Melbourne.

The growth of the practice has occurred incrementally. There has not been a conscious decision or aspiration for growth, or to attain a practice of a certain size. Being awarded larger projects has determined the necessary recruitment of staff. Therefore the business planning of the practice has followed, albeit behind the reality of project resourcing and the pursuit of the next design challenge.

The Directors of TCL – Kate Cullity, Perry Lethlean and I – have varied backgrounds, covering among other things, landscape architecture, social planning, architecture, art, biology and urban design. We equally have varied interests. These diverse influences have resulted in the practice seeking a diversity of project types that have normally extended beyond the conventions of landscape architecture.

In 2010 the Directors believed the practice had reached a critical period. We had completed what are now considered landmark projects in landscape architecture in Australia, including The Australian Garden – a large Botanic Garden dedicated to indigenous flora, Craigieburn Bypass – a large freeway infrastructure project, the redevelopment of North Terrace, the major cultural boulevard in Adelaide and The Victoria Square Redevelopment – a large urban square in the centre of Adelaide.

Two conversations occurred in this period.

Firstly, we were consciously seeking the next challenge, following on from these landmark projects. We had found that projects that were unusual, difficult or on the edge of the traditional definition of landscape architecture were what sustained the practice and kept us enthused as practitioners. These projects often required us to take a chance in bidding for them, and, if successful, required investigation, conversations and collaborations with partners outside the sphere of our discipline. The requirement for a deeper level of research on these atypical projects, seemed to result in a more enjoyable design process.

We were intrigued by how our particular lens as landscape architects, our backgrounds, way of working and design sensibilities influenced the design outcomes of projects that were not in the standard remit of landscape architecture. We were speculating what the next challenge might be.

Secondly, we were concerned about becoming complacent practitioners. The practice was 20 years old, and we feared the accidental trajectory of growth, new projects and typological challenges may not be sustained. Our business advisor suggested practices similar to ours often stagnate creatively and commercially unless there was a shift in the manner of practice, through either new challenges, staffing or commercial opportunities.

Parallel to this conversation, Leon van Schaik and SueAnne Ware came to our studio and effectively communicated a similar observation, that design studios need to step out of their comfort zone approximately every ten years to allow for a necessary period of reflection, readjustment and rejuvenation.

The suggestion of a PhD by Leon van Schaik and SueAnne Ware appeared to address these two conversations. It has allowed us to delve into the TCL backstory, its influences, common threads and processes of design. It offered the next challenge. Reflection, we hoped, might reveal real insights, offering a way forward that would present new challenges to the Directors, Kate, Perry and myself, and would sustain the next phase of our working life. This PhD therefore is a product of this process of reflection.

The PhD has revealed a commonality of design interests and threads within the three Directors that is demonstrated across a range of projects over 20 years.

The PhD is also a means to understand our individual contribution to practice and to new knowledge. My particular interest in civic projects are examined as these have formed the bulk of the practice's work and present the greatest challenges to the expression of site and community relationships and responses. North Terrace and Victoria Square / Tarntanyangga are also two of the most collaborative projects the practice has undertaken and therefore highlight changing modes of practice and collaboration by not only for myself but also for Kate Cullity and Perry Lethlean.

As the PhD was undertaken together by all three Directors of TCL, it reflects a shared and collective examination of our practice, the catalogue structure is therefore largely the same for each candidate, except for our individual essays. The structure is illustrated in the diagram on the right page.

At the beginning of our research we dissected our project typologies, our influences and our community of practice collectively. We identified a distinction between what we described as our sticky projects, the ones that resonated with us as important to the practice, compared to our seminal projects, the ones that resonated in our professional fraternity. This is discussed in Chapter 2 Threads of Investigation.

Our seminal projects are demonstrated via a series of project descriptions in Chapter 2.4 Seminal Projects. The projects selected are part of our seminal group and are also projects that are discussed in our individual essays.

We then identified common threads in a range of our important projects and important themes that have linked a community of projects over 20 years. These threads are discussed in Chapter 2.6 Emerging Threads.

Ron Jones, renowned Australian Landscape architect and Director of the Melbourne practice of Jones and Whitehead, provides a context for TCL in contemporary landscape architecture practice. His essay titled *Truth itself is Constructed: Public Space – as Public Art* is contained in Chapter 3. This peer review has been utilised to prompt a design conversation via annotations to his essay.

Our individual essays, in Chapter 4 explore our particular individual backgrounds, research and interests. My essay examines our civic work and how it has necessitated a casting back to the earliest projects of the practice where intense experiences with communities, collaborators and sites created strong attitudes and Design Activism approaches to public space design. What has been found is a resonance with the ideals and values of the 'New Civic' as being explored during the Victoria Square project.

Upon each presenting our individual essays during our PRS 3 June 2011², Richard Blythe, Dean of Architecture and Design at RMIT, a panel member, observed our key differences were really about care (Kate Cullity), sense (Kevin Taylor) and composition (Perry Lethlean). Finally, in Chapter 5 we reflect on this PhD process, our shared contribution to the community of practice and speculate on our directions ahead.

To compliment the writing an Appendix of awards received and publication references is provided containing an archive of each project mentioned throughout the PhD.

² Practice Research Symposium is a weekend symposium that happens twice a year and each candidate presents their research allowing public consideration of the nature of the mastery that their peers have recognised in their work. <http://www.rmit.edu.au/architecturedesign/research/prs>

Book 01	01	Introduction
	02	Threads of Investigation
	03	Ron's Essay
Book 02	04	Individual Essay
	05	Reflection
	06	Appendix

**An Introduction to Taylor Cullity
Lethlean; the Design Practice**

TCL is located in two studios, Melbourne and Adelaide. Kate Cullity and myself, have led the Adelaide Studio while Perry Lethlean has led the Melbourne practice. We currently employ 25 staff across these two studios.

The practice commenced in 1990. In its early period, projects were modest in size and largely concerned with community participation in public realm, as well as collaboration with artistic disciplines.

In 1990, Kate Cullity and myself worked with architect Gregory Burgess on the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, a project in Australia's red centre, that required a very sensitive understanding of environmental and cultural processes. In 1995 TCL were awarded the commission for The Australian Garden, a large Botanic Garden located south of Melbourne. This project enabled Kate and myself to further explore our understanding of the Australian landscape and to abstractly express this through design. It was also the first project where we collaborated with Perry Lethlean and it allowed the practice to shift to a new scale and level of complexity which has substantially influenced our practice. Similarly in 1997 with Perry's urban design skills TCL were awarded the redevelopment of Geelong Waterfront Project which enabled us to shift our mode of practice to an even larger urban scale where we examined the interrelationships of built form, activation and a revitalised public realm.

These three formative projects are cited as they illustrate the sheer diversity and scale of our early commissions. Their built realisation and their acknowledgement through the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture Awards and publications³, allowed the studio to embrace a diversity of project types. TCL has therefore not become niche specialists but a practice that enjoys design at multiple scales and in any location.

Our promotional material talks about how our practice examines, through design, four streams of investigations. This PhD has revealed, that if we put aside the marketing delivery of the words, these investigations are still somewhat valid, albeit with a different emphasis and more modest intentions.

Contemporary urban life and global culture are explored in our urban public realm projects, particularly ideas around the 'new civic' where we attempt to encourage public interactions, unplanned events and chance encounters. In this catalogue this is described under the thread 'Civic'.

The elemental power of site and landscape is often the foundation for many of our studios' national park and cultural tourism projects, where the designers' hand is often barely perceptible. In this catalogue this is described under the thread 'Site'.

Artistic practice in a range of disciplines refers to projects that are part of exhibitions and sculptural installations and our interest in the crafting of fine detail of landscape elements as well as our propensity to collaborate with many creative specialists, such as writers, artists, and historians. In this catalogue this is described under the thread 'Material Presence'.

The creation of a sustainable future is a lofty ambition and sounds somewhat inflated, but this refers more to our aim to embed, without fanfare, sustainable practices in all aspects of our projects. This is not described as a dominant thread through this catalogue.

The PhD has revealed another thread, 'Narrative', that underpins an approach to design on many of our public and cultural projects.

³ Refer Appendix for Awards received and Publications



Top: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre
Right: Geelong Waterfront

These threads describe a common language of design that is apparent across many of our projects. They do not describe the individual contrasting interests of each of the three Directors, which is an important component of our practice's DNA.

Kate Cullity, Perry Lethlean and I each bring different disciplines and skills to the firm. Along with a shared background in landscape architecture, Kate is trained in botany and visual arts, Perry in urban design and I in architecture.

I studied architecture in Adelaide and practised in architecture. I came to Melbourne and started in the first year of the RMIT course in 1981 and graduated in landscape architecture. Initially I worked with David Yenken at Merchant Builders, then taught landscape architecture at RMIT while working at TRACT Landscape Architects. I then established my own landscape design practice, undertaking modest domestic-scaled projects, before forming a practice with Kate Cullity.

Perry began a Town Planning degree at The University of Melbourne, mistakenly thinking that he was going to be taught how to design cities. He then commenced the Landscape Architecture undergraduate degree course at RMIT around the same time I did. Perry subsequently worked in a number of design practices in Melbourne and undertook a number of design competitions in his spare time, which fostered an interest in urban design. He undertook a Masters of Design in Urban Design at RMIT in the early 1990s, before joining Taylor and Cullity in 1995.

Kate first studied Biological Sciences majoring in Botany in Perth, this means Kate has a scientific background which has informed her love of plants and landscape. Kate then studied and practised teaching, which she disliked. Subsequently Kate came to Melbourne, studied part of a Landscape Architecture Masters degree at Melbourne University before starting her own landscape design practice. While working with the renowned Architect Gregory Burgess Kate met me. We collaborated professionally on projects before we become life partners as well as business partners, establishing the practice of Taylor and Cullity in 1990.

This difference in backgrounds, design interests and approach is an important factor in the robustness and resilience of our practice and will be further explored in subsequent chapters of this catalogue.



Right: Perry Lethlean, Kevin Taylor and Kate Cullity on site after being selected to design the masterplan for Victoria Square, Adelaide (2009).

An Introduction to the way we work

Our idyllic notion of the three Directors collaborating on all of our significant projects has not always been possible. While we have tried for the three of us to work together, the fact that we are geographically in Adelaide and Melbourne, has meant that there have only been a certain number of projects that we have come together on.

As would be expected, Kate and myself in Adelaide collaborated on projects on a daily basis, and Perry typically worked with staff in the Melbourne studio on most of the projects generated there.

The three of us have come together to collaborate on projects when we recognised that our combined skills would be suited to that project scale, importance or complexity. These combined skills and backgrounds in architecture, urban design and artistic practice have also been used as part of our 'pitch' when bidding for projects.

These projects have been mostly for design competitions and major public projects and all have been significant projects in terms of their public standing. We believe our different approaches have resulted in a richer, more dense, design solution.

Equally the design collaboration, the process of negotiating solutions, the challenge of 'who holds the pen', is, for each of us a rewarding process.

On these collaborations the spiritual leader was me, I would, with a quiet and modest manner, be the conduit to Perry and Kate on the nuances of the site context and opportunities, project brief, community and stakeholder concerns, artistic collaborations and client relationships. I would guide a steady ship ensuring design discussions are fostered within the realpolitik of the project.

Perry would typically attempt to grasp the bigger story of the project, understand its urban context and attempt to grasp a conceptual framework to guide the many and varied design discussions and decisions. To get to the nub of the project as fast as possible would be his ideal collaboration.

By contrast Kate would like to keep opportunities open and conversations flowing. At larger scales Kate would often defer to Perry or I, participating in the design process but not necessarily holding the pen. Kate's interest in art, planting, detail and materiality meant that she became more active and vocal at the middle to small scale of the project.

These differences, and the way each of us work and collaborate, were further articulated at our first PRS in June 2010. Here we each talked about another Director and attempted to summarise, what we believed, were their core qualities as designers. An edited excerpt of that discussion follows.

Kate talking about Kevin

I first met Kevin when he was working on the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, a community consultation and community art project, out of Gregory Burgess's office.

Walking In

Walking into Anangu

- *Gently, around the grasses, past the warrior oaks, to this place*
- *Anangu*
- *Plain*
- *Earth*
- *Stories*
- *Law*
- *Rock*

Space

Open spaces, all not filled

Sparseness

Seeing the value in what is there

Using what is there

Making do

Watching where you walk

Patterns

Sand

Kevin has a really strong social and environmental conscience and has a natural affinity for consulting with others and great sensitivity, particularly for working with indigenous peoples.

He has an amazing ability for being diplomatic – which I'm not always so great at – for holding a vision, for knowing when to move forward, for when to stay in a holding pattern and for when to tack. He always keeps the idea of the vision and the big picture. He doesn't mind sometimes if you lose a battle, as long as you win the war.

The qualities that allow him to do this are due to his steady nature. He has a wonderful quality to be able to supplant his ego. He has also an acute ability to listen. It is this ability to listen, and to collect information and to work collaboratively in a very non egotistic way, that allows him to make lateral leaps with information and then distil them and transform them into the design.

Kevin has a really attuned sense of site, and a love of geography and natural systems. He also loves finding out about the nuances of Australian landscape and finding the essence of these landscapes and then to express them in his designs.

*He is a poetic soul. He has a great talent for writing. In fact many submissions that we were successful with, for example *The Australian Garden* and *the Forest Gallery*, were expressive texts written by Kevin, often delivered in a prose style presentation to the client to get the job. He loves finding the poetic in the site. He delights in finding their stories and transforming them into design.*

His architectural training and building his home in St Andrews have, I think, given him an ability to understand the fine grain detail of landscapes.

The poem on the side is prose that he wrote while we were at Uluru.

And he's also a great hubby.

PRS June 2010

How TCL Work

Perry talking about Kate

Kate is a hybrid designer, part artist, sculptor, botanist, landscape architect. Where she excels, in all of these hybrid states, is in the beauty of small things and in the crafting and making of things. It is in recognising the beauty of the object where she is masterful and that's a completely different skill and approach to the way I work.

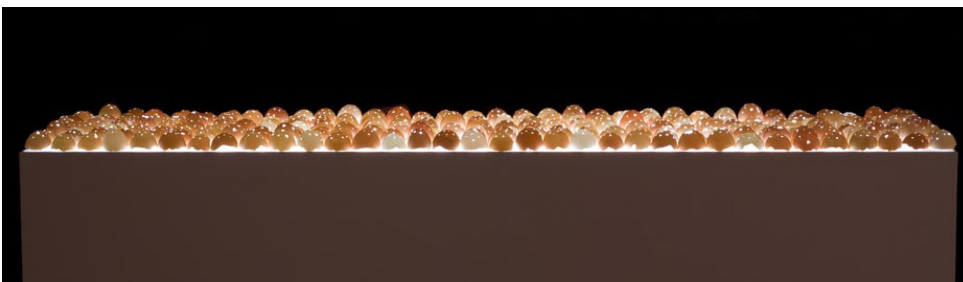
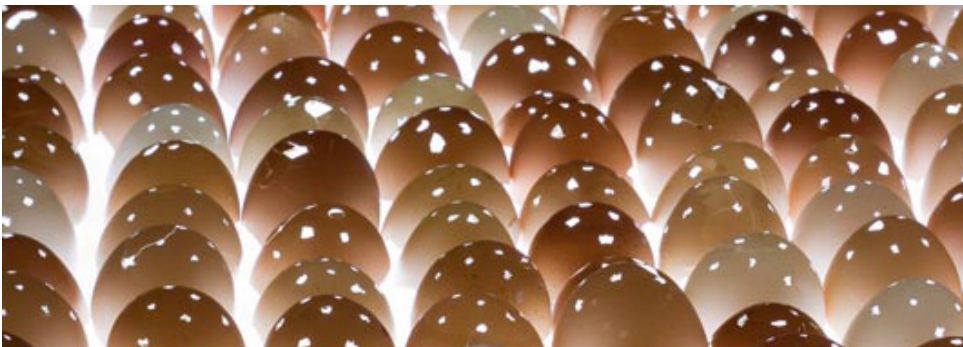
She loves working in this manner. Kate also loves a conversation and loves to tease out a problem, slowly. She prefers not to find the answer right away. The conversation about design is actually often more important rather than getting to the solution. In that way, she loves the process of collaboration and the participation of a whole host of people that would help and support and enrich the design process and project outcome.

Kate circles around projects in landscape architectural terms. She actually hones in, engages fully in the project, when she feels comfortable about a certain scale of a project. Once Kate is engaged, she is working it out, imagining, exploring how the design challenge will eventually turn out as the finished object, landscape or artwork.

Kate is also hands-on, she makes stuff, the project is enriched by her detailed three-dimensional testing of each important element of the project. It is also not unusual for Kate to be tenacious on site, actually telling landscapers where to put the plants, how to plant them, prune them and look after them. This is very unusual, but ultimately very valuable from a landscape architecture and project realisation point of view.

Kate has brought to the practice a great awareness in the beauty of thinking on a fine scale, of crafting objects, patterning and repetition. She has a really great horticultural knowledge and she sees planting as a valuable and valid creative pastime.

PRS June 2010



Left: Reproduction Series:
Broken, Kate Cullity 2009

Over the years through my study of landscape architecture and visual art I have also become fascinated with the abstraction of elemental landscape, the power of repetition, patterns and multiples and the play of light and shadow.

Kate Cullity

Kevin talking about Perry

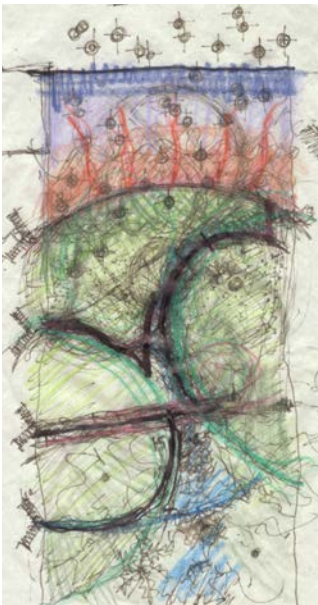
For me, what Perry is really great at is the big vision in a project. While we'll be sitting around the table, Perry will close his eyes, and if Perry closes his eyes, you know something's going on. So he closes his eyes, and then he'll just start drawing and he will usually just draw very simple little diagrams, sometimes little perspectives, but often very small diagrammatic plans, and they will encapsulate the sort of essential qualities of what we're talking about.

The other thing is that he doesn't stop there. He'll likely then draw four or five of those. Again, often reasonably quickly. So there's this thing about being able to have a vision, but then being able to just let go of that one, and do another one, which I find really hard to do. I usually get stuck a bit on, when I think I've got a solution.

Perry's diagrams are often describing a narrative, so there's a story behind them, and they have, surprisingly for simple diagrams, a very strong three-dimensional quality to them, or a sequence of spaces. Once the group have decided on one of these diagrams as being the most appropriate direction for the project, there is then an absolute bull terrier tenacity in Perry that the vision, the bold gestures that are in those diagrams, is going to survive through to the end of the project.

So how this has all influenced the practice? We have worked on some very big projects over the last five or six years. Perry's quality of being able to see into the project, the site, the program and the community and to distil these issues into a series of fairly simple diagrammatic design gestures has meant that we have been able to work on these big complex projects and able to communicate what those the principal design moves are to clients and to communities, and they've been able to understand them.

So it's been a critical contribution, I think, to the way the practice unfolded. This diagram (left) is an actual diagram that Perry did when he was sitting next to me on a train coming back from Geelong about 1998 from a meeting down at Geelong Foreshore. He did this diagram in only about 10 or 15 minutes and it's of the Forest Gallery which, as I mentioned before, is probably [one of] the most complex projects we've ever worked on, and Perry sat there and did this little diagram, which, while the Forest Gallery is not exactly like that, that diagram is really the kernel of the way the physical form and the spatial arrangement of the Forest Gallery unfolded. So, it's an early example of how that combination of dreaming, thinking, designing and drawing, often in fairly quick sequence, could manifest itself.



Above: Original sketch of Forest Gallery by Perry Lethlean.

Right: The Climate boardwalk in the Forest Gallery hovers above the landscape with scientific interpretations as the peculiar seasons of the forest are contrasted with an Aboriginal perspective.

Far Right: The Forest Gallery interprets the tall Mountain Ash forest of central Victoria, and as the centrepiece of the Museum, it is intended to challenge preconceived ideas of the role and image of the traditional Museum.

PRS June 2010



We knew each of us were different designers, and that this contributed positively to the density of practice ideas. Yet we didn't understand what formed these differences.

As part of this PhD we undertook an exercise where each of us quickly noted our baggage and then related to each other the relevance of our notations. This reflection on our own back-story, attempted to uncover what influences prior to our formal training led us to be drawn to certain approaches, influences and ways of thinking. This exercise was simple yet revelatory.

These reflections are described further in Chapter 5.

13 Bagger
KT

-
- KT
- Fishing (The natural Env. - the sea)
 - The Backyard
- Solitary play - building
- making
 - Fascination with big Things
- bridges, dams, buildings
 - Ecology
 - Social/Community issues
- Wendy Sarkissian
 - Community Art

Above: Kevin Taylor's notations on his personal back stories. This quick exercise as part of the PhD revealed for each of us, some important influences on our individual practice.

I think for me, probably, when I think back on the reasons I ended up being a landscape architect, I used to go fishing as a kid when I was 8, 9, 10 years old. I had a brother who's ten years older than me and he used to take me down to fish in the ocean south of Adelaide and we'd both walk down to the beach at dusk, then along the beach for 4 or 5 kilometres, then he'd set me up, and then he would walk, once it got dark, down the other end of the beach and fish and leave me for four or five hours, in the middle of the night, on the beach, and there'd likely be no one else around, basically with a little fire, and I'd be fishing.

When I think back on it, after I did architecture I felt there was something missing. I felt that I needed, after I finished architecture, a much greater connection with the site that I was going to work with. When I reflected back on that I think it really comes from being very young, literally just being on the beach with the Southern Ocean rolling in, and a really elemental sense of connection with a place.

I think when I finished architecture, there was a gaping hole for me. It's not to say that I couldn't have filled that hole with architecture, but I really gravitated towards a way of designing that really worked much more holistically or wholeheartedly with site. I'd always been interested, while I was studying architecture, in ecology, in social community issues, and they've really been important to me in flowing through to the sorts of projects I've worked on in the practice, and how I've practised.

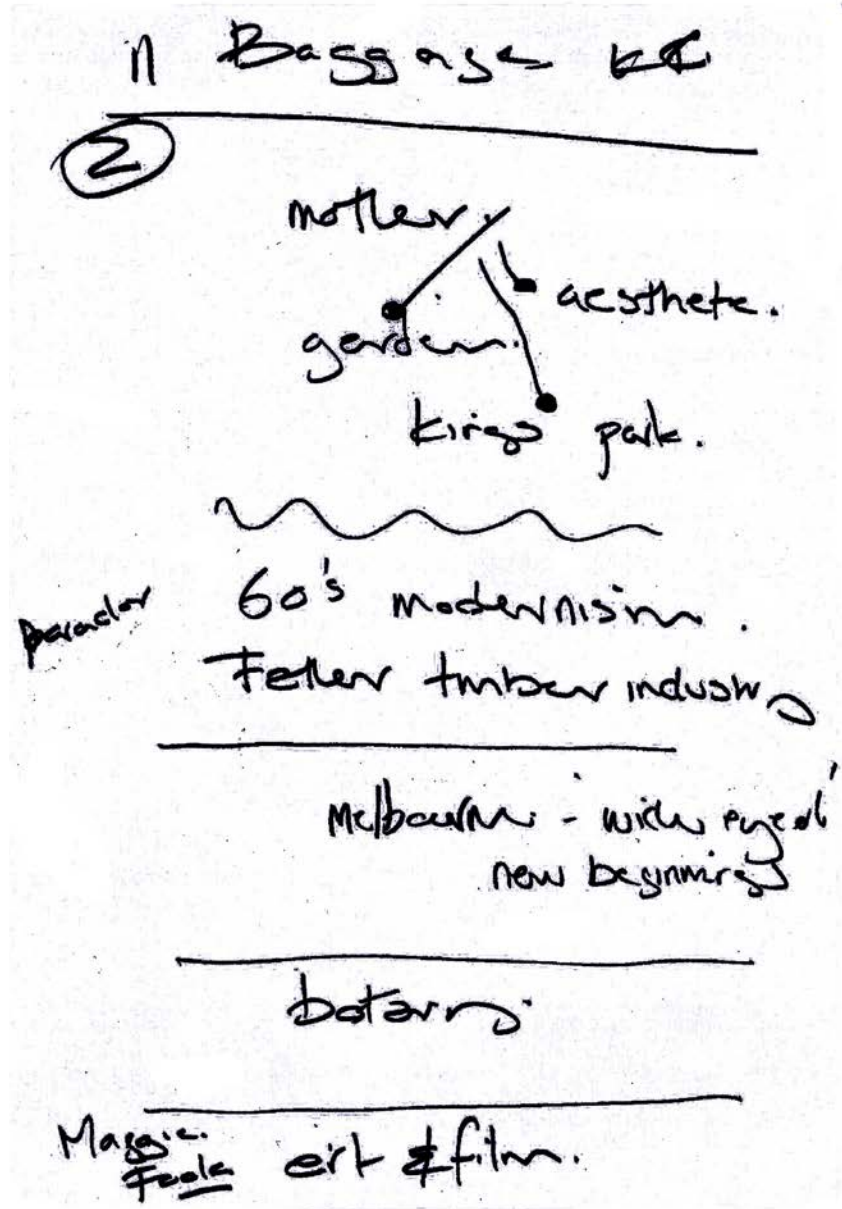
Kevin Taylor June 2010

Both Perry and I have mothers as an influence, and my mother is a really keen gardener. She studied botany at university, actually we shared some of the same lecturers. They were getting a bit crusty by the time I studied there. She had an incredible love for arranging flowers. Anybody who knows me knows that I love flower arranging and assemblage.

Another really important part that resonated with me is West Australian landscapes and particularly Kings Park in Perth, which was a seminal landscape for me as a child. Also the light, the light there is unlike anywhere else. Also, my father was in timber manufacturing, I was often constructing model houses. They seemed terribly modern to me, being a child of the sixties, out of timbers, and that seemed to make me want to move on and be a designer. We spent a lot of time designing cubbies.

The University of Western Australia is also a place that was really important to me. The first few years I didn't study very much, but I always loved the campus and I realise in hindsight what a power it had. By the seventies, when I was a student there, it had already reached master plan stage. The design had already pulled back the cars from the campus and it had a great conversation with the Swan River adjacent to it. It had a number of (and still does) very fabulous places with exotic names like the sunken garden. I realised how the open spaces that were in the campus really allowed for reverie and relaxation by the students.

Another really important part of my baggage was moving to Melbourne. It was like coming home. Finding an artistic life in Melbourne.



Above: Kate Cullity's notations on her personal back stories. This quick exercise as part of the PhD revealed for each of us, some important influences on our individual practice.

12 Baggas. R

(2)

Nature

Competition.

Japan

Gardens - "

Brian Stafford.
+ Royal Park

There are two principal influences in my upbringing. One, I grew up in LaTrobe Valley, a son of an engineer who worked in these huge bush, open-cut mines. Most people would perceive this massive excavation as a really ugly landscape. I actually found a sublime beauty in the topography of the open cut. The repetitive terrace curved within a black hole is extremely visually powerful. It only resonated with me. More recently, when we started the National Arboretum in Canberra, I played a part in designing the large sculpted engineered landscape of repetitive grass terraces that look remarkably similar to the landscapes of my upbringing.

Secondly, my mother was a painter and artist. She went up into the bush every weekend and stole tree ferns out of the Strzelecki Ranges. Dug them up, put them on the trailer, took them home, and put them in the backyard. Every weekend I experienced the bush for raiding, and I called them tree fern raids. Totally illegal, but can't deny it. These forays into the bush inspired my love of the Australian landscape.

Perry Lethlean June 2010

Above: Perry Lethlean's notations on his personal back stories. This quick exercise as part of the PhD revealed for each of us, some important influences on our individual practice.

1.5 Influence of Royal Park

The Shared Influence of the Royal Park Design Competition

It is apparent that we are all different designers with contrasting backgrounds, styles and influences. This contrast of skills and interests is our strength. We can each do our own thing. Each individual's contribution is sufficiently distinct, valued, productive and respected.

Yet this doesn't explain why we are able to work in a very complementary way and have a shared approach to design, with a common set of design themes that are evident in our collective work. These shared views relate to our interest in designing in response to the Australian landscape, as a creative act. Kate, Perry and I were studying landscape architecture in the early 1980s. At this time the profession was highly influenced by the 'bush school', which often advocated designing parks and gardens using indigenous flora that might have once been on site. Foreshore park projects by Bruce Mackenzie in Sydney are successful examples of this approach. We shared a view that, by contrast, didn't want to literally recreate indigenous landscape, but design in response to the many facets of a site, its culture, histories and communities.

Through the PhD process we uncovered a shared appreciation for the winning competition entry for the Royal Park Redevelopment in Melbourne, by Laceworks Landscape Collaborative.

We realised that this entry was very formative in our individual development as landscape architects and, we speculated, could be the uniting element in our background and possibly a reason for a shared view on design.

Ron Jones and Brain Stafford taught at RMIT in the early 1980s, they taught both Perry and I in undergraduate years. They established Laceworks Landscape Collaborative while teaching and entered and won the national design competition, conducted by The City of Melbourne, for the redevelopment of Royal Park. We all believe it was a turning point in the profession of landscape architecture in Australia.

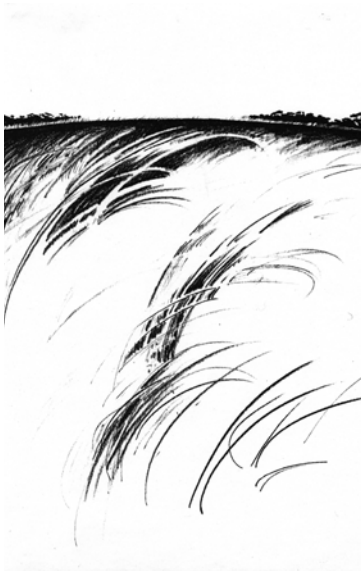
Up until this time, one could crudely summarise landscape architecture in Australia as being in two main camps: one, a North American influenced Postmodern tradition of design evidence by the work of TRACT in Melbourne, whose Directors were educated in North American Universities; or two, as stated previously, a bush school of landscape architecture that attempted to recreate the beauty of the Australian landscape.

This was the first project that we had become aware of that was not only inspired by the site and the broader idea of the Australian landscape but which poetically distilled its essential qualities in a very beautiful, evocative way. It didn't rely on an imported language of design, nor did it rely on mimicry of an idealised 'bush'.

Part of the competition success was not only the finely tuned response to the site and the bravado of its minimalism but also the way the ideas were communicated. Spare evocative drawings evoked an intent; they invited the judges and project sponsors to poetically read the design and take away abstract messages. We all remember at the time that many of our peers and colleagues were taken with the beautiful simplicity of their design. In our opinion they had made a major leap from existing Australian landscape architecture design paradigms. It appeared to us that they had just cracked the code of meaningfully responding to our Australian condition in a newly artistic and evocative way. This approach is reflected in the image on page 31, drawn by artist Maggie May, which depicted the fundamental qualities of the design proposal: grass lands, silhouette and horizon. The sparse graphic language evoked the intent without literally describing the outcome.

Both Kevin and Perry subsequently worked for Laceworks Landscape Collaborative on the first stage of the design development of the competition.

Uncovering the shared respect and influence of this project was an interesting find in our collective PhDs. We are still impressed by its power of abstraction, the introduction of the poetic, and of its strong story which underpins the design process for this project.



Top: Detail image from competition panel 3, 1984.

Right: Original competition panel 1 from the 1984 competition by Laceworks Landscape Collaborative (Brian Stafford & Ron Jones).

ROYAL PARK Context

A landscape analogy

Royal Park expresses the essential qualities of the regional landscape which conditioned the nineteenth century European settlers of the area. It was a large, uncut plain, where the stroke of the earth and sky pressed upon the view, and the horizon extended out to distant, unseen mountains. The park is a remnant of and analogy for that original landscape. It is a place where the earth meets the dome of the sky across uncut and the horizon becomes.

Royal Park was also the starting point for an early and intensive journey beyond the horizon. It therefore symbolises that and all subsequent attempts to know and come to terms with Australian landscapes.

City and park

The city is experienced as contained, linear spaces defined by buildings along parallel and intersecting streets. Views are generally contained within the city, to the street and middle distances.

In contrast, the park is experienced as an uncutting plane with an immediately apparent expansiveness and direct views beyond the park itself, allowing release from the containment of the city.

A landscape remnant

Royal Park is historically significant simply by virtue of its existence despite one hundred and fifty years of urbanisation.

Since the initial delineation of the boundaries which separated it from the greater landscape, Royal Park has been reduced and impinged by the reduction of land for non-park uses and dissection by transport routes servicing the metropolis.

Metropolitan park system

Although Royal Park is very close to the city centre, it is distant from the inner city public gardens to city uses and landscape character.

The river acts to partition along the river and Maitland/Murray river valleys, which provide large areas for active and passive recreation, connecting both local neighbourhoods and larger regions. An east-west linking of the three pastoral areas on the divided ribbon through line, under parks on roads, and the redeveloped Farrington structures, will provide continuous pedestrian and bike paths across the northern suburbs, between Melbourne's best major rivers.

Thus, an integrated park system will be realised for the first time, with the capacity for extension up and downstream along both the Maitland/Murray and Yarra river valleys.

The Royal Park Competition was an influential project, for each of us. It illustrated a way of designing in response to the Australian landscape that had not been attempted before. Instead of attempting to re-establish or recreate an ecologically correct, version of what might once have been there on the site,¹ this competition demonstrated how landscapes can be artistically interpreted.² This, it appeared, opened up many possibilities to creatively respond to our indigenous landscape, allowing experiences and qualities of landscapes to be heightened, exaggerated or distilled.

These observations were important in the genesis of our own first big project, The Australian Garden, Cranbourne Victoria, see project sheet on page 052.

The Australian Garden, a 25 hectare botanic garden, is one of our most important projects. It began as a master planning commission some 18 years ago. Its first stage was implemented in 1998 and the second and final stage was completed in 2012. It is the first project where all three Directors worked on the design together. Perry had just joined the practice when we were engaged for the master plan in 1995.

Ron Jones, co-author of the Royal Park Competition entry, described how we have a precious ability to disagree productively.³ This project demonstrated that ability. It combined my love and experience of the Australian landscape, my skills regarding a journey as narrative, and an understanding of how people might move through space. It also combined Kate's interest in integrated art, the love of materiality, colours, textures and collaboration with various creative disciplines including horticulture. It also utilised Perry's predilection for bold moves and patterns, and his Japanese garden experiences.

Interestingly we had just come together as a practice of three, we didn't know each other well. Kate and I obviously knew each other, but we didn't know Perry. Despite our varied interests and differences we designed as if we were on the same page, we were jelling as a design team and that, in retrospect, is amazing for a team that had only been together for one month.

The project brief asked us to explore ways visitors could experience the beauty and diversity of Australian flora. It asked us to be bold and convey the broader definition of the nature of Australia.⁴

As the brief was open to interpretation it allowed us to imagine designing with Australian plants in a new way, and creating a possible new type of Australian botanic garden, one not based on the scientific arrangement of plants but one based on experiences. Although we were not conscious of it at the time, the Royal Park 'breakthrough' was critical. It allowed us to be reassured that we were first and foremost a design discipline located in a most beautiful and challenging continent.

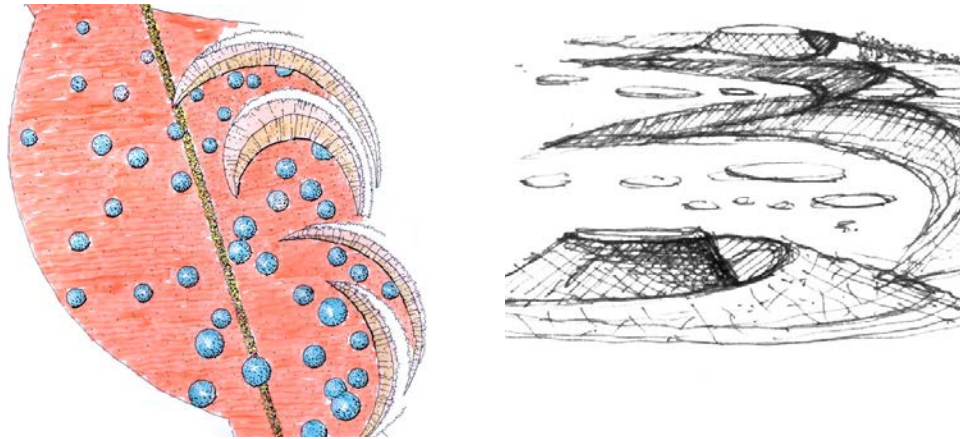
The Australian Garden was the first project we explored together and like Royal Park involved the idea of distilling landscapes. Instead of recreating landscapes in a scientific manner we wanted to excite visitors about the potential of using indigenous plants by hosting them in memorable and visually striking experiences. Visitors were taken metaphorically on a journey of water through the Australian landscape, from gardens that expressed the aridity of the red centre, to rockpool waterways and escarpments, languid river bends and more urbanised fertile expressions. In the design of each of these experiences we were consciously interpreting these landscape typologies in an artistic manner, abstracting their moods, evoking essential qualities and attempting to capture their quintessential character.

¹ Bruce McKenzie from Sydney is a renowned exponent of the 'bush school.' He designed many significant Sydney foreshore parks, utilising indigenous flora in a manner that looked as if the park had always been there.

² Contemporary Landscape Architecture discourse at this time advocated a more functional, ecological and scientifically based rationale for project designs. The work of Ian McHarg is an example of this approach. A more 'artistic' and 'poetic' approach might be seen as a design method that allows more subjective and abstract interpretations of site and for concepts to be explored.

³ Ronald Jones, *Truth is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art*, (paper written as a peer review for PhD, Melbourne 11 February 2011)

⁴ Australia Garden project brief prepared by Royal Botanic Gardens, 1994.



Right: The Sand Garden is the first view visitors see upon entering the Australian Garden. It is purposefully large, visually striking and challenges stereotypes regarding what a Botanic Garden in Australia should look like. The garden is a stylised representation of the desert, not a literal reproduction, and attempts to evoke ideas of vast scale, horizon, striking colours and repetitive planting forms.



The project is important to each of us as designers and to the practice. It resonates because it also influenced a host of our subsequent work. It was the project that fully developed for us the creative opportunities in interpreting the Australian landscape in a myriad of ways. It also developed a strong narrative as a conceptual underpinning of the project and integrated a rich array of material expressions to reinforce an experience of place while also integrating important public art commissions.

Each of these notions were subsequently developed and utilised in a whole range of projects, and they are explored in the next chapter as important design threads of our practice.

2.0

Threads of Investigation

2.1 Project Types Across Two Studios

2.2 TCL and Our Peers

2.3 Sticky Projects

2.4 Seminal Projects

Box Hill Community Arts Centre

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Australian Garden

Geelong Waterfront

Flinders Rangers National Park

Forest Gallery

North Terrace

Craigieburn Bypass

2.5 Seminal and Poles

2.6 Emerging Threads

Narrative

Material Presence

Civic

Site

2.1 Project Types Across Two Studios

One of the first exercises of this PhD was to understand the types of work we undertook and to test whether there was any underlying typological pattern or structure to our design practice.

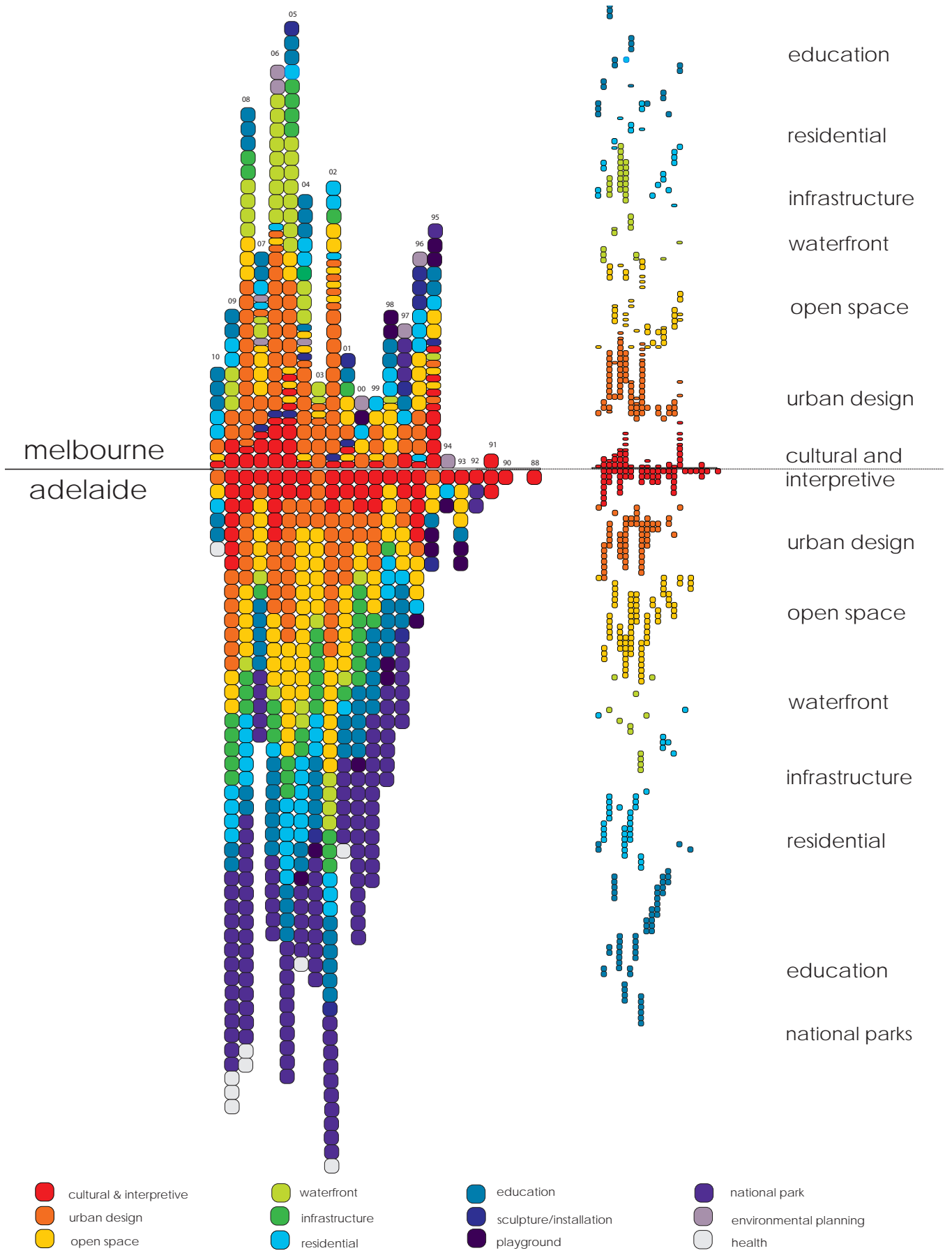
Our combined practice has, over some twenty years, designed over 1000 projects and constructed near to 300. These projects represent a great diversity of project scales, clients, challenges, budgets and typologies. This breadth and diversity has resulted in diverse design expressions that have also shifted and developed over many years, coupled with the distinct hand of each of the design directors on any particular project. The practice does not aspire to have a distinctive design brand. Although it could be argued that many projects exhibit the TCL moniker, this is more a reflection of the constant presence and design hand of the three directors rather than a conscious idea of how projects should look.

In addition, the distinct difference of scales and types of works between the Adelaide and the Melbourne studios has resulted in a reading of difference across the studios. The diagram (right) maps our combined practice and illustrates some of the difference between the studios.

The diagram is split into two halves, Melbourne on the top and Adelaide on the bottom. It is also arranged as a timeline, starting from our practices' early formation to the present day. Finally it illustrates the number of projects the studios were commissioned for in any given year and the project type, with each colour representing the type of work, the cultural intent of the work, whether it is open space, waterfront work, infrastructure, education etc.

A number of things are apparent. Firstly, the Adelaide studio has often had to eke out a living on a diet of smaller projects, with very modest budgets. This is illustrated via the many more projects the studio has undertaken than the Melbourne studio. Many of the projects in Adelaide are also coloured differently than Melbourne, reflecting more open space and national park based projects. This is linked also in part to the interest and expertise of Kevin and Kate, based in Adelaide, in designing within the natural environment. The Melbourne studio by contrast has undertaken fewer projects, with larger budgets and with more of an urban design and waterfront emphasis. Similarly this emphasis in project types is linked to Perry, director of the Melbourne Studio having also trained in urban design.

Mapping the projects was a useful process to glean the differences between studios although it didn't uncover any underlying design themes that united this broad body of work.



Above: Typologies Diagram

The mapping of project types across studios illustrated the breadth of our practice, but did not reveal dominant practice patterns. By contrast to this practice-centric review we undertook an exercise to understand how our practice might be situated in comparison to our national and international peers. This was attempted via a tri-polar analysis¹, shown in the diagram² (refer opposite diagram).

The diagram is composed of three polar 'approaches' to landscape architecture.

Poetic: this might be characterised by the work of Martha Schwartz and the early work of Peter Walker, where landscape architecture as an artistic practice such as pattern making, graphic and compositional emphasis takes precedence over other concerns.

Functional: this describes projects that are driven by meeting programmatic and functional requirements. The work of Karres en Brands or more locally, TRACT, might be characterised by this pole.

Technical: this describes projects that have been informed via a strong community engagement process, a political/social activist agenda or an environmental systems based approach. Some of the work of Jahn Gehl, Yves Brunier or Field Operations might be characterised by this pole.

For comparative purposes we located a variety of practices and TCL within this tri-polar diagram based on their broad body of work. It revealed that a lot of our peers were not situated at extreme ends of the spectrums but were more centrally located, with a modest emphasis towards each of the poles. For example Field Operations a notable landscape urbanism practice, have been at the forefront of advocating how urban projects could be informed directly by landscape systems and ecological processes.³ This approach is not however fully realised across many of their projects. The Highline Project in New York for example, although using a diverse array of native flora, is a relatively conventional, although beautifully executed, landscape architecture project that will require a level of horticultural maintenance commensurate with other civic public spaces. The landscape urbanism intentions are not able to be fully realised in projects of this type, and were therefore located this practice more centrally in our tri-polar diagram. The example of Field Operations also reflects the broad body of projects and typologies landscape architects often undertake that require shifting emphasis on design concerns.

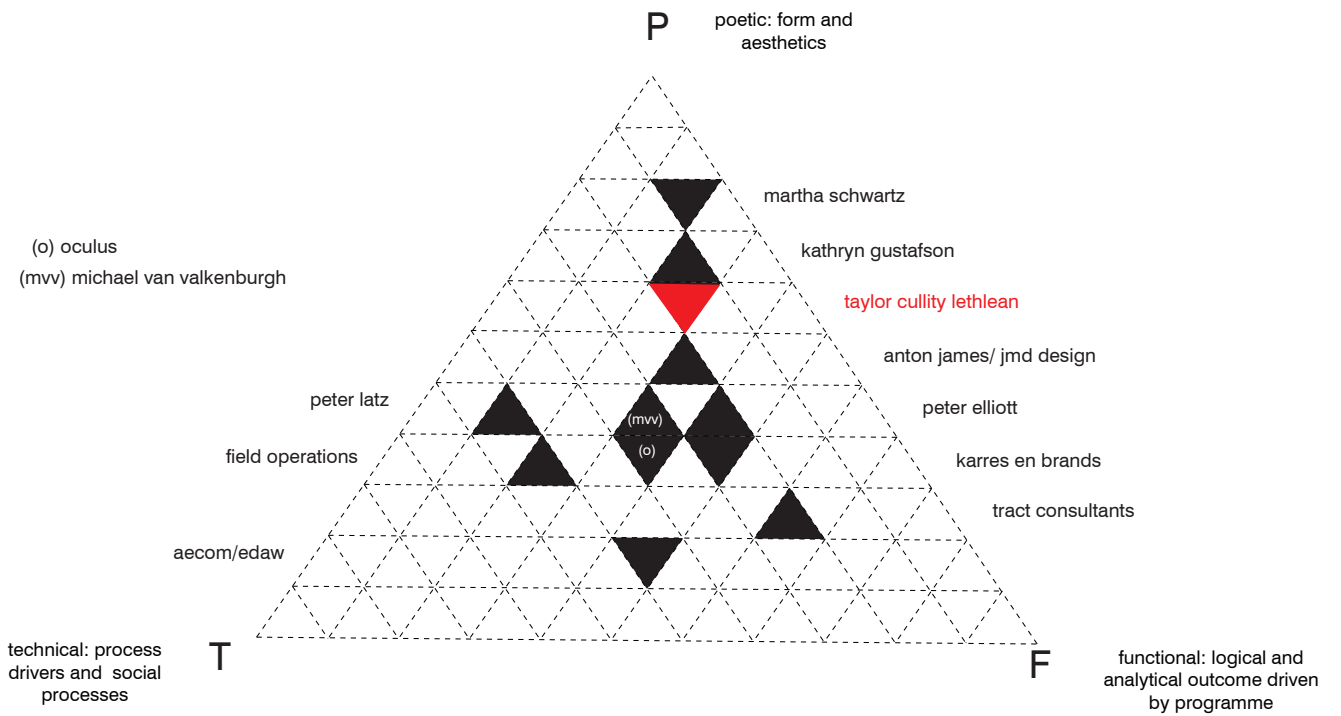
TCL were located at the poetic end of the diagram in company with Kathryn Gustafson and Anton James from JMD. This reflects an ongoing interest in landscape architecture as a creative discipline rather than focussing on an approach that privileged a functional approach or social activist agenda. Both Gustafson and James undertake similarly scaled projects to ourselves and although the projects appear distinctly different to ours, we speculated that a similar design approach might have informed their work. This analysis revealed the necessary dexterity required of landscape architectural practices to undertake a variety of project typologies, however it didn't uncover any latent patterns of our practice through a comparison with our peers.

¹ Collins, Randall, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Thoery of Intellectual Change*, Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998.

² van Schaik, Leon, *Spatial Intelligence: New Futures for Architecture*, John Willey & Sons Ltd, 2008.

³ Waldheim, Charles. *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2006.

Selected Landscape Architects and TCL



Following from our typological analysis and review of our practice through a tri-polar analysis with our peers, our next challenge was to uncover the underlying approaches to design that were apparent in this diverse body of practice. What brought the three directors together, what were our shared passions or differences and what projects resonated with each of us?

We asked; could projects that resonated, with all three of us, be a useful filter to examine a shared approach or interest? Via a series of workshops at the Melbourne and Adelaide TCL Studios, we tried to filter some 1000 projects down to a more manageable size. The shortlisted projects we identified as those that challenged us, were rewarding in terms of expanding our knowledge, our skills and our relationships and were also successfully realised. We called these projects our 'Sticky' projects.

The workshops were informal yet revelatory. We first asked what are the projects that resonate most to each of us? What seemed the most important, and do each of us find the same projects important or were they different? As would be expected, each of us had some projects that were more important than the others and there were some projects that only one person found important. Via a process of discussion, debate and ultimately elimination, we collectively got to twenty-two projects.⁴

What was interesting is that of these twenty-two projects, all but five, occurred in the first ten years of our practice. This was surprising; we had probably believed that our more recent projects, our more recent investigations would resonate more clearly. This tiny discovery warranted further investigation. We examined the twenty-two projects further and found that one of the main common threads was that a lot of the projects were the first time the practice had undertaken that particular project type. For example the Craigieburn Bypass was identified as one of our Sticky projects, primarily because we hadn't done work of that scale or noise amelioration on a freeway before. It was a project that challenged us completely and brought a lot of new knowledge to the practice and our collective skill sets. This project, comprising major sculptural noise wall elements, forms an entry experience into Melbourne from the north and is further explained on page 076.

We further honed in on eight projects that were the first of their type for the practice (see diagram to the right). Upon reflection not only were these projects challenging they opened our design world to a conversation with a broader community of experts, designers and artists. As we really were starting anew on these projects, we needed to undertake research and collaborate with a lot of practitioners. This process of discovery and conversation was an enjoyable and memorable part of our working lives whether it was with scientists, engineers writers, artists or historians.

The Sticky projects were often very risky high profile and large budget projects. The practice spent considerable time on these projects, far in excess of what the fee allowed. We nearly always lost money, no doubt exacerbated by that fact that some of these Sticky projects were our personal pets.

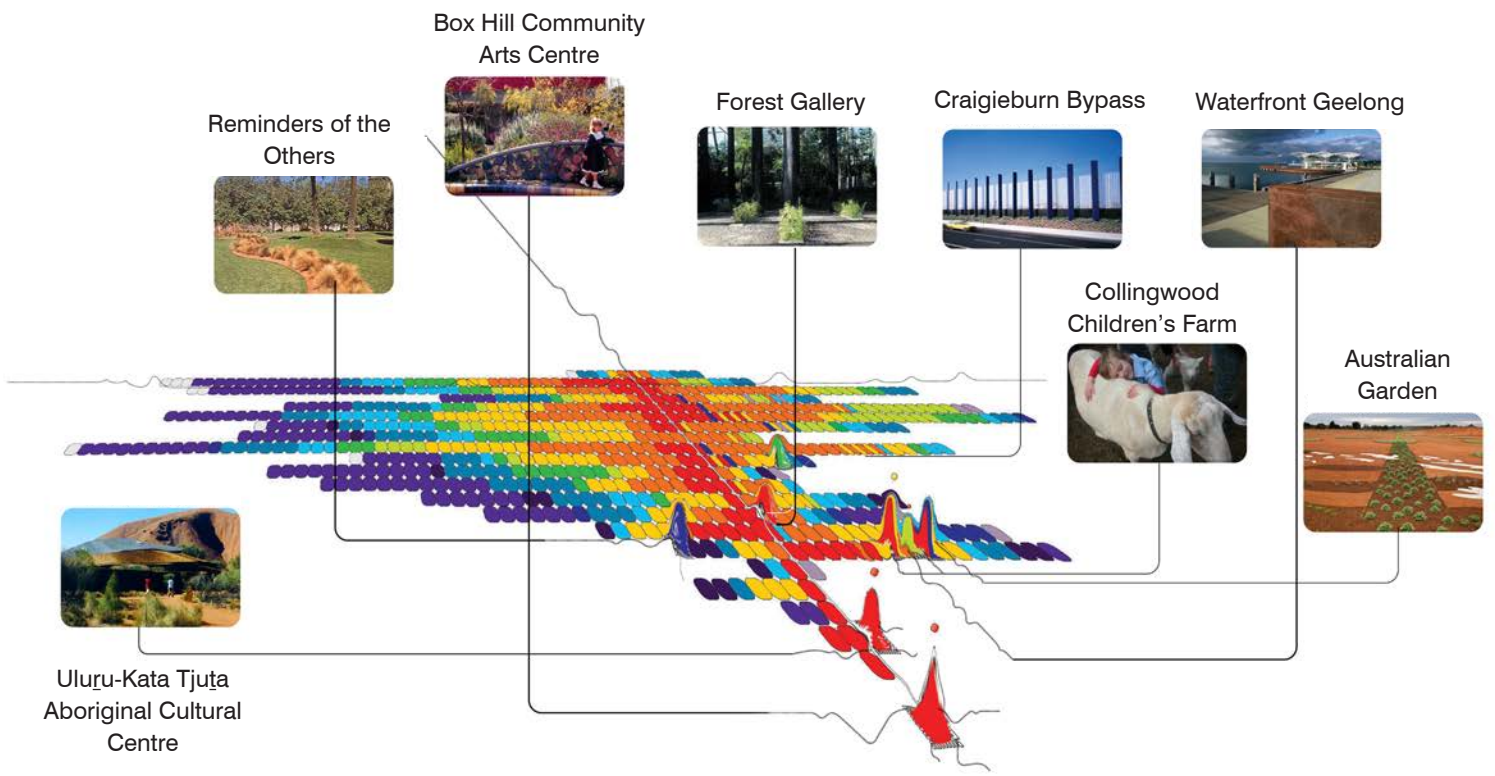
As these were often projects that required us to jump off the deep end, to embark on projects beyond our comfort zone, we had a naïve confidence, we probably thought 'how bad could they be?'. Just because we hadn't done them before didn't mean they should be avoided. The necessary research, conversation and discovery on these projects resonated with us, as it was unlike conventional practice processes.

⁴ Sticky Projects first cut, twenty-two projects including Geelong Waterfront, Australian Garden, Collingwood Children's Farm, Craigieburn Bypass, Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Forest Gallery, Box Hill Community Centre, Auckland Waterfront, Shanghai Expo, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, University of Sydney, Canberra Arboretum, Healesville Sanctuary, Lewis Residence, Quarries Playground, Hemmings Park Playground, Flinders Rangers National Park, North Terrace, Highgate Residence, Victoria Square, Northern Expressway and Reminders of the Other.



Above: Craigieburn Bypass, a Sticky Project, which was the first large infrastructure project TCL had undertaken.

Right: Sticky Projects Diagram illustrates the location of each of these projects in the context of our broader body of work across twenty years.



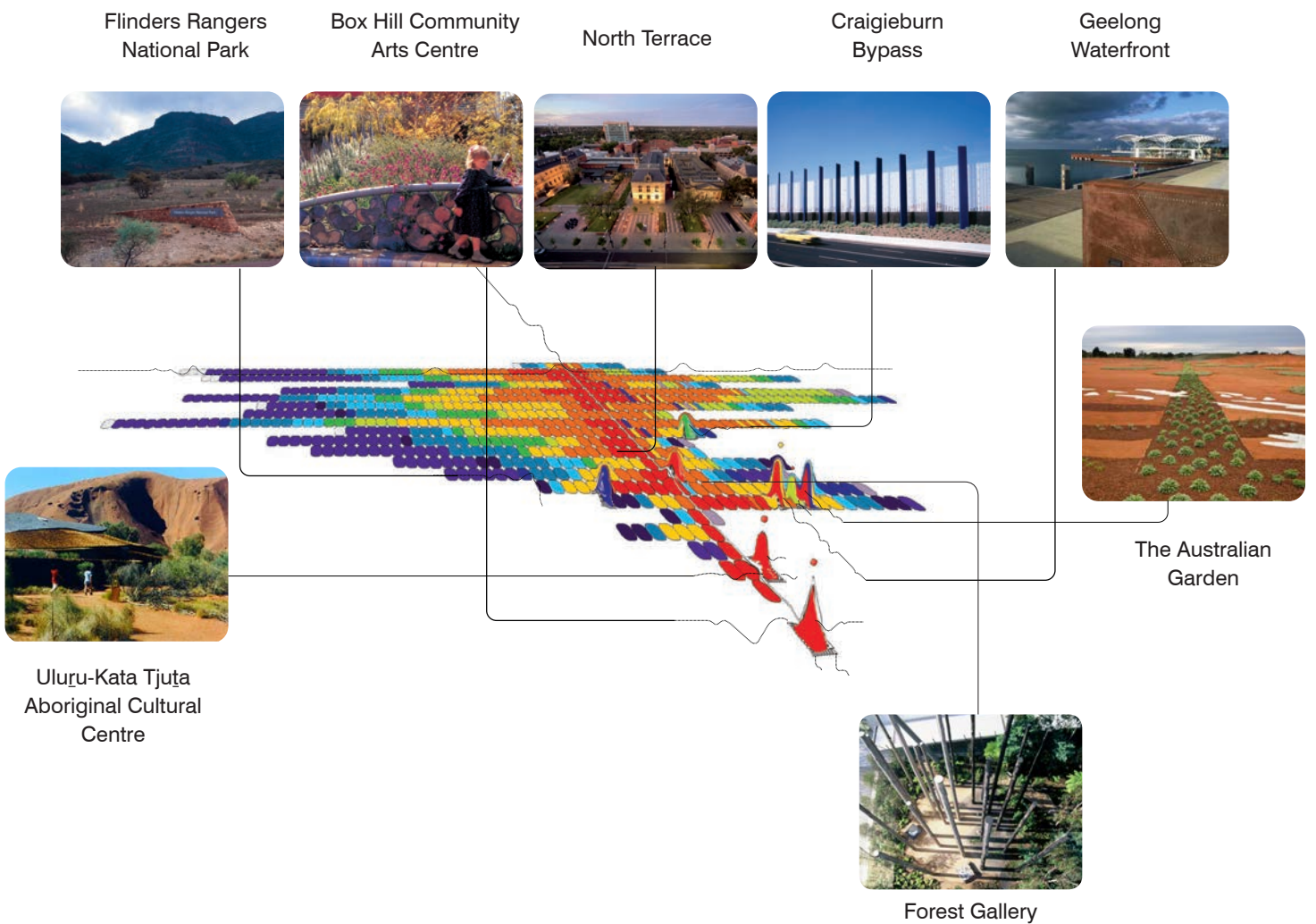
Following an investigation of our 'Sticky projects' we examined our public behaviours⁵, and reflected on our body of work, through a different lens. Rather than looking at the projects that have been influential in our internal practice, we looked at projects that we thought could have been influential within the wider profession and or contributed to the wider dialogue in landscape architecture. These projects were determined via a series of workshops. We examined projects that were notable because they expanded the boundaries of conventional Landscape Architectural practice in Australia, such as Craigieburn Bypass discussed on page 076, or were recognised through the receipt of awards, or were widely published.⁶

These seminal projects are ordered in their sequential order of delivery, and are described through a statement of their significance to the broader profession, their design process and outcome.

The projects are then further explained via common design threads in Chapter 2.6 which through extended captions to images, articulate design threads common to these projects and to our practice.

⁵ van, Schaik Leon. *Spatial Intelligence: New Futures for Architecture*. Chichester, England: Wiley, 2008.

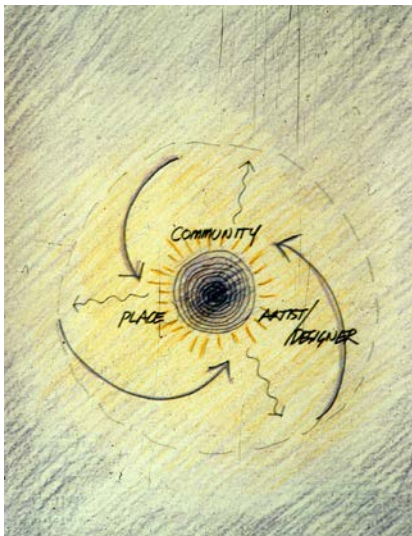
⁶ List of Awards and Publications can be found in the Appendix chapter 6.0.



Above: Seminal Projects Diagram illustrates the location of each of these projects in the context of our broader body of work across twenty years. It reveals that most of these projects were designed in the first 10 to 15 years and reflect that they were often of a first project typologies to be undertaken by a landscape architecture practice.



Left: The building and landscape is expressive of the council's and community's aspiration for a vibrant arts centre.



Left: A consultative Forward Planning Study formed the basis for the Arts Centre Brief.

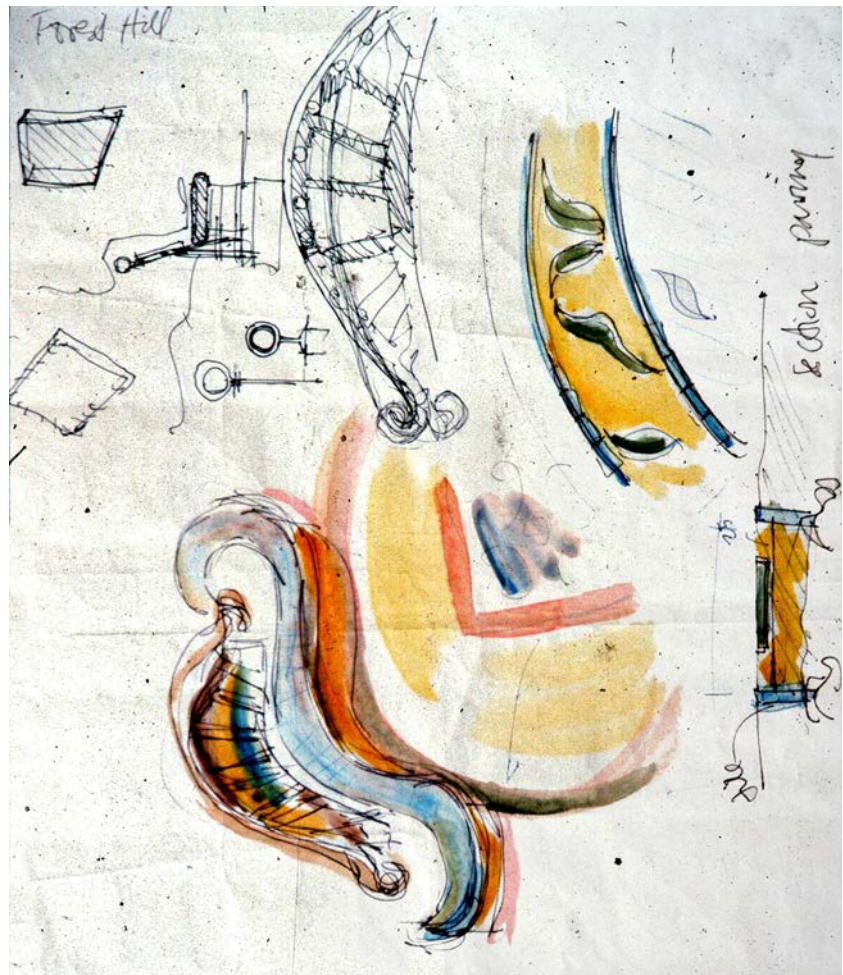
Box Hill Community Arts Centre

Design Response

Taylor and Cullity were employed as project landscape architects to work as part of a collaborative team with Gregory Burgess Architects P.L. and artists, principally the ceramic artist Maggie Fooke. The insights gained through Kevin's earlier work with the community led to our close involvement with the architect and artists throughout the design process from site planning to detailed design and documentation. This close working relationship is reflected in the free-flowing relationship between the inside and outside spaces throughout the centre.

The expression of the building and landscape was influenced by a resurgence in the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Community Arts Movement, as well as the Heidelberg School of Impressionist Painters who had lived in the area in the early 1900s.

Many of the community who had worked with Kevin Taylor in the Forward Planning Study also contributed during the design and development of the project.





Opposite Top: Sketches by ceramic artist Maggie Fooke.

Opposite Bottom: Kate Cullity and members of the Arts Centre and the neighbouring Community Garden using jigsaws to construct a decorative picket fence, a community arts project that brought together members from both sides of the fence.

Right: The ceramic seat and planting demonstrate the collaborative input of the landscape architect the artist, and the metal crafts person.

Design Outcome

The colourful, exuberant and expressive building and landscape are embellished with handmade painted ceramics. The detailing of the centre heralded the crafted, ornamental and hand hewn.

Each internal space opens onto an outdoor courtyard, terrace or garden designed to support the activities of the individuals and groups who use the centre. On the Station Street front entrance, the landscape helps to buffer the street, and a long highly decorative walkway leads to the building entrance from the adjacent car park. This walkway highlights the collaborative nature of the project with landscape architect, architect, ceramic artist and a metal crafts person all contributing to a colourful and patterned space.

The large rear north-facing courtyard is dominated by oversized ceramic lounges that embrace the central court. The arts centre and neighbouring community vegetable garden are separated (or rather,

joined) by a sculptural picket fence designed and constructed by Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity, members of the Box Hill art community and council officers as a celebratory 'finishing off' project. In 1992 further pickets were commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria for an inaugural community arts exhibition.

On completion of the development in 1991, the building immediately became fully occupied by an enthusiastic community.

As landscape architects, Kevin Taylor and Kate Cullity regularly advise on maintenance issues in the landscape, and have formed friendships with many of the regular users of the centre.

The garden has been visited regularly by landscape design conference and seminar groups, as well as students of landscape architecture, horticulture and the visual arts.

The thread of material presence is privileged in this project.

Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa Cultural Centre

25°21'35.23"S 131° 1'2.57"E

Location: Uluru, Northern Territory

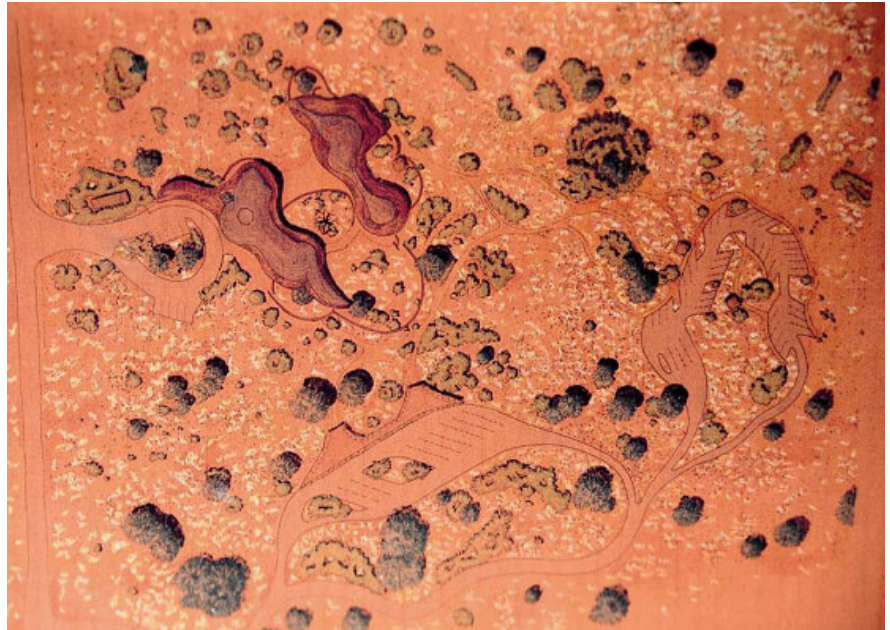
Collaboration: Gregory Burgess Architects, Peter Ytrup Engineers and Sonya Peters Exhibition Designer, Anangu People

Budget: \$4.2 million

Size: 20 acres

Client: Uluru National Park, Northern Territory Australian Nature Conservation Agency

Start - end: 1990-1995



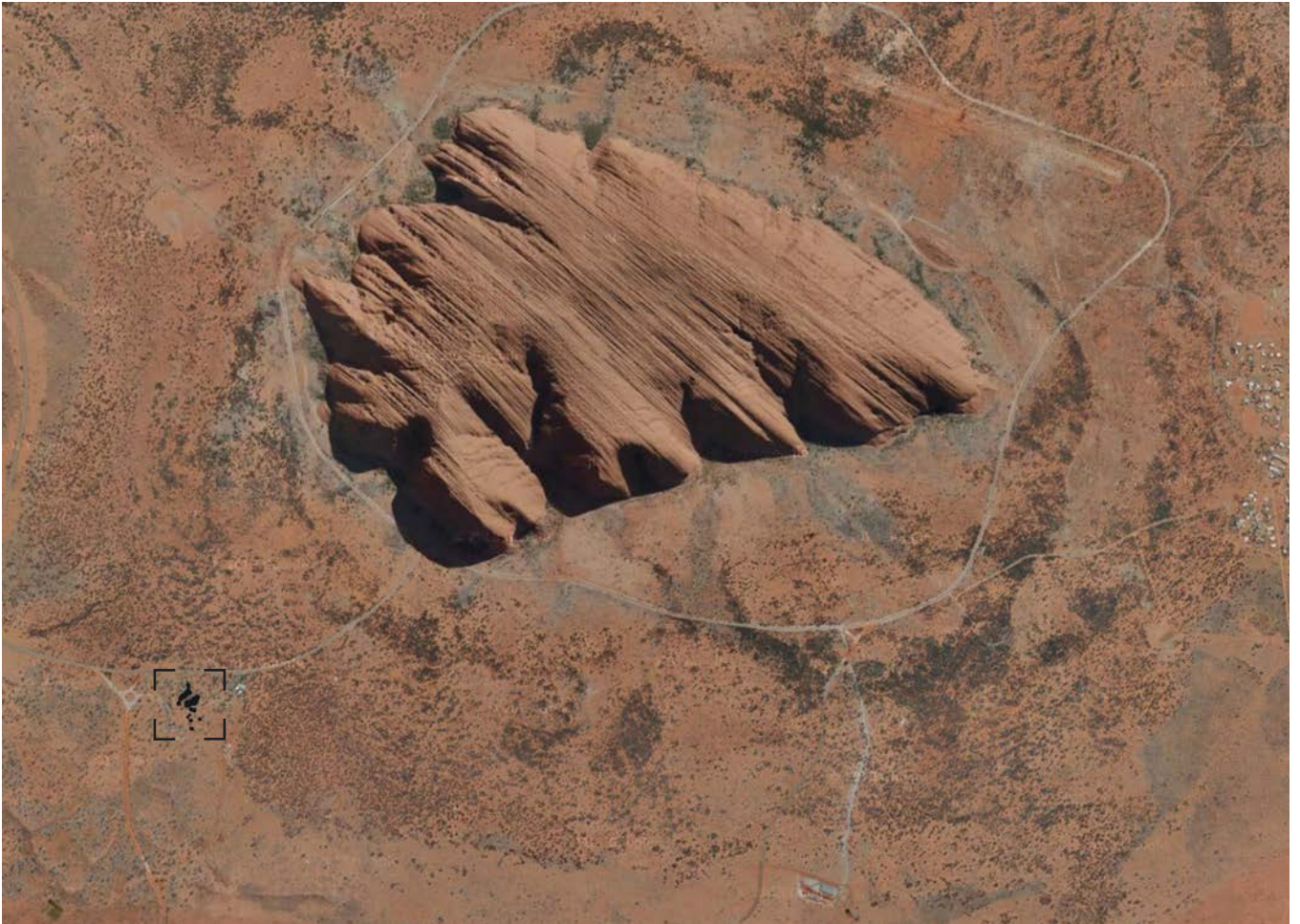
Statement Why Seminal

Located one kilometre from the base of one of Australia's most loved icons, the Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa Aboriginal Cultural Centre is an ongoing testimony to the value of joint indigenous and non-indigenous management. It's intertwining of building with vegetation and desert sand imbues a fluidity symbolic of the give and take of joint management, the inner and outer expression of culture, and the physical experience of landscape by Anangu, the traditional Aboriginal owners.

Brief

The conception of an Anangu controlled cultural centre developed through the recognition that, in the past, visitors to the park were provided with inadequate and deficient cultural information, as well as frustration at the lack of Anangu control over the distribution and accuracy of such information. The Aboriginal Cultural Centre would address these issues through the vehicle of joint Anangu and National Parks management. The objective was to rectify the false perceptions visitors had about this precious landscape including their desire to 'climb the rock' as a primary reason for travelling to Uluru. It was to be a centre where Anangu invited the visitors, in contrast to a tourist destination which tolerated the traditional owner's presence.

Gregory Burgess Architects with Taylor and Cullity and Sonya Peters (cultural designer) were commissioned to write a brief which would elaborate on the requirements for the centre.

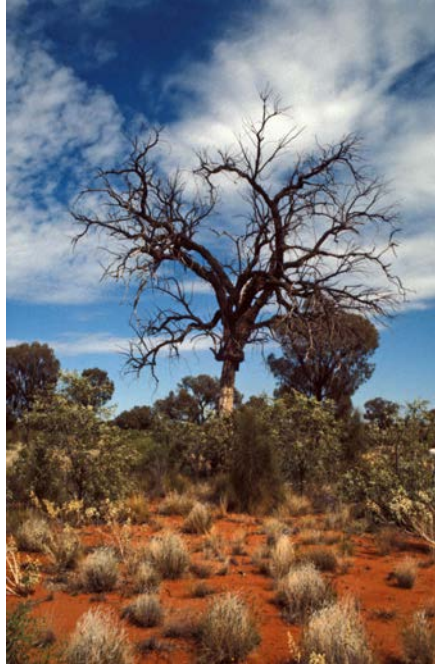


Above: Aerial image of Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre highlighted in black bottom left.

Right: An open door approach to consultation with Anangu.



Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre



Design Response

The design is the result of a close collaboration with architect, Gregory Burgess, and designer, Sonya Peters. The designers worked closely together in an interdisciplinary manner.

Collaboration with joint management, the rangers and Anangu was also a hallmark of the project.

The design team spent approximately one month in the Mutitjulu community at Uluru where a work studio and drop in space were set up; a space which allowed Anangu to

converse with the team and the National Park Rangers at their pace and in their preferred manner. The designers participated in the life of the community including going on hunting trips and attending cultural events. A number of paintings by Anangu artists were commissioned as a way of understanding place, culture and their aspirations for the project.

Above left: Designer and cultural advisor Sonya Peters and Kate Cullity talking to Anangu women on site.

Above Middle: The dead desert oak surrounded by juvenile trees was seen by Anangu as the ideal location for the Cultural Centre, a metaphor for the flourishing of their culture.

Right Top: An Anangu Elder woman depicted clasped hands in a sand drawing to describe her vision of Anangu and the National Parks staff and the design team working together.

Right Bottom: A painting commissioned by an Anangu artist representing her ideas for the Cultural Centre with various rooms around the central dead oak.



Design Outcome

The building by Gregory Burgess Architects sits in the delicate environment both ecologically and politically. TCL designed the roads, car and bus parks, as well as the entry paths and building courtyards. The central theme of these elements were to minimise the impact on the landscape while maximising the visitor's experience of the site's subtle beauty. The car and bus parks were sited well back from the building (100-300 metres) with a series of winding red sand paths encouraging the visitors to walk through the desert.

A landscape 'island' was created around the building in which visitors have a little time to pause as they approach the building, and listen to the mysterious conversations between the red earth, the Desert Oaks and Mulga, the sky, the building, Uluru, themselves and the Anangu who have been part of this place forever.

Above: The car and bus parks are set back 300 metres encouraging visitors to walk through the desert before entering the Cultural Centre.

2.4 Australian Garden

052

38° 7'46.25"S 145°16'10.51"E

Location: Cranbourne, Melbourne

Collaboration: Paul Thompson, Mark Stoner, Edwina Kearney, Greg Clark, Mish Eisen

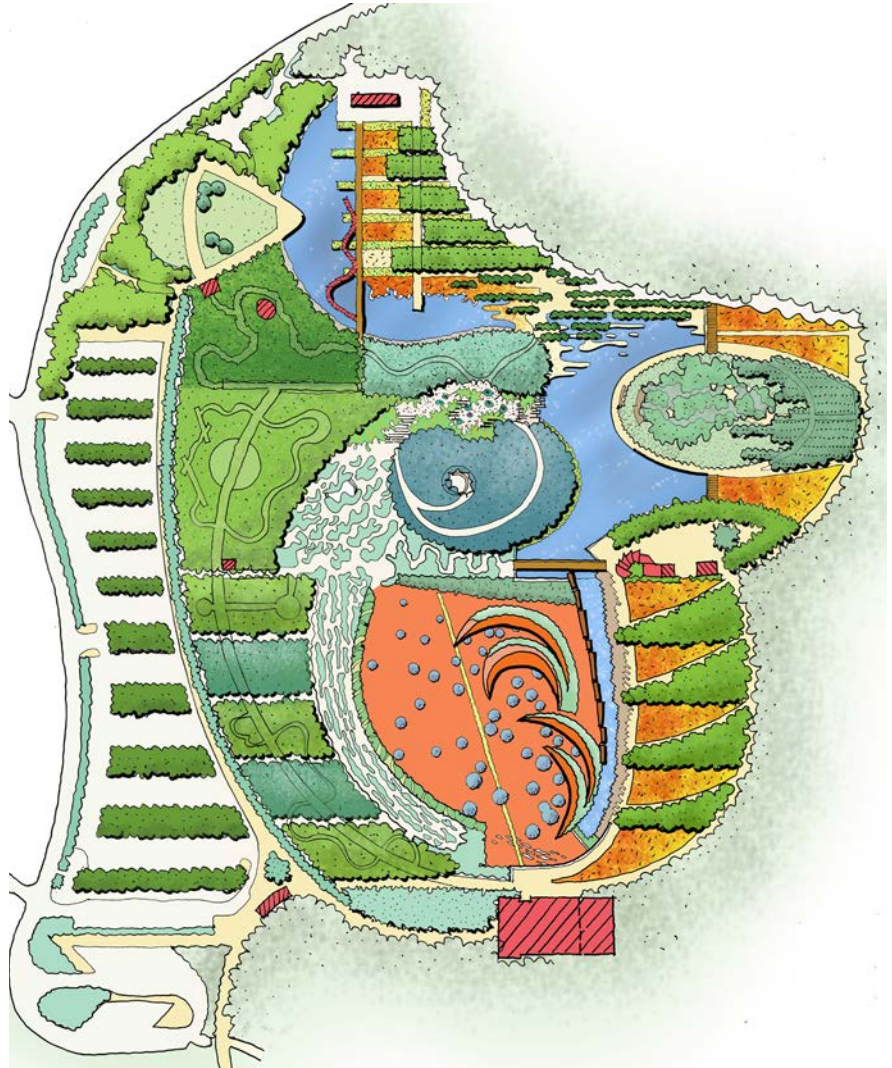
Budget: \$26 million (Stage 1 and 2)

Size: 25 ha

Client: Royal Botanical Gardens

Start - end: Stage 1, 1995 - 2006

Start - end: Stage 2, 2005 - 2012



Statement: Why Seminal

The Australian Garden is TCL's first large, multidisciplinary project, that tested ideas relating to the non-literal representation of the Australian landscape, the integration of art and the use of Australians flora in a variety of expressions. It was also the first time Kevin ,Perry and Kate worked together.

It was notable as a new type of Botanic Garden, one in which the atmospheric quality of the underlying narrative was emphasised rather than the mere display of a myriad of exclusively Australian plants.

Site

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens is an annex to the celebrated Melbourne Botanic Garden. It is located 50 kilometres southeast of Melbourne and comprises 300 hectares of mostly intact indigenous bushland. Located within this relatively untouched landscape setting was a 25 hectare former sand mine, which was stripped of all vegetation and soil. This was designated as a place to display Australian flora from around the continent.

Brief

The client provided the designers with a relatively open yet inspiring brief, wanting this garden to be an exemplar of design and a mechanism to illustrate to the broader public, the diversity, beauty and creative opportunities of the Australian indigenous flora.

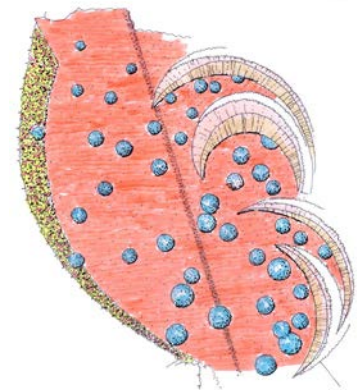
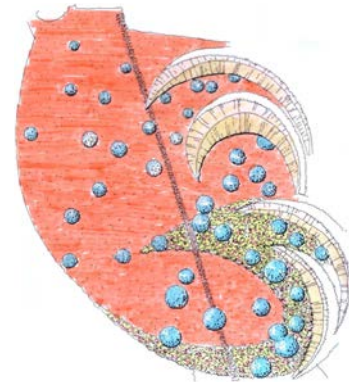
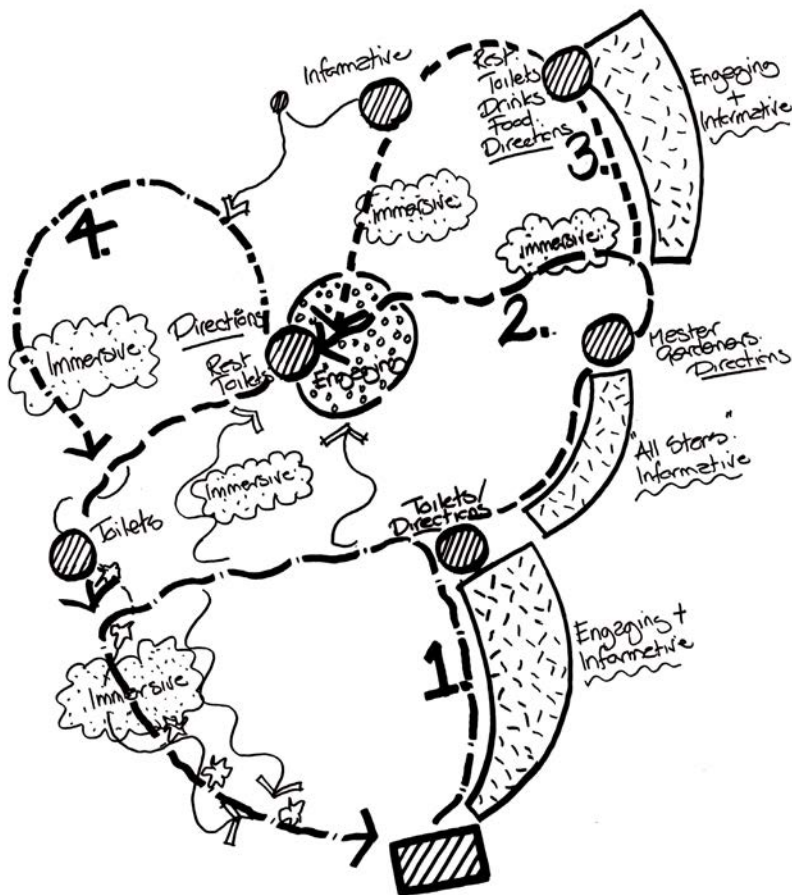
It wasn't to be a traditional botanic garden based on a scientific classification of plants, or a representative arrangement of various genera. Instead it asked the designers to inspire visitors to see and utilise Australian flora in new ways.

Above: Master plan concept drawing. The metaphorical journey of water is the primary ordering device for the garden. A sequence of garden spaces are arranged along this journey which reference a series of iconic Australian Landscape typologies.

Opposite Top: Visitor follow the journey of water through the 25 hectare garden. A series of 'ordering marks' provide a repetitive structure to the garden.

Opposite Bottom: Australia's dry interior has been abstracted into the Sand Garden, the centrepiece of The Australian Garden experience.





Design Response

We were interested in finding a way to structure the garden that was intuitive and experiential and didn't rely on an understanding of the botanical classification of plants, nor rely on a complex wayfinding structure.

In addition we were also interested in how the garden could dispel preconceived notions of what a botanic garden looks like, particularly in Australia, that had until now used English motifs and exotic flora.

As a continent that is understood according to the cycle of drought and flood, we structured the garden via a story of water in the Australian landscape. Visitors are taken on a metaphorical journey of water through the Australian landscape, from the desert to the coastal fringe.

The garden is also arranged to express the love – hate relationship Australian's have with their landscape. It is paradoxically embraced or shunned by its people, loved for its sublime beauty or loathed as the cause of hardship. Artists and writers have often been inspired to create in response to

subtle rhythms, flowing forms and tenacious flora of our landscape. Whilst others have attempted to order the landscape, and conceive of it as humanly designed form.

At the Australian Garden these tensions are the creative genesis of the design, expressing our reverence and sense of awe for the natural landscape, and our innate impulse to change it, to make it into a humanly contrived form, beautiful, yet our own work.



On the east side of the garden, exhibition gardens, display landscapes, research plots and forestry allees illustrate our cultural propensity to frame and order the landscape in more formal manners.

Whilst on the west, visitors are subsumed by gardens that are inspired by natural cycles, immersive landscapes and irregular floristic forms. Water plays a mediating role between these two conditions, taking visitors from rockpool escarpments, meandering river bends, melaleuca spits and coastal edges.

We were conscious that within a small space, the landscapes of Australia could not be recreated; instead we were interested in how we could evoke and distill its essential qualities. This is expressed via a sequence of sculptural and artistic landscape experiences, along the journey of water, that seek to stimulate and educate visitors into the potential use and diversity of Australian flora.

Opposite Left: Early concept drawing for the garden which explored how visitors would orientate their visit via a series of nodal points. The numbers relate to the potential journeys within the garden.

Opposite Right: Sketches for the Sand Garden which tested the arrangement of the repetitive planting 'discs'

Above: The harbour garden on the eastern edge of the Australian Garden is formally arranged and references our propensity to frame and order the landscape.

Australian Garden



Design Outcome

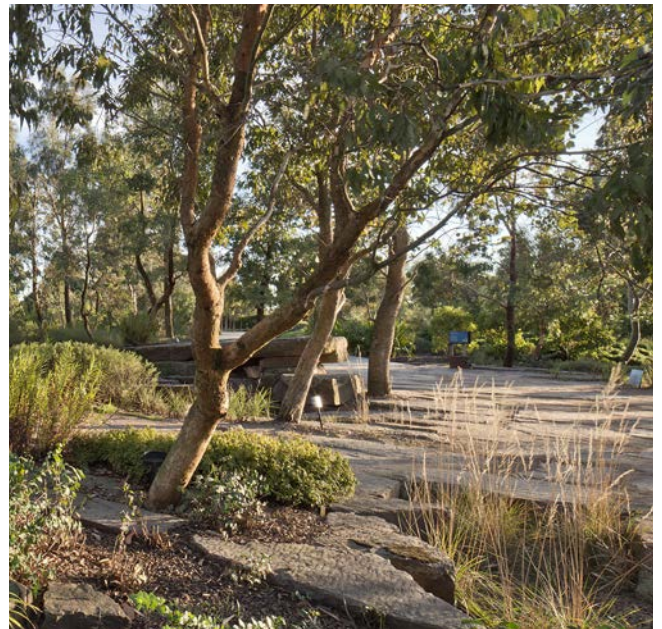
The Garden is structured via the journey of water, which begins as a trickle and culminates in a modest sized lake. Pathways follow this journey taking visitors on a range of garden experiences that evoke certain characteristics of the Australian landscape.

At the entry, a large sand garden evokes the arid centre of our continent, conveying ideas of vastness and repetition via multiple discs of *Rhagodia* sp., red sand, and sculpted landforms.

Visitors are then directed, via the sound of water, to a 'Rockpool Waterway', composed of a 120 metre long constructed waterway, flanked by a sculpted pre rusted 'Escarpment Wall' by Greg Clarke.

The journey of water continues along the east side of the garden to a designed riverbend, coastal edge and more urban landscape expressions. Along the journey, themed gardens display a diverse collection of Australian flora in a range of contexts, culminating in a sequence of gardens that illustrate how our flora can be used in residential and urban contexts.

Visitors typically return on the west side of the garden, where the pathways are meandering, intimate and offer a more immersive landscape experience. The majority of the landscape is dominated by the Eucalypt walk, a long linear collection of woodlands that are grouped to display their distinct qualities such as trunks, aroma, and textures.



Opposite: The Sand Garden is located at The Australian Garden entry point and evokes Australia's dry red centre

Top Left: The journey of water begins with this 'Rockpool Waterway' and 'Escarpment Wall' These highly stylised and abstracted compositions are a consistent design feature of the garden.

Bottom Left: A series of display gardens line the Eastern side of The Australian Garden and provide a resource for visitors to utilise for their own domestic garden condition.

Top Right: The 'Melaleuca Spits' reference Australia's coastal fringe.

Bottom Right: The western edge of the Garden, represented by the Eucalypt walk comprises landscapes that are inspired by the natural flowing and immersive experiences of flora around Australia.

2.4 Geelong Waterfront

38° 8'39.00"S 144°21'47.00"E

Location: Geelong, Victoria

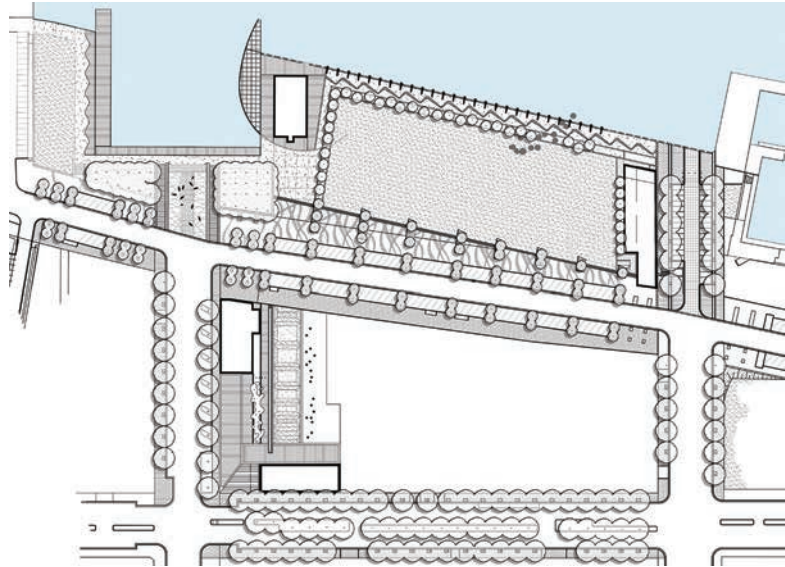
Collaboration: Maggie Fooke and Bill Perrin, Mark Stoner

Budget: \$13 million

Size: 28763.24 m², 7.11 acres

Client: City of Greater Geelong

Start - end: 1995-2001



Statement: Why Seminal

Geelong Waterfront is one of TCL's first forays into landscape architecture on a large urban scale. It broke new ground for the profession up to that time, landscape architects in Victoria, had typically played a minor role to planners and architects on similarly scaled projects. So in that sense

Site

Geelong, like Melbourne, was laid out by the government surveyor, Robert Hoddle, in 1838. It is a conventional grid of orthogonal streets and laneways that are located parallel to Corio Bay. The retail and commercial heart of Geelong was developed away from the waterfront due to its emphasis on industry and harbour functions.

In the 1970s onwards, the industry and harbour functions along Corio Bay moved away from this section of waterfront leaving a series of vacant waterfront holdings that were not connected along their length nor back to the retail heart of the City.

A series of beautification projects in the 1970s saw the removal of the industrial and maritime qualities and brought in a landscape material language of bricks and mock heritage furniture in an attempt to bring people to this neglected and unconnected piece of public land.

Brief

The beautification projects were limited in scope and resources and did little to transform the waterfront or bring people to it.

A grand waterfront plan was designed by TRACT consultants that imagined transforming Geelong's waterfront to a major retail and commercial destination, in the manner of Darling Harbour in Sydney. This was a plan that would have resulted in a significant loss of public space.



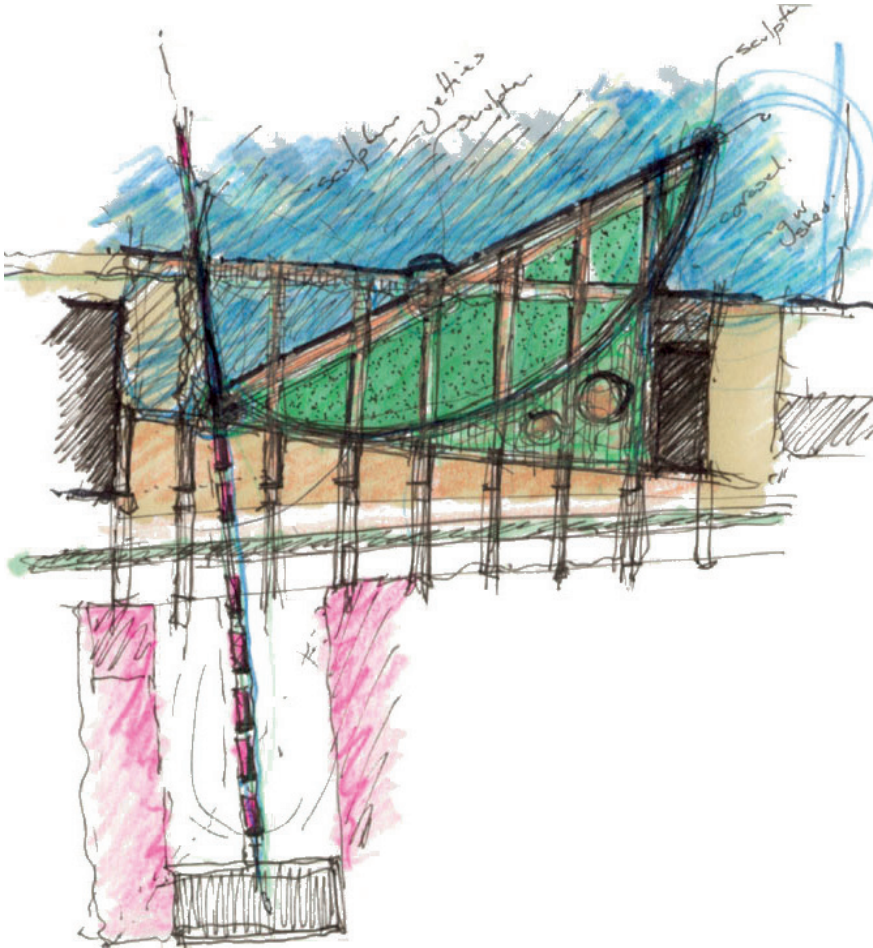
Right Top: Geelong Waterfront circa 1926 illustrating a diversity of maritime and trade activities.

Right: Geelong Waterfront circa 1980, most of the maritime activities have been removed. The waterfront was a liner setting with few public functions and limited links back to Geelong's CBD.



⁶ The waterfront redevelopment focussed on providing publicly focussed improvements to streets, promenade and parks along the waterfront. Adjacent to these public sites were a series of vacant private sites that have since been developed for hotel, restaurant and apartment uses.

Council were concerned about the scale and extent of this grand vision, and asked TCL in 1988 to look at a waterfront transformation that was more publicly focused, that would heighten the sense of water engagement and make strong connections back to the retail heart of the City. It was hoped that this strategy would attract commercial investment to adjacent private land holdings and in combination make a significant public destination.⁸



Design Response

The design of this project was influenced by Perry Lethlean's masters education in urban design at RMIT, particularly the studies he undertook on urban mappings in the manner of Mario Gandelsonas, as well as an interest in conveying the former history of the waterfront that had now been erased. Part of the challenge of the waterfront design was to unite a 2 kilometre stretch of narrow waterfront land as a coherent whole, as well as to stitch it back into the fabric of Hoddle's grid and the City's retail centre.

At a primary level the design extended the street grid of the City to provide seamless connections

between the City and the Bay. These street terminations became focus points of activity, artworks, or node points of water engagement.

Along the length of the waterfront a continuous waterside promenade was envisaged that linked a series of new and existing 'attractions' such as a new harbour, existing cafés, fishing port and heritage baths.

The material language and detail design of elements referenced the maritime past via the use of 'honest' materials such as pre-rusted steel and bush hammered concrete, as well as more metaphorical references in artworks and pocket parks.

Above: Concept sketch for Geelong Waterfront.



Top Left: Customs Plaza is characterised by an undulating lawn surface, referencing the original line of Geelong's Waterfront.

Top Right: A continuous 2 km public promenade is a feature of the waterfront redevelopment.

Bottom Left: Pre-cast concrete fins clip onto an existing sea wall and provide a series of repetitive seating spaces along the promenade.

Bottom Right: Located along Geelong's new waterfront promenade are a series of nodes, such as this harbour which was intended to link Geelong via ferry to Melbourne.

Design Outcome

The project comprises a narrow band of public realm initiatives along the waterfront, including the creation of a small harbour, promenade and a public park in front of the former Customs Building. A feature of the project is the repetitive use of concrete elements along the length of the waterfront as a rhythmic motif.

The project has been embraced by the public and now is a popular setting for daily recreational activities and a host to major events and attractions.

Although it was a large project by TCL standards, and received 13 international and national design awards, in retrospect one can see that the design approach was limited in its breadth. It was largely concerned with the design of public spaces, making physical connections and visually bold and uniting compositions. Activities along the waterfront are largely limited to strolling and alfresco dining; other programmatic opportunities were not fully tested nor was there a strong consideration of public and private architecture development that could complement the overall vision of the setting.

2.4 Flinders Ranges National Park

31°53'51.87"S 139°21'54.51"E

Location: Flinders Ranges, South
Australia

Collaboration: Flightpath Architects

Size: 95,000 ha

Client: Department for Environment
Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs

Start - end: 1996 - 2000

Image removed due to copyright.

Statement: Why Seminal

The project represents the first time any National Park in Australia had conducted a 'whole of park' approach, particularly one where local materials were recommended. It resulted in the Flinders Ranges National Park Visitor Facility and Services Planning Report.

This planning and development document had been instrumental in securing funding for this work. Other National Parks in SA, including Kangaroo Island, Port Lincoln, Deep Creek, Innes and Riverparks, have since undertaken a similar process, placing design squarely in the forefront of the park planning process.

Brief

In 1996 a management plan for the Flinders Ranges Park, produced by the Department for Environment and Heritage, identified that a comprehensive appraisal and redevelopment program to guide the design and implementation of new visitor facilities and services was required.

A fundamental part of this program was the engagement of a planning and design team to assist National Parks and Wildlife of South Australia (NPWSA) staff. TCL were subsequently commissioned to coordinate the preparation of the Flinders Ranges National Park Visitor Facility Development and Services Plan.

NPWSA had identified 64 sites throughout the park where visitors left their vehicles and walked into the landscape. Apart from walking trails and the Wilpena Pound Tourist Precinct, this represented all the primary points of contact and impact in the park.

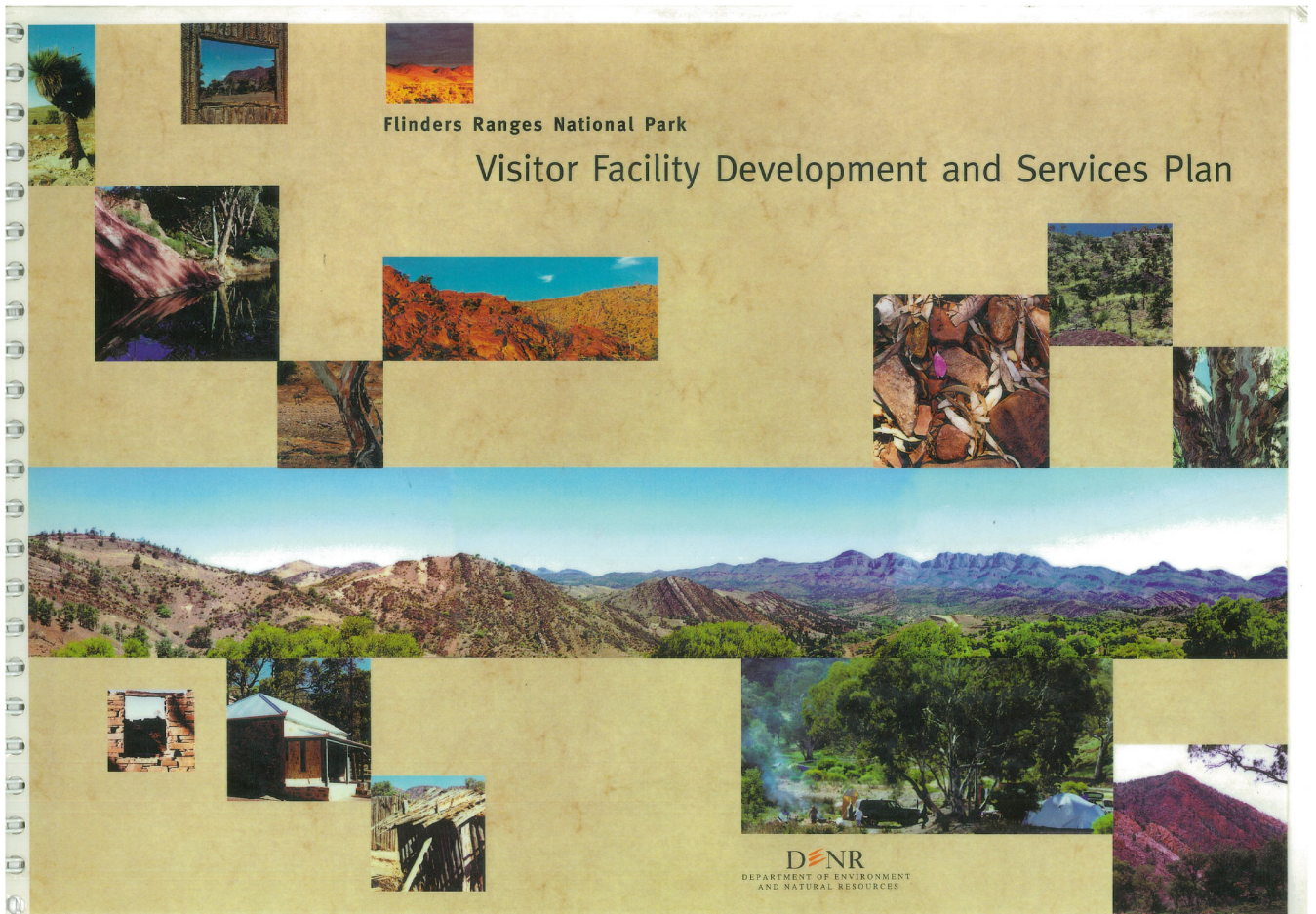
The sites occurred within all landscape types in the park, varying from isolated lookouts to roadside pull overs. All park entrances, whether walking or vehicular, were included, as were all trailheads and campgrounds.

Above: The Flinders Ranges National Park is within the Northern Flinders Ranges and is 450 km north of Adelaide. Wilpena Pound is one of the most dramatic topographical formations within the park.

Opposite Top: The angled ridgelines and steep escarpments of the ranges contrast with the rolling hills and flat plains of the valleys. The strong visual difference between these landscapes has been carefully considered in the design of the park elements.

Opposite: The Flinders Ranges National Park Visitor Facility Development and Services Plan engaged a 'whole of park' approach and included the design of 64 sites throughout the park.

Image removed due to copyright.





Design Process

The information required to address the issues associated with each site resided with the park staff, the landscape and ourselves, the designers. The approach taken was to spend as much time as possible on each site and to regularly meet with the park staff.

Since no surveys existed and each site had to be measured up, we decided to undertake this job ourselves, and to treat it as part of the site familiarisation, analysis and design process. Thus each site was walked with a measuring wheel and tape, mud maps drawn, proportions

and scales guessed and adjusted, until a fair representation of what was there was recorded. Photos were also taken and sketches drawn.

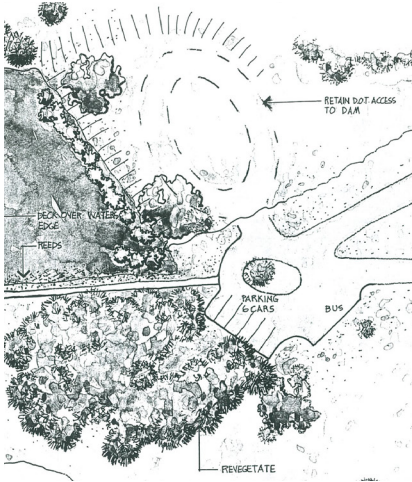
One of our self-imposed disciplines was to stay on each site until we discovered at least the kernel of the solution. Forming a relationship with each place was of primary importance; fortunately the walking and measuring helped this process.

Standing or sitting around was also important. Each site was different, and required a slightly different approach, resulting in a

new conversation which often led in unexpected directions.

Discussions were also conducted with the rangers regarding the existing use of materials and sourcing local alternative materials.

The number of sites to cover demanded several visits, each of three to seven days duration, over a three-month period. We therefore experienced both hot, dry and cold, wet conditions; as well as weeks with few people in the park and long weekends when every campsite, car park and pull over was occupied.



Opposite: As there were no surveys of the sites, measurements were taken on site and 'mud maps' drawn. A rule of not leaving site until at least the kernel of the design was worked out was instigated on each trip to the park.

Above: Simple hand drawn site analysis and plans were drawn for each site. These sketch designs were used during site construction.

Right: Toilets and shelters by Flightpath Architects were carefully sited allowing them to be prominent enough for visitors to recognise and appreciate them without dominating the landscape.



Design Response

Each site required individual attention. However, as the project progressed some rules of thumb or principles emerged which helped guide the design of many sites.

These included:

- While acknowledging the value of the driving experience as a way of appreciating the broader landscape, cars were generally kept to the edge of sites. Visitors were encouraged to walk.
- To protect sensitive soils and vegetation, vehicle and pedestrian barriers were frequently needed. Where possible natural landforms, trees and rock outcrops were utilised to perform this function. Introduced barriers were kept to a minimum.
- Many of the soil types in the parks are highly erodible. Car parks, paths and campgrounds were sited to minimise the concentration of run-off. The views from many sites are breathtaking, however, the siting of roads and paths encouraged

appreciation of a multiplicity of aspects of the sites.

- Facilities such as toilets and shelters needed to be prominent enough to be identified, yet not dominate the scene. Relationship between services and landform and vegetation were equally important.
- The choice of materials for each site was critical. A palette of local gravels, stone, rusted steel, galvanised iron and white cypress pine was established. Even within this limited range, the choice and combination of materials for each site was crucial.
- Many sites required substantial deletion of existing structure, campsites or roads. This process of editing was to become an important component of design; what was left out at times being as important as what was added.

By 2000, in approximately two and a half years since the report was completed, 70% of the proposed work had been implemented.

2.4 Forest Gallery

37°48'10.95"S 144°58'18.39"E

Location: Melbourne

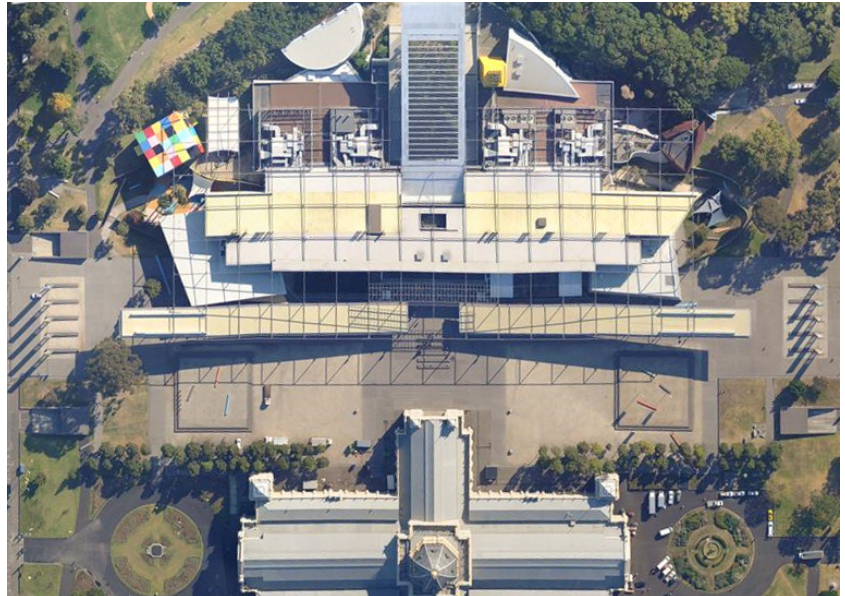
Collaboration: Paul Thompson, Gini Lee, Mark Stoner

Budget: \$3 million

Size: 0.125ha

Client: Museum of Victoria

Start - end: 1996 - 2000



Statement: Why Seminal

The Forest Gallery, located at the Melbourne Museum, interprets the tall timber forests of central Victoria. It was designed to convey to visitors that they were visiting a new type of Museum, one that is concerned with living environments and these are vital to our understanding about the world.

It was notable for its synthesis of a variety of disciplines, including exhibition, graphic, horticulture, sculpture, landscape and for its design integrity based on in-depth research with Museum staff.

Brief

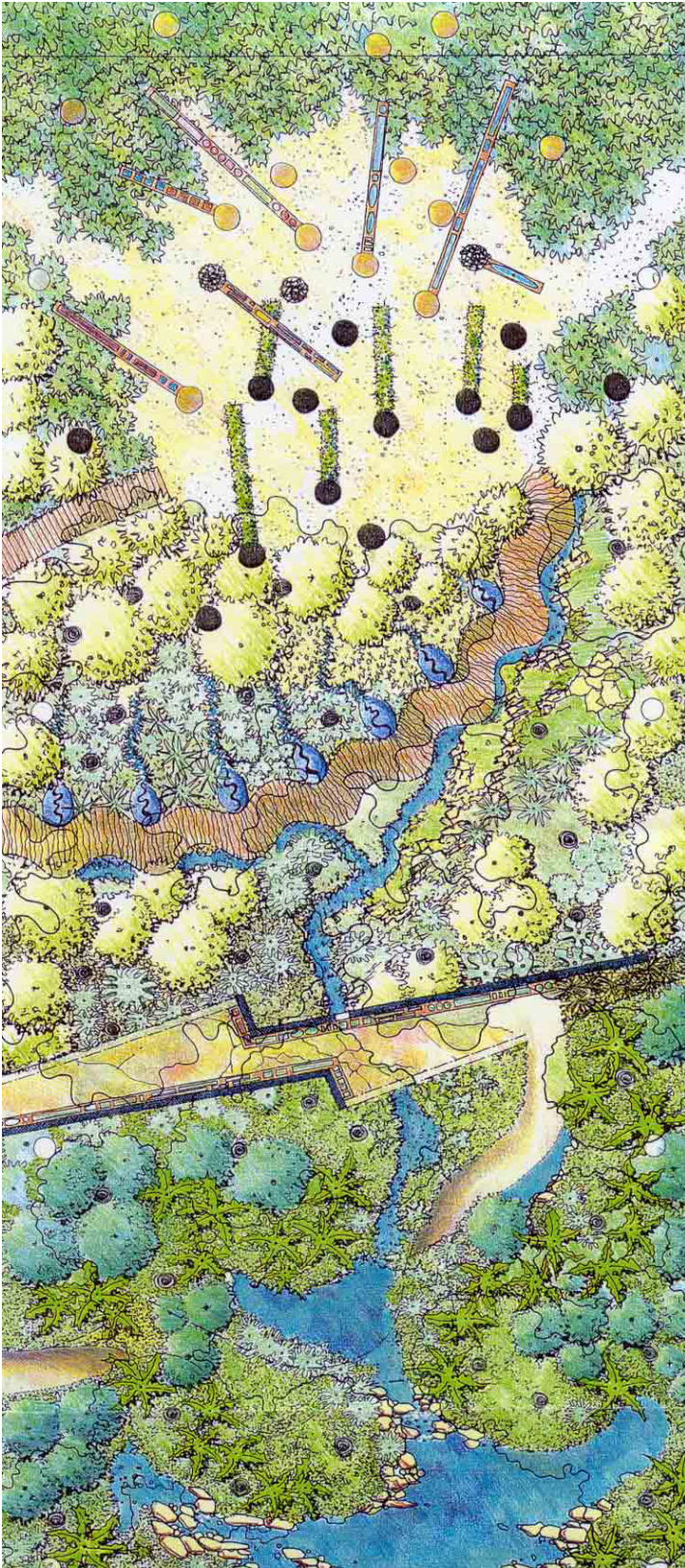
The Melbourne Museum was procured by an international competition, won by Denton Corker Marshall. Part of the competition intent was to provide new opportunities to display the large Museum collection to the public. In addition it was to reimagine what a contemporary Museum could be and become a major cultural attraction to the City.

The Forest Gallery was to illustrate that Museums were not just concerned with dead and old things but that they are living institutions concerned with natural sciences, cultural studies and research.

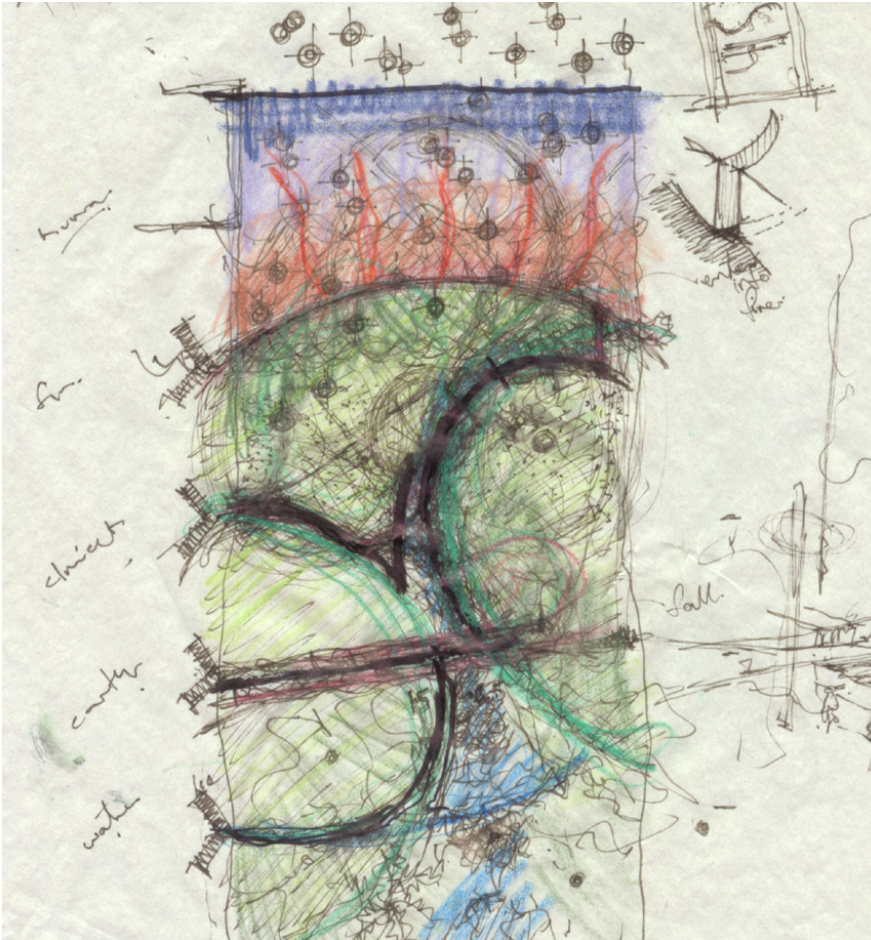
The Gallery is a 25 by 50 metre open air exhibition space and comprises an impression of Victoria's tall timber forest (*Eucalyptus regnans*).

This forest was chosen for its iconic scale and for its ability to convey a host of stories relating to the natural sciences as well as social and cultural studies. The challenge for the design was to convincingly insert a forest fragment and to compose its circulation and landscape in a way that provided visitors with a memorable experience and opportunity to learn about this unique Victorian landscape.

Above: The Forest Gallery is located under a vast projecting roof in the centre of the new Melbourne Museum by Denton Corker Marshall.



Left: Concept plan for the Forest Gallery. A forest fragment is seemingly inserted into a rectangular frame which forms the centrepiece to Melbourne Museum. Five themed pathways dissect and interpret the forest experience.



Design Response

This project's primary challenge was one of scale. The design had to convincingly locate a forest, in a very small space, that in the wild is vast in scale. In addition, this forest insert had to be both convincing as a visitor experience but also scientifically accurate and able to convey a myriad of messages for visitors to learn about the unique stories of this landscape.

These stories were developed over a six month period via a sequence of workshops with Museum staff from various departments. It was our first project where research was actually valued and commissioned.

The themes developed via these workshops were entitled the 'Agents of Change'. These themes; water, earth, climate, fire, and human influences, were the main forces that have determined the evolution and character of this landscape, and therefore appropriate as the primary vehicle for interpretation and experience.

The design approach became a hybrid of landscape design typologies, part symbolic, ecological, sculptural and representational and botanical.

Left: First concept sketch spatially testing the five interpretive themes of the gallery – water, earth, climate, fire and humans.

Right: *The Forest Gallery* interprets the tall Mountain Ash forests of central Victoria by incorporating a hyperreal living ecosystem into the heart of the institution. *The Forest* is intended to challenge reconceived ideas of the role and image of a traditional Museum.



Design Outcome

The design appears to have inserted a forest piece into the rectangular museum frame. Within the naturalistic landscape a series of paths take visitors on a journey through five themed spaces, Water, Earth, Climate, Fire and Human.

At one level it appears as a real untouched forest fragment, seemingly lifted into place inside the museum. We wanted to convey the litter of the forest, its smells, host its animals, insects and birds, and reinforce its scale and immersive qualities. By contrast, pathways through this landscape were to read as purposeful

interventions and vehicles to interpret and discover the landscape.

Upon entry to the Gallery, the landscape appears as an untouched piece of temperate rain forest, yet as one travels further into the gallery, the landscape becomes more abstracted, more designed and more evocative. This shift from replication to stylisation ultimately conveys the forest in the Museum as artefact and enabled us to evoke the sense of scale and grandeur by less literal means.

The landscape design is what we have described as intrinsically interpretive; that is, it doesn't rely

on signs or didactic messages. For example, in the "water theme, visitors experience the forces of water on this landscape by travelling under it, being immersed in its mist and smelling the moist air amongst the ferns.

The forest gallery is TCL's most technologically complex project. Eucalypt trees, for example, were transplanted from a forest, on a farm lot, at full scale, the first time this had been done. The gallery also sits on 'structure', with the trees located on large blocks of polystyrene. It's in effect a vast roof garden. The project's success, for us, is how this complexity is hidden in seemingly simple outcome.





Above: *The Forest Gallery* takes visitors on a journey from the 'naturalistic' to the 'abstract', culminating in tall sculptural poles used to convey the grandeur of the tall timber forests.

2.4 North Terrace

072

34°55'16.00"S 138°36'19.00"E

Location: Adelaide, South Australia

Collaboration: Peter Elliott

Architects, Paul Carter, James Hayter,
Hossein Valamanesh

Budget: \$14 million

Size: 20,500m²

Client: Adelaide City Council and
Government of SA

Start - end: 2000 - Ongoing



Statement: Why Seminal

The North Terrace redevelopment was particularly influential in Adelaide because it represented an unprecedented investment in the public realm and associated ideas of civicness, community participation and urban connections. The integration of art, planting and fine urban detailing, in collaboration with Paul Carter, cultural theorist and artist, and Peter Elliott, Architect, was recognised as distinctive at that time.

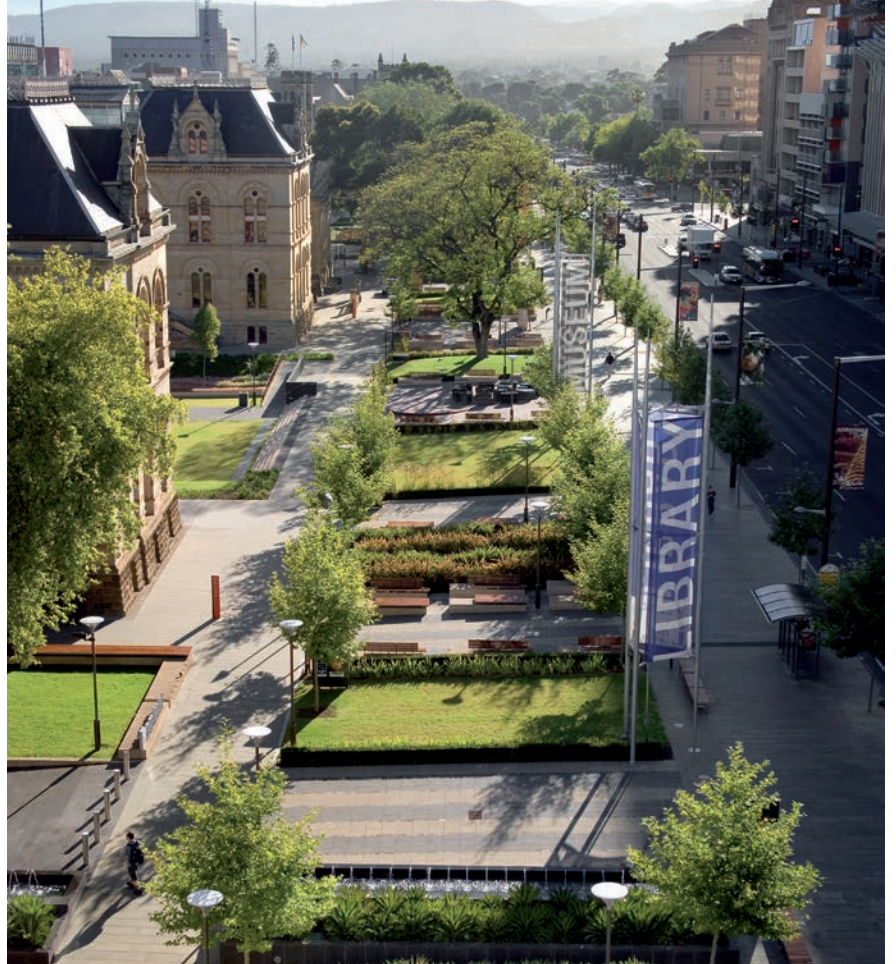
Site

North Terrace is 2.5 kilometres long and is one of four terraces that bound Adelaide's central business district. It is an important threshold between the north of the City, and the River Torrens and Parklands. Much of this threshold is occupied by a unique assemblage of civic buildings including the Parliament, Government House, Library, Museum, Art Gallery, and two Universities.



Above: Historic images of North Terrace showing the first of the institutions set back 26 metres from the road. Fortunately all other buildings followed this set back to allow the formation of the broad terrace.

Right: A view along North Terrace showing the generous inner and outer paths and the repetitive rhythm of seating, paving, planting and forecourts.

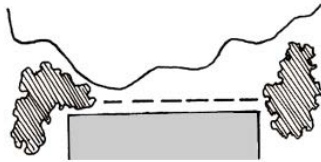


Brief

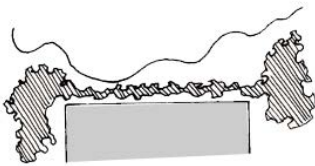
North Terrace is Adelaide's premier civic street. While the Terrace still functioned as a civic place of importance, by the late 1990s it had become tired and overgrown and was in need of a major over-haul.

As part of a joint initiative between the State Government and the City of Adelaide, the original brief asked for a Development Framework Plan. This phase established the project fundamentals, such as providing a case for North Terrace's rejuvenation by identifying its important role in the City as a civic address, an important connector and part of an ongoing redevelopment of existing and new cultural institutions.

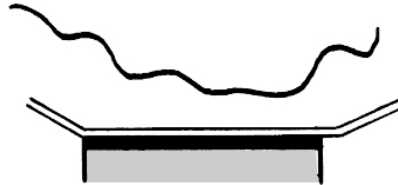
Stage 1 of the North Terrace redevelopment, focused on the Civic core, an area 500 metres long that formed part of the Art Gallery, Library and University frontages. The project sought to provide an appropriate public address to these institutions, a connecting pathway along its length, as well as a new setting for community activity.



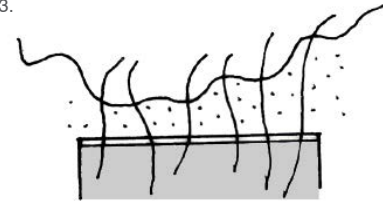
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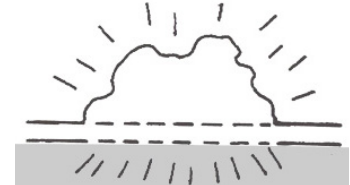
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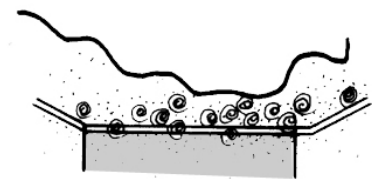
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Design Response

North Terrace is comprised of a conventional urban condition on its southern City edge. On the north, there is a real sense of terrace, comprising a broad flat area edging the institutions, before the land falls towards the river. The design reinforced this unusual asymmetric alignment of street and spacious northern linear space.

In front of Government House, the remnants of a linear park were identified, comprised of a wide central lawn and edged by an inner and outer pathway. This condition became the template for circulation, lawn, garden and plazas along the length of the Terrace.

Design Outcome

The arrangement of the Terrace was defined according to the template of pathways. In front of the institutions, for example, the inner pathway connected to each of the buildings, while the outer path provided street edge access. The space in between became a hybrid space, comprising garden, lawns and plaza. This design approach allowed for active movement corridors on its edges while enabling more passive respite areas in between.

Repeated bands of planting visually unites the urban scene, while their modulation frames entry to each of the cultural institutions. Thus the Terrace provides a sense of address and arrival to each major doorway, yet is visually connected along the length of the street.

Along the Terrace, the plazas are hosts to a variety of seating opportunities, pop up cafés and integrated artworks. Water elements, located in front of each of the cultural institutions, are used to mark their entry, provide visual interest, playful opportunities and cooling effects.

Above: Six Key Design Principles form the basis of the Concept Plan.

1. Reinforce the Threshold
2. Convert the Terrace Walk
3. Define the City Edge
4. Foster the City – River Connection
5. Animate the Cultural Heart
6. Promote Terrace Vitality

Right: Having all cultural institutions along one terrace is unique. The redevelopment of North Terrace allows each institution to be heralded while providing cohesion along the whole length.



Craigieburn Bypass

37°40'5.22"S 144°58'58.40"E

Location: Craigieburn, Victoria

Collaborators: Tonkin Zulaikha Greer
and Artist Robert Owen

Budget: \$26 million

Size: 4.8km

Client: Vic Roads

Start - end: 2003-2005



Statement: Why Seminal

Craigieburn Bypass was our first large-scale infrastructure project and comprised the design of noise attenuation walls, bridges and landscape elements as part of a new freeway in the north of Melbourne.

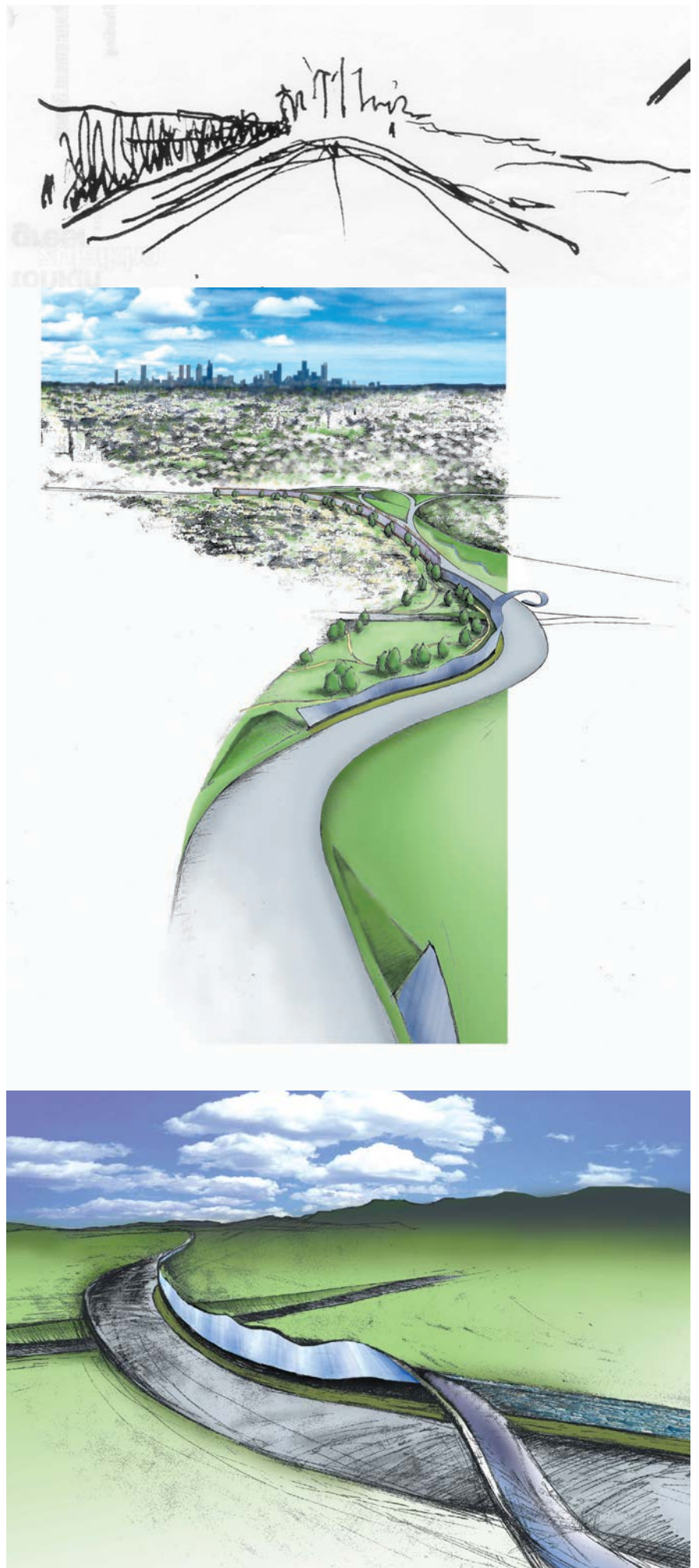
It was particularly important for the profession in Australia as landscape architects had not led the design of significant components of large-scale infrastructure projects of this kind before.

Brief

To alleviate congestion along the Hume Highway as traffic entered Melbourne's outskirts, a new bypass at Craigieburn was proposed to connect traffic to the recently completed Western Ring Road.

As part of this project procurement, a limited competition was organised for a new gateway feature to signal arrival in Melbourne and to provide design ideas for noise attenuation elements along the freeway's length.

TCL as lead consultants brought together TZG Architects and the sculptor Robert Owen for the successful competition entry.



Right: Original competition sketches for the noise attenuation walls. These drawings explore how infrastructure elements can be 'read' as fluid forms that are seemingly animated by the travelling motorist.



Design Response

Our design proposed that the whole freeway and noise attenuation elements should be a linear, sequential and memorable gateway entry experience to Melbourne, instead of a singular gateway element that was imagined in the brief.

We advocated that the \$25 million budget allocated for the gateway feature be instead reinvested to more high quality urban design, landscape and noise attenuation elements along the length of the bypass.

We brought a landscape approach to the design of infrastructure. Our analysis revealed that the freeway

mediated between two main conditions. On its west, the freeway passed along the Merri Creek grasslands, an important ecosystem that was originally part of the basalt lava flows that defined Melbourne's west. On its east, the freeway passed along the continuously expanding urban fringe.

These two contrasting conditions, an ancient geological condition now host to a vulnerable plant community and a typical suburban edge condition, informed our design response that proposed two noise wall types which responded to these primary landscape/urban conditions along the freeway.

Above: The pedestrian bridge provides a connection for the community to the nearby Merri Creek linear park. As motorists leave Melbourne travelling north, the bridge forms a significant marker of departure.

Opposite Top: Motorists arriving along the Hume Highway from Sydney first encounter the curtain wall which flows alongside the driver until ultimately twisting to become a pedestrian bridge over the road way. At this point, the view of Melbourne is revealed.

Opposite Bottom: As drivers arrive in Melbourne acrylic panel elements become dominant. This 'screen' contains thousands of LEDs, each programmed to respond to the density of traffic changing in colour and intensity at any particular moment.



Design Outcome

The bypass is characterised by two main wall experiences. One wall, titled the 'Curtain Wall', is comprised of a linear continuous flowing element that references the basalt lava flows in its curvaceous form and in its use of pre-rusted steel. The wall is located on a pre-cast concrete plinth that helps to make the wall appear elevated. Its major defining feature is how the flowing form of the wall seemingly flips over the freeway to become a pedestrian bridge.

The other wall, the 'Scrim Wall', is comprised of an opaque acrylic patterned sheet with vertical concrete louvers positioned in front of it. In a very abstract sense we were referencing the front windows with shade louvers that are often characteristic of the adjacent suburban residential typology. At a practical level we were using these tall louvers to allow light into the adjacent residential context and provided shaded areas to the linear park behind the wall.

The project also investigated how these noise attenuation devices could become more than a functional response to blocking noise, and instead be a fluid element that could

become part landscape feature, sculpture and bridge element.

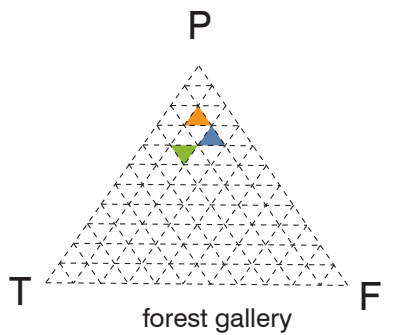
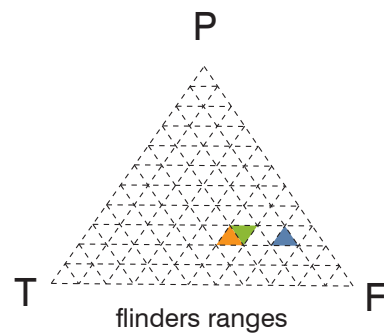
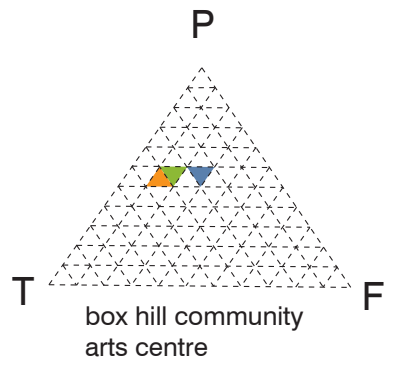
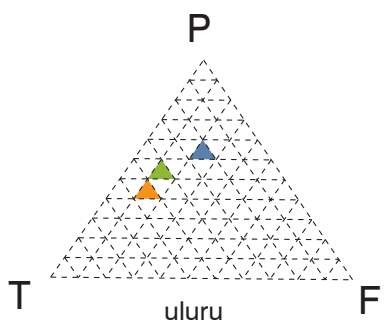
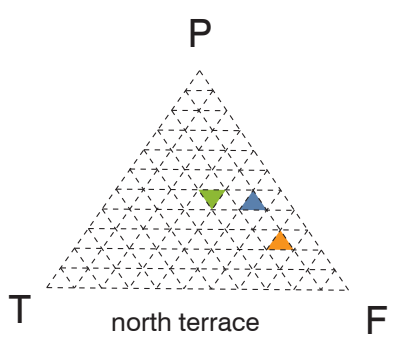
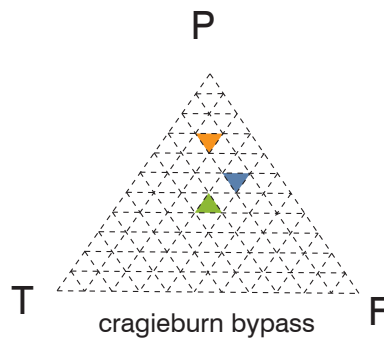
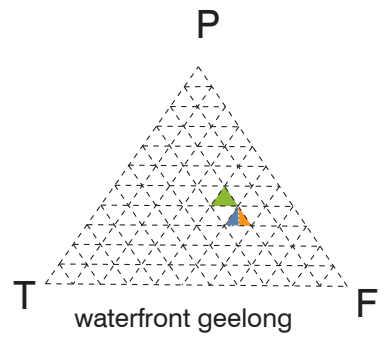
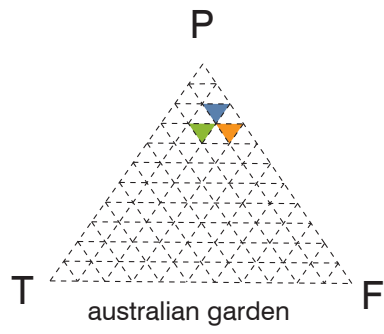
In addition, the design considered how the walls could respond to the travelling motorist, and be animated according to the speed of travel. For example, the Curtain Wall seemingly flows along the freeway, it seems animated as one travels past it, ultimately morphing to become a pedestrian bridge which frames views of Melbourne.

Our seminal projects reflect a diversity of typologies and scales of projects across our practice. We examined what might be consistencies between these projects in terms of design emphasis, via a tri-polar analysis. An explanation of the tri-polar diagram is explained in Chapter 2.2.

The process revealed that our seminal projects do not typically gravitate to a particular pole. Instead these projects were spread across the polar opposites of approaches to landscape architecture. We hoped that this reflected the range and diversity of the project types, and typologies, rather than an oscillating design approach. Looking at the diversity of projects selected, some of them were social-process driven projects, some of them required a more functionally driven approach and there were projects that privileged a more a formal and poetic approach.

This analysis didn't uncover a common underlying conceptual approach. It confirmed that these seminal projects reflected a practice that undertakes a diversity of project typologies. It revealed that, like most practitioners, we shift poles according to our ability to source work. Although we certainly have an emphasis towards the more poetic end of the diagram, with projects that utilise narrative, graphic and artistic practice integration, the sheer breadth of project typologies requires us also to meet more technical and functional demands.

Seminal Projects



Right: Each of us individually located the Seminal projects in the tri-polar matrix

▲ kevin ▲ kate ▲ perry

Our company vision has fine words on our approach to design, but doesn't dissect the underlying themes that are apparent in our work. The selection of our Sticky and Seminal projects captured our most important projects of the practice over twenty years, but we had yet to identify their commonalities. We asked ourselves, is there a consistency across the projects of a design approach, a common physical outcome that may be apparent, or possibly a way of working that might bring them together?

The diagram starts to answer some of these questions. We originally identified five common threads across all of our important projects. The threads, narrative, material presence, collaboration, civic quality and Australianess were our first labels, developed for and presented at PRS 2 in October 2010.

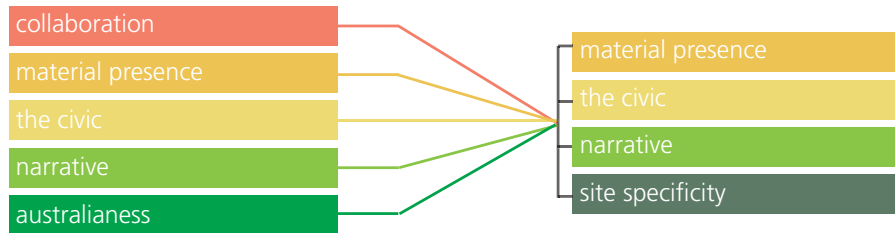
Two of these threads, Collaboration and Australianess were subsequently examined and either removed or refined. Collaboration, for example, is a strong part of our practice origins and forms an ongoing way of working on many of our projects. Many of our more complex projects, have required, bringing together, in partnership, a range of experts to deliver a truly integrated outcome. For example the Craigieburn Bypass, a large noise wall infrastructure project, was contractually led by TCL, with integrated input by TZG, architects and Robert Owen, sculptor, as well as many others. The design emerged through collaborative workshops and the ongoing development of the design by the team was constantly discussed reviewed and refined.

However collaboration, although an important way of working to our practice, didn't describe a design outcome that is evident in our projects. We subsequently didn't pursue this thread.

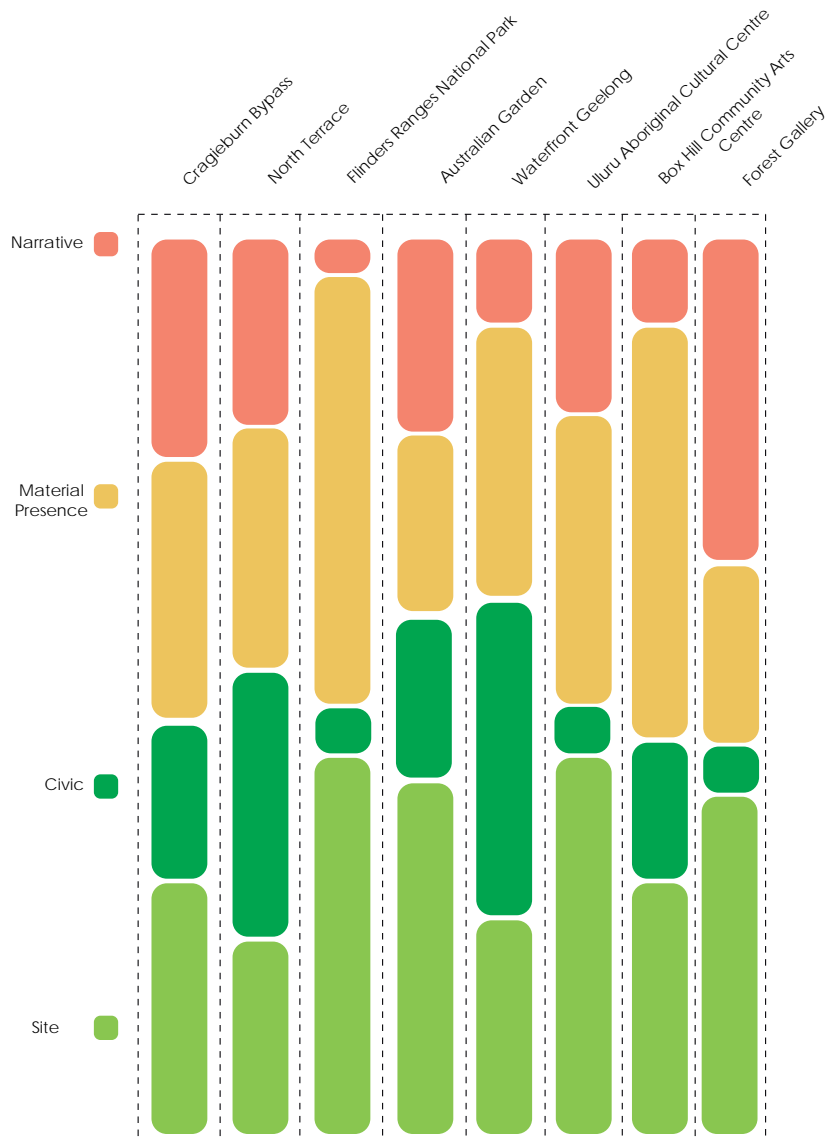
Another original thread, Australian Context, was attempting to describe projects that were recognisably Australian. Projects such as the visitor facilities at Flinders National Park, or the minimal interventions at Uluru and the more extravagant Australian Garden are recognisably of this continent. It was felt however that each of these projects were more concerned as a design response to their context and that this approach could have been equally valid in another country. Subsequently this thread has been described as Site.

The identified modes of practice had since been refined to narrative, material presence, civic and site. The following chapter unpacks each of our seminal projects according to one or more of the identified threads.

Refining the TCL Threads



Original Emergent Threads



Top: Diagram illustrating our original five Threads that were subsequently refined to four.

Bottom: Illustration showing our four threads relating to each Seminal project, and the relative emphasis of each thread.

Narrative

It is probably no great surprise to our peers that we have identified the thread Narrative. It has been a constant design companion for the studio, as a way for us to convey meaning to an audience, to reinforce particular place stories or create places that are intrinsically interpretive. Many of our projects, for cultural institutions have directly required this approach.

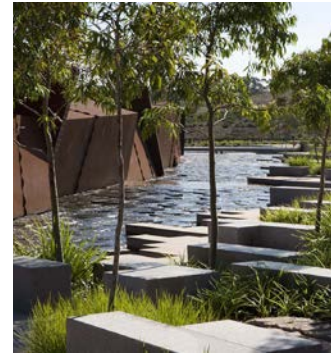
It was apparent, via this PhD, that this approach extends across many other project types, from waterfronts, gardens and even infrastructure projects. It was also apparent that this design approach was consistent with the three of us. Typically we are not satisfied, with just solving the technical function or spatial composition, there has usually got to be a story there somewhere; whether it is within the brief, the site, the programme or whether it's just in our imagining.

There are also nuances to the term narrative that we like. There is a reference in narrative to an unfolding quality, which appeals to us in the potentially playful aspect of practice. This allows us to set a scene, a somewhat open ended one, which facilitates the opening up of the imagination of the user.

There's also a part of the notion of narrative to do with it as relating, which implies a rapport or an exchange with the user which we think we have enjoyed exploring in design. The idea of narrative or story telling; the wrapping of facts in a cloak of something that's multilayered with potentially multiple threads with unexpected connections, is also utilised in a range of our projects.

We attempted to summarise each of these types of narratives and sought to understand which projects they were utilised in.

We have labelled the first type as 'intrinsically interpretive'. This relates to projects where the brief for the projects asks the designer to tell a particular story and allow that story to be experienced via the user. Projects like the Australian Garden and the Forest Gallery, which are for major cultural institutions, required us to interpret a landscape and to convey that interpretation to the visitor without the need for didactic signage. Our solutions often flow from investigating the site, the landscape, its underlying story and finding a narrative which generates a physical form. The Australian Garden for example, is a 25 hectare garden devoted to the use of Australian native plants. Instead of arranging the garden based on ecosystems or on a taxonomic arrangement of plants, we instead arranged plants based on a metaphorical journey, an imagined narrative, from the red centre to the more fertile coastal edge of Australia. Via the use of water, as a linking device, visitors travel from one landscape typology to another. This method allowed visitors to undertake their own journey through the Australian landscape; The visitor understood, through visual and tactile cues, the underlying story of the designs conception. They set the scene for the detailed use of the indigenous flora. Signage became a minimal requirement.



Top: The journey of water in the Australian landscape is metaphysically represented in the Rockpool Waterway, flanked by the Escarpment Wall sculpted by Greg Clarke.

Middle: The Climate boardwalk hovers above the landscape in the Forest Gallery of at the Melbourne Museum. Scientific interpretations of the seasons of the forest are contrasted with an Aboriginal perspective.

Bottom: The concrete louvers used along the Craigieburn Bypass reference the adjacent domestic condition.



The next type of narrative we titled the ‘non-literal abstract’, which refers to the design generators not being particularly evident in the outcome. The narrative is still an important foundational idea, yet via a process of distillation and abstraction, the experience of the underlying idea is not necessarily apparent. The Craigieburn Bypass noise walls, for example, were generated out of two ‘landscape’ conditions; one the basaltic grasslands plains, a volcanic tableau which led us to design the flowing pre-rusted walls and two only; the adjacent residential condition which informed the idea of louvers. Both of these important design generators are probably not apparent to the passing motorist.

The third type was titled ‘this means that’. These projects quite literally express the formative narrative and is very evident in the built outcome. The Manly Corso, is generated out of the idea that this space is a link between two celebrated water conditions in Sydney, the Harbour and the Coast. The design expresses this link through the use of paving which conveys the idea of water flows through the use of contrasting pavement colours and patterns. The ‘public’ would be able to make this connection between the graphic of the pavement and the generating narrative.

‘Invisible generators’ refers to projects where the narrative has a powerful influence on the design process, but it’s eventually dissolved into the background of the physical form. Geelong Waterfront for example utilises the motif of fins along the waterfront. There are two expressions, one along the road edge, comprising large titled tree planters at twenty metre intervals, and two, along the waterside pedestrian promenade comprising smaller and more repetitive concrete fins. The foundation idea was to convey the idea of two speeds of movement along this waterfront, fast speed along the road, and a slower speed along the waterside. The scale and spread of the ‘fins’ expressed the two conditions. The foundation narrative was important, although the design soon became preoccupied with more formal compositional qualities of each of these elements. The original narrative intent is not as strongly evident as we originally intended it to be.

Each of these narrative types is evident in some manner across most of the TCL projects. They are further explained in the following chapter where we illustrate via project examples how they are manifested.

Top: Manly Corso’s paving is a graphic representation of water forms.

Middle: Concrete elements at Geelong where originally conceived as devices to communicate different travelling speeds along the waterfront.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre



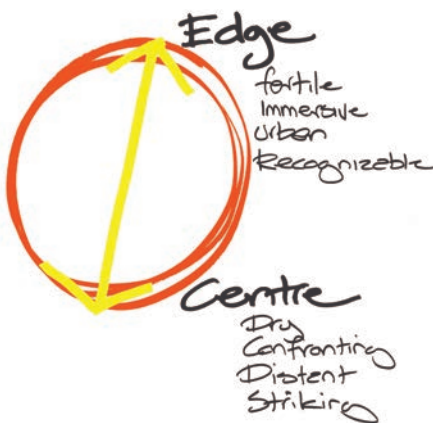
Above: The walk to and from the building is an immersive experience, and for some visitors the only time they experience being in the desert landscape.



Above: The bus and carpark are deliberately held back 300 metres from the building encouraging visitors to walk through the desert landscape.

Narrative

We wanted to emphasise the narrative of walking in the desert, as for many visitors it is the only time they venture away from vehicles (other than those who climb Uluru). The landscape journey to the building is based on the visitor slowing down and being immersed in the nuances of the particular landscape of the site, as a way of preparing themselves for the cultural stories imparted in the building, and in leaving the cultural centre to reflect on Anangu's perceptions of the interconnected nature of the physical and metaphysical world.



Original masterplan diagrams describing the design narrative.

Top Left: *The Challenge*, How to provide a conceptual framework and visitor orientation strategy which provides a successful composition for the myriad of important stories and themes relating to the Australian landscape and its flora.

Top Right: *The Water Journey*, The Garden is simply conceived as a journey from the arid centre of this vast continent to its fertile continental edge.

Bottom Left: *The Journey to the Edge*, The journey of water from ephemeral beds, cracked earth, to local springs and escarpment waterways is a major interpretive feature of the Garden and principal orientation device.

Bottom Right: *The Tension*, The Garden is conceptually arranged via two contrasting themes; A celebration of the forms, patterns and textures of the natural landscape and our human impulse to change, modify and abstract. The garden expresses the tension between these two principal themes.



Opposite Top: *The Rockpool Waterway* evokes the inland escarpment and ephemeral streams.

Above Top: *The Scribbly Path* references the patterns found on the Scribbly Gum's trunk.

Above Bottom: *The Sand Garden* evoked the desert landscape providing visitors with an abstracted visual experience of this typology.

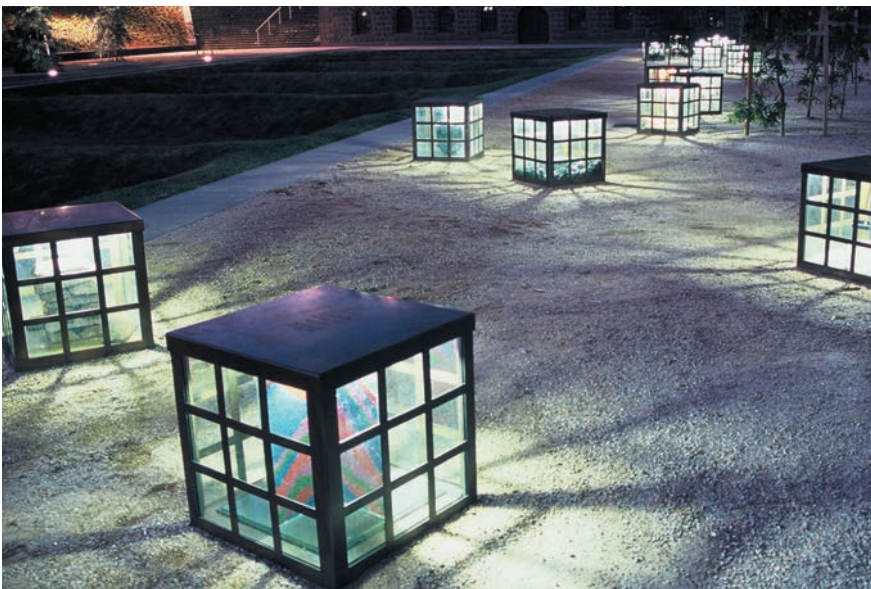
Narrative

Visitors engage with the botanical collections via intrinsically interpretive experience, of an imagined journey from the red centre to the fertile coastal edge.

Didactic signage is shunned in favour of a landscape design approach that communicates narratives via experience and immersion. Design is a catalyst to evoke qualities of the Australian landscape, via abstraction, distillation and sculpted forms. This design approach captures a heightened experience that does not rely on mimicry, or simulacra.

Designed experiences such as walking across the tangle of a Eucalypt forest floor, or the passage through wind pruned coastal heath, is juxtaposed amongst the order reminiscent of forestry plantations and gardens that evoke the patterns of urbanisation on our coastal fringe. The botanical collection plays a fundamental supporting role in accentuating the interpretive experience.

The narrative has informed the composition and the experience reinforces the message. It aims to strike a balance, between abstraction, metaphor and poetry. Not every visitor will take home the same message, as each will have their own experience. It allows many layers of emotional and intellectual discovery.



Above: *North* a precast concrete sculpture by Mark Stoner defines a connection between Geelong CBD and the waterfront terminating the main civic axis along Moorabool St and references sailing activities on Corio Bay.

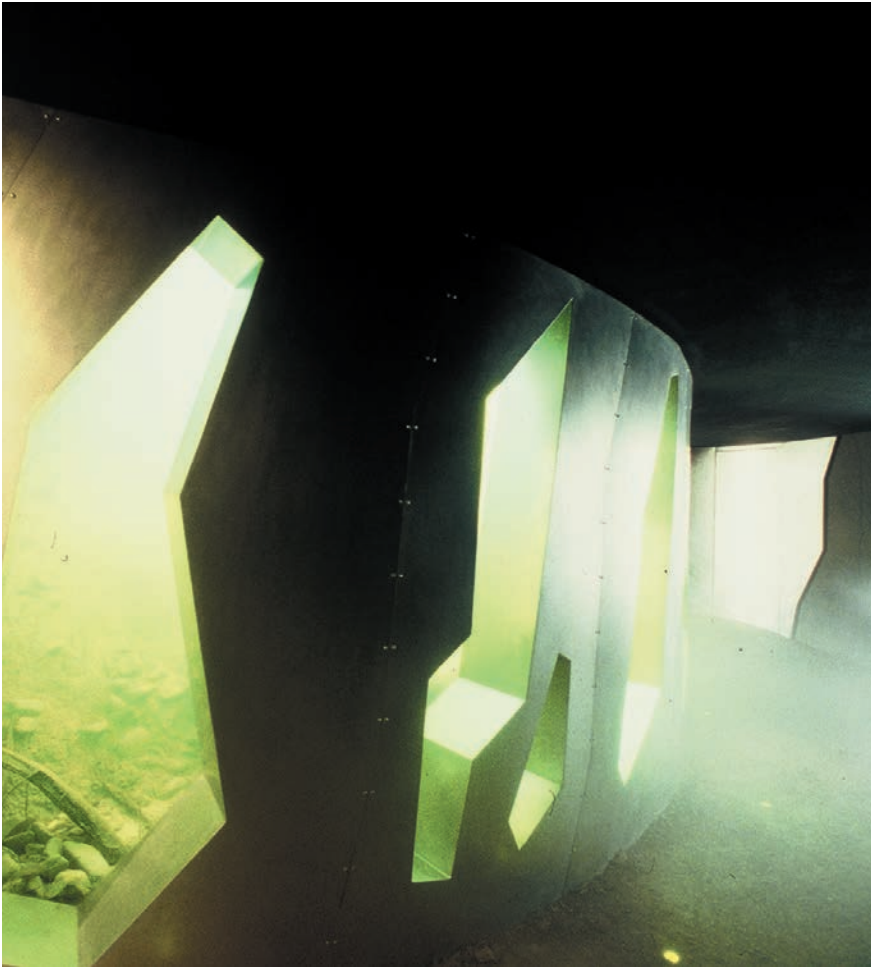
Left: *Cargo Boxes* by artists Maggie Fooke and Bill Perrin are scattered in front of the historical Customs House, serving as seating, lighting and interpretive elements. Each box contains items of trade from a particular ship that once journeyed to and from Geelong.

Opposite: Customs Plaza composed of an undulating lawn surface and linear waterway provides a quieter park experience opposite the more hedonistic foreshore. This lawn references the flow of goods that once entered into the city at this location, as well as defining the original foreshore line.



Narrative

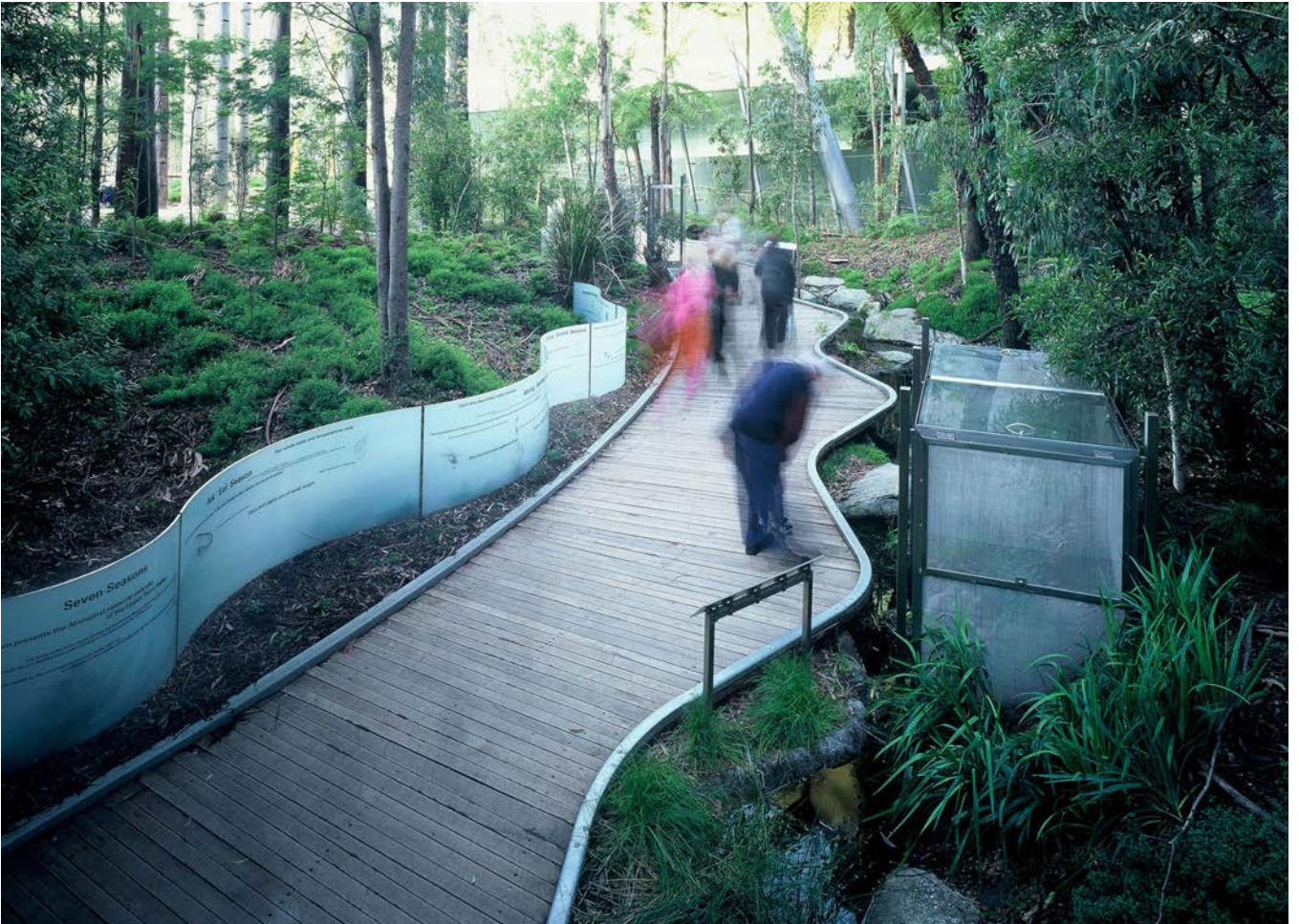
Narrative is utilised at two levels at Geelong Waterfront. Firstly there is a more subtle reference to an industrial context through the use of materials and over-scaled forms. The site had been Geelong's setting for maritime and harbour activities before all traces of these activities were removed in the 1970s. The design uses pre-rusted materials and concrete forms to evoke the utility and function of this former active waterfront. A more didactic and literal reference to the site and its history is conveyed at the Customs Plaza. This is evident where the wave motion of the grass relates to nearby Corio Bay, and the furniture elements such as the cargo boxes talk about the exchange of goods in and out of the Customs House and the port over a period of time.



Top Left: Visitors descend under the forest, in the *Water* pathways to experience this theme through waterfalls, mist and by looking into ponds that are host to fish, eels and crustaceans.

Left: Visitors descend into the *Earth* forest via sunken paths, a design method to ensure the landscape remains the dominant experience.

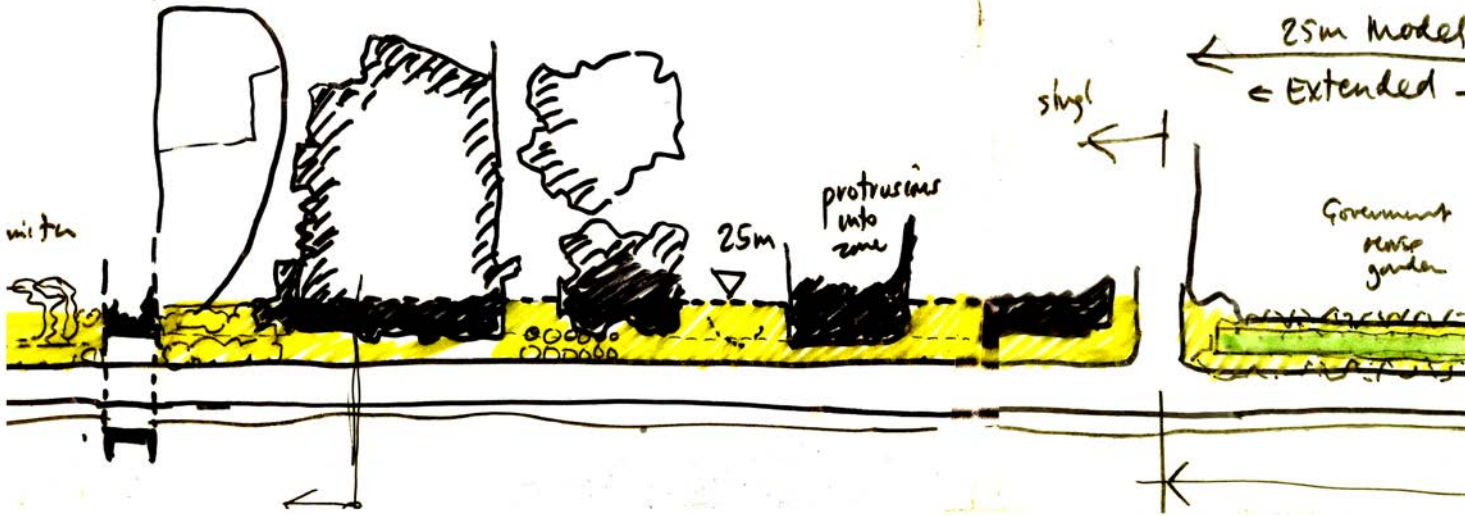
Opposite: *The Climate* boardwalk hovers above the landscape with scientific interpretations of the particular seasons of the forest contrasting with the aboriginal calendar of the temperate forest.

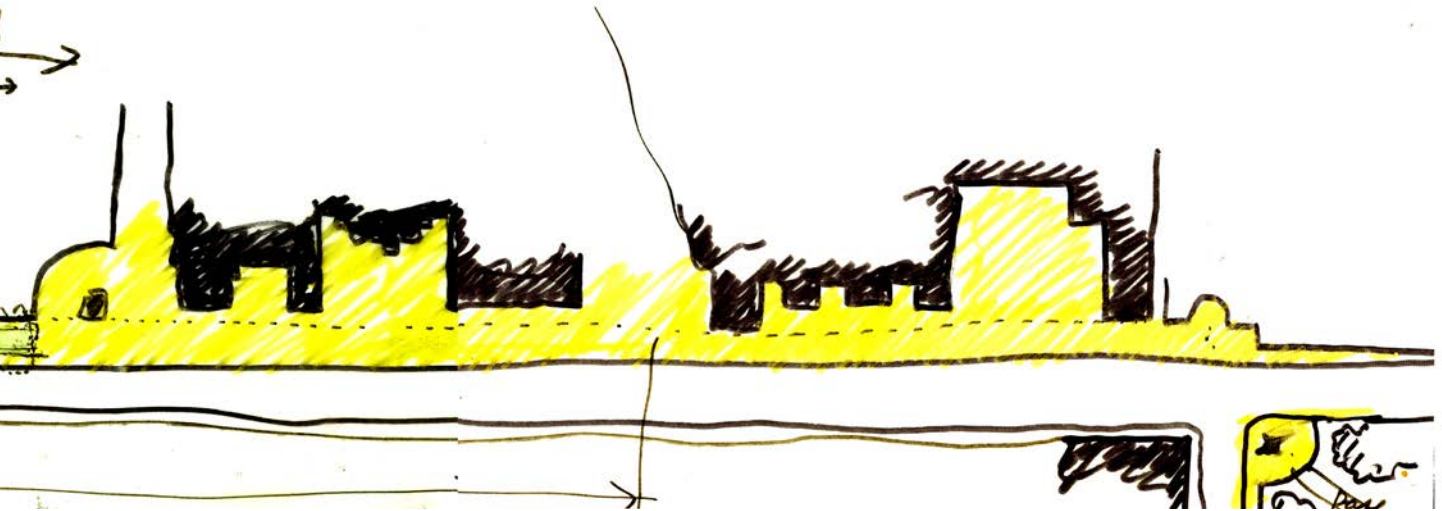


Narrative

The Forest Gallery was designed as a vehicle to tell stories. Five 'agents of change' water, earth, climate, fire, human were identified as the important communication themes for the Gallery. These 'agents of change' became themed pathways, which dissect the forest installation. Each provides a window for visitors into important factors in the life or evolution of this landscape. They were also selected in their ability to connect back into the museum's educational priorities in the natural sciences, but also in indigenous studies and social history.

The 'human' precinct of the Forest Gallery for example, is composed of tall poles, evoking the tall Mountain Ash trees. Each pole has notches conveying the method of early forestry practices. Under the 'trees' are a series of picnic tables that relate stories about the different way people perceive of this forest and how this perception results in certain ways of impacting and interacting with it.





Above: A collaborative drawing from a design session with Peter Elliot, setting up testing the terrace and building interaction.

Left: A reinvigorated interpretation of the former Prince Henry Garden. Linear forms of planting create repetitive and seasonal patterns along the terrace. This 'hybrid' space, comprising gardens, plazas and lawns, allowed the project to host a variety of public activities in line with Paul Carter's speculations of Colonel Light's intent for the Terrace.

Narrative

The design for North Terrace was not generated out of a literal narrative of place. Many functional and site specific qualities informed the outcome such as the remnant path and lawn layout located in front of the Government House, which set the template for the circulation along the terrace. However one narrative, developed by Paul Carter, became a catalyst for imagining the Terrace as more than an address to public institutions but instead a social setting and destination in its own right. Paul as part of the design team was delving into the mythic qualities of place, especially what Colonel Light, the government surveyor, may have intended for this place in his original plan for the City. Paul speculated, and advocated in design, that Light would have seen the Terrace as an important social setting, a place for community event and a place of prospect. These speculations were a turning point for the design as it allowed us to advocate a more activated agenda for public use along this important civic spine.




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Image removed due to copyright.

Left: Original ideas for the design imagined referencing the flowing basaltic lave flows of this region. These early thoughts moved into ideas of flow, ribbons and fluid forms. The work of Christo and Gustafson were early precedents to the project.



Above: The *Curtain Wall* pedestrian bridge links the park to the grasslands associated with the Merri Creek. It blurs the boundaries between infrastructure and sculpture. The flowing pre-rusted wall was initiated via a conceptual idea around referencing ancient basaltic lava flows.

Narrative

Narrative was a primary driver of the original design process for the Craigieburn Bypass. Prior to any formal design process occurring, the design team articulated that the stories of the broader landscape should inform the design process. Ideas of lava flows, basaltic plains, earth forms and weaving snakes were all references that resonated, as well as domestic architectural ideas of lace curtains and window louvres. These narratives were abstracted, refined and underwent various formal modelling trials to achieve the ultimate design outcome.

Material Presence

Unlike narrative, the emergence of this thread, material presence, was a bit of a surprise. When we originally discussed our underlying themes we were expecting to uncover latent philosophical approaches that have underpinned the work. Nevertheless the idea of material presence was revealed as a strong part of our work. The sense of fine detail, crafting, a human scale with a rich palette of materials seemed to be a common trait across many projects.

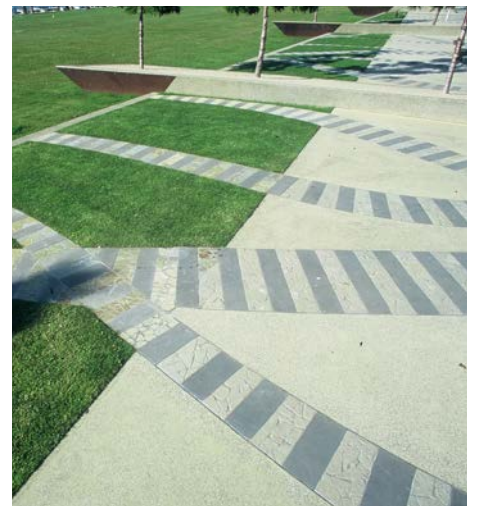
TCL tread a fine line in the expression of materials in our projects; between the use of ornamentation and detail that might be considered appropriate for public projects, versus the tendency to overuse and excessively detail with too many materials. We have said to ourselves on projects, that we should take Coco Chanel's advice and "before we leave the house look in the mirror and take one thing off".

Our interest in materiality could be traced back to our Box Hill Community Arts Centre project, completed in the early 1990s, where we collaborated with artists and crafts people and with the Architect Greg Burgess. There was a huge emphasis on materiality, on the expression and exploration of materials and that, this intent for that project has found it's way through a whole range of other projects.

One of the noticeable traits of our material presence is also the influence of the Australian landscape in our work. Kevin and myself have spent many months working out in a number of outback national parks and developed a fascination with the ideas of aridity, fire and heat. In particular we examined the forces that are generating these sorts of colours and textures, such as decay and weathering, oxidization and the unpredictable cycles of wet and dry. It is apparent, that we haven't just used these materials in situ, in projects in National Parks. We have brought these materials back into the urban landscape. In a sense our use of these materials in these more urban contexts is conveying a kind of message, that says 'we are here but this is out there' and there is an obvious intention for people to understand and connect with that idea.

Ornamentation is also apparent in our detailing of pavements, furnishings and also planting in our public works. We contend that we 'embellish' our works in urban settings to ensure our spaces are not empty or forlorn, particularly when we don't have the density of population to confidently create the unadorned European plaza. The introduction of gardens in the middle scale of these public and civic spaces is also a means to 'embellish' these settings. The gardens also allow us to create a hybrid condition between promenade, park and plaza, a condition that allows for a greater range of activities to occur and also provides a setting that is inviting or familiar at its quietest and offers a denser occupation at peak times.

Often planting become the primary element to an urban scene, they are not used as colourful backdrops but often primary ordering devices. In the North Terrace Redevelopment Project, for example, plantings reinforce a quality of the civic arrangement of spaces with their strong repetition.



Top: Box Hill Community Arts Centre with a large curved ceramic seat and colourful plantings.

Middle: North Terrace paving and furniture detail.

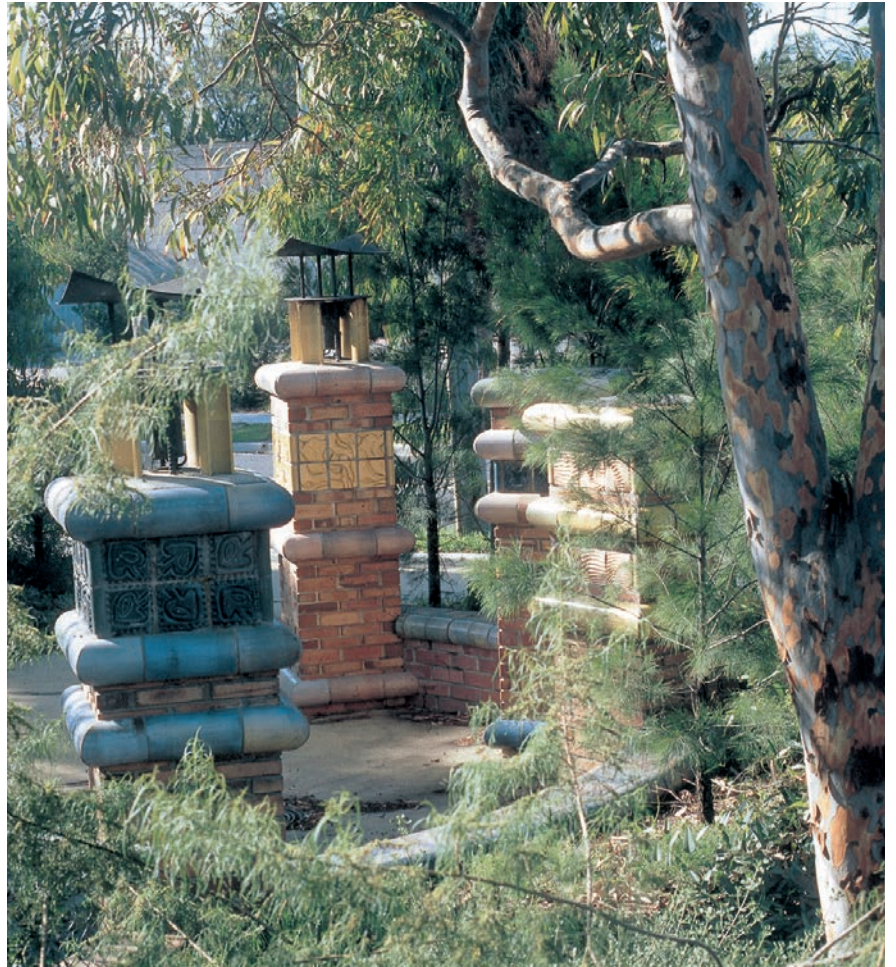
Bottom: Geelong Waterfront grass and pedestrian pathway interface.



Left Above: The decorative timber picket fence plays with vernacular ideas about neighbourhood boundaries. The soft Oregon 'seconds' timber allowed the community to jigsaw elements expressive of their artistic interests.

Left Below: Detail. Curved ceramic seats of painterly amorphous tiles are reflective of the colours and mood of the Heidelberg School of Painters who lived in the Box Hill area in the early 1900's.

Opposite: Entrance pillars and seats with handmade ceramic tiles by artist Maggie Fooke and the involvement of local tertiary TAFE students. The curved tiles are made from half round clay pipes, an ingenious and cost effective solution. The work of Hundertwasser has influenced the materiality and form of the pillars.



Material Presence

The building and landscape of the Box Hill Community Centre are deliberately non-institutional with crafted materials and vibrant colour being prominent throughout the centre.

Materials that express the arts include one-off wrought-iron elements, timber seating and fencing and hand-made ceramic tiles, not just as a small decorative element but as a major component of the exterior façade and interior elements of the building and landscape.

The exuberance of the Arts Centre is also expressed through the planting palette, with a rich diversity of colourful, seasonal and slightly chaotic plantings.



Above: The majority of materials are from the site and surrounding area. Paths are constructed from compacted and cement stabilised site sand and path edging is composed of brush and sticks collected from within the park.

Left: Signs are constructed from rusted steel and brass in keeping with the desert colours.

Opposite: Low courtyard walls are constructed from desert sand 'bricks' constructed on site. The building site's allowable perimeter was within a metre of the build structures, ensuring very little indigenous vegetation was damaged.



Material Presence

The Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre project was generated out of the intent to protect and celebrate the particular cultural landscape and material qualities of this unique setting. In order to lessen the impact of altering the landscape, as much as possible materials were sourced from the site. For example, meandering paths and walls were constructed from site sand and path edges were of found bleached branches collected from the park.

No trees and very little vegetation were removed, vegetation was encouraged to regenerate and no vegetation was planted. Strict contractual arrangements resulted in plants being preserved 1 metre from the road and building edge. As the infrequent occurrence of rain in the desert actually informs the planting communities, no swales, kerbing or changes of level were implemented so that the elemental landscape was kept as close to its original condition as possible.





Material Presence

The Australian Garden is host to an amazing array of Australian indigenous flora, which provides a binding, colourful texture to the landscape. As the garden is composed via a sequence of evocative landscape experiences, a diverse selection of pavings, walls and furnishings were selected and designed to reinforce the intended character of the setting. This garden also utilises the experiences of Kevin Taylor and myself in the Australian landscape, particularly in the use of unconventional materials to evoke the qualities of the arid centre. Red sand, rusted steel, stone mulches, gravel paths and patterned striated stone are all used in combination with the flora, to reinforce the experience of the abstracted landscape.

Opposite Top: A diversity of materials are utilised to reinforce the quality of the landscape experience such as loose granitic pathways amongst these xanthorrhoeas.

Opposite Bottom: A diverse palette of Australia flora binds the garden experience.

Above: A field of vertical slate provides a setting for the continent's more unusual floristic forms.

Bottom Left: Pre-rusted steel plates and rods are used by the sculptor Greg Clarke to evoke an escarpment.



Above: In situ concrete pavements are interrupted by curvaceous stone pavements, that reference the local sea grasses.

Left: The project explored a variety of ways the city can interact with the waterfront including this cantilevered boat deck constructed with pre-rusted walls and timber decks that extended into Corio Bay.

Below: Precast and in situ concrete is the principal material for pavements, edges seats and walls.

Opposite: Precast concrete fins with pre-rusted steel lighting boxes are arranged to provide seating options as well as visually uniting the promenade.



Material Presence

The Geelong Waterfront project attempted to convey a difference in materiality from the typical urban treatments in city centres. We advocated that we are attracted to waterfronts because they are function driven, utilitarian, honest and have a unique language of colors, textures, and materials. The project utilised a consistent palette of concrete and pre-rusted steel that, took cues from Geelong's maritime and industrial history. These 'tough' materials were manipulated to convey a civic quality in the manner of many Barcelona projects of the 1980s.

Flinders Ranges National Park



Material Presence

At the Flinders Ranges National Park, one of the key issues for National Parks and Wildlife, South Australia was the requirement to reduce ongoing maintenance. In addition, they sought to represent their land management and conservation philosophy through the built elements in the park.

Historically, a feature of the park's facilities was the overriding use of treated pine. This timber, while durable, is soft and often fails due to drying out in the arid environment.

The design team evaluated a range of possible alternative materials, looking first at those in the park environment. The palette of local materials was exquisite; burgundy and ochre coloured stone, silver-grey White Cypress Pine, deep brown rusted steel and the enduring shimmer of galvanised iron. These materials, all durable, cost effective and environmentally sustainable (project research was conducted on the sustainability of Cypress Pine) formed the basis of further design work on facilities such as toilets, shelters and signs.

Above: Materials selected were inspired by both the natural landscape, for example the use of the indigenous cypress pine, as well as built elements such as former stone dwellings, mild and galvanised steel elements used in structures in the former life of the park as grazing land.

Image removed due to copyright.



Above: Entry signs were constructed from local stone, as well as mild steel that was compatible with the colours of the surrounding landscape. The form of the signs was reflective of the surrounding topographical shapes.

Park entry signs were designed using mild steel rusted after fabrication and sealed, built into bases constructed from local stone. Careful attention was given to the form and scale of each sign. The major entry signs had to be easily read from a moving car, while smaller minor entry track signs needed to be at the right scale for walkers.

Toilets and shelters, designed by Flightpath Architects, utilised rusted mild steel posts, White Cypress Pine framing and cladding, stone screens and galvanised iron roofs. Apart from the sealing of the rusted steel, no paints, stains or other applied finishes were specified. The resulting structures, while unusual and varied in their form, relate well to the surrounding landscape through their colours and textures.





Opposite Left: Blackened paved surfaces, burnt poles and seedling lines relate the story of regeneration of the forest after fire.

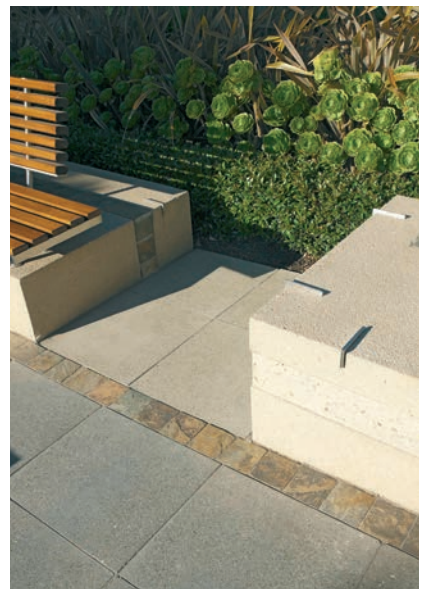
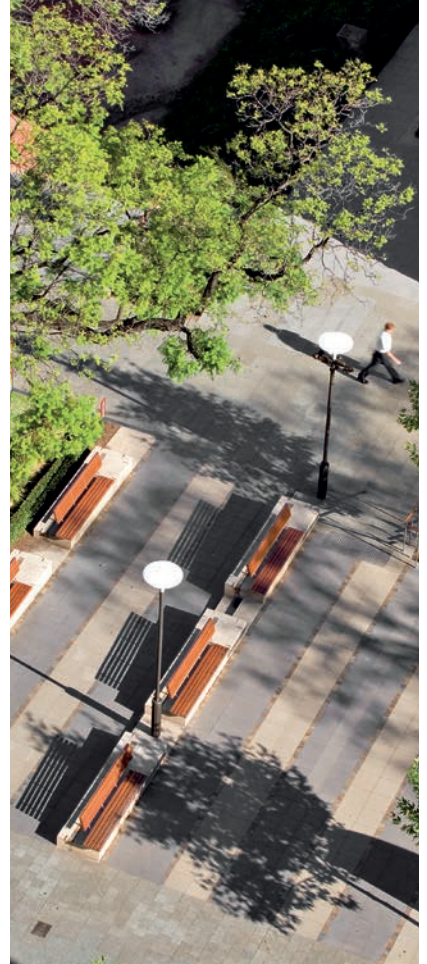
Opposite Right: The human impact on the forest is conveyed via a series of 'picnic' tables that communicate stories relating to the forest as a resource for a variety of 'commodities' over thousands of years.

Opposite Bottom: The *Earth* pathway comprising tilted concrete sculpted walls by Mark Stoner within the Forest Gallery convey messages about the evolution of the forest following the formation of the Gondwana super continent.

Above: Mist, waterfalls and pools convey the importance of water in the life and evolution of the forest.

Material Presence

The materiality of Forest Gallery is complex and diverse. There is a rich language of surfaces and highly detailed landscapes, yet the overall appearance is of integration and immersion. This is due to the site specific material language that was brought to the project and to each of the five themed landscapes. There was a great deal of time spent ensuring the landscape elements were absorbed into the fabric of the landscape. By contrast features that were obviously interpretive components were purposefully designed to stand out, and read as contrasting insertions to the otherwise neutral backdrop.





Above: Water features mark each institution plaza 14 Pieces by artists Hossein and Angela Valamanesh is located on the plaza of the Museum of South Australia. The black granite forms are reminiscent of the giant dinosaur bones in the Museum's collection.

Opposite Above Left: The planting is Mediterranean befitting the climate of Adelaide. The plant selection provides contrasting textures and seasonal colour with a number of plants such as Cycads referencing a former Victorian planting palette. Opposite Above Right: The contemporary seating takes the slope between the street and buildings and has a civic strength in both the form and amount of seating. Opposite Left: The design and material selection of the S.A. Museum forecourt references the important Aboriginal artefact collection within the museum. Opposite Middle: Water features pronounce each of the institutions plazas, such as The Library of South Australia which encourages thoughts about the precious yet exuberant nature of water. Opposite Right: The detailing of the seating and paving has a crafted quality.

Material Presence

The Terrace has a level of fine detailing evident in furniture, paving, integrated artwork and planting that is atypical for projects of this type in Australia. We were particularly interested in conveying a sense of quality and human scale to the work, that we hoped might represent to its users the importance of North Terrace to the public of Adelaide.

The quality of materials and detailing of the project has successfully set an example for other public spaces in Adelaide. This commitment to quality was expressed in the brief and fully embraced by TCL. The choice of materials was strongly influenced by local resources and skills. Local Padthaway granite and Kanmantoo stone are predominately used in the paving, while Adelaide's renowned excellence in precast concrete has been utilised to form seat bases, bollards and paving. The restrained palette of materials is designed to achieve a simple elegance befitting the civic and cultural significance of the Terrace.

Civic

The civic thread captures our significant body of work and interest in the design of public space in urban settings. It also reflects that so much of our work is for public agencies or private corporations who are building public spaces as part of an overall urban regeneration project or as part of an integrated setting for commercial or residential functions.

The design of these public spaces is a strong interest in the practice; what they mean, how people operate in them, what sort of experiences they engender and what sort of processes are required to create them. This interest fostered research, collaborations and new knowledge which has led to new clients and new projects.

Perry's masters of design in urban design at RMIT followed a revelation that landscape architecture, by itself, was not going to make a significant shift in the design of our cities nor in how people used them. Perry was interested in studying urban design theory and ways of practice of architects and urban designers that would allow him to participate equally in the design of significant urban/public projects in our cities. This knowledge and new found confidence allowed the practice to subsequently work on large urban and waterfront regeneration projects as lead consultants, where we were able to curate built form, activities, public space programming, traffic reorganisation and landscape as an integrated whole.

Projects such as the Geelong Waterfront Redevelopment and Victoria Square in the heart of Adelaide, have as their foundation idea, to foster community ownership and activity back to their city's principal public space, as a mechanism to assist in an economic regeneration of the city. Both projects considered mechanisms to create new public spaces, new activities and new ways of social engagement. They were successful because we were able to participate and often lead the design in a holistic manner through fundamental urban transformations, from locating new building activities, creating new street connections and reorganising traffic and pedestrian priorities.

The Civic thread mediates in our work between two conditions. One notion of civic sees our work creating large scale formal receptacles for people in a public setting. These spaces are designed to take particular types of events, some of which are large scale and where the individual everyday person is engaged in a limited number of activities. These are flexible and robust frames that allow for anything, such as an event, a festival or a market, but their simple programming doesn't encourage necessarily a diversity of daily use. Birrarung Marr a large riverside project in Melbourne, designed in collaboration with the City of Melbourne, is a large open park comprising tilted lawn surfaces and open gravel walkways. It is intended as an event space host to Melbourne's major festivals and celebrations. It is also intended as a beautiful setting for picnics, and promenading. Other than the conventional park furnishings, the park is left as a largely neutral backdrop for the public to enjoy.

This contrasts with a more complex idea of the 'new civic'⁷ or civicness, which suggests design can act as a facilitator for all sorts of actions of engagement and social interaction. This contrasts with the idea of a neutral receptacle of potential activity, and instead suggests that multiple ways of engaging in public space should be designed and encouraged, not as an open field of possibilities or separately programmed areas, but instead as overlapping programming and public space activities which invites interaction between different cultures, demographics and age groups over time and space.

⁷ Peter Emmett cultural historian worked with TCL on the redevelopment of Victoria Square in Adelaide. He described the 'new civic' as a refocusing on public spheres as the new setting for democracy and social interaction in contrast to the 19th Century notion of public assembly in 'civic' buildings and institutions.

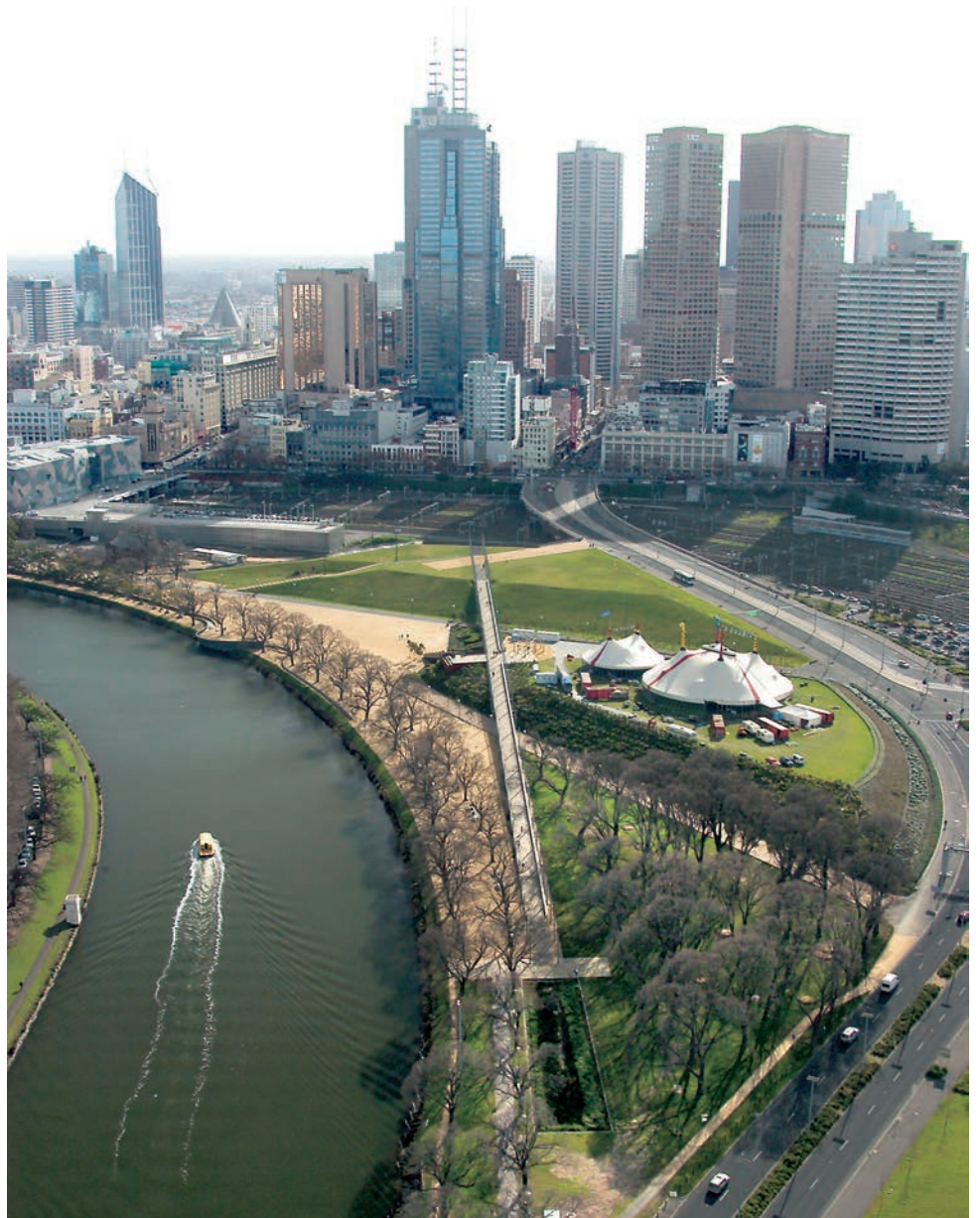
The Auckland Waterfront Redevelopment project tests these ideas via the incorporation of many overlapping programmatic opportunities for the public to engage in this waterside setting. New parks, cafes, play spaces, gardens, plazas, skate areas, streets, gantries, lookouts, promenades and event spaces are brought together as a rich and integrated whole. The project invites many publics to enjoy and 'own' this setting. The civic intent is enriched by the retention of working industries including ship building and fishing fleets and fish processing.



Right: Birrarung Marr is designed as an event space along the Yarra River edge.

Above Top: Night Cinema activation in Silo Park of Auckland's Waterfront Redevelopment.

Above: Silo Park in Auckland, plays host to a range of public functions as passive recreation, events space, youth precinct and weekend market.





Left: The Arts Centre is deliberately non-institutional and befitting a building and landscape that engages with a creative community and the arts.

Right: Kate Cullity with delegates from a landscape design conference (1994). The Arts Centre has been of interest to the design community as an exemplar of collaboration between design disciplines.



Civic

Box Hill Community Arts Centre embeds 'civic' intentions through the participation and ongoing ownership of the local in the design and realisation of the Arts Centre. The consultative and collaborative process has led to an expressive building and landscape that embody the visions and aspirations of a local community, one in which individuals can feel a part of an ever-expanding creative arts community.

The non-institutional characteristics of the Arts Centre have created a strong contrast to the more anonymous qualities of Box Hill. This gives the residents and those who experience the centre a sense of belonging to a vibrant place-specific facility where positive aspirations and achievements reverberate in the broader community.



Above: A large event lawn is planned to become a setting for organised festivals concerts and markets.

Left: The garden has become an important local community resource, particularly for children and families who utilise waterways, bridges and play elements as a setting for social gatherings.

Opposite Top: The Visitors centre by Kerstin Thompson Architects provides a facility for not only visitors' information and refreshment but also as a resource as a venue for events, conferences and weddings.



Civic

As the largest botanic garden devoted to the display of Australian flora, the Australian Garden is now host to a vast collection of plants for scientific, educative, and conservation purposes.

It also performs another role, one as the new public realm for an ever expanding city. Located in Cranbourne, one of the fastest developing residential precincts in Melbourne, the gardens have become an important passive recreational destination. Messages of biodiversity and sustainability in the garden are integrated into its role as a new major visitor destination where visitors not only come to explore the plant collections but to also be entertained, through interactive workshops, music, cinema, markets, cafes and play.



Above: Precast 'fins' are arranged to create a repetitive sequence of seating bays along the promenade, a location for informal social interaction.

Left: 'Swival' seats are informally arranged along Geelong's promenade.

Opposite: The waterfront comprises a sequence of waterfront promenades as a popular 'passeggiata' for the Geelong community.



Civic

Geelong Waterfront certainly has civic intentions, a place to meet, socialise and celebrate a beautiful north facing urban waterfront destination, yet it was conceived in a manner different from our more recent projects. Where our contemporary projects purposefully investigate multilayered space and the blurring of built form and the public realm, Geelong, by contrast, privileges the formal compositional qualities of the project. The visual quality of the space was the primary design emphasis, its serial graphic journey along the promenade was heightened at the expense of complexity of program and friction between activities. People used it, people enjoyed it, but it was within the tight frame of the composition.



Above: At 8 metres both the inner and outer paths are generous befitting the scale of this cultural boulevard and the number of people traversing the Terrace.

Left: A generous uncluttered forecourt in-front of The University of Adelaide. Inlaid brass has been used in various elements reflecting the civic nature of the Terrace.

Opposite: *Northern Lights* installation for the Adelaide International Festival of Art (2008 and 2010). Images were projected onto each of the historic buildings. This event showed the flexibility of the Terrace to allow for various programming.



Civic

The North Terrace Redevelopment project has the important function of reinforcing the civic address for Adelaide's cultural institutions. The design was concerned with conveying a certain civic quality in its formal composition and use of materials. On another level, we were interested in how a once forlorn setting could be not just 'seen' as a decorative forecourt but could become a destination in its own right, a place for public activity, meeting and social engagement. The narrow dimension limited some programming, but it was hoped the layering of lawn, garden and plaza provided a range of spatial variety and activity opportunities as well as a sense of promenade along the length of the street.

Site

This thread, Site, was originally titled Australian Context. It was the one theme that we were less certain about.

Lisa Diedrich, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, has talked about our work as seemingly oscillating between landscape that's 'found' and landscape that's 'artifice'.⁸ It is true, our work does convey these two conditions.

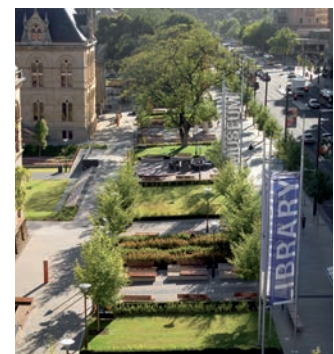
⁸ Diedrich, Lisa. Essay "As Seen from Europe". Unpublished (2012).

Many of our projects, particularly the projects for national parks, work very hard to integrate with their setting and be subsumed by the as found condition. Projects such as the Flinders Ranges National Park, and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre were concerned with design that allowed visitors to connect with the natural setting. The hand of the landscape architecture is hardly evident. Where furnishings, signage or park infrastructure is required, the design utilised the patina and materiality of the setting to ensure it was integrated and complimentary to the broader landscape experience.

There are also projects that are located in more urban contexts, yet they resonate strong Australian landscape qualities. Projects such as the Forest Gallery at the Melbourne Museum required the design team to interpret particular qualities of this iconic Australian landscape. We were asked to convey, via the Forest Gallery, that Museums are living institutions comprised of important research and education. The Gallery, inspired by the tall timber forests of central Victoria, was selected as a useful device to inspire visitors into the rich botanical, ecology, history and contemporary issues of this beautiful part of the State. The design was informed by months of research including detailed site walks and workshops and conversations with many Museum specialists.

Similarly projects such as the exhibition gardens at Chaumont-sur-Loire, France and Métis, Canada are inspired by and seek to communicate particular and unique qualities of an Australian site context.

This approach contrasts with projects that are located in more urban contexts yet are equally responsive to their site context. In these situations we have attempted to tap into the fine nuances of these sites in their entirety, such as understanding natural systems, communities, cultural stories, mythologies of site, or urban morphologies. A project such as Custom's Plaza on Geelong's Waterfront is a small pocket park located in front of a Heritage Customs Building. This design comprises an undulating lawn surface, and scattered cargo box seats. It relates to the local context and expresses this site specificity through the wave motion of the grass relating to the bay and the cargo boxes which talk about the exchange of the goods in and out of the custom's house over many years.



Top: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Above: North Terrace Redevelopment, showing the 'dual pathways' along the Terrace; a reference to the arrangement observed in front of South Australia's Government House.

The North Terrace Redevelopment, a large public promenade on the edge of Adelaide's CBD, was designed as a major public setting to some of Adelaide's important public Institutions. The design team was supported by the cultural historian Paul Carter, who uncovered some important cultural stories relating to Colonel Light's intent for this Terrace, as a place of prospect. In addition we were intrigued by what seemed a latent underlying pattern of dual paths with 'soft landscape' in between that seemed to be evident along some parts of the Terrace. These detailed site observations and research as well as many other site factors were strongly evident in the formation of the concept and its realisation.



Right: Métis, Canada. The screens depict the microscopic image of a Eucalypt Leaf. Each screen was placed vertically, referring to the way in which hard sclerophyll eucalypt leaves present themselves to the sun, an adaptation in a hot, dry climate to prevent water loss.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre



Above: Curved Walls of desert sand create an entrance courtyard encouraging visitors to pause before entering the visitor centre. Views are focused only on sections of Uluru that were sanctioned by Anangu, the traditional owners of Uluru-Kata Tjuta.

Opposite: The sinuous building by Gregory Burgess Architects is sited within indigenous vegetation. No trees and very little vegetation were removed during construction. There were no changes in gradients and no additional planting so that the site was maintained in its untouched indigenous state.



Site

In this elemental and powerful location the actual siting of the Aboriginal centre was fundamental to the project. Hours were spent walking through the desert, in conversation with the land, the park rangers and Anangu as they talked of the particular minutia and nuances of site, as well as their metaphorical dreaming stories. An understanding became evident that it is not just the monolith of Uluru that is significant but the interconnected nature of the place. There was a desire for the tourist to walk in and experience the desert landscape in this place, as it is, in a particular moment, to experience what is not only seen but what could be felt.

The preferred site was centred around a dead Desert Oak *Casurina decaisneana* as it was viewed by Anangu as a strong pivotal point, one which expressed rejuvenation through the proliferation of young Desert Oaks sprouting under the parent trees stark dead branches.





Opposite Top: Meandering pathways take visitors on an immersive experience through a diverse array of Eucalyptus species in the *Eucalypt Walk*.

Opposite Bottom: Long curved pathways juxtaposes with maze like walking experiences providing a diversity of journeys in and amongst the botanical collection.

Above: Stylized Lily Pads hover over the water providing connection between garden precincts.

Site

The Australian Garden takes its cues and attempts to capture qualities from the broader site of Australia. One example of this challenge is represented in the way we have attempted to capture how people move through the landscape and how this might inform a designed response. For example, walking through the Australian landscape is a journey of constant weaves, shifts and jumps. One never travels in a straight line. The flora gets in the way! This choreography of movement, is captured in The Australian Garden, where visitors are taken on a distinctly unconventional journey. Visitors are invited into the landscape via a pathway system that constantly morphs according to the landscape narrative and garden experience. Crusty paths in the Gondwana Garden, shift to become an over water bridge of circular grated plates that then connect to a field of stones where the actual path is no longer apparent.

Flinders Ranges National Park



Above: Toilets and shelters by Flightpath Architects were carefully sited allowing them to be prominent enough for visitors to recognise and appreciate them without dominating the landscape.

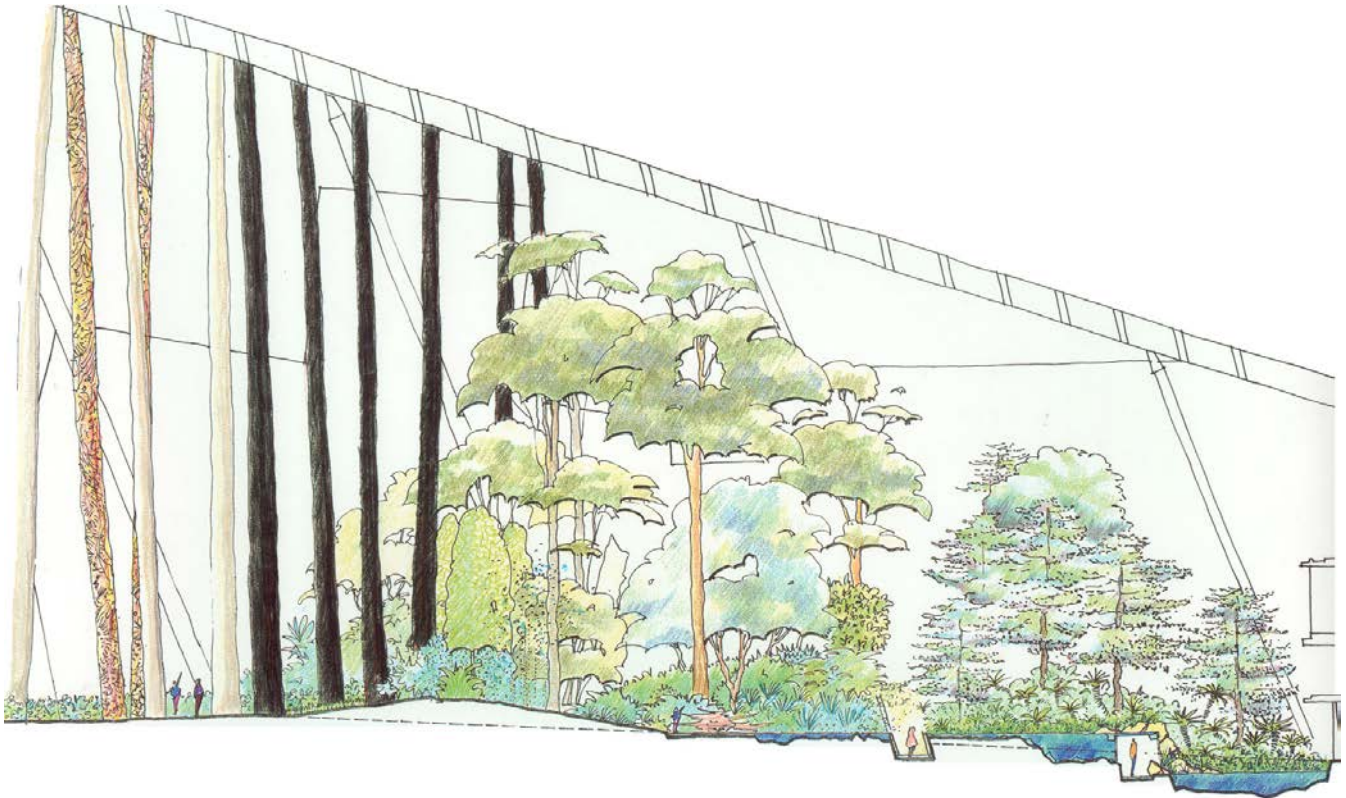
Left: A number of signs were designed and the form of each took into consideration the topography of the surrounding landscape.

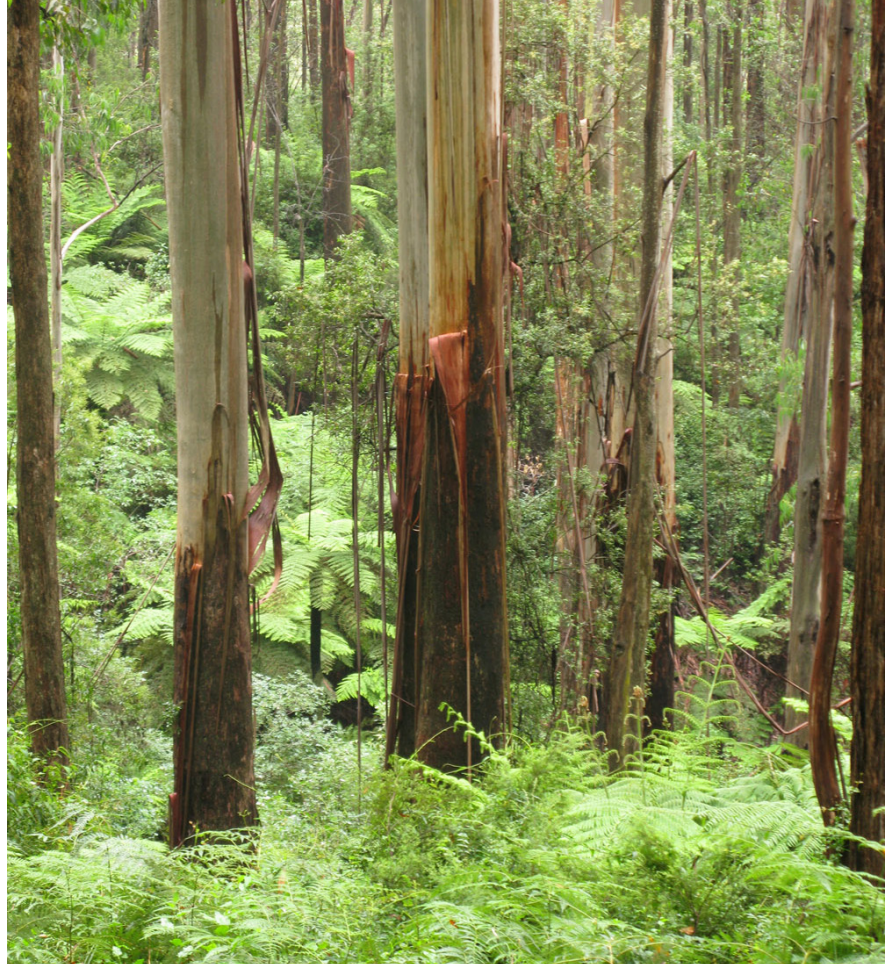
Opposite: One of the major challenges was to cater for the large number of visitors to the park while protecting the seemingly robust but actually fragile landscape.



Site

The Flinders Ranges National Park is a place of pilgrimage for 120,000 visitors from South Australia, Australia and overseas. Like many places of raw elemental beauty, it is threatened by the very people it attracts. The harsh and rugged landscape belies a fragile ecosystem based on thin soils. Years of overgrazing and the continual trampling and foraging by plagues of goats and rabbits once brought this place to its knees. Rescued and given a chance to recover by NPWSA, the park now required a new overlay of management – the guiding of people through and within the landscape in a manner which encourages a diversity of experiences, but discourages destruction.





Opposite Top: Cross Section through the Forest Gallery. On the right conveys the more fertile immersive *Nothofagus* spp. ecosystems of the Gullies, whilst the *Eucalyptus regnans* forests are conveyed via the use of tall timber poles on the left of the diagram.

Opposite Bottom: Burnt poles evoke the forest after fire. Video's are inserted into the poles and relate messages of destruction and regeneration.

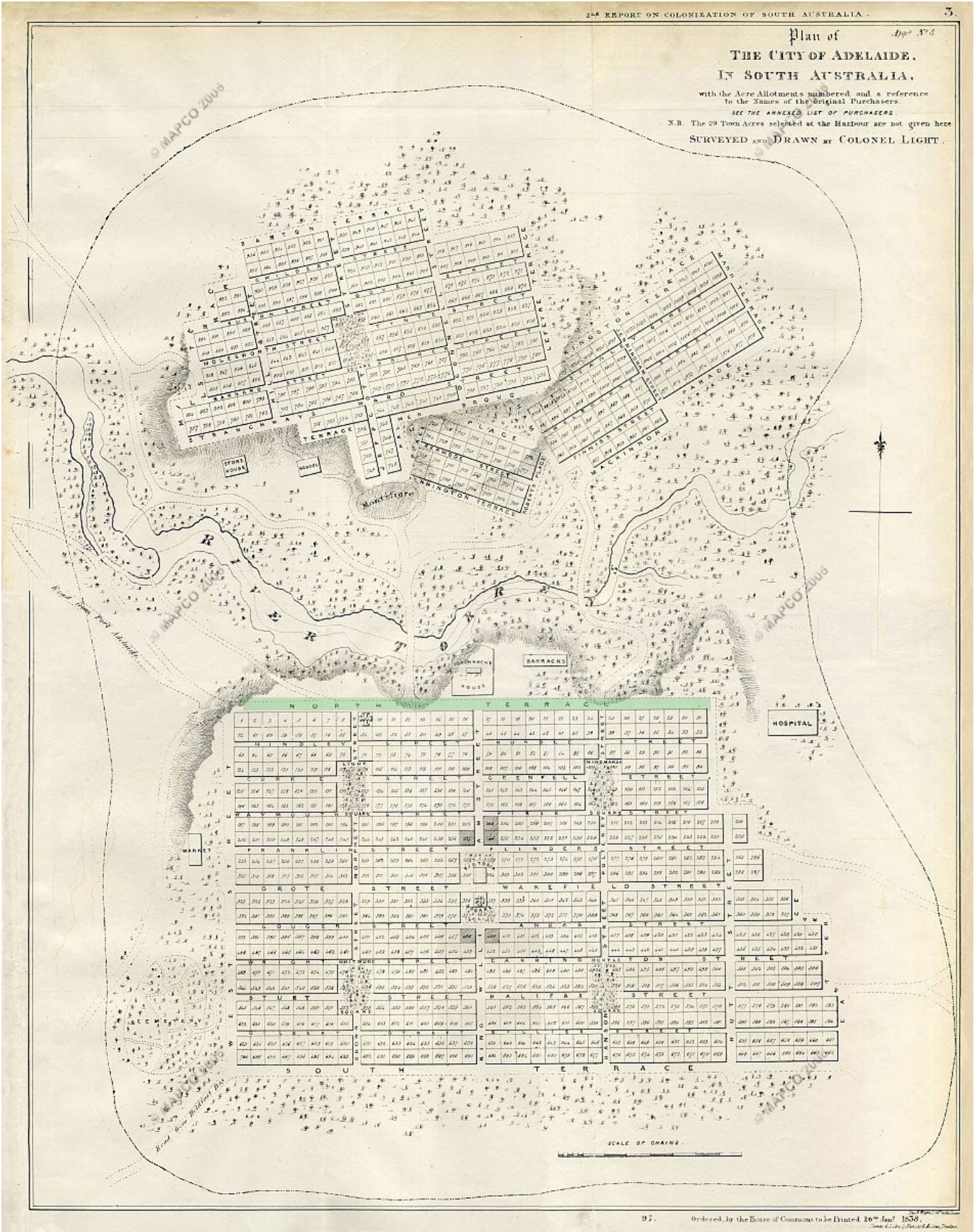
Above: The tall timber forests of central Victoria comprising predominantly of *Eucalyptus regnans* is used as the 'source' material for the Forest Gallery design.

Site

The Forest Gallery attempts to be an accurate evocation of a particular forest and ecotone. Although it is an impression, its apparent realism succeeds because of a thorough and detailed understanding of this landscape. As well as detailed site walks, the design team undertook a six month long consultation with museum scientists so we could understand the landscapes, particular characteristics, its principal messages and unique flora and fauna.

Plan of
THE CITY OF ADELAIDE,
IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

with the Acre Allotments numbered, and a reference
to the Names of the Original Purchasers.
SEE THE ANNEXED LIST OF PURCHASERS.
N.B. The 29 Town Acres selected at the Harbour are not given here
SURVEYED AND DRAWN BY COLONEL LIGHT.





Left: Colonel Light survey of The City of Adelaide. North Terrace highlighted in green. The plan shows how North Terrace is a terrace in both the civic sense and as a terrace to the river on a lower grade.

Above: The design incorporated a number of important existing trees. The site allows for passive relaxation in the central zone as well as active movement along the inner and outer pathways.

Site

The design of North Terrace emerged out of an observation of place, in particular a remnant path/lawn layout along the Terrace. This was utilised to inform an entire design outcome. Parallel to these site observations, Paul Carter was delving into the mythic qualities of place, especially what Colonel Light, the government surveyor, may have intended for this place in his original plan for the City. Paul speculated, and advocated in design, that Light would have seen the Terrace as an important social setting, a place for community events and a place of prospects. North Terrace is also a 'terrace' before the river edge escarpment to the river itself.



Top: Site photo prior to the freeway construction. The two principal noise attenuation features respond to the observation that the freeway mediates between two site conditions; the basalt grassland plains and the expanding residential edge condition.

Left: The acrylic *Scrim Wall* references the adjacent windows of the residential edges as well as functionally allowing light into the properties.

Opposite: The flowing curves of the *Curtain Wall* was inspired by the ancient volcanic basaltic plains that are a feature of these north/west landscapes of Melbourne.



Site

The project was conceived out of an observation of site conditions. The freeway alignment mediates between two contrasting conditions: the grasslands of the Merri Creek corridor and the growing suburban edge. The design intends to heighten these conditions, the pre-rusted steel wall references geological conditions and flowing forms in landscape, while the acrylic wall and louvres reference the adjacent domestic condition.

3.0

Our threads describe common modes of practice represented in our projects across twenty years and are particularly evident in the seminal projects. They are necessarily broad themes encapsulating diverse project typologies and a commonality of approach across the three Directors of TCL. These reflections will be compared with a peer review of our practice by Ron Jones in the following chapter who has identified similar modes of practice and describes additional themes in our projects.

Essay

Truth itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art

Ronald Jones

3.1 Introduction TCL

**3.2 Truth itself is Constructed:
Public Space as Public Art**

Ron Jones, Director of Jones and Whitehead, is a renowned Australian Landscape Architect.

He was asked to provide an essay commenting on TCL's work and approach, and to situate our work in comparison with his own practice.

Ron originally from Iowa, came to Australia in the early 1980's and assisted in teaching landscape architecture at RMIT. He subsequently joined with Brian Stafford to form Laceworks Landscape Collaborative, which won the celebrated Royal Park Competition, as described in section 1.5. Ron later became the City Of Melbourne's principal landscape architect and led the design of some of the City's important projects, including Birrarung Marr and the City Square Redevelopment, before starting his own practice.

His essay is an insightful reflection on our practice.

It has been a useful mechanism for us to consider our work through a different lens. It prompted many conversations and debates amongst the three of us as to its observations and conclusions.

I have annotated his essay throughout where I believe his reflections require some level of clarification, endorsement or disagreement.

Essay

Truth itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art

Ronald Jones

3.2

Truth itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art

Ronald Jones

Perspective

Kevin Taylor and Kate Cullity first established their practice in Melbourne in 1990. The firm expanded to a second office when Kevin and Kate moved to Adelaide in 1995, leaving Perry Lethlean in charge in Melbourne and soon afterwards making him a partner. The two offices maintain a close working relationship and TCL remains an integrated practice, with collaboration between all three principals on a large share of projects. Kevin, Kate and Perry are each distinct personalities with their own perspectives on the world, but they have a precious ability to disagree productively. Their combined talents, and ample opportunity to exercise those talents over the country's recent decades of affluence and growth, have made TCL one of the great success stories in Australian landscape architecture.

At times over the past 29 years I have been a tutor, employer, sub consultant and collaborator with Kevin, Kate and Perry, individually or in combination. We also share careers focused on public landscapes. However, unlike the conventional free agent model of private practice that TCL follows, my career has been dominated by years of employment in the public sector and, even during subsequent private practice, by working as a virtual extension of those agencies at times. It has also been tethered closely to specific central urban areas over extended periods. This combination of professional similarities and differences lies at the root of the things that most intrigue me in TCL's work. It raises questions of what landscape architecture in the public realm tries to achieve, what it can achieve, and what it might aim to achieve.

Left: A Christian Lacroix on the catwalk. [Florian Vincent, 2008. Wikipedia]

Right: Pierre Balmain and Ruth Ford making a dress. [Carl Van Vechten, 1947. Library of Congress]



Craft

It may be that we have become so feckless as a people that we no longer care how things do work, but only what kind of quick, easy outer impression they give.

If so, there is little hope for our cities or probably for much else in our society. But I do not think this is so.

Jane Jacobs¹

You may be forgiven for thinking that TCL caters to a market for haute couture, not prêt-à-porter. Their catalogue of projects is filled with prestigious spaces in capital cities and important regional centres, which suit beautifully crafted one-of-a-kind designs—and which demand designs that glitter obligingly in the spotlights directed onto such sites. TCL may have been launched at the local milk bar, so to speak, with projects like the Clifton Hill Quarries playground, but in full flight its course has been stellar (if mostly confined to southern skies).

Almost absent from their catalogue are staples of many colleagues' practices: routine enhancements of suburban shopping streets, planning frameworks, design guidelines for street furniture and paving, and so on. This is not a matter of running off with all the big-budget projects; there are plenty of modest ones on their files. Instead it reflects a restriction in the breadth of their practice, largely omitting projects in mundane urban settings where public space is treated as infrastructure and where designers attempt to manipulate processes that affect general areas rather than specifying details for particular sites.

¹ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Vintage Books/Random House 1961), 7–8.

Or so it would seem. But in fact, the breadth of practice that other offices engage in is important in TCL's work, if not in urban settings. Their work in the Flinders Ranges National Park, at Uluru, and other national parks focuses squarely on infrastructure. Like their urban projects, these are seldom everyday spaces but are instead exceptional ones—including national, even international, treasures. But there is no continuity between the urban and remote area projects with respect to management conditions, economic processes, social issues, or patterns of use. Their feet are in two disparate worlds, and their work differs profoundly in each.²

In one, TCL's claim to 'have undertaken an investigation into the poetic expression of the Australian landscape' positions their work in the world of art, rather than simple professional services.³ Additionally, they are old-fashioned artists who value craft, engaging with the landscapes' material qualities as an integral part of their concepts. This, in combination with their maintenance of control over detail and execution, and with the indulgences that projects on special sites allow, has created opportunities where unique designs can be finessed to create images with a richness of detail and level of impact beyond the norms of landscape architectural practice.

In the other world, their designs show a self-effacing humility before the natural landscape. This is not 'poetic expression', but discerning silence in the presence of greater poetry. The subtlety of rustic slabs of local stone used as 'tables' for camp sites, the straightforward structures for trailhead information displays, and materials that merge into the land can be overlooked easily. These are sophisticated but not slick designs. They are not as simple as they seem and would not have been obvious solutions. They reflect careful judgement and a refinement of craft, as if in agreement with Whistler:

Industry in art is a necessity—not a virtue—and any evidence of the same, in the production, is a blemish, not a quality; a proof, not of achievement, but of absolutely insufficient work, for work alone will efface the footsteps of work.⁴

Last year when walking in the Flinders Ranges for the first time I did overlook this work. I saw it but paid it no regard. Only recently when seeing it in photos did I think about it as a design project, and recall that I had even read about it some years before. Maybe my brain is going soft or it was just in holiday mode, but when I experienced the project I was focused on the natural landscape. TCL were invisible to me.

This cannot be said of TCL's urban projects. There is a significant difference between these projects—not in the craft that supports them, but in what's being done with it. One group of projects speaks to us: sometimes with a neighbourly g'day, sometimes with formal politeness, and sometimes gabbling like dear old friends who've been cooped up alone for too long. The other is mute.

There is a lot of communication going on, but not consistently - only in their urban projects. The mechanics or styles of communication aren't the puzzle. Marc Treib might call them 'didactic', 'neoarchaic', 'vernacular', 'zeitgeist' or whatever, I don't care.⁵ But I do wonder: What are TCL aiming for?



² Infrastructure: TCL describe Melbourne's Craigieburn Bypass and Adelaide's Northeast Expressway as infrastructure projects. So they are, but they are infrastructure supporting the automotive and petrochemical industries. Sewers, streets and parks are infrastructure supporting other city functions. In other words, 'infrastructure' doesn't strike me as a useful term for categorising and understanding projects. Instead it indicates an emphasis on projects' role in supporting particular functions, rather than their innate values.

Urban projects: I regard this as a broad category that is not limited to central city sites. The program for the Australian Garden differs substantially from that for spaces like Victoria Square, but it is no less an urban space. It may be 60 km from Melbourne's historical centre, and in the sticks (as was Central Park New York, when first developed), but the Melbourne Botanic Gardens annex is an urban institution. It is the sweet-smelling end of a body of big Victorian government projects supporting the capital, at the other end of which is the desalination plant at Wonthaggi—also located in the country but firmly plugged into the city.

Remote area projects: TCL's project list is dominated by urban sites but that represents opportunity as much as inclination. No Australian landscape architectural practices would survive on work in national parks and similar settings, although a few focus on that as one area of specialisation. Australia's people, money, and work are concentrated in a few cities. Worldwide, the number of people living in urban areas began to exceed rural populations only in the past few years, but nearly 75% of Australians lived in urban areas by 1950, increasing to 90% in 2000. The bulk of this urban population is accounted for in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. In 2006, over 68% of the population lived in major cities, and only five of the eight Australian states and territories include a 'major city' (as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics). Furthermore, the population has grown most rapidly in the most populous areas, while declining in rural and remote areas.

United Nations Population Division, 'World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision – III. Analysis of Urban and Rural Population Growth at The Regional Level', www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wup2001/WUP2001_CH3.pdf (accessed 27 November 2010); Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Australian Social Trends, 2008 – Population Distribution', www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter3002008 (accessed 4 December 2010).

³ See www.tcl.net.au (accessed December 2010).

⁴ And agreement with John Burgess, who was a lecturer in landscape architecture at RMIT when Kevin and Perry were students and I was a tutor there, and who said to me once that he thought a mark of good designs was often that they seemed inevitable—with the benefit of hindsight. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, 'Propositions No. 2', *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*. Reprint of 2nd edition (1892) (Dover, New York, 1967) 115.

⁵ These terms are from Marc Treib, 'Must Landscapes Mean?: Approaches to Significance in Recent Landscape Architecture', *Landscape Journal*, 14(1) (1995)46–62, the abstract for which reads: 'A renewed concern for meaning in landscape architecture—and the ways by which meaning can be achieved— resurfaced during the early 1980s after an absence in professional publications of almost half a century. This essay examines the sources of significance in landscape design and the possibilities—and limits—of designing meaning into landscape architecture. Six approaches currently employed are discussed: the Neolithic, the Genius of the Place, the Zeitgeist, the Vernacular Landscape, the Didactic and the Theme Garden.' As found at <http://lj.uwpress.org/cgi/content/abstract/14/1/46> (accessed 12 December 2010). It seems ironic that Treib goes to the effort of defining ways to invest places with meaning only to conclude they are all misguided, since 'people create meaning by using, interacting, and becoming familiar with a space, forming associations that accumulate over time rather [than] finding meaning in the design itself. Thus, a space will likely have a different meaning for its users than that intended by the designer, especially over time.' As reviewed at www.informedesign.org/Rs_detail.aspx?rsId=1316 (accessed 12 December 2010).

Above Left: TCL and Tonkin Zulaikha Greer's proposed redevelopment of Victoria Square, Adelaide, 2010. [TCL + TZG]

Above Right: St Mary's Peak, Flinders Ranges, South Australia.

Theatre

...in such places of public resort the kindest feelings of human nature are cherished, there the employer sees his faithful servant discharging the higher duties of a Burgess, as a Husband, and as a Father.

Melbourne City Council, 1842⁶

My first reading on the subject of urban design was assigned, not in my study of landscape architecture, but as an example of a literary form: an excerpt from Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. I already knew about the City Beautiful movement and other examples of urban posturing from Rome to Canberra, but for me Jacobs is a starting point.

The Jacobs text was a description of the 'ballet of the street'— the richly varied and complex scene of ordinary people using an ordinary street throughout an ordinary day.⁷ Viewing life through a lens we use to look at art is problematic, and Jacobs was cautious about calling this scene a ballet—one of the most formal and stylised types of staged performance—but the theatre is an often-used metaphor for public life. Performative aspects of public life are reflected in things as simple as dressing up for a wedding; this is not just 'putting on glad rags' but a part of the purposeful adoption of public roles for the public world, which differ from private roles at home.

Endless repetition of Shakespeare's 'all the world's a stage' may have made this seem a trite cliché, but Richard Sennett has argued that it is anything but trite, and that erosion of this principle lies at the root of problems such as the selection of politicians based upon perceptions of their private personality rather than their capacity to govern effectively.⁸ Setting aside the socio-political arguments, my question is: What are the design implications of seeing public space as a place of performance (rather than, say, 'a machine for shopping in')?

How to answer that depends upon another question. Theatres imply the presence of things other than stages—in particular, audiences. But who are the performers, and who the audience?

Over the past few decades, staged spectacles and amusements have been given increasing priority in urban spaces. Arts festivals, sculpture triennials, giant video screens, government funded 'amateur' sports and corporate marquees are now more common in municipal open space than beds of petunias ever were. The obsessive promotion of Melbourne's calendar of events by Jeff Kennett's Victorian government in the 1990s was just one side of this. It also shows in the now perpetual drip, drip, drip of minor 'events'

Opposite Left: DCM's 1976 design for the City Square, with cafés hidden in the basement behind the 'water wall'. [RJ] Opposite Right: The 'red centre' of TCL and Paul Thompson's Australian Garden, Cranbourne. [RJ]

⁶ Melbourne City Council, petition to Superintendent Charles Joseph La Trobe, 1842, quoted by Georgina Whitehead, *Civilising the City*, (State Library of Victoria: Melbourne, 1997) 1.

⁷ The extract is the concluding section of Chapter 2 of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, as in *The Norton Reader*, 4th ed. (WW Norton & Co Inc: NY, 1977) 541.

⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (WW Norton & Co: NY 1974)



Above: 6. Roger Williams Park, Providence, Rhode Island designed by HWS Cleveland, 1878. [Frances Loeb Library]⁹



Above: 7. The Long Meadow, Prospect Park, New York, designed by Olmsted and Vaux, 1866. [US National Park Service]¹⁰

in Melbourne's City Square. That signals a policy reversal from the time of Denton Corker Marshall's 1976 design for the square, which is more dramatic than the square's physical redesign twenty years later. Then, it was deemed inappropriate even for the adjoining ice cream shop and cafes to be visible, out of fear that commerce would taint the square's civic nature, so they were hidden behind grand water features along with the public toilets. That was silly. Now, people using public spaces are reduced to spectators. That is tragic.

This relegation of the public to the position of spectator is contrary to Sennett's and Jacobs's sense of public life as a stage, where every person in public is observer and performer. This dual role sustains a process of civic exchange that builds communities as complex networks of personal relationships, whereas spectators are simply manipulated into homogeneous market segments. Furthermore, if we are simultaneously performers and audiences, the theatre is everywhere, not only on formally designated stages. It pervades the city and operates constantly. No matter how trifling each exchange, the accrual is potentially significant.

TCL's projects show one trait in particular that is important in supporting this role. This is not novel or unique to TCL, but stands in contrast with traditional park design. Unlike parks where people on paths are expected to gaze away from the path onto picturesque lawns, fountains or flower beds, TCL's projects consistently pull the scene and action together in spaces that are habitable as well as focal points. It is arguable that people have always been eyeing their fellow pedestrians as much as the landscape, but it is certain that a busy urban promenade and rural scenery to its sides were separate and irreconcilable within the Olmstedian tradition of park design. The classic photographs of Prospect Park and Roger Williams Park (figs. 6 and 7) are emblematic of those parks' ideal: people are not in the picture. With different motives but similar impacts, children playing in the flower beds in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens were unwanted vexations, and banned. Popular engravings of public parks and gardens from the 19th and early 20th centuries frequently emphasised people (and their fashionable clothing) on the paths, but designers and gardeners stubbornly focused elsewhere.

In contrast, TCL's design for North Terrace puts the seats in the midst of, not overlooking, the ornamental plantings; seats at the water edge in Geelong are smack in the foreground of the bay views from the promenade; and Victoria Square's 'urban lounge' will feature reciprocal views with the thoroughfare along the grand harbour. Seats are made into attention-seeking sculptural objects in projects like Sydney University and the National Australia Bank waterfront promenade in Melbourne's Docklands, and fountains are even incorporated into the urban lounge in Victoria Square. The water features marking the entry to each institution along North Terrace, and in the Australian Garden at Cranbourne, are not designed to be looked at from afar; they invite people to enter into them and touch the water.

On the face of it, the 'red centre' of TCL's Australian Garden at Cranbourne may seem like a throw-back to Prospect Park, conspicuously failing to support this idea. However, its situation, facing the single public entry to the Garden, means this space acts like an overture to an opera—fundamentally related to but different from the work as a whole, forming a dramatic introduction of the work's aesthetic framework before the action starts.

⁹ Photo as reproduced in Melanie Simo, *100 Years of Landscape Architecture: Some Patterns of a Century* (American Society of Landscape Architects, 1999) 35.

¹⁰ Photo as reproduced in Melanie Simo, *100 Years of Landscape Architecture: Some Patterns of a Century* (American Society of Landscape Architects, 1999) 39.

Scenography

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

Oscar Wilde ¹¹

In Jane Jacobs's evocative descriptions of street life, there are indirect references to the relationship between buildings and the street (people looking out windows, etc.) but no mention of the design of the public space itself. It is unimportant except for what it enables. It is the stage, not the show. In accordance with this omission, there is a common urban design approach that stresses the simple functionality of public spaces, of which the physical fabric is expected to serve as a passive and virtually invisible background while its users take the speaking parts.¹² At its best, this combines sensitivity to people's behaviour with acknowledgement of the unwieldy practicalities of making and maintaining city spaces. I often advocate this approach, especially when confronted with too clever designs for paving, or with public art in spaces that lack the basics of access, amenity or furniture to support their use.

Yet there is no question of the value of expressive scenery in conventional theatre, and characterless buildings are often decried for their impact on streets as places for public activity. Neglecting the visual character and quality of any stage is a fault. But what works well as scenography in the public realm is not a simple matter.

The first issue is that scenography is usually thought of as the tailoring of sets to specific plays or films. Many films are famed for sets that are so distinctive they could never be reused. However, reusable settings are common. Serlio included three designs in his *Five Books of Architecture*: a grand streetscape lined with classical buildings for tragedies, a less regular city street of modest buildings for comedies, and a rustic lane for satires.¹³ Although these could have been painted backcloths, they were models for permanent fittings at Vicenza's Teatro Olimpico and the Teatro all'antica in Sabbioneta, which feature trompe l'oeil streetscapes as stage scenery. These were for urban elites who saw themselves as heirs to classical Roman culture, who would chuckle at productive country rustics and don earnest faces in front of mock Roman temples. The designs said more about the audience than about any particular performance mounted in the theatres.

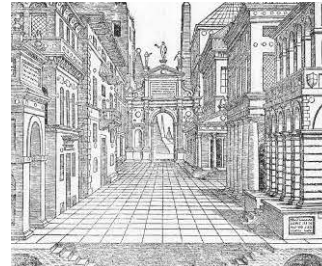
Scenography to suit the audience is particularly appropriate in public space, where there is no distinction between actors and audience. And, if streets have been staple stage scenery since the Renaissance, real streets were frequently designed as settings for theatrical display. Michelangelo's Porta Pia formed the extravagant focal point of a city street in Rome, a work of 'pure urban scenography' recalling Serlio's sets.¹⁴ Triumphal arches (being monuments to travel through but otherwise useless) are little more than outdoor stage sets, but Melbourne's Collins Street, as photographed by Nicholas Caire around 1900 (fig. 14), was just as theatrical even if it was the heart of the city's commercial district.



Above: 9. Work on a set for *Metropolis*, dir. Fritz Lang, 1927. [fanboy.com]



Above: 10. Still from *La Belle et la Bête*, directed by Jean Cocteau, 1946.



Above: 11. Sebastiano Serlio, stage set for a tragedy from *The Five Books of Architecture*, first published 1545.



Above: 12. Stage of the Olympic Theatre, Vicenza, designed by Palladio and Scamozzi, 1580-85. [Flickr]

¹¹ Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (first published 1891)

¹² A few of the many possible examples to cite include: William H Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Project for Public Spaces: NY, 1980); Donald Appleyard, *Liveable Streets* (University of California Press, 1981); Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis, *People Places: Design Guidelines for Urban Open Space*, 2nd ed (John Wiley & Sons, 1998); *San Francisco Better Streets Plan: Policies and Guidelines for the Pedestrian Realm* (City and County of San Francisco Planning Department, 2010).

¹³ Sebastiano Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture*. Dover, 1982 (reprint of the Stafford 1611 English edition), Book 2, chapter 3, fol. 25 and 26.

¹⁴ James S Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 2nd Ed (Penguin, 1986) 246.

The second issue is that most of the energy we perceive in set design goes into making exotic and even unsettling imagery. What we remember and regard as the more creative works are the sets from *Psycho* not *The Magnificent Ambersons*, and from *Alien* not *Kramer v.s. Kramer*. The aim of what we learn to understand as creative design in scenography—simply through our experience of the craft—is antithetical to the aim of scenography in public space. If people using public spaces are to act openly and view the actions of others favourably, designs must draw them out of themselves, not send them into foetal positions.

However, the third issue is that this is an uphill battle. Few people are predisposed towards outward engagement in urban spaces. Nothing like the domestic street life described by Jacobs is familiar in Australia. Despite a recent boom in city apartments, the majority of Australians live in suburbs. City streets are busy, but as places for shopping excursions, forays to the cinema, and nights on the town, not as anyone's front yard. Furthermore, constant exposure trains us to perceive streets as places hostile to pedestrians, where kerbside parking and driving at the speed limit are God-given rights. The more important a road is in the eyes of the state the less provision is made for walking. Kerbs, although devised to keep vehicles in check, have thereby come through association to be seen by many as something unfriendly to pedestrians, and asphalt is widely despised (although this was not so in 19th century Paris, where a flâneur was 'a walker of the macadam...a connoisseur of the fleeting richness of city life').¹⁵ The design of Swanston Street after its closure to through traffic in 1991 was a shocking disappointment to the popular press. It still looked very much like a street; it was not, in their eyes, for them.

In this context, one trait of many TCL projects is particularly interesting. Although their approach of linking scene and action contradicts 19th Century park design traditions, several projects confirm the old-fashioned value of garden-making in public places. I have seen no beds of petunias in a TCL project, but would not be surprised if I did. Their urban landscapes are not only cultivated, they are designed to emphasise that fact. My first reading of TCL's aim to pursue the 'poetic expression of the Australian landscape' was as a reference to indigenous landscapes. I was mistaken. Designs like North Terrace, the Canberra Arboretum and (former) display embankment in Birrarung Marr are anything but references to nature. These are intensely cultural landscapes. There is barely a native plant in view along North Terrace (particularly after the pathetic political decision to plant Planes rather than Spotted Gums for the tree canopy). The Arboretum completely jettisons the tradition of naturalistic landscapes to display trees, as at the Arnold or Morton Arboretum; it is, above all else, planted.¹⁶ The impact of this garden-like aspect of TCL's designs was dramatised by the vocal negative public response to the North Terrace project under construction, which promptly reversed after planting occurred. Pre-judging half-built designs is a common error but the episode indicates the plantings' impact.

¹⁵ Gwilym Eades and Renée Sieber, 'Mapping the Flâneur: A Geospatial Translation of Charles Baudelaire's "Les Hiboux"', McGill University, p. 2, http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/753483/Eades_Sieber_MappingTheFlaneur.pdf (accessed 10 January 2011).

¹⁶ See www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au/100_forests_100_gardens/design_concept (accessed 6 January 2010).



Above and Left: 13. Performing arts: German troops and then Free French troops parade through the Arc de Triomphe, Paris in World War II. [Wikipedia]



Left: 14. Collins Street, Melbourne. [Nicholas Caire, c1902. National Library of Australia]



Above: 15. Canberra Arboretum, detail plan by TCL + Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, 2005. [National Arboretum]
Below Left: Work on a set for Metropolis, dir. Fritz Lang, 1927. [fanboy.com]

Top Right: 16. Birrarung Marr, display embankment designed by TCL, 2000. [RJ]

Bottom Right: 17. Bosco dei Mostri (Bosco Sacro), Bomarzo, designed by Pier Francesco Orsini, ca 1550-80. [Amor-Fati-Stock]

It's interesting to contrast this with the fact that the project remains incomplete in other ways, after political intervention to delete a significant element in the form of a proposed café; this had no adverse affect on people's perception of the project.

Garden-making provides a way to control the sense of scale of spaces, to provide sensory enrichment, shade and shelter and to make spaces that are inviting and comfortable to use. It also has a deeper significance. Wilderness scenery may be beautiful but unliveable. Gardens indicate habitability. The 'Park of the Monsters' at Bomarzo is not frightening; the conceit of a garden of terrors is undermined by the gesture of gardening.

Gardens are a tell-tale signal of care (or neglect), and like canaries in a coal mine quickly show if a space and people in it matter to those who are responsible for it. A garden is also useful as a sort of skill, encouraging people to occupy a space simply by making it look occupied—by involving people in visible public activity whether as paid gardeners or with public involvement in community gardens, as proposed in Victoria Square.

Robert Pogue Harrison writes that 'gardens do not, as one hears so often, bring order to nature; rather, they give order to our relation to nature'.¹⁷ We also often hear that gardens are places of seclusion or retreat from public life, but the opposite is true in TCL's projects, where gardens help give order to our relationships within society.

¹⁷ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*. University of Chicago, 2008, p. 48.

Plot

Public language that defies normal understanding is, as Primo Levi wrote, ‘an ancient repressive artifice’ ...

[so] an argument concerning the public language is an argument concerning liberty.

Don Watson ¹⁸

Projecting human emotions or values into inanimate things is known as a pathetic fallacy, for example calling a sunny day a happy day. Despite the term’s pejorative overtones it is a treasured device in poetry. However, pathetic fallacies are also seen in other disciplines, as in using social value systems as a basis for conceiving earth-centred models of the universe. Inverse pathetic fallacies are often understood as something like a sunny day inspiring happiness, but it’s a fact that emotions can be inspired by non-human factors so this involves no fallacy of logic. The actual inverse is the projection of non-human traits onto people and societies, e.g. if people are regarded as machines, or if scientific models of the universe are projected onto the domain of human social values.

This inverse is not just seen in poetry. It gets built. Two recent examples are the use of fractal theory to generate architectural form in LAB’s Federation Square and ARM’s Storey Hall Annexe in Melbourne. This is usually explained away as innovation, but transposing mathematical theory into the built environment is not a new idea. The avenues cut through Rome by Sixtus V applied the new science of perspective. Descartes’s mathematics, optics and physics are reflected in French baroque gardens,¹⁹ and his coordinate system supported Thomas Jefferson’s gridded Public Land Survey that was applied across the bulk of the United States.

A uniform grid spanning a continent was, arguably, a spatial expression of Protestant democratic values driving the new nation. It is a non-hierarchical system in which ‘God is alike in all places’ and in which people in any location have no greater or lesser privilege than people elsewhere. It was an apt symbol for the expanding federation, and a practical way to parcel up remote ‘unsettled’ terrain.²⁰ However, it was irrelevant to the landscapes it was imposed upon and to any community relationships expected to develop in it. Individuals floating in undifferentiated space may be equal, but cannot form communities. It is not possible to ‘establish what [is] of value in places without centers or boundaries, spaces of endless, mindless geometric division.’²¹

¹⁸ Don Watson, *Death Sentence*, Knopf, 2003, p. 3.

¹⁹ Allen S Weiss, *Mirrors of Infinity: The French Garden and 17th Century Metaphysics*. Princeton Architectural Press, 1995.

²⁰ J B Jackson also sees reflections of Isaac Newton’s concepts of physics and theology in the US Public Land Survey System. See J B Jackson, ‘The Order of a Landscape: Reason and Religion in Newtonian America’ in D W Meinig (ed.) *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp.153-163.

²¹ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*. WW Norton & Co, 1990, p. 55.

In contrast, the pinwheel grid used on Federation Square's facades lacks either the positive or negative implications of Jefferson's grid. It is simply difficult to see how applying ideas about a 'self-organising' universe to the buildings' facades relates to the cultural institutions housed in them, which are, patently, not self-organising.²² It is, perhaps, an attempt to design in a new way that is innocent of negative associations conjured by historical precedents—whether the baroque seats of despots or the mechanical forms of Miesian office blocks. However, this too is really a kind of neutrality rather than innocence. It is aware, but aloof from the institutions and from familiar frames of reference for people using the spaces.

How to order and design landscapes, spaces and buildings to express the varied functions of a modern city is an unresolved question. Attempted answers include arbitrarily imposed patterns—fractal geometry or otherwise—or using something that is somehow related to the site, its surroundings or the activities to be supported, or that is metaphorically associated with the activities or users of the place. But what system is used to order a design is probably less important than two potential traps with any of them.

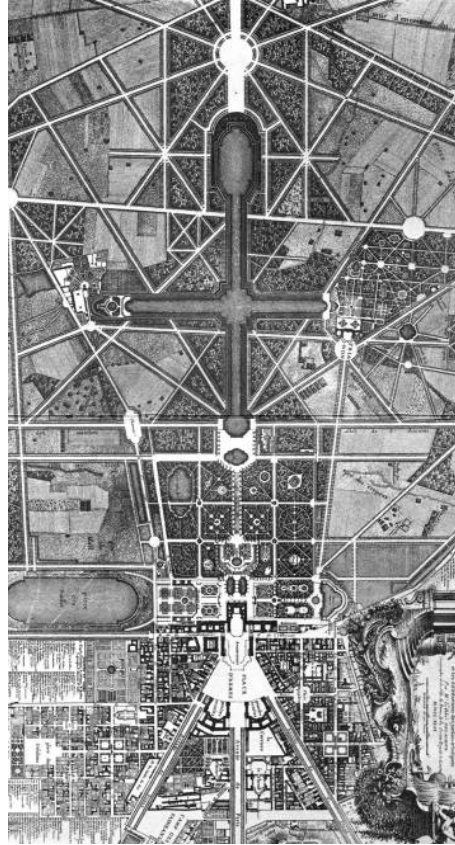
The first is failure to recognise that the system is meaningless to most people. I do not believe that growing up in a landscape defined by an immense square grid, in the Midwest US, significantly affected my perception of social and political relationships in a way that differs from any other geometry of property boundaries and road alignments; other factors were infinitely more important. To most people in the world, an argument about the relative merit of different types of grids is pseudo-intellectual claptrap, of interest to cabbalists seeking an occult order in things but basically irrelevant to the task at hand.

The second trap is designing the medium rather than the message. Any ordering system such as a geometric grid in its basic form is empty of meaning. Consider musical scales, which are systems of ordering sound. A scale is not music, but it allows the creation of expressive music using variations within the system—notes at different intervals, in different combinations, etc. Ironically, the simpler the system, the more expressive potential it has. Complexity in a system obscures variations created within it. The chromatic scale (with sharps and flats) offers greater musical potential than a diatonic scale (no sharps or flats, but actually a more complex harmonic sequence). The complex pinwheel grid in Federation Square

One pattern that repeats across several of TCL's projects made me wonder for a while what they were aiming to do with it. North Terrace, the Australian Garden, the Canberra Arboretum and initial concepts for Harbour Esplanade in Melbourne Docklands are all, conspicuously, striped. Even the arcs of the giant pergolas in Victoria Square form a plan of big distorted stripes. The giant 'louvres' along the Craigieburn Bypass are vertical stripes. TCL's description of the parallel lines ruled across the Australian Garden as 'ordering marks' is spot on.²³ This is an ordering system—about as simple as possible—which they adopt and then proceed to re-scale, twist, distort, and overlay to create varied spatial experiences and expressive designs. This generates varied effects that anybody can perceive directly and appreciate, especially in combination with movement: along or across the grain or meandering independently from it; and with dynamic effects caused by passing stripes at varying speeds or with their varied spacing implying different speeds.

Right: The US Public Land Survey System of mile-square sections and townships arbitrarily overlaid the natural landscape. [Google Earth]

Far Right: 'Isaac Newton', William Blake, 1795; 1746 plan of Versailles. [Wikipedia]



The lines handled this way obviously define edges, and also, as in the pergolas of Victoria Square, define the opening up of centres. Unvaried parallel stripes would generate neutral space, as would an unvaried grid; but the pattern is never unvaried. TCL's use of stripes is basically an arbitrary imposition rather than a reflection of site interpretations or patterns of use. The same pattern crops up in too many different situations to claim it is a site-specific response. It's a flexible tool TCL know how to use, so they use it. It works across large sites and scales down as unpretentious decoration. Handy. And that's fine, although in this sense it is neutral too. Where it most seems to gain greater value is where it resonates with other aspects of a site or its uses. That happens quite often—perhaps because the system is simple, and because it is not burdened with arcane meanings or pretensions of innovation. In places the stripes make meaningful references: e.g. in the Canberra Arboretum they relate to Walter Burley Griffin's 'water axis' and suggest patterns of agro-forestry, rather than picturesque arboreta of the past. They also seem a quintessential pattern of tillage to me, which is one reason I read the North Terrace design as a garden in the sense discussed earlier. But whatever they are, the suggestion of such meanings by the sites themselves—to be reflected by the design rather than imported and labelled by designers—means the design itself has the capacity to speak.

²² Charles Jencks, 'The New Paradigm of Architecture'. As found at www.charlesjencks.com/articles.html (accessed 3 January 2011).

²³ See www.aiaa.org.au/projects/vic/tcl-AusGarden/slides/004.htm (accessed 28 December 2010).

Dialogue

The language of the street is always strong. ...Cut these words and they would bleed; they are vascular and alive; they walk and run. Moreover they who speak them have this elegancy, that they do not trip in their speech. It is a shower of bullets, whilst Cambridge men and Yale men correct themselves and begin again at every half sentence.

Ralph Waldo Emerson ²⁴

I think the most crippling trait of Modernism is insistence on originality. I have heard at least one Modernist use the term derivative as a four letter word—as if the inevitable result of adapting someone else’s ideas is that the ideas will be degraded; as if refinement is impossible or even reprehensible; as if something can come from nothing; as if we have no past. Even architectural theorists keen to adopt new ‘paradigms’ maintain this attitude, as when Charles Jencks notes without protest that designs are demanded that ‘must not look like anything seen before and [must] refer to no known religion, ideology, or set of conventions’, and criticises Libeskind and Gehry because their ‘expressive grammar is too often repeated across projects’.

This attitude leaves an impossible task of designing meaningful places without using a language or references that might infuse them with meaning. All that can be created is an ‘enigmatic signifier’—something perhaps beautiful or sublime to behold, or intriguing through its novelty, but vacuous.²⁵

To embed meaning in a design and for others to recognise that meaning depends on people being able to recognise something in the design and interpret it in a manner consistent with the designer’s intent. This depends on links with things known before. This is undermined by complete novelty. If a design’s derivation is familiar (whether or not consciously recognisable as such), it has the potential to be more expressive than if all links are novel or obscure. This doesn’t rule out transposition of ideas from one context to another, or abstraction, variation and so on—as, for example, in the derivation of Glenn Murcutt’s rural houses from vernacular farm buildings. But it does mean that tangible links between designs and other places provide a basis for richer experiences by people using them. (I don’t mean to say there is no value in sensual responses to light, form, space, etc.

²⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘The Language of the Street’ as quoted in *The Norton Reader*, 4th ed. WW Norton & Co Inc, NY, 1977, p. 258.

²⁵ Given his repeated and apparently earnest use of the term, it isn’t certain that Jencks regards an ‘enigmatic signifier’ as an oxymoron, but it is. See Charles Jencks, ‘The New Paradigm of Architecture’. As at www.charlesjencks.com/articles.html (accessed 3 January 2011);

or in allowing people to imbue places with their own meanings, but for the moment let's assume that conveying meaning matters—that communication is important.)

There are many links between TCL's work and historical precedents. Their garden for the Australian Consul General in Japan is a descendent of a classic parterre and of the cubist garden for the Villa Noailles by Robert Mallet-Stevens, as well as a reference to a bento box full of tasty treats. Victoria Square owes debts to Bryant Park New York, Denton Corker Marshall's giant arbour at Southbank in Brisbane, and Bernini's colonnades at St Peter's in Rome. Stylistic traits and formal elements also get repeated and reinterpreted from one TCL project to another, such as the giant 'louvres' along the Craigieburn Bypass and in the Sydney University campus.

Abstractions of and references to natural landscapes also abound in their work. The repeated appearance of rust-red features in many TCL projects is partly a reflection of the contemporary fashion for Cor-Ten steel, but also a reminder of landscapes of the Flinders Ranges and Uluru. The shell grit swale in Birrarung Marr is highly abstracted, very formal and composed of a strange mixture of materials, yet recognisable as a reference to dry riverbeds.

The Forest Gallery and the Australian Garden would have required references to natural landscapes as part of the brief, but that doesn't make these irrelevant; a decision to pursue a direction in a design is just a starting point. What is striking in these projects is the variety of abstractions TCL and their collaborator Paul Thompson have devised, with convincing references to a number of distinct ecologies. None of these are even faintly realistic as depictions of natural landscapes, but the careful use of specific details gives several of them a kind of poetic verisimilitude. In contrast, evocations of a vaguely perceived stereotypical 'Australian landscape', as in Federation Square, seem unconvincing. Modest, sharply observed stories often carry more weight than grand theoretical propositions.

Even if you accept the value of conveying meaning in designs, and that striving for innovation is less important than people make it out to be and even a potential problem (neither of these is a done deal) there are four problems to address. One is simple: unnecessary chatter. Meanings are often overlaid on designs with no clear relationship to its functions, and could be replaced or just done away with and few would complain.

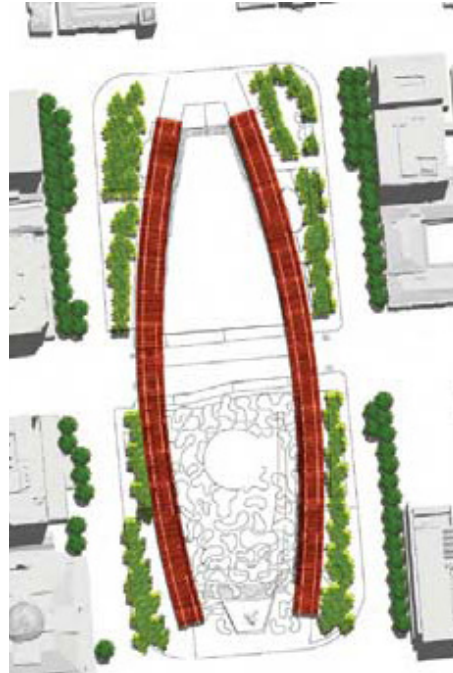
The second is complicated: ambiguity. Landscapes aren't read like pages of text. Full understanding of a design as we intend it to be understood is unlikely. Conflicting interpretations are probable. Meanings shift over time. This might be a source of interest, but must be a limit to any ambition to communicate.

Opposite Left: 20. Cubist garden of Villa Noailles, Hyères, France by Robert Mallet-Stevens, 1923-25. [Wikipedia]



Opposite Right: 21. Garden for the Australian Consul General's Residence, Kobe, Japan by TCL, 1998. [TCL]





The third is Emerson. Emerson exaggerated to make a point as much as I do. Yes, there may be a sense of immediacy in the banter between two brickies, but also crudeness—not in the sense of causing offence, but in lacking the ability to express a wide range of ideas or subtleties across that range. A capacity for nuanced suggestion is a marvellous thing. But there are times when blunt clarity is desirable. Lots of them.

The fourth is Keats. Urban public spaces experience a strange hybrid of timescales, with a necessity for longevity of spaces and systems combined with a shocking ephemerality of fabric that seems like it should be enduring, whether stone paving or magnificent buildings.²⁶ Cities shed their skin regularly and grind through landscapes more quickly than the Tasmanian wood-cutting industry, and most of what we see in them is shaped by ongoing processes rather than considered design decisions. Over time, park maintenance regimes do as much, if not more, to shape landscapes than any master plan. If we intervene and redesign a space, but do not alter the prevailing processes, the only reasonable expectation is that it will revert to something like its earlier state—in cities no less than in natural landscapes. Any meaning embedded in the design had just as well be writ in water.

These are the things that worry me in TCL's projects, even if many are in special places, seemingly set aside from the path of cities' grinding machinery. The problem is that even the most cosseted urban spaces are not divorced from surrounding realities—rarely as much as people like to imagine, including clients (with ambitions), designers (in denial), and the public (in the dark). No more or less than usual for public landscape projects, TCL's are marked by misjudgements of robustness, as with the undulating Customs House lawn in Geelong that has been replaced with a very boring patch of flat grass; by overestimations of the capacity or will to maintain spaces, as in Birrarung Marr where the plantings are now shockingly overgrown with weeds; and by the influence of short-term marketing ploys rather than long-term management realities, as in Melbourne Docklands projects where special pavers and furniture will inevitably be replaced with council standards as soon as bits start to break.



Opposite Left: 22. Bernini's forecourt to St Peter's, Rome, 1657-67. [Wikipedia]

Opposite Right: 23. Plan for Victoria Square with proposed arbours. [TCL + TZG]

Right: TCL's wavy Customs House lawn at the Geelong foreshore before (bottom) and after it was flattened (top). A more gently undulating (and more wave-like) sine curve and an engineered turf and soil combination surely could have been used to make it work, but the processes affecting the public realm tend to grind things flat—literally, in this case. [TCL; Flickr]



We need poetry, but I can't help thinking it would be wise to speak more often in a blunt but durable language of the street, even if it is limiting—and to try to use this as the basis of a more robust civic art.

²⁶ A phenomenon possibly due to capitalism more than carelessness. See Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. Verso, 1983, pp. 98-99.

Civic Design

In a democracy citizens are caretakers of the state. In totalitarian societies, the state presumes to be the caretaker of its citizens. But a state that is not actively sustained by the care of its citizens—that does not grow through their participation in the maintenance and governance of its institutions—has neither the means nor the will to care for its citizens, except insofar as they serve the interests of the state.

Robert Pogue Harrison ²⁷

Shaping the environment to support ourselves is a mark of our human civilisation. The vital aspect of this environmental design in building a civilisation—rather than just making nests—is not the construction of private homes, but the creation of settlements that are aggregates of buildings and shared spaces among them. Public space is one of the most fundamental civic institutions. It is the physical expression of, and support for, civic life—for the activities that make us citizens rather than only grudging co-inhabitants or rival consumers like cattle in a feed-lot.

It is naive to think physical design alone directs behaviour. If, as Sennett says, ‘monotonous space is what a society of passive individuals builds for itself’ there is no certainty that richly varied environments will draw people out of self-absorbed insularity and into lives of civic action.²⁸ However, there are obvious relationships between public behaviour and the forms given to spaces that may support or hinder activities in them. The visual harmonies between natural environments in different parts of the world and the distinctive cultures that developed within those environments also indicate that the character of environments is influential. On a day-to-day basis, we interpret the way people treat their environment as signs of sloth and industry, pomp and modesty, esteem and denigration. Public space affects us profoundly—individually and as communities, over the course of generations and in split-second decisions about how we act.

Giambattista Vico argued that people construct their own understanding of reality, developing a sense of meaning through interaction with their surroundings. He claimed that history, culture and truth itself—let alone institutions—are man-made, and that civic life is therefore wholly constructed. In a more down-to-earth style, Jane Jacobs agreed, describing how the fundamental trust that supports civic interaction of any kind must be built through the myriad small interchanges that occur in cities: casual greetings to passers by, enquiries after a neighbour's health, weather observations shared with the greengrocer. 'Most of it is ostensibly utterly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all.'²⁹ The edifice arises brick by brick.

This construction goes hand-in-hand with the creation of public realms that give civic life a home. Shaping the public realm well is not only a matter of creating infrastructure that passively facilitates interaction by others. The design of the public realm itself, at least at some times and in some places, can make important contributions to the accumulation of exchanges that builds a community. A designer of a public space is a citizen as much as the people who inhabit that space, and should act accordingly.

There *is* a lot of communication going on in TCL's work. The rich imagery, striking patterns and conspicuous craft in their projects might be regarded as mere show, but should be seen as standing up and being heard when things should be said, and speaking in languages that people can understand.

That communication requires balance. A polite enquiry after the newsagent's health is not a request for details of his bowel movements, and I'm not convinced that silence is golden only in the temples of wild nature. However, expressions of acknowledgement, intelligent conversation, just praise, wit, and wisdom are precious things. Few of us always get the balance right, and I wouldn't argue that TCL have. However, I do see expressions of acknowledgement, intelligent conversation, just praise, wit, and wisdom in their work.

²⁷ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*. University of Chicago, 2008, p. 36.

²⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities*. WW Norton & Co, 1990, p. 65.

²⁹ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vintage Books/Random House, 1961, p. 56.

Public Art

Our [human] condition is for most parts an affair of the everyday, not of the heroic, and our minimal ethical responsibility to our neighbour... consists not in showing him or her the way to redemption but in helping him or her get through the day.

Robert Pogue Harrison³⁰

Most creative work is autobiographical to some extent, reflecting where we have travelled, how we have seen things, those we have loved or reacted against, when we have lived. Creative work is therefore, in itself, an account of influences. And yet by definition it is not a simple representation of facts, but an exercise of imagination in which our lives are distorted and obscured. Furthermore, the languages in which these accounts are rendered are often ambiguous or arcane—languages of visual or performing arts, science and technology, languages used conventionally or idiosyncratically, defined, encrypted, or erroneously assumed to be tacit.

Not surprisingly, the limits of reading creative works as reflections of their makers' lives are widely acknowledged. Less appreciated is the difficulty of understanding what is actually creative in these works. In the 17th Century, there was a dispute between Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz over which of the two invented calculus. Both seemed to have invented it simultaneously, but both were building on ideas developed over centuries by mathematicians in Greece, China, Persia, India and Japan. It isn't clear who created what. While I am no mathematician, in the case of calculus there seems less room for doubt about sources and innovations than in works of landscape architecture, which draw on a wide range of arts, sciences, technologies, environmental conditions, personal experiences and cultural associations. And as landscapes are usually the production of several people rather than a result of one person's thinking, the complication of any attempt at attribution is increased manyfold.

Understanding where and why people have focused their creative effort is even more difficult. Relating creative works to life histories at least has the advantage of tangible objects on one hand and biographical facts on the other. Understanding creative intent requires some kind of intellectual sympathy.

However, intellectual sympathy is a weak force among the various forces that bind the human universe. In 2008 in Somalia, a 13-year-old girl was stoned to death by fifty men in front of about a thousand spectators, as punishment for adultery because she had been raped; none of the rapists were arrested or punished.³¹ This is beyond intellectual sympathy for me—alien to what I would call my human understanding.

³⁰ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*. University of Chicago, 2008, p. 94.

³¹ 'Rape victim stoned to death', *The Guardian*, as reproduced in *The Age*, 4 November 2008, p. 8. Amnesty International, 'Child of 13 stoned to death in Somalia', 31 October 2008, www.amnesty.org/en/news-andupdates/news/child-of-13-stoned-to-death-in-somalia-20081031 (accessed 3 December 2008).

³² 'How Kevin Bacon Cured Cancer' (on network theory research by D Watts, A-L Barabasi, etc.), ABC1 TV, 28 Oct 2008, www.abc.net.au/tv/guide/netw/200810/programs/DO0719H001D28102008T203000.htm (accessed 7 November 2008).

Yet the authorities, executioners and witnesses were human. It is also possible that every one of them knows someone who knows someone, who, through a chain of roughly 'six degrees of separation' knows me.³² How, in this close-linked chain, can perceptions of enormity be transformed into perceptions of justice? If such unfathomable chasms can exist within our global culture, surely multitudes of smaller ones do too, even closer to home.

In a culture where creative work—especially 'art'—is seen as something expressive of unique personal perceptions, this must make true 'public art' an impossibility. At the very least it demands that, if we are to pursue ideas of art in the public landscape, we must recognise differences between art in the public domain and an art of the public domain.

To me, this suggests two lines of thinking. The first pertains to the art of making public spaces. This might seem a matter of craft rather than art, but links between craftsmanship and art are pervasive and multifaceted. The second is that public art should, perhaps, be concerned with generating intellectual sympathy itself, rather than expressing the sort of 'truths' (e.g. about 'beauty' or 'the human condition') that are more often a focus of art, but for which intellectual sympathy is required as a precondition in order for that art to have effect.

I think this is the civic goal of public space design: laying the foundations for mutual understanding and productive interaction. 'Civic' spaces need not be forums for political debates, or monuments to victorious leaders and fallen heroes.

And the 'art' of their design need not accomplish anything more profound than an understanding that we are all in this thing together. A design might appear as a simple gift—person to person, not as a paternalistic duty by state for subject—and in the process build a bridge. The abyss may still be there, but there is a way across.

4.0

Essay

Making Sense of Landscape

Kevin Taylor

Making Sense of Landscape

Kevin Taylor

Introduction

This essay explores my relationship with site and community and the individual contribution this has made to the work of the practice, Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL). Particular reference is made to two large-scale civic projects in Adelaide; North Terrace and Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga.

These projects occurred in 1999–2005 in the case of North Terrace and 2009–2011 for Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga. They therefore capture distinct periods in my and the practice's development.

To provide context to the examination of my practice through these two projects, three of the earliest projects undertaken by TCL are also discussed. Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Collingwood Children's Farm are examined to highlight formative project experiences and reactions to site and community.

In addition, two major civic spaces in Australia and the United States of America are studied to identify differences and similarities in how these projects have evolved in comparison to TCL's approach.

Civic projects are examined as these have formed the bulk of the practice's work and present the greatest challenges to the expression of site and community relationships and responses. North Terrace and Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga are also two of the most collaborative projects the practice has undertaken and therefore highlight changing modes of practice and collaboration by not only myself but also Kate Cullity and Perry Lethlean.

Making Sense of Site and Community: A Short Personal History My Personal Experience of Site and Community

In understanding a project, my first intuition is to go to the site and feel what it is like to be there. My connection with site is also the conduit through which my relationship with client and community develops. When consulting or working with people, I am searching for their connection with the site, and then through this, my connection with them. Their experiences of the site, whether remembered or contemporary, enriches the identity of the site for me.

It also nurtures my connection with the people and gives me an intimacy with the site, the people and the project which allows me to contemplate what is an appropriate transformation. This intimacy gives me the confidence to act, knowing that my actions are borne out of some mutual understanding between myself and the site and project. The site and project embody a past (known as the 'imagined'), a presence which is felt and tangible and a trajectory which includes myself and a wider body of people (community) who have aspirations which are projected through the place.

I become a facilitator and an orchestrator. While I have a sense of what is appropriate or right, I usually need help to come up with the physical form, and Kate will frequently then work on the detail bringing beauty and care. My principal contribution is knowing what is appropriate for the site and people who are connected with it. I can contribute to the big moves, in fact I am good at that scale because that is often about the big picture planning of the site and formative responses. Once this is established, I struggle harder to work into

the actual design response. I need to go to the site to move towards answers (this is why the Uluru and Flinders Ranges and other National Park projects are so important to me. I am there, I experience the site, I walk, I respond).

There is something fluid which happens on the site. There is movement. Not just walking, but a fluidity of sensing, feeling, thinking and imagining which unlocks possibilities.

The Lonely Ocean

My relationship with site emanates from standing on Southern Ocean beaches at Waitpinga and the Coorong in South Australia, primarily at night; fishing when I was 10–14 years old. In the middle of this period when I was 12 years old, my father died. The first two years of this period I stood on the beach with him. The last two years, I stood alone. The beach, the sky, horizon and ocean, the rhythmic sound of the waves, the dunes behind and the quietness of the night were constant presences. I experienced the physicality of these places while very open and sensitive, and vulnerable. I learnt something about the landscape, something of its language. I learnt a way of being in it whereby I could feel intimately connected with it. It comforted me. I learnt how to be comfortable within it.

The Vast Plain

I had already grown up on the plains of Adelaide and became attuned to the geography of everyday life. I had learnt that the sun rose over the hills and set over the gulf; that each ran parallel to the other and that I lived on the plain between. When 7–10 years old, I had roamed from my house in the centre of the plain, east to the foothills and west almost to the coastal beaches. These were long distances for someone so young to walk and ride. I was exploring, looking for undulation, some variation in the endless flatness of the plain. I wanted to experience its end point where it rose up to form the foothills or tipped into the gulf. I was acutely aware of the greater site on which I dwelt.

The Mountains of Melbourne

When I came to Melbourne at age 24, I was disoriented for the first three years. I then moved to St Andrews in the foothills of Kinglake Range, 50 kilometres north of the city where I purchased a 40ha piece of land covered in native forest and bounded by the Kinglake National Park.

My sense of site changed on two scales as a result. Firstly, by driving down the ridge from St Andrews to Eltham on my way to Melbourne, I came to appreciate the encircling ranges of the Melbourne region. The winding road twisted and turned, first facing the Dandenongs, then the Macedon Ranges, then back to the Kinglake Ranges, then looking far south-west to the You Yangs, and south-east to Mt Martha.

I started to organise myself in the streets of Melbourne in relation to these landmarks and Port Phillip Bay to the south. I found a geography of place which allowed me to feel comfortable in the manner I had previously experienced on the Adelaide plains during my childhood.

Walking the Forest

At a smaller, more intimate scale I began to walk the slopes of my 40 ha of bushland. I walked, ran, sat and stood still among the trees. I came to appreciate the lie of the land, the spatial arrangement of trees, the light at different times of the day, the way sound travels through different thicknesses of air. Importantly, I learnt that these perceptions and the route I took on my nomadic wanderings across the landscape added up to a tangible relationship between me and the site; that this relationship influences the way I think about the site, that the site changes me and it changes the way I change it.

Early Projects—Formative Experiences of Site and Community

My early project experiences were significant influences on the development of my relationship with site and community in public spaces. Undertaken in the period from 1988–1995, these projects were a testing ground for ideas which influenced larger civic projects later in the practice's development.

Box Hill Community Arts Centre

In 1988, I consulted with the Box Hill arts community regarding the possible renovation of their existing community arts centre which was situated in an old electricity supply depot building on Station Street.

The suburb of Box Hill was undergoing a significant transformation from quiet middle ring suburb into a major district centre with the usual array of shopping malls, transport hubs and major roads. What began as a relatively small consultation process soon became an exploration of what defined Box Hill as both a place and a community, and more importantly what role local artists could play in the unfolding of Box Hill's future.

It was evident through a series of workshops, interviews and surveys that the arts community lived in a different Box Hill from the one which was rapidly evolving as a district centre. While the local artists were a divergent group working across many art forms, they shared a vision of a supportive studio-based environment where they could develop skills, teach and socialise with other artists. This vision, interpreted into a brief and subsequently developed into a building and landscape proposal, proved to be a powerful force which inspired the Box Hill City Council to provide \$1.7 million for a new centre rather than the initial \$90,000 envisaged for renovation of the old existing building.

The community's involvement in the brief writing and initial design phases carried forward into a highly collaborative detailed design and construction process in which council officers, designers, artists, craftspeople, builders and community members worked together. The result was a building and landscape that reflected and interpreted the



Left: Box Hill CAC — community made fence.

Left: Box Hill CAC — fence making workshop.

Right: Box Hill CAC — seat by Taylor and Cullity (later TCL) and Maggie Fooke.



community's needs and aspirations in a manner that allowed for a continuous dialogue from concept to construction. Within two years of completion the centre was occupied by 50 groups, largely financially self-sufficient, had won State and national architectural and landscape awards and was considered an exemplary outcome against social, cultural, design and financial benchmarks.

The consultation and collaborative process with the community was risky. It involved my assistant Kim Dunlop and I (later joined by Kate Cullity) taking community members on a journey which traversed new territory for them. They were asked to reflect on the place they lived in, what made it special, how they might contribute to it, what it meant to be an artist in Box Hill, and what type of centre would reflect their vision for the future. In other words, they were asked to actively participate in the whole process; to take responsibility for the brief, the design and the built outcomes.

The project set in train a series of commissions for Taylor and Cullity based on community consultation and design collaboration that were instrumental in framing the practice's approach to subsequent sites and briefs. Story-telling and project narratives were developed out of workshop processes. Difference and diversity were encountered on a one-to-one basis, and above all, the power of the everyday and local community actions was experienced.

Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Immediately following the completion of the Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Kate Cullity and I embarked on the master plan for the Uluru-Kata Tjuṯa Aboriginal Cultural Centre for Parks Australia and the Mutitjulu Aboriginal community in Central Australia. This project was led by Gregory Burgess, the architect at Box Hill.

While the Box Hill project had involved many risks in the community consultation and collaboration processes, the community and site were familiar territory. At Uluru, all was foreign—culture, language, social structures, life experiences, landscape. Preconceptions about site and community were of no value.

What was required at Uluru was the ability to listen intently. Listen to the Aboriginal elders tell their stories of the site and its relationship to the wider cultural landscape. Stories of the multitude of special places residing within Uluru. Stories of tourists coming from afar to climb the rock—like ants (*minga*). Stories of changes occurring for the traditional owners and Mutitjulu community.

Here difference and diversity, contested borders and grey zones of multiple meaning constituted the bulk of the site and brief. Everything was a political act with tangible cultural, social and environmental consequences.

We walked the site with Aboriginal elders, with Parks Australia rangers, with each other, by ourselves. The site was thick with stories and meanings. The brief was to make a place where the Aboriginal people could communicate their story of Uluru to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who came each year and stayed an average of one and a half days. Thousands of years of life on country to be communicated in just a few hours via the conduits of landscape, building, interpretive media and personal story-telling.

We learnt about 'otherness' in community and landscape. We experienced site as living entity beyond surface markings and history. We found ways to walk our designs into the landscape. We knew what it felt like to be humble in the presence of a different type of knowledge which was specific to that place. Yet we knew we had something to offer by working together to produce a place of exchange where new experiences and perspectives were possible for future visitors.



Left: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre — Anangu elders on site.

Right: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre — sand paths from car park to Centre.

Collingwood Children's Farm

From 1992–1995, Kate Cullity and I undertook the preparation of a master plan for Collingwood Children's Farm. The project was stimulated by the Farm's need to establish its boundaries, identity and future amid growing concerns that its idyllic riverside location would become housing, or part of the adjacent university. The consultation involved in the project necessitated contact with vulnerable people from across the inner suburbs of Melbourne; youths, young children, recent migrants, people with mental illnesses. The process encouraged people to tell their stories, and to describe their relationship with the Farm.

The Farm environment was analysed, but the qualities which make it unique were difficult to map. They were partly about the exceptional location on a sweeping bend of the Yarra, nestled against an escarpment clad in remnant native vegetation. But the human interactions of the Farm also constituted a large part of its character; egalitarianism, compassion, acceptance, a practice of making do with available resources, tenacity and an underlying fragility.

This was a site similar to the Uluru landscape in that it was criss-crossed with a multitude of stories. There was no single narrative, this was not a place of spectacle. Rather it was built up from the collective experiences and memories of its community of users and visitors. Our task was to work with this precious web of relationships through the process of design to provide a landscape framework that would help guide the Farm's future.

Over the three years of intensive involvement, we assisted the Farm with many projects, all politically charged due to the desire of developers, government or the adjacent university to fundamentally change the Farm landscape and therefore its relationship with its community. Working with consultation, collaboration, storytelling and the politicisation of design were the principal learnings from this project.

Left: Collingwood Children's Farm, structured consultation during the Farm's Spring Fair.

Right: Collingwood Children's Farm, children and young adults building an entrance path using materials found on site.



Lessons from Early Projects

Box Hill Community Arts Centre, Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre and the Collingwood Children's Farm were important projects that contributed to preparing the practice and myself for later large-scale civic projects.

They embedded an understanding of the dense multi-layered reality of sites where personal and community politics play into the design process. They also demonstrated the value of collaboration with creative others in order to address the complexity of landscapes. Importantly, these early projects also educated me in the value of listening and building an understanding and narrative of the site based on everyday human stories and memories.

The nature of the projects fostered an acceptance of diversity and difference as a desirable given in any complex site and community. It also exposed me to the resilience and tenacity, yet fragility, of the social edge where 'ownership' and the right to occupy a site are contested.

Finally each of these projects, particularly Uluru and Collingwood Children's Farm, allowed me to develop skills in appreciating the multitude and complex interweaving of meanings which constitute 'site'. To appreciate the 'thickness' of site as a field of interactions and memories which permeate and expand beyond the physical attributes of place.

North Terrace—An Introduction to the Civic Context

In 1999, TCL undertook the preparation of an urban design framework for the North Terrace Precinct in Adelaide. This was led by TCL with Peter Elliott Architects, James Hayter and Associates and Paul Carter.

North Terrace occupies a unique location on the flat terrain of the Adelaide Plains. As one of the four terraces which bound the inner city, it is situated on an escarpment overlooking the Torrens River. It therefore has a sense of elevation, making it a terrace both topographically and as a broad linear conduit for movement.

To the south, the inner city spreads across the plain. North Terrace therefore occupies a place of mediation between the commerce of the city and plain to the south, and the ecology of the river and its valley to the north.

In planning the city of Adelaide, Colonel William Light located Government House at the junction of King William Street and North Terrace, and envisaged that Victoria Square in the centre of the grid-like plan would be the civic and cultural centre of the city. However, the magnetism of the topographic change adjacent to North Terrace in an otherwise flat landscape proved too strong and over a period of 100 years, from 1836 to 1936, every peak civic and cultural institution in South Australia lined up along the Terrace, producing a remarkable array of fine buildings and transforming North Terrace into the nation's finest cultural boulevard.

During this period, two important decisions created a physical framework which still endures and has shaped the spatial experience of North Terrace. Firstly, the road reserve was set at 54 m in width with 25 m on the northern edge being reserved for pedestrian movement. Secondly, this 25 m zone was divided into approximately 12 m of east–west paths and approximately 13 m of garden. Thus the Prince Henry Gardens were created from King William Street eastwards to Frome Road.

By the late 1980s, despite its strong underlying structure, the Terrace had degenerated into a series of disparate institutions and public spaces flanked by a major road choked with vehicles. Movement from the city to the river was blocked, and the Terrace was considered an inhospitable place for pedestrians. The brief for the urban design framework written in 1999 had a vision that North Terrace would be '... reinvigorated as the civic and cultural heart of Adelaide and South Australia ... becom[ing] a vital place of economic exchange and rich social intercourse ... reflecting the collective and individual imagination and achievements of the South Australian community'.¹ More specifically, the vision called for improved north–south access between the city and river, definition of major institution entrances, reduced vehicle impacts, regenerated plantings and reinstatement of a definable sense of identity and place for North Terrace as a destination within the city.

¹ Capital City Development Program, *North Terrace Precincts Development & Urban Design Framework*. Unpublished, 2000, iv.

An Imagined Past—Forgotten Memories

The project team for North Terrace included Paul Carter, an experienced cultural planner, writer and artist. Building on previous research, Paul undertook an exploration of the motivations and basis of Colonel Light's plan for Adelaide and in particular his vision for North Terrace. Most of Light's documents were destroyed in a fire which incinerated his house in 1839. Little is therefore known of his musings and motivations in laying out the city.

Basing his speculations primarily on what is known of Light's personal history and travels prior to reaching Adelaide, Carter formulated a series of propositions regarding Light's intent for North Terrace:

'In Spain and Italy, whence Light derived his conception of the Terrace, the terrace is a place of heightened social intercourse, where pedestrians predominate, entertainments proliferate and the view creates a theatrical backdrop to these activities.'²

Further, Carter's supposition was that Light had envisioned a place of urbanity and significant cultural importance:

'The prospect terrace was conceived as a link between religious, political and cultural activities. In addition it was imagined as a distinctively urban (and urbane) zone where a heightened sense of civic identity was inculcated.'³

Carter's text, faxed in barely decipherable handwriting from Frankfurt Airport, was liberating and compelling.⁴ Firstly, it created a direct link between the design team and Light, providing us with a previously unattainable 'authority' to radically change this 'sacrosanct' element within his revered city plan. Secondly, it cemented the link between topography, terrace and urbanity in our thinking.

These informed speculations not only resonated with the design team, but also the client body, and consequently opened a fruitful dialogue concerning the synchronicity of the contemporary vision for North Terrace with the dormant possibility Carter had unearthed.



Right: Panoramic view of North Terrace, Adelaide looking east from the west end. Created by lithographer S. Streaker (London) from a drawing on stone by J. Hitchen based on a work by E. A. Opie circa 1841. Source State Library of South Australia.

² Paul Carter quoted in *North Terrace Precincts Development & Urban Design Framework*. Unpublished, 2000, 24.

³ *ibid*, 26.

⁴ Aspects of this text were subsequently published in Paul Carter, *Dark Writing – Geography, Performance, Design (Writing Post Colonialism)*. (University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 140 – 152.

This experience of how a myth, memory or story concerning a large civic and symbolic site such as North Terrace could connect with and influence the design process was an important moment which further reinforced the value of delving below the surface of conventional site histories.

⁵ Paul Carter quoted in *North Terrace Precincts Development & Urban Design Framework*. Unpublished, 2000, 40.

The Whole Terrace—Key Moves

In addressing the whole length of North Terrace from West Terrace to Hackney Road, the design team developed a set of paramount design principles or ‘key moves’ which described the fundamental shifts necessary to reconceptualise the Terrace in the manner Carter had proposed; ‘... to put the terrace back into North Terrace ...’⁵ These ‘moves’ or shifts were a synthesis of principles, policies and physical changes designed to provide a structure within which more detailed planning and design principles could be framed:

Complete the Thresholds

Create a west entry landscape and park to match the quality of the east entry.

Connect the Thresholds

Connect the thresholds with a green Terrace Walk.

Energise the River

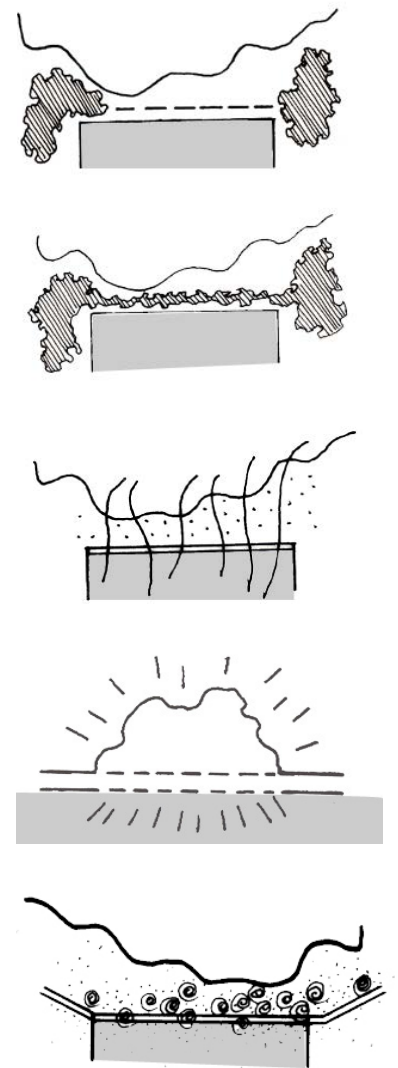
Bring the river valley to life with buildings facing the water, waterside promenades and a program of water-based activities and riverside events.

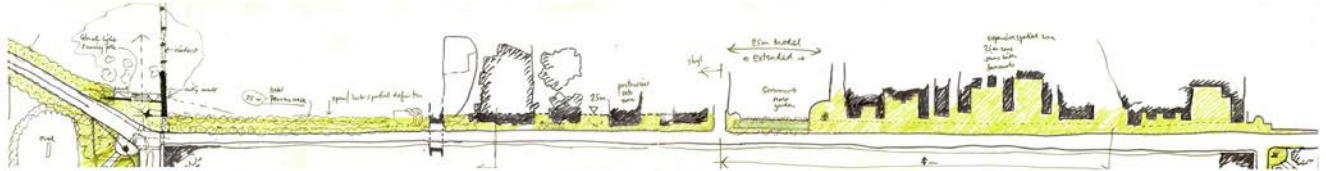
Enhance the Cultural Heart

Explore new ways to draw people into the intellectual, artistic, government, botanical, tourist and medical institutions which form the heart of the Terrace Precinct.

Cross-fertilise

Enhance the synergies and create lively links between the city retail, cultural/civic and river precincts.





The fundamental difference between these ‘moves’ and other guiding principles and vision statements’ etcetera, is that they constitute a design approach or language that is spatial and propose physical changes to the site. Developing a set of ‘moves’ is a common step in TCL’s development of design. It is a key device used to isolate the most important changes needed to transform the site. It provides clarity of intent and allows for clear and simple communication with the client and others involved in the project. It also provides a framework within which more detailed design exploration can occur, and against which they can be reviewed.

The North Terrace ‘moves’ are spatial, experiential and activity based. They foreshadow particular landscapes; threshold parks, Terrace Walk, river promenade, riverside buildings, walks and laneways between the city and river. They also suggest activities/experience; promenading, riverside events, and activities around the Cultural Heart. What is lacking in the language used to describe the ‘key moves’ is a reference to the complexity, diversity, difference and social exchange present in public domain as defined by Hajer and Reijndorp.⁶

⁶ M Hajer & A Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain* (NAi Publishers: Rotterdam, 2001). 89.

Scale Shift—Patterns within Patterns

Moving to the next level down from the ‘key moves’ involved designing the first two stages of North Terrace in detail. The approach taken was to identify an overall pattern which organised the entire site, then to develop a series of infill patterns which gradually built up levels of detail. The defining key move for the detailed design was ‘Connect the Thresholds’ with a green Terrace Walk.

Investigations into the possible configuration of this green Terrace Walk led to the identification of the remnant historical path and garden pattern extant in front of Government House. Here the 25 m pedestrian zone on the north side of North Terrace was set out with an inner path against the Government House wall, a central lawn or garden and an outer path against the road kerb. Photos from the 1880s had shown the initial set out of this arrangement.

Left: North Terrace Key Moves from the *Redevelopment of North Terrace Design Framework* by Taylor Cullity Lethlean with Peter Elliott, James Hayter and Associates and Paul Carter. Unpublished.

This layout was modified to a 4 m inner path, a 13 m flexible garden/lawn/plaza zone, and a generous 8 m kerbside path, and extended from King William Street to East Terrace. A modified version was proposed from King William Street west to West Terrace.

Given the changing land uses along the length of North Terrace, it was considered imperative to establish such a strong and robust spatial framework within which individual precinct character could be expressed without subsuming the overall conceptual intent and spatial experience.

Having established the overall framework, attention turned to the detail within the 13 m flexible zone. Here a rhythm of stripes was used to order planting, lawns, water features and plaza spaces. Ron Jones refers to TCL's use of striped patterns in his essay *Truth Itself is Constructed*, where he postulates that the pattern is used as an ordering device and that its neutrality allows other aspects of the design to find their voice. On North Terrace he relates the striped garden beds to a tillage pattern which prompts him to '... read the North Terrace design as a garden'.⁷

Two key requirements resulted in the use of these patterns on North Terrace. Firstly, the pattern had to be very flexible and read both as a definable repetitive element, yet allow garden beds, lawns, plazas, etcetera to come and go according to the needs determined primarily by adjacent land uses and institutions. Secondly, the pattern had to facilitate north-south movement through the site. The striped pattern achieves both of these objectives. Interestingly, its flexibility has resulted in it reading as a definite and rigid pattern in some locations while fading into the background and acting only as a conceptual form-giver in others.

Gini Lee, in her article, 'On Walking the Terrace and Mediating Topography' refers to the rhythm of spaces which have been created by the striped patterning and how they both frame the adjacent buildings and encourage pedestrians to pause and linger in the spaces created.⁸

Topography, Asymmetry and Serrated Edges

Lee's article also refers to North Terrace's redesign as being a '... topographical approach to re-imagining the Terrace'.⁹ She describes how '... the immediate ground plane has emerged from the flattened plain in a kind of micro-topography that spatially refocusses one's position between the chaos of the busy street and the formality of the institutional buildings'.¹⁰ Precast concrete seating plinths terrace down-slope from south to north in a deliberate reference to the escarpment on which the Terrace sits above the river valley.

The redevelopment also chooses to reinforce rather than camouflage the asymmetrical form of the Terrace. The solid south wall of the city is emphasised as is the serrated building edge to the north, where the inner path expands into a series of forecourts associated with the various institutions. The extent of the continuous public realm is significantly increased as a result, and the many buildings visually sit within a continuous and relatively uniform context of materials and patterning.

⁷ Ronald Jones *Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art*, Unpublished, 2011, 12.

⁸ Gini Lee, 'North Terrace', *Architecture Australia*, 2006, 95th ed. no 2: 710 – 79.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*



Above Left: North Terrace – typical users. By Emily Taylor

Above Right: Northern Lights on North Terrace by Andy Rasheed.



Northern Lights—Passeggiata on the Terrace

In 2008, and again in 2010, the Adelaide Festival of the Arts installed a series of projections onto the heritage façades of buildings between Kintore Avenue and Frome Road in Stages One and Two of North Terrace. Brightly coloured and expressive images tailored to each façade changed every few minutes in a continuous spectacle each night throughout the Festival.

The people of Adelaide responded in an unexpected manner. They came in their thousands and watched the changing projections, but more importantly they stayed and talked to friends and strangers. They lingered and occupied the pathways, forecourts and plazas in a way seldom seen in the preceding decades. Many of them returned a second and third time, not just to see the images, but to experience the social exchange made possible by this temporary event.

This event, perhaps more than any theoretical speculation, demonstrated the potential of North Terrace to become ‘public domain’ rather than public space. It is valuable to evaluate the nature of the ‘spectacle’ which took place at Northern Lights. It was not a focused and timed event centred on a single screen or stage. Rather it was a cyclic sequence of images diffusely spread along the length of the Terrace. It was engaging, but in the background. It served its purpose of drawing people out into the street, but did not then demand their attention. It did not seek to entertain them on its terms. It allowed and encouraged people to ‘entertain’ themselves. This invariably took the form of conversation, meeting and exchange.

Exploring the New Civic—Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga: Place as Process

Context

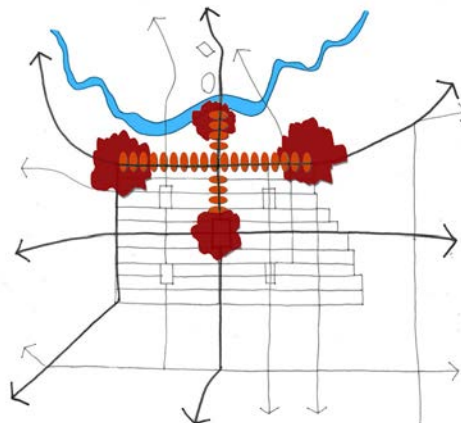
Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga is situated in the geographic centre of Light's plan for central Adelaide. It is approximately at the midpoint between the gulf and beaches to the west and the foothills and ranges to the east. From its slight knoll, the Square looks down a gentle slope north to the Torrens River valley, while to the south the Mount Lofty Ranges arc around to the coast providing a distant view of hills and escarpments.

Two wide main streets of Adelaide run north–south (King William Street) and east–west (Grote–Wakefield Street) through the Square. The long views to hills and horizons afforded by these streets reinforce the sense that the Square is at the centre of not only the city but the larger plain on which it sits.

This geographic intensity is not matched by contemporary activity patterns which are biased towards the north-east precincts of the city. However, current major projects such as the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and associated research facilities and redevelopment of the Riverbank precinct will significantly increase activity in the north-west sector of the city. These north-east and north-west centres of activity will be linked by the North Terrace boulevard/promenade.

The development of the tram extension north of Victoria Square along King William Street in 2007 has highlighted the potential for this boulevard to become a north–south link from Victoria Square to North Terrace and the northern activity zones. Victoria Square and its adjacent activity precincts of Gouger and Grote Street thus have the potential to be part of a triangle of major activity centres linked by the city's two principal structural and symbolic boulevards—North Terrace and King William Street.

This sense of city context is critical in Adelaide where projects historically compete for limited short-term funds, with inter-project criticism often resulting in a lapse of political confidence and will to undertake any urban public realm improvement. By positioning Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga within a holistic picture of the city complementary to other contemporary projects, the project team sought to create a paradigm in which multiple initiatives could be appreciated for their combined value to the city over a longer period of time.



Left: Linking North Terrace and Victoria Square activity zones. Diagram showing Balancing and linking City Activity from *Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga Regeneration Master Plan Report*, TCL and others, 2010, 7.

Site Evolution

Victoria Square was conceived by Light as the central square in a system of five squares and encircling parkland forming a comprehensive open space system for the portion of Adelaide south of the Torrens River.

The Post Office, Town Hall, principal government offices and law courts were grouped around the Square, quickly establishing it as the civic heart of the city and colony. This ‘civicness’ was defined principally by the functions in the institutions around rather than within the Square. The Square itself was used predominantly for recreation once it was established in the 1850s.

The physical form of the Square has changed at 30–40 year intervals from 1836. The first major intervention was the extension of King William Street through the Square in 1883 creating four quadrants. Significant changes to path layouts and plantings have occurred more frequently at 10–20 year intervals e.g. 1910–11, 1930–31, 1945–46 and 1965–69.¹¹

The last redevelopment in 1965–69 was a radical departure from previous arrangements. Largely in response to car movement efficiencies, the formerly rectilinear shape of the Square was modified to a diamond which allowed vehicles to easily move in a north–south direction around two large internal spaces created in the north and south. Small triangular remnants were created in each corner. This configuration still exists 40 years later. In the ensuing period the Square has been maintained but not upgraded resulting in the gradual decline of trees, pavement and furniture and hence an overall appearance of decline and malaise.

Since 1967, numerous schemes have been produced to transform the Square, some commissioned by Adelaide City Council, others volunteered by architects and urban designers keen to see this important site developed in a contemporary manner. The last such effort was in 2000–02 when a multidisciplinary team led by KBR prepared a complete redevelopment plan after considerable consultation. This scheme proposed the closure of the east–west road through the Square which resulted in the politicisation of the design and its subsequent abandonment after the 2002 Council elections (the newly elected Lord Mayor had made the retention of the road and the dilution of the plan a significant part of his platform).

¹¹ Dr David Jones, *Cultural Heritage Report in Victoria Square/ Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Project Sketch Design Report*, Unpublished, 2010, 10 – 35.

Below Left: View of Victoria Square showing civic buildings photograph by Samuel White Sweet, Victoria Square, seventh of 12 photographs in an album. Victoria Square circa 1878. Source State Library of South Australia

Below Right: Aerial of Victoria Square, 2011. Source: Google Maps.



Embedded Culture

An equally significant event in 2002 was the closure of the central road through the Square for the 10-day duration of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. Under the directorship of Peter Sellars and Kurna associate directors Karl and Waiata Telfer, *Kurna Palti Meyunna* was staged. This cultural event brought indigenous first nation people from around the world to the Square in a series of ceremonies, performances and events that included the festival opening ceremony. For the first time the centre of the Square was open; not only accessible for all, but the Kurna Aboriginal people had re-established their presence. Queen Victoria's statue was respectfully wrapped/embalmed insitu and incorporated into the central stage for the event.

Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga is very significant to the Kurna people. Ivaritji the last Kurna person to speak the language fluently is quoted in 1927 as saying that Victoria Square was the location of the Kurna people's central camp.¹² Aboriginal cultural bearer and member of the TCL team working on the Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga redevelopment, Karl Telfer, describes Tarndanyangga as being '... the dreaming place of the red kangaroo ... the sacred heartbeat of the Dhanda-anya Kurna people'.¹³

The Kurna people believe that Light was aware of the significant Kurna places in the Adelaide region and in fact sited and laid out the city partly in response to this knowledge. Karl Telfer states that '... the first seed of light planted by William (1836) has grown over time and has opened up a new pathway toward a respected symbolic layering of the Hunter/Gatherer and the Farmer/City Dweller to share in the collective memory of story and place'.¹⁴

¹² Karl Telfer, *Aboriginal Culture & Tarndanyangga in Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Project Sketch Design Report*, Unpublished, 2010, 1.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 2.



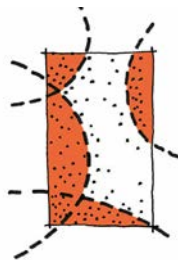
Left: *Kurna Palti Meyunna*, Adelaide Festival of the Arts, 2002.

From Idea to Form

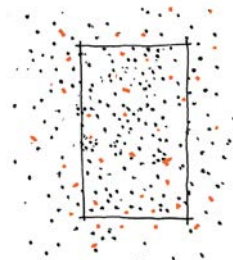
The process of developing a design for Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga was a circuitous route of exploration, trial and error, ducking and weaving, involving the examination of many options. It was a collaborative process with Peter Tonkin of Tonkin Zulaikha Greer and contributions from a team of 23 specialist consultants.

Six principles were established early in the investigations. These were:

1. Tease Life out of the Edges: attract adjacent workers into the Square
2. Enable the New Civic: create a space which facilitates socialisation and exchange
3. Make the Market Connection: link with the life of the adjacent Central Market
4. Create New Sources of Life—A Hybrid Square: develop a mix of uses which together create a vibrant and unified Square
5. Tell Stories with Meaning: embed into the experience of the Square an appreciation of the cultural significance of the place
6. A Centre for the Symbolic and Actual Life of the City: transform the Square into a rich centre of activity



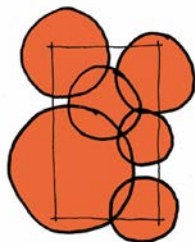
Tease Life out of the Edges



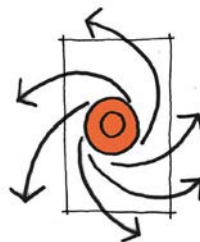
Enable the New Civic



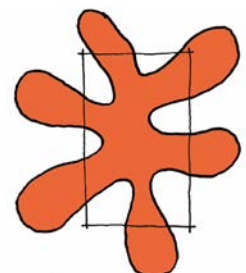
Make the Market Connection



Create New Sources of Life—A Hybrid Square



Tell Stories with Meaning



A Centre for the Symbolic and Actual Life of the City

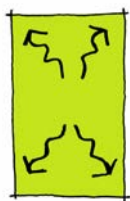
Right: Diagrams showing the Six Principles of Victoria Square from *Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Regeneration Master Plan Report*, TCL and others, 2010, 21.

These principles were complemented by six layers of experience which were developed from the market research and extensive discussion with stakeholders:

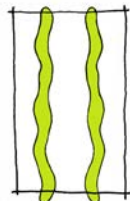
- Theatre of the City: make the Square Adelaide's premier outdoor space
- A Garden Haven: a sustainable garden respite in the city
- Market Square: a place to savour the best of South Australia's food, wine and outdoor lifestyle
- A Curated Square: an integrated approach which brings together all cultural experiences within the Square
- A Connection Focus: the establishment of a bustling public transport hub in the centre of the city

The manifestation of the principles and layers of experience on the site were facilitated by six spatial moves:

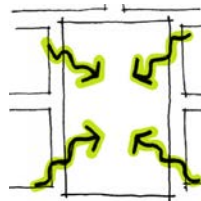
- Maximise the central space
- Link from north to south
- Facilitate access from the edges
- Create multiple destinations
- Integrate east-west movement
- Make the centre the main attraction



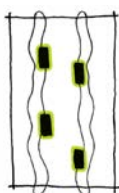
Maximise the Central Space



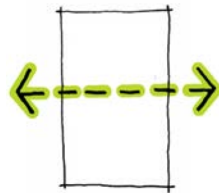
Link from North to South



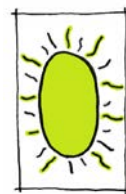
Faciliate Access from the Edges



Create Multiple Destinations



Integrate East-West Movement



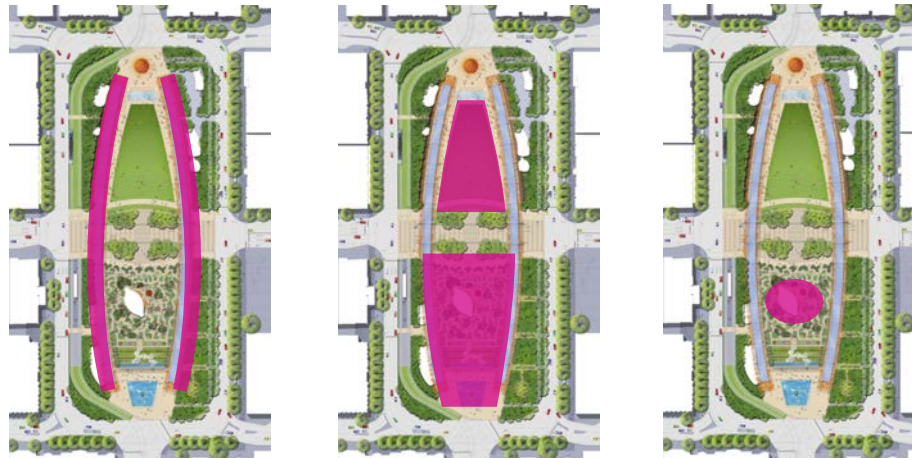
Make the Centre the Main Attraction

Left: Diagrams showing the Six Spatial Moves for Victoria Square. *Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Design Development Report*, TCL and others, 2011, 15.

The combinations of Principle–Layers of Experience–Spatial Moves that were most influential in setting up the overall form of the Square were:

1. Enable the New Civic/A Curated Square/Link North to South
2. Create a Hybrid Square/Theatre of the City and Garden Haven/Create Multiple Destinations
3. Tell Stories with Meaning/A Place of Cultural Exchange/Make the Centre the Main Attraction

Right: Victoria Square Combinations. *Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Design Development Report*, TCL and others, 2011, 18.



Maximise the Central Space

Link from North to South

Faciliate Access from the Edges

The primary outcome of Combination One was the establishment of two large – scale arbours and their associated promenades running the full length of the Square on both the east and west sides. These spatially frame the inner square and provide a strong physical link from north to south over the central roadway. The arbours house a number of destinational buildings and spaces and provide a series of long edges ideal for elaboration and creation of public domain and new civic experiences.

Combination Two posits two different but complementary spaces and uses in the north and south sectors of the inner space framed by the arbours. To the north is a large grassed event space serviced with state of the art infrastructure. In the south is a city garden; a respite from the noise of the city, an exemplar of urban sustainability, a living place of rich colours and textures.

Combination Three locates Mullabakka, the Aboriginal place of culture in the city garden. This unique performative space will be the cultural/spiritual base for the Kaurna people of the Adelaide plains and a place to be shared with people of other cultures.¹⁵

¹⁵ Peter Emmett and Karl Telfer, *The Curated Square in Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Urban Regeneration Project Design Development Report*, Unpublished, 2011.

Within the framework of these elements a mosaic of finer-grain spaces weave their way throughout the Garden, along the edges of the Event Space and Arbour Promenade and around the outer edges of the Square.

Mosaic—The Continuous Edge

A distinguishing feature of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga is the paucity of active edges on the perimeter of the Square. In all but the north-west sector, long lengths of predominantly heritage façades present walls to the street with few doors and even fewer windows which allow any visible connection between indoor activities and the adjacent street. This was a serious issue in the redevelopment of the Square as active edges are considered an important contributor to the life of squares and plazas in most contexts.¹⁶

In order to generate new opportunities for edge conditions the proposed design creates sequences of concentric and overlapping edges. These are described by SueAnne Ware in her essay 'Making Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga' as '... a series of permeable enclosures. Like Russian nesting dolls, successive layers of permeable edges culminate with a unifying set of bowed arbours.'¹⁷

The principal 'edge' within the Square is the double-sided arbour promenades. Running north-south beneath and adjacent to the arbours the promenades are linear terraces stretched along the length of the arbours, opening into the plazas at each end of the Square and edging the central plaza. The arbour promenades create a public space that maximises the edge. In fact the entire space is defined as much by its relationship to its edges as by its internal width and linearity.

The edges of the promenade are thickened to create social friction. They are habitable, permeable spaces for lingering, watching, playing, resting and meeting. They encourage the promenade to pause, stop, engage with others and/or the activities of the adjacent garden, café or Event Lawn.

The edge between the Arbour Promenade and the Event Lawn is a series of terraced seat/steps leading down onto the lawn. The outer promenade edge in the northern portion of the Square houses the Urban Lounge, a slightly raised terrace spatially separate but continuously accessible from the promenade where promenaders can engage in a range of social activities while watching the passing parade.

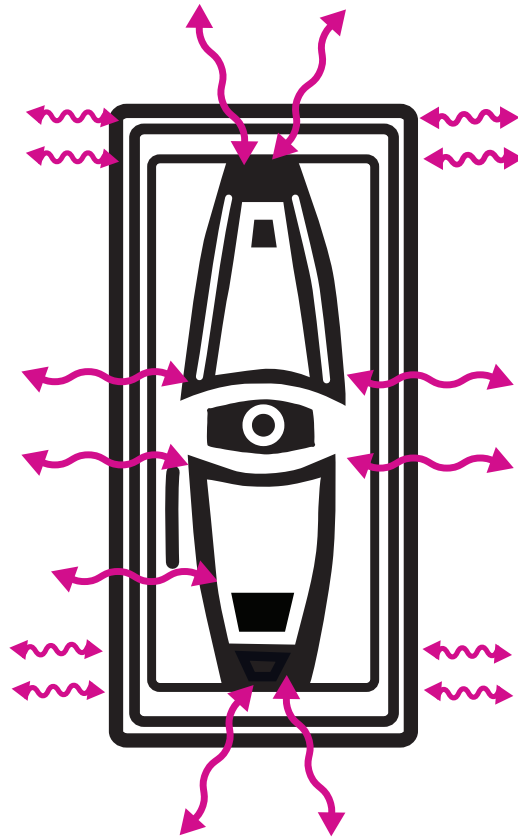
The cafés, bicycle hub, visitor information centre and public toilets are located along the outer edge of the Arbour Promenade to further enhance the offerings which encourage a diversity of activities along its length.

The margins between the north and south plazas and the Event Lawn and Garden respectively are also thickened through the use of terraced seat/steps to encourage occupation and increase the likelihood of social exchange.

Within the Garden there are multiple permeable borders between subspaces such as Mullabakka, the Productive Garden and the Bio-retention Garden. Each one of these interludes are destinations that cause people to pause and engage with the view and those who are 'employed' in these spaces.

¹⁶ Lennard and Lennard, *Genius of the European Square*, Gondolier Press: California, 2008), 51 – 55.

¹⁷ SueAnne Ware, *Making Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga*. Unpublished, 2010, 1.



Right Layers of permeable edges.
Victoria Square/Tamtanyangga Project
Reference Group TCL and others,
2011, 2,

Below Arbour Promenade showing
the thick edges of the Urban Lounge
and the terrace steps. *Victoria Square/
Tamtanyangga Design Development*
Report, TCL and others, 2011, 23,



Ambiguous Presences

Each of the subspaces within the Garden present opportunities for interaction between not only acquaintances, but with strangers. The entire garden, but particularly its subspaces, is a rich source of sensory stimuli, and layers of information; about Aboriginal culture, food production and water recycling in urban environments, native plants and biodiversity in cities.

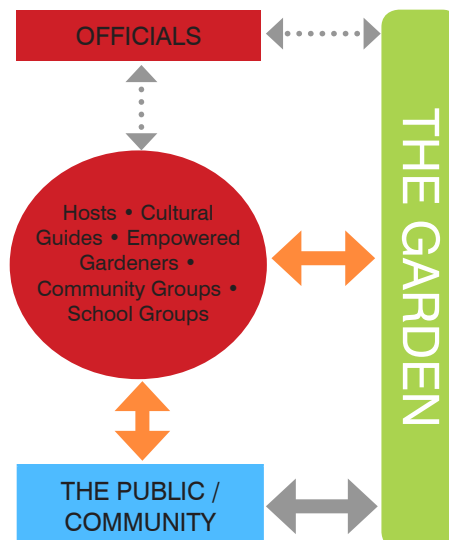
The challenge is how to exploit the inquisitive urge of visitors to create real social interaction rather than passive reading of signs or brochures, or alternatively turning the gardens into non-participatory spectacles. It was felt that while the physical environment would encourage interaction, there was an opportunity to introduce a third genre of person into the Garden. Neither a member of the 'public' nor an 'authorised' employee of Council, these individuals would have an ambiguous presence—empowered gardeners or cultural hosts. They inhabit the Garden and undertake a wide range of tasks, some expected (gardening or guiding a school group) others surprising, a little unsettling (starting a conversation with a stranger, singing, offering free food from the Productive Garden). They are briefed with opening the possibility for the unexpected and spontaneous, with creating an environment where strangers might engage. Not to create a spectacle to be passively observed, but rather to encourage direct participation in the life of the Square and its community of users.¹⁸

Discussions with Council volunteers and volunteer organisations such as Conservation Volunteers Australia regarding this proposal have been met with excitement and enthusiasm. Similarly, the education unit of the adjacent Water SA building are equally enthusiastic to bring their students into the Garden to engage with Mullabakka and the Productive and Bio Retention Gardens.

The prospect of school goes (both young children and adolescents) mixing with lunch-time workers, tourists, resting shoppers, the many older users of the adjacent Central Market, and Aboriginal people attracted by Mullabakka makes for a mix ripe with potential for experiences of cultural mobility where there is an opportunity to see things differently and accept the challenge to relate to others.¹⁹ The ambiguous others—the empowered gardeners or cultural hosts are there to stir the mix just enough to make the experience more enriching and memorable.

¹⁸ See M Hajer & A Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, 2001, 45 – 49. for a discussion on the importance of the unexpected, spontaneous and engagement with the 'other' in creating public domain.

¹⁹ M Hajer & A Reijndorp, *ibid.*, 116.



Left: The Populated Garden—a diagram showing the relationship between official, ambiguous and public response in the Garden.

The Digital Landscape—The Here and the Now

Increasingly the physical landscape is overlaid by an invisible digital equivalent which for many people modulates their experience of place and time. Digital interactivity, real-time communication, social media and augmented reality are some of the means by which this can be achieved.

Aware of the reality that many younger people in particular experience the digital and physical worlds as one interchangeable whole, TCL with Peter Emmett commissioned experts in this field (Rezon8) to explore the potential for this technology in Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga. We were cognisant of the fact that digital technologies can either enhance or diminish one's experience of place and the present; as Paul Virilio states, potentially 'there is no longer any "here", everything is "now"'.²⁰ Virilio makes the point directly in relation to public domain when he asks '... what is left of the notion of public when the (real-time) public image prevails over public space?'²¹

Rezon8 were therefore challenged to create ways that digital media could enhance the experience of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga as a physical place and contribute to the New Civic objective of facilitating social interaction and exchange. Their various offerings included digital interfaces for gaining information and communicating with others, pillars that allowed digital artworks to be viewed within the actual Square landscape, place-activated digital graffiti or marks that visitors could leave to be viewed by others via their mobile devices, and social media options that are geo-local and promote discussion of local issues.²²

What is clear from this exercise is that digital technologies have the potential to enhance interaction in public spaces, and to enhance appreciation of the physical qualities of place. However, the relationship of people to digital devices, place, time and each other is critical. Without the artistic expression and place specificity Rezon8 sought to bring to the Victoria Square digital landscape, this new layer of experience could contribute to a spatial and temporal disorientation that diminishes our ability to engage in social exchange within public spaces.²³

²⁰ Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, Verso, 2008, 142.

²¹ Paul Virilio, *ibid.*, 18.

²² Rezon8, *The Curated Square* in *Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Project Design Development Report*. Unpublished, 2011.

²³ Paul Virilio, *ibid.*, 142.

The New Civic

Research into civic design for Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga unearthed a body of investigation termed 'The New Civic'. This describes an experience of public space in which exchange, interaction and acceptance of diversity and difference are the defining characteristics. These are places defined by the experiences they facilitate, as much as their spatial form.²⁴

The New Civic privileges story-telling and memory over official histories, seeking a multi-layered starting point for design thinking. The everyday interaction is as, or more important than the spectacle. Interaction with others and a diversity of publics is favoured over fragmentation of personal experience and the privatisation of space.

American urban sociologist, Richard Sennett, in discussing the potential benefits of interaction, exchange and diversity in public spaces, encourages places which facilitate '... an engagement with difference, an acceptance of impermanence and chance'.²⁵ To Sennett, such places provide the full benefit of modern urban life by turning people outward and offering them '... in the presence of difference ... the possibility to step outside themselves'.²⁶

Relating this approach directly to landscape architecture and urban design, Hajer and Reijndorp in their book *In Search of the New Public Domain*, define public domain as those places where an exchange takes place rather than a meeting. Such places '... facilitate "cultural mobility"; places where people can have new experiences, where a change of perspective is possible'.²⁷ They describe public domain as places with multiple and incongruent meanings, where a shift in perspective through the experience of otherness is possible. Such spaces have overlapping social realms and contested borders, as described by Sennett in his phrase 'The social centre is at the physical edge'.²⁸

De Certeau, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, describes the opposing forces which shape our experience of urban spaces. Institutions commission and control such spaces and adopt 'strategies' that seek to normalise and homogenise behaviour, while citizens employ 'tactics' to subvert this predictable band of experiences to create their own spontaneous journey.²⁹

Boyer, de Certeau, Sennett and Hajer and Reijndorp are all calling for a public domain in which individuals experience the intense reality of the city through personal interaction with others. Along with philosophers such as Paul Virilio, who has written on the cultural and sociological implications of digital technologies, they are responding to the trend throughout the 20th and early 21st Centuries of rapid urbanisation thrusting more and more people into close proximity with 'strangers'.

Notions of ideal public spaces based on the old squares of Europe are not necessarily relevant in new cities and their suburbs. This is especially true in societies where traditions such as the *passaggiata* do not exist and public space is not experienced as a place of regular social interaction. This situation is further exacerbated by the now ubiquitous mobile phone which encourages communication beyond the present place. While this communication can assist in spontaneously bringing people together in ways previously not possible, it can also result in greater isolation from the immediate presence of the person or tree immediately alongside us.

²⁴ Peter Emmett & Karl Telfer, *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, 2.

²⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye – The Design and Social Life of Cities* (Norton & Company, New York, 1990) 202.

²⁷ M Hajer & A Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, 13.

²⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye – The Design and Social Life of Cities*, 197.

²⁹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984) 96.



Opposite: Aerial perspective of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga from the South West. *Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga Design Development Report*, TCL and others, 2011, 23,

The experience of the New Civic is therefore an affirmation of the existence and worth of the 'public' in all its dimensions. It is an attempt to redefine public behaviour and, by implication, public space in response to contemporary tendencies towards individualism and social isolation.

Strategies and Tactics in the Square and Terrace

In reflecting on the outcomes of the North Terrace project, Lee describes it as '... a design intervention that respectfully reinterprets the conditions that have framed the cultural development of Adelaide'.³⁰ The use of the phrase 'respectfully reinterprets' hints at some of the limitations of the outcome when considered in the light of de Certeau's discussion of institutional strategies and individual tactics in public spaces. In North Terrace, the balance is in favour of institutional or overall site planning strategies which limit the program of the site and constrain individual actions.

The unrelenting use of two layers of patterns, the dual paths and central space, and the striped north-south ordering of the central space have combined to limit spatial variety and more importantly create thin inflexible edge treatments. These treatments limit the likelihood of '... discovering something unexpected to the eye ...',³¹ one of Sennett's prerequisites for a street 'full of life'. On street character, Sennett states that 'time begins to do the work of giving place character when the places are not used as they were meant to be',³² and that such places have 'weak borders', which are able to be inhabited and manipulated. In North Terrace, the behaviours are largely predictable and expected, and so the likelihood of '... confrontation with otherness, a change of perspective, an exchange',³³ hallmarks of public domain as defined by Hajer and Reijndorp, are unlikely.

Ware in her examination of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga describes the attempt to balance overall structure with an open program at a more detailed level:

'By spatially juxtaposing various publics and their needs rather than trying to ameliorate or placate their differences, the design enables a productive friction between users and the numerous roles required of this civic realm.'³⁴

Ron Jones also refers to TCL's ability to pull the scene and the action together so that the observer and the observed occupy the same location. He is here referring to the urban lounge at Victoria Square where the promenade steps up to become a venue for resting, thereby placing promenading and sitting/socialising in the same space.³⁵

³⁰ Gini Lee, 'North Terrace', *Architecture Australia*, 2006, 95, no 2: 710 – 79.

³¹ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye – The Design and Social Life of Cities*, 157.

³² *ibid.*, 196.

³³ M Hajer & A Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, 129.

³⁴ SueAnne Ware, *Making Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga*, 1.

³⁵ Ronald Jones *Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art*, 6.

The Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga design reflects a conscious effort to privilege the everyday tactics of the individual over institutional planning and programming strategies. Devices used to achieve this include:

- The creation of multiple edges which house a wide range of potential activities.
- Thick edges which become places of habitation while maintaining their connection to the building, promenade or path of which they are a part.
- The creation of layers of places each of which is a source of activity e.g. the subspaces within the Garden, i.e. Mullabakka, The Bio Retention Garden and The Productive Garden.
- The proposal to include empowered gardeners and cultural hosts etc. throughout the Garden to facilitate interaction.
- The creation of multiple spaces capable of housing a diverse program from community spectacles to everyday activities.
- A focus on the experiences which occur within places equally with the physical design of spaces.
- Acknowledgement of the legitimacy of everyday collective experience and memory of place in balance with the civic history and symbolism of the Square.

In summary, the tactics of the everyday are supported within a strong and unifying physical form. The structure of the perimeter roads and the arbours responds to the formal symmetry of the history of the Square, while the open mosaic field embedded within and around this symmetry responds to the tactics of surprise, friction, difference and exchange.

Thus, the Square attempts to be self-regenerating, building an ongoing field of experiences, dialogues and memories that will create an evolving contemporary civic more powerful than the static civic residues flowing from the Square's 19th Century and early 20th Century history.

Above: Aerial view of midtown Manhattan and Bryant Park, 2011.
Source: Google Maps.



Other Sites & Civics

How do TCL's design processes and the project objectives and outcomes observed for North Terrace and Victoria Square compare with other examples in Australia and internationally? Two projects have been reviewed, Federation Square in Melbourne and Bryant Park in New York. These have been chosen because they are frequently cited as exemplars of urban civic design both in their physical form and aesthetics and their success as highly used civic and community spaces.³⁶

Bryant Park, New York

Located in a busy precinct in midtown Manhattan, surrounded by offices and educational institutions, Bryant Park is a rare portion of green open space (1.85 ha) in an otherwise densely developed district of New York City. The park is adjacent to the main branch of the New York Municipal Library and surrounded by busy streets on its other three edges.

First established as a park in 1847, it was redesigned in 1934 in a classical style with a large central lawn, fountain, plaza and avenues of trees with paving beneath on each side. At this time it was also raised 1.2 metres above the surrounding footpaths and enclosed with an iron fence and dense planting. The design provided few entry points and through the positioning of internal balustrades, planting and fixed seats prevented informal crossing of the park.³⁷

The intention of the 1934 design was to create a 'refuge from the city, free from the hustle and bustle of pedestrians'.³⁸ This objective and the physical changes described above proved too successful, resulting in a space which was underutilised and over time colonised predominantly by a narrow band of users. These people discouraged others until by the 1970s the park was a major haunt of drug dealers whose presence created the perception that the park was an unsafe environment for most of the population.

Hajer and Reijndorp stress both the need for a sense of safety in order for people to fully participate in the public domain,³⁹ and the positive potential of parochial enclaves as the starting point for public domain experiences. Bryant Park prior to its second renovation in 1991 was an enclave where the physical environment did not support a sense of safety that would allow the proximity between groups necessary for appreciation of otherness and a subsequent meaningful exchange to take place. It seems that in Bryant Park on a fine day you were either a 'legitimate' user on the central lawn where there was safety in numbers, or you were an 'undesirable' lurking in the shadows of the adjacent avenues of trees'.⁴⁰

³⁶ Both projects have been the recipients of numerous state and national design awards and published extensively internationally.

³⁷ The pre-1990s condition of Bryant Park is described in J. William Thomson, *The Rebirth of New York City's Bryant Park* (Spacemaker Press, Washington 1997), 18–23; Mark Francis, *Urban Open Space* (Island Press, Washington, 2003) 47–50 and William H. Whyte, *City – Rediscovering the Centre* (Anchor Books, New York 1988), 159–160.

³⁸ William H. Whyte, *City – Rediscovering the Centre*, 159

³⁹ Maarten, Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, 116–117.

⁴⁰ William H. Whyte, *City – Rediscovering the Centre*, 160.

Image removed due to copyright.

Far Left: Performance on the central lawn at Bryant Park. Left: Relaxing on the central lawn at Bryant Park.

In 1991, Hanna Olin (now Olin Partnership) of Philadelphia was commissioned to redesign the park to improve its usability for a wider range of users. Renowned urban analyst William Whyte described the park's problems at the time '...access is the nub of the matter. Psychologically, as well as physically, Bryant Park is a hidden place. The best way to meet the problem is to promote the widest possible use and enjoyment by people.'⁴¹

The Olin design, as built, created multiple entry points, added more seats—including 2000 moveable chairs, cleared out and renovated all understorey planting, and accommodated a restaurant adjacent to the library as well as another smaller food kiosk. Just as importantly, the physical changes were accompanied by an extensive program bringing artists, performances, winter skating, outdoor cinema and a host of other organised activities to the park throughout the year. In addition park security and maintenance were significantly enhanced. All this was possible through the formation of a public – private partnership which financed the capital costs and still manages the park today using a combination of public grants, funds raised through events in the Park, and levies on adjacent landowners and businesses.⁴²

A post-occupancy evaluation undertaken in 1993 by City University of New York graduate students provides some insight into the manner in which the redeveloped park is used. Their conclusion was that perceived safety is the primary reason for the park's popularity, and that this is mainly due to improved visual and physical access into and throughout the park.⁴³

Thompson, in his 1997 essay on the Park, also comments on the great diversity of park users including '... most surprisingly ... a scattering of homeless people ... [who] ... even more surprisingly, the mainstream users ... seem to tolerate ...'⁴⁴ Here Bryant Park is teetering on the edge of public domain. Proximity of otherness is experienced within a 'safe' environment. What appears to be lacking is the spatial overlap and friction that might encourage otherwise parochial groups to interact.⁴⁵

Richard Sennett, a resident of New York who opposed the 'privatisation and gentrification' of the Park in the early 1990s sees this process where proximity transforms into interaction as 'an act of stepping outside oneself, which is beneficial to both the individual and the broader community'.⁴⁶

Sennett's concerns regarding privatisation of the Park are shared by others who comment not just on the privatisation of management and the consequent danger of loss of access by the broadest possible spectrum of the public, but the increasing use of the Park for private functions and events.⁴⁷ This raises an issue which is discussed further in

⁴¹ Mark Francis, *Urban Open Space*, (Island Press, Washington, 2003) 50.

⁴² J. William Thomson, *The Rebirth of New York City's Bryant Park*, 24 – 31 and Mark Francis, *Urban Open Space* 48 – 57.

⁴³ J. William Thomson, *The Rebirth of New York City's Bryant Park*, 33.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Maarten, Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, *In Search of New Public Domain*, 116.

⁴⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye – The Design and Social Life of Cities*, 123.

⁴⁷ See Kent in Mark Francis, *Urban Open Space*, 56.

relation to Federation Square i.e. striking the most appropriate balance between public space as place of spectacle with the public as passive spectator versus facilitation of the myriad unpredictable personal interactions and exchanges that constitute the everyday experience of place.

The design of Bryant Park is somewhat similar to North Terrace in that it is a highly structured space which in non-event mode accommodates a relatively narrow band of activities. Its day to day operation is, however, significantly improved by the spillout of activities from the café and kiosk located adjacent to the Library, and by the use of the over 2000 moveable chairs which allow visitors to sit in any location and grouping.



Right: Aerial view of Federation Square and surrounds, 2011. Source: Google Maps.

Federation Square, Melbourne

The brief for the design competition for Federation Square called for a '... unique 21st Century civic and cultural facility ... intended to become the cultural focal point of the city'.⁴⁸ Eight and half years since its opening in 2002, the Square has proved to be immensely popular with both Melbournians and tourists.

The winning design by Lab Architecture and Bates Smart with Dutch landscape architects Karres en Brands created two principal outdoor civic spaces, the plaza (7,500 m²) and the glazed atrium (3,250 m²). The plaza is described as a '... compound figure with multiple alignments and zones, that is also understood as a distinct, single, spatial figure. Being the key to the whole project, the Plaza establishes precise and varying relationships with the city and landscape around the site.'⁴⁹ The compound nature of the plaza seeks to create a variety of smaller spaces adjacent to building edges and entries and along the Swanston Street and Flinders Street frontages, while also allowing the entire space to be utilised for large events and festivals. A stage and digital screen located in the south-west portion of the space are focal points for many events and performances. The topography of the Square falls towards the stage and screen creating an amphitheatre-like character. The placement of the steps, terraces and seat-walls, particularly on the Swanston–Flinders Street corner has created a series of well used vantage points for watching the passing parade or waiting for an acquaintance.

⁴⁸ See <http://www.federationsquare.com.au/Docs/FSQ%205%20year%20book%20web.pdf>, (accessed 25 April 2011).

⁴⁹ See http://www.arcspace.com/architects/Lab/federation_square.html, (accessed 25 April 2011).

Image removed due to copyright.

Left: Occupying the terraces at Federation Square. Opposite Right: The Plaza, Federation Square. Source: Left: <http://www.sapphirealuminium.com.au> , Right: Rphh

The atrium space runs north–south from Flinders Street to the Yarra River edge of the site. It is a galleria-like structure which is open twenty-four hours and acts as a forecourt to the NGV Ian Potter Centre. It provides an alternative space to the plaza for medium to small events.⁵⁰

Federation Square is a business run by Fed Square Pty Ltd who program over 1500 public events a year in the Square. In addition to the public open spaces, the company manages buildings which house NGV Ian Potter Centre, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Champions Australian Racing Museum, Kirra Gallery, BMW Edge Theatre, National Design Centre, Melbourne Visitor Centre, Melbourne Mobility Centre, a large multistorey car park, cafés and a hotel. All these functions generate large attendances in addition to those who visit the Square for programmed events, informal meetings or just to ‘hang out’.

A further intrinsic attribute of Federation Square which has been exploited by the design is the location on one of Melbourne’s busiest intersections, and the proximity to the Flinders Street Railway Station and Swanston Street and Flinders Street tram routes. The site is the perfect venue for people watching and meeting as discussed above.

The landscape architects of Federation Square describe the project as having a ‘... true sense of “federation:., [where] highly diverse elements are brought together to form a complex ensemble of the individual and the collective. Instead of creating a controlled enclave, an attempt has been made to build relationships with the surrounding area.”⁵¹ While it is most likely this description is intended for the whole project, it is worth considering it as a philosophical starting point for the plaza, which exhibits this character of having a number of subspaces of diverse shapes and activities which together ‘form a complex ensemble’, i.e. the overall plaza, usable for large events.

In *Topos 49*, which celebrates Karres en Brands’ 2004 European Landscape Award, an image of Federation Square has a caption by Karres en Brands which reads:

‘A good design creates opportunities for various forms of land-use without designating specific areas or elements for particular ends. People can discover the meaning of a place in their own way. The design not only determines uses, it’s determined by its users.’⁵²

This suggests that the designers intended to create a space capable of supporting a diverse program including activities unknown at the time of designing.

While Federation Square is very different in its scale, form and materiality to Victoria Square, the intent in designing the principal open spaces is similar. Multiple edge spaces have been crafted to create places which overlap with adjacent uses (in the case of

⁵⁰ See <http://www.fedsquare.com/index.cfm?pageID=29>, (accessed 25 April 2011).

⁵¹ See http://www.karresenbrands.nl/_projects_en.php?id=20, (accessed 25 April 2011).

⁵² Sylvia Karres and Bart Brands, “Reflective Progression”, as quoted in *Topos*. 49th ed., December 2004, 94.

Federation Square this is achieved by terracing which mediates between the plaza and adjacent buildings and streets). It is principally in these spaces that 'public domain' is likely to be experienced.

A significant question regarding Federation Square is the high level of programming which occurs in the space. The 1500 programmed events a year equates to approximately four events each day. While many events are small and a percentage are participatory, many also encourage square users to assume the role of passive spectator e.g. the majority of screen and stage-based events would fall into this category. In Victoria Square, after much debate the design team successfully argued to the client that a permanent 'big screen' was not desirable. This was done on the basis that temporary screens are readily available to be brought in for large events, and that a permanent screen would inevitably dominate the grassed Event Space with inane low quality content for much of everyday mode, and dubious spectator-based content for much of what would be considered 'event' mode. The team's biggest concern was the passivity it would induce, and the implied assumption that Square users were incapable of entertaining themselves either individually or in groups. We decided to wager in favour of the Square becoming a place capable of creating its own interactions and memories in much the same way that M. Christine Boyer describes *The City of Collective Memory*:

'What will become fascinatingly rich in the City of Collective Memory will be the play of oppositions, the existence of randomness, disturbances, dispersions and accidents. New city forms and scopes will depend as well on the creation of innovative tactics and plays to deal with uncertainty and disorder in this city of lost narrative norms and decomposed centres.'⁵³

A focal point and a venue for large events were part of the brief for both Federation Square and Victoria Square. An important consideration is the degree to which the singular spectacle is privileged over multiple personal exchanges.

⁵³ M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, 1994) 68.

Conclusion

Trajectories and Tri-polarities

It is evident from this exploration of the civic in TCL's work, and in particular from a close examination of the current ideas and propositions which are driving the Victoria Square project, that a new position is emerging for the practice in relation to public space design. For me this has evolved from a re-examination and transformation of the values and ideals which took shape during the first seven years of the practice.

These formative years, as illustrated earlier through the Box Hill, Uluru and Collingwood projects, resulted in a keen appreciation of community input, a commitment to collaboration, an apprenticeship in how politics plays itself out in projects, and a tendency to seek a diversity of inputs and views regarding the stories and histories of a site and its community. Using the tri-polar analysis and poles proposed by Ware,⁵⁴ the practice's work, between 1988–1995, can be categorised as predominantly Design Activism i.e. socially engaged. Less concern was afforded Landscape Urbanism and Neo Formalism.

By 1995, I was on a trajectory which carried the above cargo as well as a propensity for expressiveness in materiality and detailing. In addition, work at places such as Uluru and Collingwood Children's Farm had resulted in an almost geomantic sensitivity to site, where imagination, memory, creative musings and stories coalesced with the experience of walking the topography of a site to create a tangible yet fluid identity for the land with which I was working.

From 1990–1995, I worked with Kate Cullity who, although taking a similar path, was significantly more influenced by materials, detail and artistry. In 1995, Kate and I began working with Perry Lethlean who was on a very different trajectory. Perry was operating at a larger urban scale, and although interested in materiality and detail was driven by the desire to identify the large moves which underlie projects and connect them with the urban fabric. At a smaller scale, his interest was in the play and beauty of composition and pattern making.

The current investigations have identified that the creative friction between our different ways of working has in fact fuelled our work together. As Ron Jones, in his essay about the practice, observed '... they have a precious ability to disagree productively'.⁵⁵ Central questions in any such partnership are: What do I forgo by maintaining this dynamic and at times abrasive but rewarding interaction; What do I gain? How has my trajectory changed or been transformed by entering the same orbit as Kate and Perry?

In examining the practice's body of work we have identified sticky and seminal projects; those that have influenced our own subsequent work and those that have influenced others. Underlying these projects we discovered four threads: narrative, site specificity, material presence and the civic which form common obsessions both throughout our projects and for ourselves personally. Here we discovered the common ground that has held the partnership together during the 15 years since 1995. During this period we have undertaken a wide range of commissions predominantly for public spaces, remote national parks, and cultural and interpretive landscapes. Each of us have maintained our interest, yet modified our positions and contributed to the creative tension which has driven the project outcomes. The work from this period when analysed within Ware's tri-polar system exhibits little Design Activism and is predominantly Neo Formalist with a tendency to Landscape Urbanism.

⁵⁴ SueAnne Ware, "Tri-polarity, Landscape Architecture and why Design still matters" in *Sunburnt: Landscape Architecture in Australia*, SUN Architecture Publishers, Amsterdam, 2011, 15–18.

⁵⁵ Ronald Jones, *Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art*, 1.

This examination of our civic work has necessitated a casting back to the earliest projects of the practice where intense experiences with communities, collaborators and sites created strong attitudes and Design Activism approaches to public space design. What has been found is a resonance with the ideals and values of the 'New Civic' as being explored during the Victoria Square project. During the period 1995–2010, I could not reconcile my affinity with community and site with the large-scale civic projects the practice undertook. As project leader for the North Terrace project, I was most engaged and animated by the explorations of subtle shifts in terrain, the myth-like imaginings of Paul Carter's site history, the shifting ground of the project's politics, and the layering of material details. I could not locate connections between my desire for community input and to create spaces for a diverse public program, and the process of Neo Formalist civic-scale design. Thus the outcome described above for North Terrace is dominated by large-scale moves, patterned infill and rich materiality. Its program is thin. It is excellent public space but poor 'public domain'. It is more old civic than new civic.

This spiral-like trajectory has thrown light on difference as a significant creative force in the practice's partnership. It has identified four threads of common interest as the glue which has held the practice together and provided ongoing foci for multiple projects. Finally, it has rekindled connections between the earliest motivations and drivers for design practice and the current civic-scale work at Victoria Square. The word 'rekindled' is chosen because the ideas and ideals from earlier projects are not being transferred to Victoria Square. They have been transformed through exposure to the rich dialogue in the fields of urban design, urban sociology and cultural geography which has taken place since the early 1990s, by the new context in which the practice seeks to apply them, and by the 15 years of experience we now bring to bear in their application.

I see the New Civic as an echo of the Design Activism which drove my earliest projects. Victoria Square with the formal symmetry of its arbours, its urban wetlands, and empowered gardeners is an attempt to reach a more palatable balance between the poles of Neo Formalism (the art of landscape), Landscape Urbanism (the science of landscape) and Design Activism (the politics of landscape).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ SueAnne Ware, "Tri-polarity, Landscape Architecture and why Design still matters", 15–18. Reference to the art, science and politics of landscape architecture.

4.2 Interview

**Interview
with Kevin Taylor
on The Plan¹
with
Josh Zeunert**

July 2011

¹ The Plan is a radio talk show on Radio Adelaide 101.5fm on Wednesday nights 6–7pm weekly. Full audio can be found at <http://www.theplan.net.au/?p=2298>

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This interview was conducted with landscape architect Josh Zeunert in July 2011.

Josh: Some of TCL's early work when it was just T yourself Taylor, and then TC Taylor Cullity involved innovative approaches to community consultation and engagement as a kind of design activism. Can you discuss this?

Kevin: Yes, a couple of the projects that we started off with, one was over in Melbourne, Box Hill Community Arts Centre; another was a completely different context up at Uluru working on the Aboriginal Cultural Centre. They were projects where the brief actually called for the designer to be a person who worked with the community to develop the brief, and then during the design process, and even in the case of Box Hill, during the construction process, actually continue working with the community.

I had spent a fair bit of time in the 1980s working with a social planner, Wendy Sarkissian, who had in fact lectured here in Adelaide for some time. She was based in Melbourne later on, as I was. So I spent quite a bit of time working with her and learning about community consultation. So when the opportunity came up to combine consultation with design, I thought it was a great way to go. At the time in the early 1990s there was a lot of enthusiasm and political support through the Australia Council for those kinds of processes and it was a really exciting time to be designing.

Josh: The public spaces are often those polemical spaces as well, where you've got so many interests all coming in on the same area, so I suppose consultation and collaboration is an important part of the course.

Kevin: I suppose that was the word I didn't mention just then ... collaboration and that was really an important part of those projects, too. There was a lot of work with Aboriginal people, cultural workers, etcetera, but in some of those projects there were also a lot of artists and sculptors involved so it was fantastic, a really good experience.

Josh: And that sort of genuine engagement approach seems to be part of TCL's work. Do you think it's been an ongoing reason for your success?

Kevin: Well, I think over time the company's engaged with different types of projects and different scales of community. In some projects it's very easy to engage with the people who are the actual users of the site. In other projects, in projects like North Terrace or Victoria Square where you could say the community of interest is a million people, the whole population, everybody in Adelaide's got an opinion. So, you know, they're different kinds of questions, about how to engage with people at that level, so I think working with communities was and is a really important part of our practice. I think as the scale of projects changes, it varies on how you might approach that.

Josh: TCL seem to have evolved from that early work to focus more during the mid-1990s on aesthetics and spatial experience and a more artistic approach. What led to this evolution in your work?

Kevin: It was partly to do with the people in the practice. Perry Lethlean joined us in 1995 so Kate and I had in the early 90s done a lot of community based work. We kept doing that kind of work during the 90s, Perry joined in the mid 90s and had a particular interest in larger-scale city planning. Urban design ... the relationship between city design and public space. And the practice started to orientate itself towards that. I think there were a number of streams of work happening concurrently. Certainly that larger-scale planning work came to the fore in the late 1990s.

Josh: Over the years TCL has done a lot of collaborations with a lot of different artists compared to typical designers and urban designers. You had an exhibition with your staff, a 'Clocked Off' exhibition which focused on some of the extra artistic endeavours you all might have. I was just wondering how has your practice developed working with this, has it been a central part of the practice?

Kevin: Yes, I think it has. I think the way that might unfold varies from project to project. But I think one of the things that have significantly influenced the practice over the years has been working with people from other disciplines. It actually hasn't always been artists, sometimes we work with cultural planners, curators, people like Paul Carter from Melbourne, Peter Emmett from Sydney, people who have an artistic way of thinking. Perhaps they are more writers or curators and they bring really interesting perspectives to the work. But at the same time we have worked with a lot of artists and sculptors. I think every time we've done that we've had an unexpected outcome, one that we wouldn't have imagined at the beginning.

Josh: Yes, which has hopefully proven that point about collaborating being a fruitful thing rather than taking ownership of the design itself. It kind of dislocates the ego as well, which a lot of firms seem to suffer from. We were just talking about that earlier, that landscape doesn't seem to suffer from quite the same egocentric design because there's so many parties contributing.

Kevin: Well, I think collaboration is difficult. I think that there's a misunderstanding to some extent with it seemingly being easy. It is actually quite a difficult thing to do. And I think the key thing with collaboration is trust really, and respect. If you don't respect the other person's work and way of working and if you don't trust that they're going to respect you, then you can't work at that level and it's really hard. I think once you get to that it can be absolutely fantastic.

Josh: Storytelling, something I've heard you mention before, can you explain this idea of storytelling in design to listeners?

Kevin: Well, I think that one of the things that came out of the early work that we did with communities was the sense of a narrative in a project. The sense of a community's relationship with a site, having a series of stories behind it that might go or lace into a narrative, that made sense for the future development of the site itself. And I think our work with narrative as a conceptual base for many projects began in that way. I think over the years it's really expanded into a whole range of ways of working with it. And often it's been informed by bringing other people in as we were just talking about in collaboration, often the sense of a story or narrative behind a design has been something that has only developed through collaboration with others. People with different points of view who have brought in a perspective or a potential narrative that perhaps we wouldn't have thought of, if we were only working by ourselves. It's not part of every project but it's something that has been part of the way that we design.

Josh: Was it easier on projects where you're the lead consultant and you can pull all those different diverse points of view together? Does that make it easier than when you're allocated to being a member of the team and someone else is in control of that?

Kevin: Like everybody, I'd say everything is easier when you're in control (laughs), we won't go there!

Josh: It's much easier to collaborate when we don't have to collaborate.

Kevin: That's right! Yes, collaboration is always easier when you're calling the shots ... Um, what was the question?

Josh: Let's move onto the next one. North Terrace — you started designing that in '99 and it's still going and I was just wondering what changes you've noticed both from a public expectation over the course of that ongoing project and where do you see it heading, and will you finish it?

Kevin: Well, that's a good question. Just to answer the last bit first, there is a lot of impetus for North Terrace to be completed because of the hospital being built down at the western end. There is some importance for the boulevard promenade to go right down and meet the hospital. And that makes a lot of sense. I think, equally, once the new hospital is down at the western end, then the obvious question for the city is what's going to happen to the existing hospital site. And I think it also makes sense too when that side is redeveloped, to extend the east end of North Terrace down to the Botanic Gardens and East Terrace. I think there is a compelling logic to finish it during that period of time when the changeover is happening in the hospital. In terms of the changes that have occurred, it was a big effort by lots of people, even before we got involved, to get North Terrace off the ground in 1999. People in the State Government, people in Council at the time and others, politicians and bureaucrats who put a huge effort into just getting it up and running and even get a break out of it for someone to work on it. So I think the success of Stage One and Stage Two and Stage Three (that's happening in front of Government House), has built up a momentum that people, for the most part, are pretty happy about what the outcome is. I mean I can remember back in ... can't remember what year it was, 2003 or so when all the trees were being pulled out and talkback radio was telling everyone how terrible TCL were, what horrible people TCL were. But I think once people could see how the beautiful sandstone buildings were revealed and also, it was a real turning point when the plants went in, in the first year, or a year or so after when the plants started to get up and people could see that it had a garden feel to it, I think that was a real turning point.

Josh: Do you think there's been an evolution in the expectations of Adelaidians with civic space in that decade? Do you think that's evolved in that time or do you still think it's similar?

Kevin: I don't know, I think Adelaide's pretty complex in relation to people's relationship with public space. I think, yes, a lot of people have seen spaces like Victoria Square and North Terrace and others, and one would hope that they could from that see that contemporary design can transform these spaces into spaces that people want to spend time in and enjoy. But you've only got to witness Victoria Square at the moment and Riverbank and places like that to see that Adelaide and South Australia are not rushing to develop quality public space. I think North Terrace has given people some confidence that precious spaces can be changed in a contemporary way and the spaces can be improved and enjoyed as a result of that.

Josh: Do you think talkback radio would be hauling you over the coals if you were pulling out the rest of the trees now, if you went to finish it off tomorrow?

Kevin: No, I don't think so. No, well, in truth that did happen in Stage Three, a row of Elm trees has been kept along the front of Government House. Some Elm trees came out and nothing was said and I think people can see what transpired in the other two stages.

Josh: Speaking of the bigger picture, we're going to jump straight to Victoria Square, arguably the most significant and important site in the city. I was wondering, do you think, the scheme is ambitious enough? With Grote Street/ Wakefield Street still being left open? And still not putting that hierarchy of pedestrians right at the top?

Kevin: The trick with part of the current master plan was the question of how do you keep the Grote/Wakefield Street open and still design a space that when the road is closed temporarily or with whatever, the square as a whole would work. In fact that was the most difficult question in the whole brief. I guess what you're asking is whether that question should have been in the brief at all? Or whether the brief should have said design a square that completely closes it. We're a very car oriented city, that's just the reality of it at the moment. Really extensive computer modelling has been done that shows that the new configuration square will work but if the road is closed through the middle there's significant redirecting of traffic. So, I guess, to put it frankly I don't think Adelaide's ready for the road to be closed. You've only got to look back to what happened back in 2002 when a scheme did propose to close it. There was political uproar about it, in fact the whole scheme fell as a basis of that. I think it's a great ambition to close it.

Josh: Was that on your agenda to close it, going into the brief?

Kevin: We've designed it so that the road could be closed tomorrow and the square will work as a pedestrian civic space. It needn't require any modification whatsoever now. You could do some things in the centre space there to make it perhaps more pedestrianised but essentially you wouldn't need to do anything. So I think the most we can do at this stage is say 'you could close it tomorrow'. It's really interesting after the master plan the square went up for community comment. There were two or three things that stood out that people said, and there were hundreds of people, or might have been thousands, I can't remember now, (it was handled by Council through their website) and the two things that stood out that they said was — 'This is great just get on and do it'. And the next thing they said was — 'Why haven't you closed the road?' So the politicians need to absorb that.

Josh: Relatively, compared to budgets of equivalent scale and scope in New South Wales and Victoria, the budgets are relatively small here. Do you think Adelaide under-appreciates or undervalues these urban spaces?

Kevin: I think the short answer is yes. When you compare what's spent on urban spaces compared with what's spent on highways and freeways you go into the hundreds of millions, if not billions when you add it all up, then, yes, I think you can't come to any other conclusion.

Josh: Seems to make a point about what people value: motor vehicles and private spaces over public and civic space and spending accordingly. Do you think we might be turning the corner in terms of what we can accomplish?

Kevin: I think the big issue in Adelaide is how the projects are procured and who's financing them. North Terrace only happened because through the Capital City Committee in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the State Government and City Council came together and formed a sub-committee of the Capital City Committee. The Premier, Lord Mayor, senior ministers and councillors were all sitting round the table making decisions, and they decided that North Terrace was important to redevelop with an approximately 50/50 funding. The reason a lot of projects get up in Melbourne, Sydney and other places is because that cooperation doesn't necessarily need to occur. The state government has the money, they fund something, or if one of the bigger city councils has the money, they fund it. Here these big projects only happen when all the stars align. And that to me is one of the biggest reasons and one of the biggest requirements for change in Adelaide is for State Government and City Council to work together to deliver these projects. And that's what's happening with Vic Square. Vic Square's a tremendously important project to the city, but it will happen when the State Government, the City Council and probably, if possible, the Commonwealth Government, to some extent, put the money in to make it happen. And that is just the nature of the size of the city and the size of the state in terms of how the finances need to be arranged.

Josh: That leads quite nicely, TCL has a Melbourne office and you've certainly got a national presence working on projects all around Australia. Having done some research I find you're probably Australia's most awarded Landscape Architecture firm, why have you remained in Adelaide considering all the challenges that we were just talking about?

Kevin: Well, I studied architecture here in Adelaide in the 70s and I was born and raised here. I lived in Melbourne for 17 years. In 1995 I decided to come back here for family reasons, as much as business reasons. But you know Adelaide is a great place to live. We've got some fantastic staff coming out of the university here. We're really excited by the projects here in Adelaide and I think at the moment with the Integrated Design Commission, the Government Architect, and the sorts of things that are on the agenda of both the City Council and State Government, I think Adelaide from an urban design point of view is the place to be at the moment.

Josh: Given the difficulties of and needing all those stars to align, like you were just talking about, do you think it's going to be difficult to deliver all the major projects at once? I'm talking about Adelaide Oval, Riverbank and Vic Square. All are seemingly under-budgeted to start off with, but they're all happening at the same time, I mean you're across most of those. Do you think Adelaide's going to make it happen?

Kevin: I mean, I can't comment on the budgets of them. But, I mean, why not? Absolutely. I think the skills are here in the city to make it happen. There's been an awfully long time where not much has happened, so why can't a lot happen in a short space of time? As I said it's a really exciting prospect for the city, I think we all should get behind it and make sure it does happen.

Josh: How's the Riverbank coming along?

Kevin: We're working on the master plan with Ashton Raggatt McDougall, well, Riverbank ... you know, you might say North Terrace or Vic Square is a complex project, but Riverbank is really, really complex. And I think Riverbank's a particular type of project in Adelaide in the sense that it really is a community of very powerful interests. There is the Convention Centre, the Casino, the Adelaide Festival Centre, the Adelaide Oval and the proposed bridge, you know, Parliament House is right in the corner there, and the Intercontinental Hotel. I mean, these are all very ... people who row from the rowing clubs, they've got plenty of clout, too. It's one of those projects where there's a lot of politics. It's not as simple as just sitting down and drawing what you think might be the optimum outcome from a spatial point of view. Although you've got to hold that very clearly front and centre, but I think there are a lot of influences there that have to be taken into account. And what we're working on with ARM is very much a master plan. Each one of those institutions have got their own designers working for them and they're in fact working out from their centre of gravity, themselves, and looking at how they relate to their precinct. The job of the master plan is to provide some context within which they can all change their immediate environment the way they want to change it, but do it in such a way that the whole precinct comes together. And one of the things that Ian McDougall's been saying is that there's ... (can't remember how many institutions I just listed there), seven or so but really what we're working for is the eighth. And the eighth is the general public, it's the public spaces that actually glue the whole place together and that's how we see our job.

Josh: What motivates your ongoing passion and stamina for design excellence?

Kevin: I just really enjoy what I do. We've got a studio full of mostly young people, I really love working with them. It's fantastic seeing people come out of university who've got a passion for what they're doing, it's pretty infectious; we really bounce off each other in the studio. We've got a really open studio environment, so I think that's part of what keeps getting me out of bed every day and coming in to work with the great people working around us. Obviously I enjoy designing, but I think a lot of the work we do, which is public space design work, is just really interesting and intriguing. Sometimes it's too interesting in a sense there's too much politics. Even though politics can be a pain in the butt, I find that a pretty interesting part of the project to engage with. I think it's partly the type of work that we do.

We've only talked tonight about work in the city but TCL, particularly in the Adelaide office, have done a lot of work out in the national parks, out in the country: Kangaroo Island, Flinders Ranges, and I just really love that work.

Josh: That's something we haven't mentioned is your quintessential signature, the Australian landscape.

Kevin: I really love that aspect of landscape architecture, really love grappling with how what you see out there might influence the way that you work in the city as well.

Josh: TCL's directors, you're currently working on a PhD through RMIT in Melbourne, in addition to all your design work, so why is research important to TCL?

Kevin: Well, we've done a couple of things in the last few years, the PhD, that's Perry, Kate and myself. And we've also started up a research arm of the company called 'Tickle', there's a 'T' a 'C' and an 'L' in Tickle so that was part of the idea. So we've really decided, over the last three or four years, that it is important to engage in design based research within the practice, as we believe there is a bit of a missing link in the kind of research that is done both academically and within other institutions, that's not necessarily motivated by design, what drives designers. And we think there is plenty of opportunity there for designers to be engaging in research to feed into other projects. The PhD ... well Perry, Kate and I just didn't have enough to do with our time (laughs). I think that it's part of the ongoing idea of continually learning. We are different ages, we had all for different reasons got to the point where we felt we really needed to reflect on our practice over a 20 - year period, and that we needed to learn from that and then start to explore how we would springboard off from that into our future practice.

Josh: I suppose it's another form of ultimate collaboration, in a sense it's that other stimulation outside of the day to day. The text and everything you engage with through that research, it's another driver for the practice I suppose.

Kevin: It is, but also the practice based research program at RMIT is a really interesting program, it's really world leading. In fact there are universities in Europe now who are taking up the system they've got there, where practitioners are involved in postgraduate research. So I think it's a cutting edge program academically and the fact that it's done with practice design based research is perfect.

Josh: It's a really exciting emerging area. And I hear that a book is in the pipeline. When can we expect to see it on the shelves?

Kevin: Well, we were 20 years old last year in 2010, so I think the book is just a little bit late. As it was supposed to be the 20 year book, it could be the 21 year book. It is being edited by Professor SueAnne Ware from RMIT and Professor Gini Lee from Melbourne University. Gini's just taken up the Dame Elisabeth Murdoch chair at Melbourne University. So we've been working with Gini and SueAnne for nearly a year and a half now and there's 17 essays from academics and researchers and practitioners from around Australia and a number of people from overseas who are writing about the various projects. We're really excited about it and it should be out in maybe November or December we hope. We'll definitely have an Adelaide book launch so you can come along.

Josh: Kevin, thank you for your time today, it's been a pleasure.

Kevin: Thank you.

4.3 Interview

**Interview
with Kevin Taylor
Place Focus**

**Filmed 28/07/2010 TCL Studio
Adelaide**

Q. Can you tell us what your favourite urban place is, in Australia?

Kevin: In Australia? I was going to say my favourite urban space is actually the Bordeaux tram system. But that's in France ...

Q. Tell us about that, that's fine.

Kevin: It seems like a strange one because it's not an individual place. Bordeaux inserted a new tram system into its city back in the early 2000s, so it was inserted into an obviously dense older European city. What's fantastic about it from an urban design perspective is that it does what I think urban design should do and that is think of both the macro and micro level. So at the macro level they've changed all the streets, taken the cars out and put the tram system in, not only that, but put interchanges on the edges of the city, so people that come in buses and cars actually change mode, and hop on the trams. Then they travel through the centre of the city via the trams. So big picture thinking about the whole transport system of the entire city ... and then, they've done an absolutely fantastic job of redesigning every street that the trams have gone down, from building edge to building edge. In some cases they've reduced main streets from four lanes, with two lanes each way, to just a single lane in one direction. And put the tram system in other streets that would have been one lane each way; they've take the cars out completely and just redesigned the whole street as a tram and pedestrian thoroughfare. So the detail of the pavement, all the furniture design, the shelter designs ... And of course the Bordeaux trams have no overhead wires it's just a central rail at ground level. So it's just beautiful to look at. The trams are highly articulated with very short sections before the articulations so they turn the corners of the narrow streets of Bordeaux, really sharp corners and they just turn like a snake winding through the streets. That's probably the best piece of urban design I think I've seen, anywhere in my travels.



Bordeaux Tram Network

Q. When you think of Bordeaux and of other places, do they have consistent qualities?

Kevin: Of the qualities that are really important, first of all is human scale. In Bordeaux that's one of the things they've done by taking the cars out, they've not only put the tram system through the streets but they've pedestrianised spaces that were previously dominated by cars, so I think, for me, human scale is really important. I also think a sense of the space having been crafted, to some extent, the materiality of it, the detailing, so that there's actually an extension of human scale, a sense of people being able to relate to the elements within the space having been designed, made, cared for by another human being which I think is really important. I think as an extension of those two, the spaces have to be sociable, in the sense that they promote human activity, they're not so anonymous they're not so bland, hard edge that they work against people socialising. I think that's really critical. And related to that I think is flexibility, open programming. Not overprogrammed but that some effort goes into at least enough programming to be a catalyst to encourage people to be in the space in the first place. And I think, in Australia, that Federation Square is obviously the quintessential programmed space.



Federation Square - Melbourne

Q. By programmed spaces do you mean for events and festivals?

Kevin: That's right but I think not to the point where it's programmed so that it excludes any spontaneity or being using it as a social space.

I think another one is obviously a sense of sustainability through all aspects of design, materiality, the whole lot. The sense of caring about the long-term use of resources I think is pretty critical. And I think the other thing that we always try to do is to allow people's experience of a space to be multi layered, to bring a sense of the site's own story. It's not you could say, just a sense of history, I think it's more a sense of conceptual narrative that is perhaps not didactic in the sense of, well, this is the history of the site, but being more open about the way it's expressed so that people can key into it in a number of different ways. They are the sorts of things that come into my mind when I think about qualities.

Q. Do you have a definition of urban design?



Canberra looking at Capital Hill down Anzac Parade

Kevin: Well, very loose. I guess my definition of urban design is more about the process and the outcome. I'd say urban design is the design of cities in a collaborative manner that produces an integrated outcome. And the key words there for me are collaboration and integration. I think urban design is not one discipline, urban designers are crucial to the process of designing cities but in the end they're planning and designing facilitators that bring a whole multitude of people together to make a city what it is. So that's the collaborative bit and I think if the collaboration works then you should get an integrated outcome and I think that's the other key for me. You only have to look at cities all around the world and Australian cities. What you see is lopsided outcomes with cars completely dominating. In Canberra, in places like the parliamentary triangle and other places, landscape architects and open spaces dominate to the detriment of the sense of the overall urban outcome. It's death by open space. So it's not always the traffic planners who are the bad guys. I think whenever it gets lopsided and any one of the disciplines, whether it's architecture or landscape or some form of engineering, becomes lopsided, then you get a result that just doesn't work on a whole range of levels.

Q. Do you see a difference between urban design and place making?

Kevin: No I don't, it's the same thing. I think all the aspirations people have when they talk about place making are the same aspirations that any good urban designer should have for the spaces that they're creating.

Q. Do you call yourself a landscape architect or an urban designer?

Kevin: Well, our company says that we work in the fields of landscape architecture and urban design. I would describe myself as a landscape architect and an urban designer. I've been practising for 30 years so I feel as though I've got enough experience to do that. Although I've never practised in architecture I do have a degree in architecture, so I feel as though I do understand buildings. And through landscape architecture I feel as though I understand the spaces in between them. And I think, just over the years, I've worked on enough large projects to understand the broader planning context within which we operate. And I really think you need to have an understanding of all, well, you need to have an understanding of a lot of things as an urban designer, but I think you've got to understand how architecture works at least in broad terms, you've got to understand how spaces between buildings work and I think you've got to have some sort of understanding

of the broader planning context. I do feel that urban design is one of those disciplines that people on the periphery of it do sometimes coerce or co-opt the name urban design or urban designer, and I think that's probably okay. It's an emerging discipline, there's not all that many people trained in it and people need to communicate what their skills are. So I feel comfortable calling myself an urban designer after both the academic background that I've got but also just the experience.

Q. What do landscape architects bring to urban design?

Kevin: Well, I think they bring possibly the most crucial bit in all the skills needed. I think landscape architects both in their training and in their experience and their interests vary enormously, some are much more interested in what you would call the soft elements of landscape architecture, in broader-scale planning and park design. But I think for landscape architects that are interested in the urban environment, I think they bring a crucial understanding of the special qualities of everything that's in-between the buildings. And I also think landscape architects tend to, just by instinct, look to context when they're designing something, which architects don't always do. I also think landscape architects, again depending on where they've been trained and what their interest is, tend to have an interest in the broad-scale landscape of urban planning. And I think that's absolutely crucial to understanding urban design or landscape design.

Q. Who should take a lead on urban design projects: a landscape architect, an architect, an engineer?

Kevin: Well, I think it depends on the skills of the individual people involved. I think it would seldom be an engineer. Personally I think that architects and landscape architects are best placed. Increasingly there are people who are qualified in urban design and if they're there and they've done a good course then I think they would be the obvious people. But I think architects and landscape architects and of those two I think landscape architects are best placed. Again it depends on how much they have an interest in the urban environment as a part of their landscape architectural experience.

Q. Does it (the leader) depend on the project – what type of urban design project it might be?

Kevin: Well, I think it does, it depends on scale and the architectural content of the exercise that's being looked at. But again, I think landscape architects because they tend to think in a broader context, so long as they have got a reasonable understanding of architecture and the broader planning principles I still think they're well placed.



North Terrace Art Gallery frontage.



North Terrace Library frontage.



North Terrace Museum frontage,
water feature by Hossein and Angela
Valamanesh.

Q. What is your favourite part of North Terrace?

Kevin: I don't think I have a definite place, but the frontages of the Museum and the Art Gallery and the Library, not necessarily the forecourts, but the actual part of the public realm out on North Terrace across those frontages I think works really well. Partly because those frontages are really active, there are a lot of people coming and going from the Art Gallery, the Library and the Museum. The Library and the Museum have got forecourts that are adjacent so the space expands. The more traditional streetscape public realm expands into those forecourts and there's normally a lot of activities through there, a lot of people coming and going. The sculptural water feature that Hossein and Angela Valamanesh did in front of the Museum forecourt is a really beautiful piece. There are some really beautiful existing trees that we've been able to integrate into the designs, some Jacarandas across there, so that from day one it meant that there was shade there and it had just a really beautiful feel to it.

Q. Your design of North Terrace, or the outcome I guess, is that a place people move through or has it become a destination people go to?

Kevin: Well, I think part of the success of it has been the fact that it was designed to do both and I think there's been a reasonable level of success there. It's very much a move through space for people moving east/west along North Terrace. Part of the brief was also to encourage people to move from the city down into the cultural institutions and even to encourage them to move between the institutions down to the river. So, there are people moving north/south and east/west, it's definitely, a moving through space. The inner and outer paths with the outer path of the footpaths where people tend to walk fairly quickly if they're catching a bus or something like that and the inner path where people can meander along the edge of the institutional buildings. I think that has worked pretty well. I think people also see it as a place, as the trees grow it will increasingly have a strong sense of identity. I think it already has, I think people already go to those institutions, hang about out front, use the forecourts. I think Adelaide City Council could, you know there's some programming opportunities, which I don't think they've really capitalised on as much as they could have that would utilise the spaces and make them even more of a destination for people. I think it works as both at the moment, it's good.

Q. Someone was saying to me that it is designed with power points, North Terrace designed for café is that why you were talking about that?

Kevin: Yes, there was a café proposed out in front of the Museum building which was taken out at the last minute but the facilities are there. There are service kiosks built into the seating plinths along there, it gets used a festival times but I think there's plenty of opportunity for it to be more used.

Q. You kind of get the sense that, if you were in a European city, it would be full of people selling coffee, is that what you had in mind for the space when you were designing?

Kevin: Well, I think this is one of the challenges of Australian cities that we don't use public space well. Maybe with the exception of Melbourne, we don't use public space quite the way that they do in some other parts of the world and a lot of that's to do with density and people actually living in the inner cities themselves. Adelaide — it's getting there, the population in the city in apartments, etcetera, is growing all the time. And yes the critical mass of people to use these sorts of spaces is building. When we first designed North Terrace there was some real concern among various people in Adelaide that the spaces were too big, too much paving, too open, I think all that's been disproven and even with the sort of moderate levels of population in the city all of the spaces have been really well used, but yes there's certainly plenty of room for them to be even more used if they're programmed.

Q. What are some of the sustainability outcomes of North Terrace?

Kevin: Well, I think the big one is one that doesn't get talked about in terms of sustainability, is to do with a phrase that was pretty popular back in the 1970s, the idea of 'long life, loose fit'. The materials that have been selected for North Terrace are going to be there for a very long time. All the pavement is granite, in fact it's local granite from South Australia or it's local slate, Mintaro slate, or it's concrete or it's recycled timber and particularly it's the granite, I suppose, that I think really is the material that's going to be there for an awfully long time. And so I think the idea of just the long life and selection of the materials so that it actually doesn't need to be replaced, so in 20 years' time that it can last, or that granite paving can last 100 years – 150 years.

In fact Adelaide City Council did an analysis when we were designing North Terrace back around 2001. It was a life cycle cost of all the pavement options for North Terrace and it went from bitumen to granite and it went through in-situ concrete, precast concrete, it was a huge matrix. And the granite actually came out in the top two or three simply because when you looked at a life of 70 or 80 years and the non-replacement of that material against needing to put in and maybe replace precast concrete two or three times in a period, etc. From a cost point of view, even though it was a very significant capital cost, they could see the life cycle cost as being equal and the same goes for the energy and resources that goes into that replacement, that would be the big one.

There's also some water sensitive urban design initiatives there. Particularly in the S.A. Museum forecourt, water is collected from the street in North Terrace and off the roofs of the Museum buildings and moved through a bio-filtration system that goes underground into a tank underneath the lawn area there and is used for irrigation. And that was the first time a system like that had been installed in Adelaide. It's been a challenge for the Museum to look after it because it was a new thing to look after. Basically it's been pretty



Cafe' on North Terrace



North Terrace Material Palette



North Terrace Museum forecourt swale

instrumental in bringing some of that thinking into people's minds as being something that can happen in the centre of the city in Adelaide. There are examples in the eastern states but there weren't examples in Adelaide of that at the time.

Q. Those kind of features in some way are quite fundamental and discreet, do you think we could be more overt with the sustainability side of things or is it more part of the outcome?

Kevin: That system of design is completely integrated into the design of the Museum forecourt. It wasn't an add-on at all. The design for North Terrace was done back in 2001/2002. The whole field of water sensitive urban design has moved on pretty considerably since then and is certainly in the subsequent stages council and TCL are looking at much more thorough use of that sort of technology. In terms of material selection we probably can't do too much better than what we've done, all the timber on all the seats is all recycled timber and there's a considerable amount of that long-wearing timber that's not going to need to be replaced. I think certainly more could be done in the lighting side of it. Again the technology has changed enormously with the introduction of LED lighting. You could probably light North Terrace now for a tenth of the electricity supply used with the conventional lights that are there at the moment. You know, the technology is changing pretty significantly in some of those areas so I guess North Terrace is lucky in some ways in that it's a staged project and new technology can certainly be integrated into those stages as they evolve.

Q. Looking back over the past 10 years at North Terrace is there anything you would have done differently?

Kevin: Well, it's one of those rare projects where there's not a lot. Most projects you do look back and think 'gee, I would have liked to have done this or that. It is a bit of a rarity, but there's not that much. Putting the filter on that question of what you know is possible and what's not possible in terms of the context of the project, I honestly don't think there's all that much, I certainly can't think of any big items. That project had a pretty fantastic run in the sense that the political context within which it occurred and the bureaucratic context within which it occurred was extremely supportive of a good quality result. So there were very few compromises. I mean, every project has got compromises as you go along, but there were very few if any compromises that resulted in thinking at the end of the project 'we wish we hadn't had to do it this way, we wish we could have done it this other way', it just was not the case in that project.

Q. It seems like a key role for success, almost understated, is the role of the client on many projects ...

Kevin: Well, that's more the case in Adelaide than it is in other places. In Adelaide big urban design places need both State Government and Adelaide City Council cooperation for them to occur, simply because of the cost. Whereas in places like Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane the councils are big enough to go ahead and fully fund the project so the way the client sets themselves up in relation to the project in Adelaide is actually absolutely fundamental to the success of the project. But, yes, the North Terrace project had a brief that put quality and functionality on equal par and it was backed up by a committee system and a directorate that was set up specifically for the project which was funded by both Adelaide City Council and the State Government. And they really carried forward the objectives of the brief all the way through.

Q. Was there a project champion of North Terrace?

Kevin: Well, again it was an unusual one in that there were two or three people at the time who were champions of the project and some of those people were quite high level ministers of government. We used to present to the Premier and we used to present to a committee called the Capital City Committee which still exists, but at that point in time were quite powerful. And the Lord Mayor, the Premier and two or three ministers of government were all on that committee and we would present it to them, so that was the level of interest in the project and the level of commitment to the project which was fairly unusual.

Q. How do project reviews fit into your firm's process of design? Are you able to go back and test the success of these projects?

Kevin: Well, I'd say it's more informal than formal. When you do a project like North Terrace in a city that you live and work in, your review process is pretty much continuous because I'd walk down North Terrace twice a week going to and from meetings in the city. So we may not have filled out a quality assurance form that formally reviews North Terrace but we've certainly taken an ongoing interest in what's going on there.

We've just set up a research arm of our company called Tickle. And one of the things that Tickle is going to be looking at is putting in place what tends to be the missing link in the flow of information in companies like ours where you do review your projects informally, but we're looking at ways of doing that formally through this research arm.

Q. Your firm investigates contemporary urban life and global culture, can you tell us what that means?

Kevin: I think that one of the things that we are really conscious of is that the environment we're designing in is not a static environment. That technology is changing the way people socialise. People don't organise where they are going to meet a week beforehand any more. Groups of kids communicate via text messages and mobile phones and decide in a flash that they're going to meet somewhere and half an hour later they're meeting there. So, I mean, we are just very conscious of the way people relate to urban spaces. The way they operate in them is changing and we need to be aware of that. I think the whole issue of globalisation versus the local and the local sense of community is really important. And some of that is to do with flow of information and technology.

I think the other thing is, at a really fundamental level to do with ownership of public spaces. There have been big changes in the last few decades in relation to who actually makes urban spaces. Urban spaces are now quite commonly made by the private sector and some of those urban spaces are more or less privatised in the way that they are operated and experienced. So I think there is a whole range of factors out there, some of which are cultural, some of which are how spaces are procured, some of which are to do with technology, that have just made us realise that you can't go back to Lynch or other people's ideas about how spaces are used from the 50s and 60s and 70s even though there are a lot of fundamental truths in that work that you need to take notice of. But there is a whole lot of other contemporary things that are happening that are really influencing the way people use urban space. We see it as really important to just be aware of that and seek to understand how it influences how we might design the spaces.

Q. Do you try and engage with existing and future users of these places, to get a sense what their needs and aspirations from the places might be?

Kevin: That's certainly something that we aspire to do in all our projects, how much you can do depends totally on the project. We've just been involved in doing the master plan for Victoria Square here in Adelaide. So the way that we've engaged with it is first of all the question involved with a space like Victoria Square, as with North Terrace, is 'who is the community of interest?' In Victoria Square, the answer is probably a million people. Everyone in Adelaide knows Victoria Square and would have an opinion about it, would feel as though they're a legitimate user of it, even if they've only ever been there once in their life. Just because of the symbolic nature of the space ... and North Terrace is in a similar category. When you're working on spaces like that, the question is: 'how the hell do you engage with people?', On Victoria Square, one of the things that council did was engage a professional market research company and did a statistically valid market research exercise with people who use the square and with people who don't use the square. They did a series of focus groups. This research is well beyond the normal community consultation that a designer would do. But in that case, because the users are potentially everyone in the city, it seemed like an appropriate way to go. Down at the next level there are all the stakeholders and again in projects like North Terrace and Victoria Square there's literally hundreds of people who own businesses around these places, government institutions, etcetera ...

Q. Public transport operators?

Oh exactly, so I mean in those sorts of projects we've been engaged in, on Victoria Square it literally was hundreds of meetings. I had some weeks where I had 20 or 30 meetings in my diary, meeting all these people, so it's a lot of work to do, but in the end it really has paid off. Because everyone has ... first of all we understand what the needs are, even meeting with the local hairdresser down there who owns a hairdressing shop on Victoria Square, we at least understand what their needs are. And probably — just as importantly — they feel as though they've been heard.

Q. We are focusing as much on the users as on the community, which are quite different. In some projects the community might not even use the place that you design. So it's the user, and I think that a nice opportunity for market researchers is that we are not just asking the people that use the place but we're asking the people that aren't using it.

Kevin: Well, they deliberately sought out people that use it and that don't and the key question that they asked the people that aren't using it is why? And in some ways that was just as informative as the information from the people that use it. I mean the other thing that is increasingly being used on projects which is more at the consultation stage, later on as the project progresses, is just the use of websites. Adelaide City Council developed a project specific website which was an extremely good website, it just had every piece of information that was available on the project. Literally, even the detailed 150 - page report was there as a PDF document somebody could download that and read every word of it if they wanted to. Nobody could have criticised Adelaide City Council for not being open about that project. Everyone who had a computer or access to a computer literally had access to almost every piece of information about the project.

Q. We're starting to get good at interaction (with the community) too, it's not necessarily one way.

Kevin: Well, exactly, I mean they didn't set up a blog site, where people were able to register their comments on a website. But in some urban design projects, and again this happened on Victoria Square, is the local newspaper. The Advertiser literally set up its own blog on Victoria Square so there was this whole other stream of consultation going on that went on for weeks in parallel with the formal consultation process that the council was managing.

Q. With projects like North Terrace and Victoria Square, do you have a consistent overall process?

Kevin: Well, yes and no. I think that in some ways what I'm about to say is pretty standard for people. We engage in a lot of analysis of site and context. And usually go way beyond the site in sort of our starting point of looking at it, the urban context in the city that we're involved with. And also delving back, and again it's not just history it's more, it's the formal history but also the stories about the site that we take a lot of time to look at. Because one of the things that our company is known for is often we have a really strong narrative or sort of conceptual underpinning of the physical solution that is the outcome. That can only come about if you've done research about the place and I guess what we strive to do is have a narrative or conceptual underpinning that is not necessarily didactic but is more multi layered and is underpinned in some reality about the site. So that when people key into it, it is specific to that place. There is a fair bit of research involved in that and also the consultation. We do put a lot of effort into the consultation process. And, as I said before, that varies on different projects as to what's possible and what's appropriate, we see it as really fundamental as to coming to the right answer.

Q. How would you sell urban design to someone who doesn't really know what it's about?

Kevin: Well, I think I've probably mentioned all the things that I list as being important. I think integration is the absolute critical one, to me that just stands out as being ... that if you don't get that right you're more than likely not going to have the right answer. And I think where people are heading with the idea of place making, which is not new, people have been talking about place making for a couple of decades. This whole idea of how do you turn a space into a place and a place is a space that has meaning for people essentially. I think integration, meaning for people and human scale and a sense of sociability I think are the key things for me.

Q. What advice would you give to people starting out as urban designers?

Kevin: Well, I think tenacity is really important, tenacity and a sense of longevity. We've got projects that we've been working on for over a decade. North Terrace in Adelaide is one. We started working on that in 1999 with an urban design framework. We've now done three stages. The State Government is saying that they want it done by 2016 when they open a new hospital down the western end. If it does run to 2016, we will have been working on that project for 17 years. And ministers, councillors, premiers and lord mayors, and all the people in the bureaucracy they've all come and gone. And as urban design consultants, we are really the only people left standing. Well, we're 11 years into it and we're already the only people left standing. There is nobody left on that project in any State Government or any department or in the council who was there when we started the project. So tenacity to keep going on these projects that require a long-term commitment and making that long-term commitment is really crucial. Which I think is different from a lot of architecture projects and other landscape architecture projects that don't have that long period of time for them to be implemented. I think collaboration, the ability and desire to collaborate not just with other disciplines, but I think in urban design again — perhaps more than other areas of landscape architecture and architecture — you've got to be able to collaborate with the client. The client is often multifaceted. You've got to be able to almost become part of the client's team. There's a lot of talk in project procurement in recent years about partnerships and that way of working and I think in urban design, very frequently you have to work that way to get things over the line. And I just think an unwavering commitment to quality. Every design discipline is plagued by death by a thousand cuts of the original desire and integrity and vision being gradually eaten away. And I think in urban design, because it's so multifaceted, there are so many components of it, it's very easy for that to happen. And that's partly what I mean by tenacity. You've got to be really tenacious about quality.

Q. What does the future hold for urban design: challenges and opportunities?

Kevin: Well, I think urban design is where the future is really in design. You've only got to look at what's happening around the world. People on every continent are streaming from the country to the city. If we're going to manage the social, cultural and environmental impacts and opportunities of human beings on the planet, then we are going to have to learn how to design cities that meet all those needs. And we are going to have to learn how to retrofit existing cities. I mean, peak oil, forgetting climate change, but the concept of peak oil is just a huge issue for almost every city in the world that's being designed around the motor car. So both the design of new cities and the redevelopment of existing cities to cope with the new population and to cope with all the environmental imperatives and to give people not just an acceptable but a real quality of life, urban design I think is just absolutely crucial. So it's both a challenge to respond to that but it's also a huge opportunity.

5.0

Reflection

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Reflections

5.3 Extending our Boundaries

5.4 Exhibition

One that's concerned with 'care', one that's concerned with 'arrangement' and one that is concerned with 'sense'. It's a sense that is about sensitivity but also making sense of this thing.

What is here, let's make sense of this thing, and in making sense of it, let's also look for those transformative moments that are authentic.

If you look at those three things, 'care', 'arrangement' and 'sense', and how those things come together to create these moments of friction.

It's a nice way of seeing how your practice is currently operating.

Our Individual Contributions

We began this PhD with the idea of a practice sustained by difference. As a practice we knew and promoted our different skills and while we understood each other's strengths and interests, we hadn't articulated, at a deeper level, our specific preoccupations. Our individual essays reveal these fundamental differences, describe our back stories and our past and current preoccupations and identify why we do what we do.

These differences were summarised by Richard Blythe following our presentation of our individual essays at PRS 3 June 2011 as; 'sense' - Kevin, 'care' - Kate, and 'arrangement' - Perry. There is obviously a reductive quality to the labels, which edit out a lot of other interests, and design approaches, but all three directors felt as if Richard captured something essential about our individual practice.

We recognise our differences and have promoted them as a practice strategy, but they have usually been articulated as skills, experience and/or background differences. Sense, care and arrangement seem to tap into our personality as well as our preoccupations. The labels allow for deeper probing and richer interpretation.

Sense captures my deep intuition for country, community and site. It encapsulates my sensitivity to people and to landscape and my ability to make sense of place, understanding its rhythms, its environments and its secrets.

Care captures Kate's personality, her way of relating to people and also a way she relates to her landscape and art practice. This concern, care, captures an interest in beauty, sustainability, crafting and detail, the hands-on approach and the ongoing pursuit for expression in gardens and public landscapes.

Arrangement captured Perry's underlying way of designing his projects. It describes a way of understanding the structures of place, its latent patterns and forms, as well as his predilection for the composition of landscapes and urban settings.

Richard describes the strength of our practice, when these concerns come together as moments of friction. It is true that they are different design approaches. They are both differences as productive friction, but also very complementary, different yet enabling. It is the combination of these concerns, their layered, accumulative strength to our way of working that seems to be an appropriate appraisal of our combined practice.

Our Individual Contributions

Our individual essays undertaken as part of this PhD expanded on the themes identified by Richard Blythe. These essays also explored our individual back stories, modes of practice and contribution to the discipline of Landscape Architecture. The essays revealed our individual strengths. Through this process we have embraced these strengths and interests as our key individual contributions. Through this acceptance we now utilise these skills in new ways, are open to them, to push them further and encourage others to do so.

Care: Kate Cullity

The notion of the essay began by exploring Kate's propensity to strive for the elusive quality of beauty in TCL's projects and her art projects—a quality she often refers to as the 'soul' of the project. Kate came across Elizabeth Meyer's essay *Sustaining Beauty* wherein she makes a connection between beauty and sustainability, and from this reading she drew a number of questions for exploration. Kate uncovered that the conduit that joins beauty and sustainability within her and TCL's body of work is her innate desire to care for and nurture individuals, communities and landscapes and to elicit this propensity in others who experience the work.

The earlier projects of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Box Hill Community Arts Centre as described in chapter 2.4 had a conscious commitment to community engagement and an innate desire to care for and nurture the visions and aspirations of those communities. This commitment was greatly enhanced by the creative collaboration between the project designers, other creative practitioners and the clients. In the Uluru project, notions of beauty and care were sought out through appreciation of the elemental landscape and a response of minimal intervention and the use of the particular site's materiality, while in the Box Hill project it was the use of ornamentation, colour and crafted detailing that created the expression of exuberance.

In the mid to late 2000s Kate was questioning her contribution to the field of Landscape Architecture, by asking what was important, what was the best way for me to interface and work creatively with the larger urban and civic projects. Kate and TCL wanted to re-engage with the earlier preoccupations of community engagement and cultural and environmental sustainability and bring them into focus in a larger civic project. TCL felt that while North Terrace and other major projects had been successful, these ideals had become clouded by the bigger civic gestures.

The redevelopment of the Tartanyangga/Victoria Square project was the first urban project that made the coalescing of the ideals of beauty and sustainability, through the conduit of care, more overt and conscious. The struggle with attaining the right expression and fit for the various gardens, the active involvement of members of the community as gardeners and cultural hosts and the emphasis on art as ecological interventions within the gardens, combined to create an equal privileging of ideals. Kate came to understand the seamlessness between beauty and sustainability and the actuality of it being and/or rather than and/or. This provides a renewed consciousness and confidence in her work.

Contribution

Kate's contribution within TCL relates to her background in botany and visual arts. She has a strong interest in the design of public and private gardens and has led the design of the gardens in the Redevelopment of Tartanyangga/Victoria Square and North Terrace, projects where the gardens are a major expression within the urban environment.

Kate has devised the arts strategies for these projects, collaborating with artists on the implementation of the artworks. The integration of art within TCL's projects are viewed by the profession as making an innovative contribution to the nexus between art and design in public projects.

Kate's PhD essay *More than Just Looking Good: Beauty Aesthetics and Care* discussed her work as an artist/designer for the Chaumont-sur-Loire International Garden Festival, one of a number of projects for international art/garden festivals. These events are a venue for experimentation and the exploration of ideas that have focused on installations that abstract the Australian landscape. This was the first time an Australian Landscape Architect has explored these contemporary ideas in international festival venues.

Sense: Kevin Taylor

Kevin Taylor's essay entitled *Making Sense of Landscape*, reflected on the exploration of the civic in TCL's work, with a close examination of the Neo-Formalist ideas behind the North Terrace Redevelopment in Adelaide and the current ideas and propositions which are driving the redevelopment of Tartanyangga/Victoria Square also in Adelaide, in particular the idea of the 'New Civic', a public space which has characteristics that allow flexibility, spontaneity and unpredictability. This examination of the latter project identified a new position is emerging for the practice in relation to public space design. For Kevin, this has evolved from a re-examination and transformation of the values and ideals which took shape during the first five years of the practice.

In Kevin's words:

These formative years, as illustrated earlier through the Box Hill, Uluru and Collingwood projects, resulted in a keen appreciation of community input, a commitment to collaboration, an apprenticeship in how politics plays itself out in projects, and a tendency to seek a diversity of inputs and views regarding the stories and histories of a site and its community. Using the tri-polar analysis and poles proposed by Ware, the practice's work, between 1988–1995, can be categorised as predominantly Design Activism, i.e. socially engaged, less concern was afforded to Landscape Urbanism and Neo Formalism.

By 1995, I was on a trajectory which carried the above cargo as well as a propensity for expressiveness in materiality and detailing. In addition, work at places such as Uluru and Collingwood Children's Farm had resulted in an almost geomantic sensitivity to site, where imagination, memory, creative musings and stories coalesced with the experience of walking the topography of a site to create a tangible yet fluid identity for the land with which I was working.

Reflections

I see the New Civic as an echo of the Design Activism which drove my earliest projects. Victoria Square with the formal symmetry of its arbours, its urban wetlands, and empowered gardeners is an attempt to reach a more palatable balance between the poles of Neo Formalism (the art of landscape), Landscape Urbanism (the science of landscape) and Design Activism (the politics of landscape).

Contribution

Kevin's PhD identified his ability to listen to and understand site and community and to make lateral connections with the knowledge he gained from his investigations. This ability was honed in his earlier consultative projects including the Box Hill Community Arts Centre (1988–1992) where he prepared a consultative Planning Study that formed the basis of the brief for the subsequent building and landscape, the first purpose-built Arts Centre in Australia and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Central Australia (1990–1993). Both projects won national awards and were internationally published.

His artful communication skills and training in Architecture enabled him to lead some of Australia's seminal urban design and landscape architecture projects, including projects most usually led by architects. These seminal projects were often realised after many years of unrealised masterplans by others, as he had the ability to understand the *real politik* of the complex projects and to inclusively guide stakeholders and the design team on a collective journey. Projects that have made significant contribution to urban design include the Redevelopment of North Terrace and Tarntanyangga/Victoria Square both in Adelaide.

Kevin is internationally recognised for his ability to distil and abstract elemental Australian landscapes into contemporary form, as well as design minimal interventions when working in national parks. Projects that have made a major contribution to the interpretation of Australian landscape include the Australian Garden and the Forest Gallery in Victoria. These projects are born out of a strong conceptual narrative that underpins the design. Seminal work in Australian national parks include the 'whole of park' approach for the Flinders Ranges Visitor Facility Development and Services Plan, a first of its kind in Australia.

Arrangement: Perry Lethlean

Perry Lethlean's essay entitled *It's Hard Being Messy When You're Compositional*, reflected, via the examination of three waterfronts, the constant theme of urban mapping to inform design, the stitching of projects into their greater context and the compositional emphasis in the arrangement of spaces. These constant ideas permeated through projects in Perth, Geelong and Auckland.

In Perry's words:

Each of these projects are characterised by key moves, spatial design acts that unite each setting and connect to their greater context. Each of the moves are spatial, they create spaces, interventions and new ways of occupying and moving through place. Each are underpinned by a narrative that is born out of the site and intends to communicate through public space the underlying stories of the site and the design's conception.

I also identified a shift in my design practice. Although the compositional design and idea of a striking frame is evident through my practice, it reveals a shift from an interest in figurative expressions to attempting to embed more complex layering and a mosaic of experiences. Instead of conceiving of 'landscape' as the primary setting for our 'public', I identified how we attempt more holistic urban scenarios that create multiple ways of experiencing public life.

Contribution

Perry's contribution relates to a mode of practice which privileges an understanding of how a project is situated and connected to its greater urban setting, the establishment of a coherent and succinct vision for the project and the identification of 'key moves'; enabling acts to achieve the vision. These methodologies were described in particular for the Geelong and Auckland Waterfront redevelopments.

Perry's Urban Design training and expertise has been fundamental to many of TCL's large complex urban design projects, such as North Terrace and Victoria Square in Adelaide and the Geelong and Auckland Waterfronts. These projects, led by TCL, involving the interrelationships of transport, built form and activation strategies, as well as collaboration between disciplines has extended the boundaries of the conventional role of the discipline.

Perry's strong and talented compositional skills and propensity to utilise the repetition of elements has created visually arresting and well knitted urban scenes that have been heralded nationally and internationally. Although this visual arrangement of spaces is still a major part of TCL and Perry's design process, Perry identified in Auckland Waterfront a new and more compelling contemporary direction regarding the activation of spaces. This was achieved by embedding friction and multi-programming into the design mix. This new way of editing and composing urban space has made a strong contribution to the profession of Landscape Architecture and Urban Design since the project was completed in 2011.

Reflections

Our Collective Contribution

The process of shared reflections and personal investigations via this PhD has been a revelatory journey. What we first assumed would be primary themes of our practice were upon closer inspection not considered as significant. Similarly other themes and interests have emerged that were not originally part of our collective view.

The spiral-like trajectory of the PhD has also thrown light on difference as a significant creative force in the practice's partnership, but it has also identified four threads of common interests as the glue that has held the practice together and provided ongoing foci for current projects.

This PhD, through our seminal projects, uncovered four threads that were common themes in our practice; civic, site, narrative and material presence. These resonated through many of our recognised projects that have been the subject of peer recognition through awards and publication which led us to identify them as our collective contribution to the field of Landscape Architecture in Australia.

Civic

The thread 'civic' relates to a body of projects in the public domain, often in urban contexts. This thread is described in chapter 2.6. Early projects grappled with the idea of civic identity in an Australian context. We identified a shift in our practice where, more recently, the practice has explored how we design to enable multiple ways of exchange and appropriation. As Kevin Taylor describes it in his essay, we have been interested in how we can 'design for complexity, diversity and social exchange within the public domain. ... public domain rather than public space.'

We identified in this PhD, that this thread, in its more recent manifestation, has returned to the origins of the practice, to Kevin and my earlier interests in social activism and community engagement and our interest in environmentally sustainable processes and outcomes.

We have also observed a shift from predominantly formal preoccupations to a more complex layering of program and occupation of public areas. These cumulative ideas are being tested at Auckland Waterfront and underpin the design of Victoria Square. These projects, while still concerned with identity and connections, represent a collective new approach to the practice and therefore its longer-term contribution to practice and knowledge is as yet unknown.

Site : Designing in an Australian Context

We identified three layers to this thread; subtle integration, evoking landscape qualities and urban expressions.

Our studies revealed that we may have a particularly distinct style derived from our work that is located in many powerful and wonderful and, at times, elemental Australian landscape settings. These projects, focussed on a subtle integration of elements, often in national parks ensuring the greater landscape context remains the dominant experience. The actual landscape architecture in these projects is informed by the materiality and scale of the setting and is modest, integrated and attempts to be subsumed by the broader site. We are always interested in the notion that the landscape does most of the talking.

The national park projects, and the research that they required, informed our more culturally based projects such as museums, zoological and botanic gardens. These projects have often attempted to evoke some quintessential qualities of the Australian landscape. Rather than reproducing an imagined 'natural' landscape, we have seen these projects as clever devices, using design techniques of abstraction and stylisation to capture certain landscape characteristics. They are informed by very specific place understandings, are strongly conceptual and are usually structured with a narrative-based visitor journey. The Australian Garden, a botanic garden designed at Cranbourne, Victoria, described in chapter 2.4, is representative of this approach. This work, certainly in an international context, has been recognised for expressing an Australian artistic or poetic abstraction and has contributed to a new style that was distinctive from the bush or international style.

We identified in this PhD that this preoccupation in understanding and interpreting site is apparent in urban expressions on a range of project typologies. Here we attempt to connect to the fine nuances of a site through research into its natural systems, communities, cultural stories and mythologies or its urban morphology.

Narrative

Over a 20 year period the use of narrative has been an important way to structure the design process and to convey meaning through the designed landscape. It has extended across a range of projects, from waterfronts to public parks to infrastructure. The PhD identified three methodologies in our utilisation of narrative. The first, described as 'intrinsically interpretive', is evident in our cultural tourism projects where the brief requires a particular story to be conveyed to the visitor and instead of relying on didactic signage we have conveyed the story through the landscape experience. The second, described as 'non-literal abstract', is not evident in the project outcome, but has been an important generator of the design. Thirdly, 'this means that', is very evident in the project outcome as a literal interpretation of the narrative generator. These methods were described in chapter 2.6.

The PhD has identified a subtle shift in how we use this theme in our design practice. As we identified in our civic theme, we have been interested in building complexity of program and activation in our public projects. Similarly the use of narrative has been less of a fundamental driver of the design, as was evident in the past, and is now incorporated more as a subtle and nuanced interpretation of place.

Extending our Boundaries

Material Presence

The PhD identified that our sense of fine detailing—the crafting of elements, a human scale and a rich palette of hard and planted material—is a common theme or trait across many of our projects. We observed that we often tread a fine line between excessive ornamentation and the detailing of the public realm.

The PhD uncovered that this interest in detailing emerged in our early community-based practice, where we often worked with artists to elevate the mundane furnishings of the public realm into more crafted experiences that connected the community to the designed landscape.

Also, we surmised, that we ‘embellish’ our works in urban settings to ensure that our spaces are not empty or forlorn, particularly when we don’t have the density of population to confidently create the unadorned European plaza. The introduction of gardens in the middle scale of these public spaces creates a hybrid condition between park and plaza, a condition that is inviting or familiar at its quietest yet allows denser occupation at peak times. North Terrace redevelopment, as described in chapter 2.6 is illustrative of this approach.

Our utilisation of the colours of the Australian landscape is also evident in our urban projects, influenced by our work in many memorable national park environments, particularly those in desert or dryer regions of Australia. We are consciously reminding the visiting public of the unique patina and textures of the broader landscape beyond the urban periphery.

Consultation and Collaboration

In addition to the four thematic threads, this PhD also recognised how our consultative and collaborative processes have been an important and consistent factor in the realisation of our projects.

The collaborative network originated as an extension of community consultation and an interest in engaging many public voices in the design process. These foundation skills in consultation have allowed us to negotiate our way through complex public projects with multiple stakeholders and community ownership.

This has extended to collaborating with a diverse range of technical and creative partners, and allowed lateral connections and networks to be created through collaborating with partners such as artists, writers, architects and cultural geographers.

In many projects collaborative input has been sought from the earliest phase of the project and has enriched a deep understanding of the site and of its potential. Through collaboration, we have been able to blur the boundary of what is landscape, or architecture or sculpture, as well as encourage TCL towards a more artistic practice. This form of collaborative practice is described in chapter 2.4, through a description of Craigieburn Bypass.

We identified in this PhD that we may be one of the first landscape architecture practices in Australia that originated with consultation and extended to collaboration embedded in the practice and that this way of working has allowed such broad integrations across disciplines.

Shifts in our Practice and New Opportunities

The PhD has identified that many of our 'sticky' and 'seminal' projects, the ones that resonated for us as creatively breaking new ground, were often new project types for the practice. This was described in chapter 2.3 and 2.2. These projects necessitated extensive research, divergent tracks and conversations, acquiring new colleagues and forging new collaborative networks. These projects were the most challenging and ultimately the most rewarding.

Through this PhD we identified that the undertaking of complex projects, those that represented new typologies and fell beyond our experience and comfort zone, were actually the core component of our practice. They have allowed us to lead projects in which, typically, a Landscape Architect might have had a more subservient role.

The diversity of project types was a revelation to us; we knew we did 'big stuff', but didn't realise that it extended so far beyond what Landscape Architects were once expected to do. This diversity has enabled, over time, for us to further extend our sphere of work and our interests.

Our collaborative background has ensured that we resource projects and integrate a myriad of disciplines to realise a successful and integrated outcome:

Major infrastructure projects such as the Craigieburn Bypass in Victoria, described in chapter 2.4 involved the coordination of architects, engineers and artists.

Cultural tourism projects such as the Forest Gallery, described in chapter 2.4, a living museum exhibit in the Melbourne Museum, is a complex zoological and Museum exhibit, typically led by specialist exhibition designers or architects. This project involved TCL coordinating a diverse range of consultants and technical experts to realise a complex design and visitor experience.

Integrated art pieces such as our conception of the Escarpment Wall at The Australian Garden, described in chapter 2.4, blurred the boundaries between what might be landscape architecture and art practice.

Urban Design projects represented by The Auckland Waterfront and Victoria Square redevelopment in South Australia, required an understanding of complex urban design issues and an integration of built form outcomes.

Each of these examples described in this PhD, extended the discipline of Landscape Architecture beyond the typical and conventional role.

Through this PhD, we have consolidated a view, that as landscape architects we have a vital role, not as a subservient partner, but as a leader in the conception and realisation of these complex projects in the public realm. This is identified as one of TCL's contributions to the broader Australian landscape architecture discipline. Particularly by demonstrating, as the lead consultants, the particular skills we can bring as a profession to these projects, including detailed site understandings, a curatorial role in the integration of disciplines and the design of the public realm that extends beyond the built form boundary.

We have now understood the importance of this diversity of project typologies to our practice of design. We have realised that this blurring of the landscape architect's boundaries beyond the conventional is where we feel we have contributed the most and been creatively challenged. It has certainly been assisted through the input of a talented and multi-skilled team of designers in our practice. Their on-going influence and creative maturity will introduce new challenges, and new collaborations which will further enable TCL to expand the sphere of our work.

A Curatorial Practice of Design

This recognition, via the PhD, of the diversity of our projects within the extended boundaries of landscape architecture and the richness of skills within our practice, has given us the confidence to anticipate the next phase. We have begun to describe this phase as a practice of design, one that creates through the lens of a landscape architect.

This approach is distinct from a landscape architect dabbling in other things or creating some add-ons to our core business. What we have realised is that these 'add-ons', the diverse project typologies where we jump in the deep end, has in the past sustained us, sometimes economically but certainly creatively, and has in many ways defined our practice.

We want to therefore embrace the original idea of TCL, 'a design practice sustained by difference', and give it further validity. This we believe will enable further expansions to our field of practice.

This notion of a creative design studio is supported by the recognition of the diverse skills and contributions within our practice. Our studio represents the disciplines of graphic design, architectural, industrial design, fashion design and artistic practice, among others, which have all contributed to the idea of the extended boundaries of Landscape Architecture. We have, through the PhD, become accustomed to our difference, as directors, we are now becoming accustomed and fostering the differences in our staff.

So what of the current Directors, Perry and Kate – are we taking a step back? No, but we do understand better our roles as enablers, our important curatorial role to foster both a collaborative network internally and externally, as well as a transfer of knowledge.

At Kevin Taylor's memorial Perry related the following;

Kevin was our secret. He was our quiet leader, a true gentleman who could create authentic beautiful places. We quietly cherished his integrity, his respect for sites and communities.

Joining his practice meant coming to a place of shared passion, respect and care. We learnt to accept and appreciate his way of listening, thinking and quiet reflection. Via reflection came honest insights. This subtlety permeated our lives. We connected into his moral compass. His values became our shared values without ever realising it.

These values: integrity, care, respect, the poetic, site, community, collaboration, communication and composition, within a studio setting, are values easily said but harder to maintain. We believe the ongoing transfer of these shared values is important to our lives and to our design practice. This, coupled with a sense of fresh, youthful energy, will, we hope, sustain the next phase of TCL.

We began this PhD with an idea of *Braided Pathways: A Practice Sustained by Difference*. At the time we were commenting on our differences. We then embarked on a process to understand these differences and the way they contribute to what we do uncovering commonalities in our modes of practice. Our future, we speculate, is much the same but with a different emphasis. It remains, we hope, a practice sustained by difference, but no longer about three individuals but now more as a collective. This, we believe, is totally consistent with our origins.



Above: A photomontage of TCL 2011 - 2012



6.0

Appendix Essay

More than Just Looking Good:

Beauty, Aesthetics and Care

Kate Cullity

Introduction

**Beauty - Somatic, Visceral and
Metaphysical**

Care

**Artistic Practice and the Beauty
of Constructing Detail**

**Minimal Intervention. Ulugu-
Kata Tjuḷa Cultural Centre, 1990
- 1994**

**Exuberant Intervention Box Hill
Community Arts Centre. 1988 –
1990.**

**Patterns and the Power of
Multiples**

**Gardens Cultivated with Care
The Mosaic Garden: A Garden
in the City Tarntanyangga/
Victoria Square 2010 - ongoing**

Conclusion

6.1 More than Just Looking Good Beauty, Aesthetics and Care Kate Cullity

‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.’¹

(Keats, 1819)

Introduction

I have an innate desire to imbue a quality of beauty, a ‘soul’, into both TCL’s landscape projects and my own art practice. This essay provides an opportunity for me to reflect on and further explore this preoccupation, with an aim to have a deeper understanding of how this propensity can inform projects into the future.

The essay also encourages me to examine whether I privilege a pursuit for beauty over environmentally sustainable issues, that I have been more interested with the expression, feel and experience (both mine and others’) of the work than environmental concerns. Elizabeth Meyer’s essay *Sustaining Beauty: The Performance of Appearance. A Manifesto in Three Parts* emphasises an essential link between beauty and sustainability and provides an invitation to explore the nexus between the two. Her essay encourages me to re-examine TCL’s projects and my own art practice in the light of her questions and to think about possible directions into the future. Do I ‘exploit’ the aesthetic experiences of landscape to encourage people towards cultural, social and environmental ideals? Do I create somatic, sensory experiences of place that lead to new awareness of how one’s actions affect the environment, and to care enough to make changes? Am I involved and preoccupied in the “role of aesthetic environmental experiences, such as beauty, (in) re-centering human consciousness from an egocentric to a more bio centric perspective.”²

Several authors cite beauty and care as critical to the successful attainment of sustainability, that sustainability must extend beyond the ecological to encompass ethics that are also intrinsically social and cultural. When searching for definitions of sustainability, Carol Franklin in an ASLA paper entitled *Designing as if the Earth Really Mattered* provides the most encompassing definition: “We need a broader and more pro-active definition of sustainable design and this is why it may be preferable to call the new paradigm ‘Ecological Design’. This is a design approach that should go beyond the modest goal of minimising site destruction to facilitating community recovery by re-establishing the processes necessary to sustain natural, social and cultural systems.”³ Australian writer and academic David Tacey, in *Edge of the Sacred*, talks of our metaphorical need to sustain the environment. “We cannot psychically and physically abuse nature on a grand scale and expect it to nurture and protect us.”⁴ Robert Harrison Pogue speaks of our need to care for the environment and humanity by looking within and in relation to one another. He quotes Voltaire’s famous words, “Il faut cultiver notre jardin”. “Notre jardin is never a garden of merely private concerns into which one escapes from the real; it is that plot of soil on the Earth, within the self, or amid the social collective, where the cultural, ethical, and civic virtues that save reality from its own worst impulses are cultivated.”⁵

Over the last 20 years TCL have embedded in our projects cultural, social or environmental concerns. Depending on the project, the emphasis shifts and sways and at times one or two concerns are privileged over the other/s. Unlike landscape urbanists who appear to believe that beauty is perhaps a by-product of interweaving systems, or firms such as Ashton Raggatt McDougall for whom the use of the “Literal or the Real” are all important and appear to believe that beauty is irrelevant, we have consciously held onto

¹ John Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, (1820), from *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250–1918*, ed. Sir A. Quiller-Couch (Oxford University Press: London, 1971), 745.

² Elizabeth Meyer, “Sustaining Beauty: The Performance of Appearance. A Manifesto in Three Parts”, *JOLA - Journal of Landscape Architecture*, (2008) 6.

³ Carol Franklin, “Designing as if the Earth Really Mattered”, *ASLA Summit White Papers* (American Society of Landscape Architects, Pennsylvania, 1999), 17.

⁴ David Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred* (Harper Collins Publishers, North Blackburn, Victoria, 1995), 72.

⁵ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2008).

the ideals of beauty and aesthetic responses even if it has not always been articulated as such.^{6,7}

TCL was founded by three very different individuals from varied academic and life backgrounds. The working title of our PhD *Braided Pathways: A Practice Sustained by Difference*, perhaps not only refers to the difference between the three individuals but also encompasses our rather catholic and eclectic responses, varying aesthetic sensibilities and conceptual preoccupations from project to project.

Ron Jones in his essay *Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art* speaks of how TCL's feet stand in two disparate worlds. One being the gently edited, light touch approach for projects conducted in elemental regional landscapes and the other the deliberate and graphic responses for urban constructions.⁸ Similarly, Lisa Diedrich's essay *As Seen From Europe* describes TCL's projects where the designer's "imprint is nearly invisible... with their sensitivity for a site that directs their designs far more than ideas on style." She writes of TCL working with a landscape "as found" and juxtaposes this to TCL's projects where a freedom of expression is fully evident. Diedrich coins this as "landscape as artifice."⁹ Another way of viewing TCL's different worlds is to see them more as having a common thread, or a pursuit towards the intention to care and to strive for beauty and best fit. We often use the words 'poetic expression' to describe what we are attempting in our projects. For us this means a distillation of expression. It can be as much what is left out, as in a haiku, or what is allowed to flow, as in long florid prose.

The following exploration will, I hope, enable me to tease out how my preoccupations in relation to beauty and care have contributed to TCL's body of work, and to understand how my way of practicing brings its own link between beauty, care and sustainability.

The essay first explores my understanding of notions of beauty and care. It then examines my own art practice and three very different projects through the lens of beauty and care and their interconnection with sustainability. Projects examined in depth are the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre in Central Australia (1990–1994), which explored an approach of minimal intervention in an elemental and culturally rich landscape, Box Hill Community Arts Centre in outer suburban Melbourne (1988–1992), a community based project that resulted in an expressive and exuberant building and landscape and the Mosaic Garden in Tarntanyangga/Victoria Square in Adelaide, a large Australian native garden and associated gardens as part of an urban park in the heart of a city. Other projects will be described to a lesser extent to allow further understanding of various design ideas such as patterning and repetition, and how these elements play into notions of beauty, care and a sustainable connection.

⁶ SueAnne Ware, SueAnne Ware and Julian Raxworthy (eds), *Sunburnt Landscape Architecture in Australia* (SUN Architecture Publishers and Authors, Amsterdam, 2011), 20.

⁸ Ronald Jones, "Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art", Unpublished, (2011), 3.

⁹ Lisa Diedrich, "As Seen From Europe", Unpublished (2010).

⁷ARM, Ashton Raggatt McDougall is an internationally recognised Melbourne based architectural firm founded in 1988. Work is primarily major public buildings including the National Museum of Australia in Canberra, the RMIT Storey Hall and most recently the Redevelopment of Hamer Hall and the Melbourne Recital Centre.

‘Humans are not rational, but poetic. For this reason, the world we have inherited is a vast texture of overlaid and overlapping poeties’¹⁰

(Les A. Murray)



Left: Kate Cullity viewing the sublime Flinders Ranges landscape (1996)

Beauty - Somatic, Visceral and Metaphysical

Beauty is an elusive and multi-layered term to try and define and by attempting to capture it, somehow its full resonance may be diminished, but it's worth a try. By beauty I mean the all-encompassing somatic, visceral or even metaphysical kind, rather than the purely visual. For me beauty is about an intuitive rightness or 'fit', a soulful quality that resonates a deeper appreciation, not so much intellectually, although my intellect can inform an understanding, but more in a right brained, emotive response that evokes a physical and felt sensation. The beauty of a thing is not just the thing in itself, but the association it conveys and the subsequent emotive resonance gained from the correlation.

I am interested in how other designers and writers understand beauty, particularly in relation to landscape. Edmund Burke who formulated a theory of aesthetics, beauty and the sublime states beauty creates an "energy of the mind",¹¹ that "seizing upon the senses and imagination, captivate(s) the soul before the understanding is ready."¹² Burke believed that it was the less didactic, somatic and suggestive experiences of beauty that could provide the most resonance, particularly in relation to his notions of the sublime; the sublime being experiences of the grandeur, awe and vastness of 'nature', as well as a fear of its destructive power.¹³ This is a sensibility that resonates from my experience of working in powerful elemental landscapes such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Flinders Ranges and other National Parks in South Australia. Sensing the sublime elicits a response of wanting to protect the purity of these magnificent environments, as well as encouraging others to do the same.

Landscape architectural academic Susan Herrington states the philosopher David Hume's argument "that it is our visceral interactions with the world that form our ideas about it. ...like other art forms, landscapes don't always carry literal messages, but can trigger sensations. This can be both their appeal and their power."¹⁴ Ian North an art critic on beauty writes "Can one contemplate a rounded piece of granite without awareness of age, or deep time? Can one look at a ...Petyarre (aboriginal painter) without thinking of cultures? ...All of these things ...can contribute to a beautiful object's symbolic value, to the qualities that let us regards them as beautiful... Many things can build beauty, its bounty leaks." North also quotes Elaine Scarry's poetic expression of beauty as "always carrying greetings from other worlds within."¹⁵

¹⁰ Les A. Murray, *Poems and the Mystery of Embodiment*, Meinjin Volume 47 Number 3 Spring 1988 (University of Melbourne, 1988), 520.

¹¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (Routledge Classics, New York, 2008), 91.

¹² Hannah Fink, Margo Osborne (ed) *The Return of Beauty, Catalogue of Exhibition* (Catalogue of Exhibition, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide 2000), 26.

¹³ Ian Chilvers, Harold Osborne (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001), 90, 253.

¹⁴ Susan Herrington, *On Landscapes* (Routledge, London, 2008), 91.

¹⁵ Ian North, Margo Osborne (eds), *The Return of Beauty* (Catalogue of Exhibition, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide, 2000), 10.

Image removed due to copyright.

Above: Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden for being 'Careless'

Das Paradies, L. Cranach, painting, 1530, accessed 02/08/2013 <http://www.abcgallery.com/C/cranach/cranach54.jpg>,

¹⁶ John Armstrong, *The Power of Beauty* (Allen Lane, Penguin Books, London, 2004), 164.

¹⁷ Mary Anne Pip Stokes, "A Poetics of Care: Mourning, Consolation, Healing", Unpublished (2010), 1,2,7,11.

¹⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design of Social Life of Cities* (W.W Norton and Co, New York, London, 1992), XIV.

¹⁹ www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/r/r_d_laing.html. (accessed 010712)

²⁰ Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye. The Design of Social Life of Cities* (W.W. Norton and Co. New York, London, 1992), XIII .

John Armstrong concludes in his book *The Secret Power of Beauty* that the power of beauty lies in somatic perceptions of the material world eliciting a metaphysical or moral experience. "To be human is to experience life under two guises: physical and spiritual.... Thus the experience of beauty is a reflection, as it were, of what it is to be human."¹⁶

Care

On examining beauty I realised there was a nexus between a striving for beauty and a preoccupation with care and cultivation. That the two are, for me, intertwined and in concert with one another and that it is perhaps this coupling that produces a sense of 'soul'.

I like to care for both the animate and inanimate and as I've grown older I realise I may seem to actively care more than many others. I don't think it's necessarily because I embody goodness but more that it makes me intuitively and somatically feel connected to my-self and a greater whole; it makes my small pursuits feel worthwhile. I cultivate and care about our garden, my immediate surrounds, my projects, TCL's projects, the minutia of them, the environments I experience, my loved ones and family, fellow 'TCLers' and colleagues, my clients, my house, my clothes and shoes, the list goes on.

Artist Pip Stoke's recent PhD, *A Poetics of Care: Mourning, Consolation, Healing* postulates that "artworks themselves produce Care," how the making and viewing of an artwork can "evoke a state of transition such as renewal and transformation" from one of degradation, destruction, grief and mourning. That caring is a form of stewardship. In exploring care she examines what it is to be the opposite, to be care-less.¹⁷ Richard Sennett views the creative impulse about caring beyond art practice and states "To care about what one sees in the world leads to mobilising one's creative powers. In the modern city, these creative powers ought to take on a particular and humane form, turning people outwards." He sees the artist's creative role as producing an "art of exposure, an art that enables the city's inhabitants to learn(ing) from complexity and have an understanding of the balance required within oneself as well as in the outer world."¹⁸

The art of landscape architecture and urban design demands a learning and understanding of complexity and interconnection. At its best it's a collaborative pursuit with other disciplines that involves a meaningful examination of what one knows and doesn't know and how to co-opt others in order to move forward with the knowledge that all parameters of a place and its people have been considered in an intellectual, cross disciplinary, sensory and visionary manner. My late husband, muse and business partner Kevin Taylor often spoke to me of R.D. Laing's statement "If I don't know I don't know, I think I know. If I don't know I know, I think I don't know."¹⁹ In order to meaningfully care this essential knowing and not knowing is paramount. In essence it's a pursuit towards a gathering of wisdom about one's self and one's craft as well as the others we collaborate with. The following sections elaborating the various projects, explores the importance of collaboration in TCL's work.

Our practice approach talks of an understanding of the poetics of the Australian landscape from desert walking trails (such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre) to waterfronts (Geelong Waterfront in Victoria or Auckland Waterfront in New Zealand). For me when TCL talks of mining our relationship to a particular project, it is through the conduit of care that we distil the essential poetics of the place, people, history and conceive a possible future vision. Richard Sennett talks of how eliciting our creative energies in the pursuit of caring is a form of desire and that "The Greeks called this desire 'poiesis', from which we derive the English work 'poetry'."²⁰



Left: Kate Cullity sweeping paving in North Terrace in preparation of the area being photographed.

In order to understand notions of care in more depth I found it was useful to look at the mythology of 'Cura' –the Goddess of Care and how this myth and the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden give us a poetic connection to the imperative of sustainability. In the Ancient Greek parable the Goddess Cura fashions a shape from clay. The God Jupiter then bestows the name 'homo' to the form as it is from the humus or earth.²¹ The myth of Care tells us as 'homo' is of the earth it is befitting that human kind care for its creator. As Cura (Care) fashioned humankind from her labour and diligence Pogue Harrison postulates that it is through labour, tending and cultivation that humans signify the 'mark of Cura'. He also talks of how Adam and Eve did not wittingly understand the importance of what had been given by being in the Garden of Eden, that they were 'careless' and so were forced out. It was only through their act of labour, cultivation and care, that Adam and Eve understood that to be fully human is to know "when things matter". They had a choice to "live in moral oblivion within its limits or gain a sense of reality at the cost of being thrown out". By being banished from a passive existence, albeit one in a paradise, they learnt how to actively care and take responsibility both for humanity and the earth. Harrison Pogue therefore argues that both stories talk of the need to be actively connected to caring.²²

There is also a link between care and fragility. The philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote of this connection, he "suspected that the beauty of a bird's song derived not just from pure aural sensation, but also for feelings of compassion for the tiny creature."²³ The desire to care for juvenile creatures and other endearing things is well known, however, in many other instances it is only through cultivating knowledge that we realise that something or some situation is fragile. The Australian environment with its severity of elemental forces and immensity of space belies the fact that it is indeed fragile and if tampered with is easily susceptible to damage and imbalance. This was most evident when Kevin Taylor and I worked at the Flinders Ranges in northern South Australia. The national park had previously been subject to extensive damage through grazing and was now threatened by the very people who came to marvel at its beauty. I am often struck by the immense amount of work required to mend the environment or a broken cultural situation. How do

Richard Pogue Harrison, *Gardens and Essay on the Human Condition* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2008), 6.

²² *ibid*

²³ Ian North, Margo Osborne (ed) *The Return of Beauty* (Catalogue of Exhibition, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide, 2000), 10.

we assist Australian Aboriginals retain their connection to place, to one another and to their spiritual world while they straddle the immensity of the contemporary world? I often find myself saying in regard to this ‘once something is broken it’s hard to fix it’ there are so many small and large ‘deaths’ in the dismantling. The strength of the feeling realm of care provides an important conduit in mending, reassembling, protecting, redeveloping and creating the material world with environmental, social and cultural ideals. This interrelationship between care and fragility will be further explored in the section on the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre, a landscape and cultural situation where an understanding of the nexus between these concepts is fundamental.

Artistic Practice and the Beauty of Constructing Detail

In 1999 I started studying Visual Arts and as I had been wired somehow inherently into notions of beauty, I found the discourse in contemporary art theory, that art ideals privileged thinking, innovation and subversion over other forms of art, especially expressions of beauty, rather mystifying. As beauty had been linked to more traditional and classical forms of art it was viewed as unnecessary baggage and as such was a limiting factor in the progression of art. I began to question the validity of our practice, whether TCL were approaching the ‘artistic practice’ of landscape architecture with an over-emphasis on beauty. Was our precept fundamentally flawed and outdated?

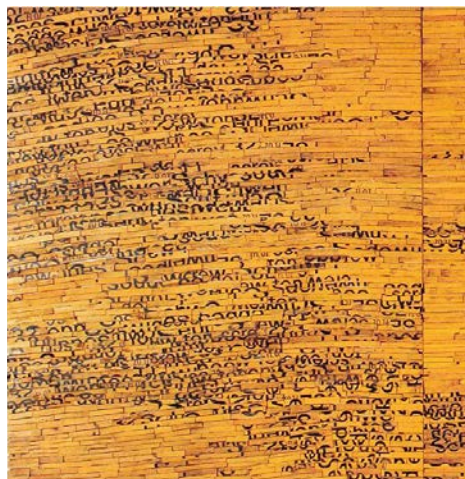
I did however find art theory and history gave me a new conduit into landscape. I could explore landscape design and visual arts through the lens of art history. I continued to produce works that to me contained ideas about beauty, ‘nature’ and the human condition and attempted to link these to a greater extent to conceptualist ideas. I gravitated towards artists who explored this nexus. For example, Australian artists such as Rosalie Gascoigne, whose art from the discarded with it’s spare, spliced ordered and repetitive elements speak lyrically and suggestively of the Australian environment, and Hossein Valamanesh, an immigrant from Iran whose work (often fashioned from natural elements) portrays a sense of a quiet reverence and metaphysical connection.

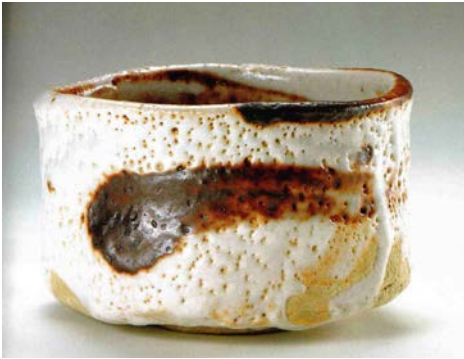
An exhibition at that time entitled *The Return to Beauty* (held during the 2000 Adelaide Festival of the Arts) resonated as it heralded a return to the importance of beauty in art. Margo Osbourne the curator stated that many artists in fact had not rejected beauty,²¹

My artwork has been influenced by artists such as Hossein Valamanesh and Rosalie Gascoigne who are preoccupied with expressing notions of beauty in relation to landscape.

Right: *Monaro*, R. Gascoigne (1997)
accessed 010813
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/1000/3343901150/>

Far Right: *Longing Belonging*,
Hossein Valamanesh (1997).
A Survey, The Art Gallery of South
Australia, Adelaide, 4





but had reinvented its expression through modernist abstraction, minimalism and later conceptualism. The exhibition's aim was to exhibit Australian artists that examined the connection between art, nature and tradition while seeking to "transcend tradition's limitations." The exhibition sought to bring to attention diverse works from ornamental to the minimalist in order to recognise that "beauty is multi-faceted and fed by culturally diverse traditions."²⁴

My design sensibility and art practice has also been influenced by a Japanese aesthetic known as Wabi-Sabi. I was introduced to this aesthetic during a trip to Japan in 1998. Wabi-Sabi recognizes and appreciates beauty in the imperfect, transient and incomplete. It often uses materials that are rough-hewn, humble and unconventional. It is an aesthetic whose origins are aligned to the philosophical tenants of Zen Buddhism and is often referred to as 'the Zen of things'. It is an artistic appreciation that grew out of the reaction to the embellished, glorified richness and finessing of Chinese arts of the 16th century and earlier. As with more contemporary western concepts of beauty, in the end its definition retains an air of elusive mystery and ineffability, a condition that has a soul or metaphysical quality expressing an alchemy that is larger than the sum of its parts. TCL's fascination with rusted steel's earthy mutable patina could be our most overt expression of this aesthetic. Leonard Koren in *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers* compares and contrasts Wabi-Sabi and Modernism. He found similarities in the use of abstraction, form following function and a distaste for ornamentation and embellishment. He noted that Wabi-Sabi and Modernism differ through modernism's principles of domination over nature and its preoccupation with geometric technological organisation and precision.²⁵

A TCL project that explores the aesthetic and material sensibility of Wabi-Sabi is *Fire Stories*, an installation for the 2004 Chaumont sur Loire International Garden Festival in France. In this project I worked as both artist and designer, living in the nearby village for three weeks constructing the installation on site. *Fire Stories* examines and abstractly narrates how the seemingly chaotic and destructive elemental force of fire orders and replenishes the Australian landscape. The design is composed of a number of interrelated elements, each expressing different stories in relation to fire. The materials selected reinforce the raw elemental quality of effects of fire.

Other artistic influences include a background in biological science, particularly an intrigue of the scientific world as seen through the lens of a microscopic, the abstraction of elemental landscapes, and the pull and fascination towards repetition, patterns and multiples. As my art practice is primarily a personal pursuit and in contrast to the public life of a landscape architect, my own personal life and the events which have shaped²⁴

My art and design sensibility has been influenced by the Japanese aesthetics of Wabi-Sabi.

Far Left: Wabi-Sabi bowl, accessed 010813, <http://thespacesinbetween.org/2011/11/29/wabi-sabi/>

Left: Stone wall and hole, accessed 010813, <http://seekeronline.info/journals/y2002/oct02.html>

Left: *Fire Stories*, International Chaumont-sur-Loire Garden (2004) The installation explores the destructive quality of fire and the way it orders the Australian landscape. This is expressed through the threads of material presence and narrative.

1. Kate Cullity working on site blackening branches.

2. The scale of the tall eucalypt forest is conveyed via charred poles (approximately six metres in height). Visitors are marked by charcoal upon touching the scarred surface.

3. At the base of the poles lines of eucalypt seedlings appear, a monoculture of plants, abstractly representing the regeneration that occurs after a forest fire.

4. The ends of the lines contain embedded and illuminated cases that house sculptural installations of Australian plant material that express the varied effects of fire both culturally and environmentally.

5. This 'forest clearing' is encircled by an elliptical form composed from a tracery of blackened branches. The outer section represents the luxuriant proliferation of plants after fire. A continuous ground plane of crushed and compacted red brick simulates the fiery red sands of central Australia.

Margo Osborne (eds) *The Return of Beauty* (Catalogue of Exhibition, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide, 2000), 4

²⁵ Leonard Koen, *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers* (Stone Bridge Press, Berkeley, California, 1994), 7,16,17,26.

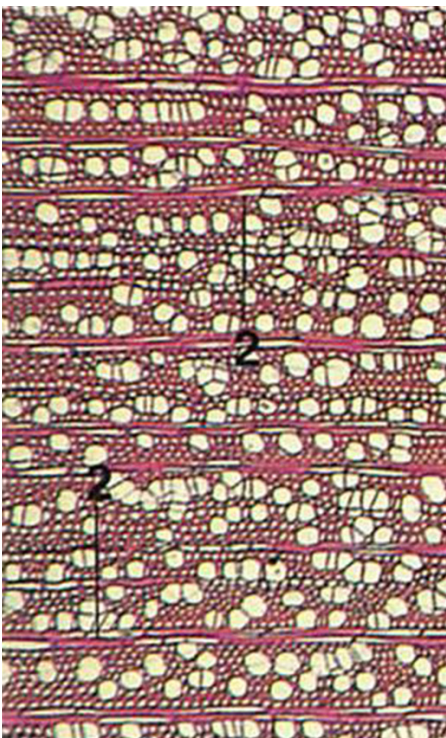


it are reflected in the artwork produced. In 2009 I exhibited artworks in a group show entitled *Matter*, at Light Square Gallery, Adelaide (as part of SALA -South Australian Living Artists). As the title suggests it was about elemental matter and 'what matters'. Along with the aforementioned preoccupations the three works were centered on a 'Momento Mori' of my inability to have children. This mourning aspect of the work was not in the accompanying brochure and is not necessarily information essential to accessing and appreciating the works, in-fact it was not in my consciousness when I first started making a smaller version of the work entitled *Broken* in 2000. It was not until the work was complete that its meaning came to consciousness. Somehow the care and time taken to pierce the eggs, compose them into exacting lines and illuminate them had a transformative effect. Viewing them as an abstraction of my personal memory of loss, as well as a creation of an otherness, perhaps a metaphoric glowing metropolis or an undulating parched landscape was somehow rejuvenating. The care of composing the work provided consolation. The use of light as a metaphor for 'momento mori' comes from an appreciation of a body of work by French artist Christian Boltanski. In the 1980s Boltanski produced a series of installations of photographs of Jewish schoolchildren taken into concentration camps during WW2. The portraits are interconnected by wires with each portrait lit with a naked small bulb. This illuminated shrine speaks not so much of their death but more of their precious short lives.

Image removed due to copyright.

Above: Christian Boltanski's illuminated works has influenced my use of light as a metaphor for the precious and precarious quality of life.

Autel de Lycee Chases, C. Boltanski, 1986-87, accessed 01/08/2013, http://www.rfc.museum/images/phocagallery/EC1/Christian_Boltanski/thumbs/phoca_thumb_I_Christian_Boltanski-R11-03-Autel_de_Lycees_Chases.jpg

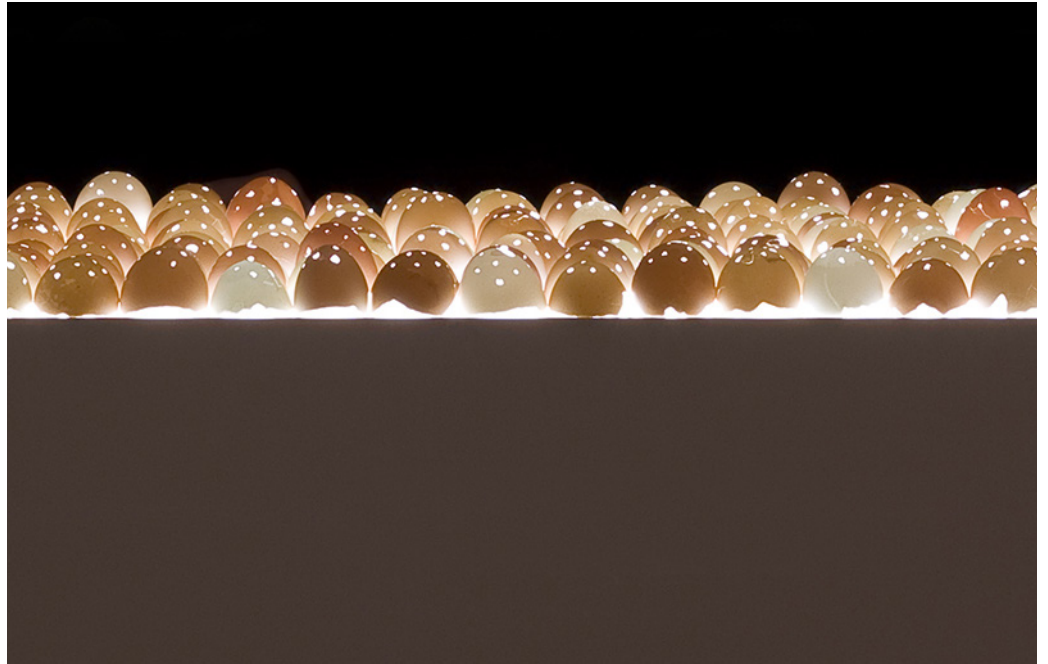


Far left: A microscopic image of a cross section of plant material.

Left: A laser cut gate at the Taylor and Cullity Garden inspired by the microscopic plant image.

Right: *Reproductive Series; Broken*, Kate Cullity, 2009, Matter Exhibition, Light Square Gallery, Adelaide.

The work is influenced by my attraction to the power of multiples and the transformative effect of illumination.



A photographic artwork entitled *P Stops* (approx. 1995 - ongoing) recognises my fascination with, and attention to the detail of viewing ground planes, particularly those in dry and desert landscapes. While travelling by car in these landscapes I am struck by the immediate shift of focus that occurs when getting out of the car during long drives to have a 'pee'. How the grandeur of the landscape as witnessed from the car is transformed into one of observing the intimacy and minutia of a particular ground surface. Squatting close to the ground and being physiologically predisposed allows a meditative revelry for what is immediately at close range in-front of me. The scenes somehow present like a scientific quadrat or perhaps a *wunderkammer*; a precious, perfectly placed installation of found curios. I have been photographing these vignettes for many years and there is always a quiet magnificence and rightness to the scenes, as though I have discovered and unearthed a truth, somehow everything is in its place. Similarly, Laurel McSherry's essay *Attention to Objects* describes her experience of 'walking a line' – a transect, as part of a group examining archaeological artefacts in a landscape on the outskirts of Rome. She expresses a similar attention to detail and how this enables one to "see that certain coherence that is landscape." For McSherry, "line walking was a first step, enabling me to contact a world exuberant with detail and alive with individualities. To look on scenes with the intent of grasping wholeness, to wonder how the simple becomes the extraordinary as a result of its context.... Paying attention – remaining open minded – is exhausting. But....observing keeps me mindful of the potential qualities laying just beyond surfaces, and the possibilities of one day glimpsing a world outside customary generalizations, prejudices and schemes."²⁶

²⁶ Laurel McSherry, Catherine Shellman (eds), "Objects of Attention", in *Re-Envisioning Landscape/Architecture* (Actar, Barcelona, 2003), 57.



P-Stops, Kate Cullity 1995-ongoing

Above: A close up 'meditative' view of the ground plain while squatting to have a 'pee' while out in elemental landscapes.

Image removed due to copyright.



Two disparate images taken in Central Australia pose questions in relation to Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal sensibilities.

Left: B. Lanker, Andy Park, Rick Smolan (eds), *A Day in the Life of Australia*, 182-183

Right: Author's archives, photographer and date sourced unknown

Minimal Intervention. Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, 1990 – 1994

Before Experiencing Uluru

In 1981 I received a book for Christmas entitled *A Day in the Life of Australia*, the hard cover, large coffee-table type. The book was compiled of photographs taken in one day throughout Australia by photographers from around the globe.²⁷ An image in particular resonated, a series of portraits of an elder Aboriginal man. At the same time I also saw another image in a book or magazine of a man mowing a vivid green lawn at the Ayers Rock Caravan Park, with Uluru as the backdrop. A surreal image, one of apparent care, it poses a number of musings and readings. What would the elder's gaze make of this scene? Why do tourists travel to the 'other' but want to experience the familiar? If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, can perceptions of beauty be shifted with a fuller cultural and environmental understanding? Can an inserted landscape be beautiful in the viewer's mind if it is known to not be sustainable? George Seddon's quote comes to mind on looking again at the image. "They (the English) have not, in general, been sensitive to new cultures and the indigenous environment. ...They are our ancestors and we owe much to their energy, but it has sometimes been blind, and we are still learning to see our own land and, to forgive it for not being England."²⁸

Road trip to Central Australia, 1986

"I think I'll dream that I might love this place."

Eloise Court (6 years) on arriving at Uluru
(as told to me by her mother Tanya Court). July 2008

Philip Drew in *The Coast Dwellers* talks of how we (Australians) cling persistently to the coastal strip both physically and psychically, but how as dislocated migrants we look elsewhere for identity and try to find it in the centre of Australia.²⁹ That rings true for me. In 1986 I went on a road trip to Central Australia with the landscape architect, artist and filmmaker Maggie Fooke. Maggie had been my design tutor at the University of Melbourne, had become a mentor as well as a good friend. In 1990 we went on to work together at Box Hill Community Arts Centre. We travelled with Sonja Peters, a German environmental designer who had never experienced the dry and desert areas of Australia, or come into contact with regional Aboriginal people. Although she suffered from heat stroke, Sonja went on to live and work in a remote Aboriginal community in Western Australia and then worked with Taylor Cullity and Gregory Burgess as an Aboriginal advisor and environmental designer on the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre in 1990.

²⁷ Andy Park, Rick Smolan, *A Day in the Life of Australia* (Griffin Press, Adelaide, 1981), 182, 183.

²⁸ George Seddon, *Swan River Landscapes* (University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1970), 3

²⁹ Philip Drew, *The Coastal Dwellers: Australians Living on the Edge* (Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria, 1994)

Image removed due to copyright.

Above: Upon learning of John Wolesely's work I felt an affinity with his ability to view the minutia of landscape as well as its enormity. His poetic text provided an extra layer of meaning.

John Wolesley, 'Deep time shallow time: Journey from Ewaninga to Gosses Bluff' (detail), (1999) 138



Kate Cullity. *Desert Oak Cones*, drawn at 'Red Camp' 1986, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

Maggie introduced me to the art of John Wolesley. I had not seen his work, but she described it to me and I was intrigued. His journeys into remote regions of Australia, his detailed, precise *plein air* drawings and paintings of the flora and fauna coupled with the grandeur of an overall scene. I subsequently viewed his wondrous work, read his beautifully expressive diary notes and compiled a design studio for university students based on his practice of observation. This journey into the Australian desert had a profound effect on my way of perceiving landscape. It was not only the sublime quality of 'country' but the nuanced details in every view. We walked, drew, photographed, dreamt and created ephemeral installations in the landscape. Maggie opened my eyes to the paradoxical fragility of the desert, the ancient geology of depleted and shifting soils, the easily disturbed ecosystems and the traditional owners' perceptions of, and connection to land. I remember one night her describing to a middle-aged Scandinavian tourist, who had come to climb the Rock as some kind of life milestone, that to do so was akin to people walking on a church altar. The woman got the message and did not climb. This journey started my appreciation of the exquisite fragile detail of the desert, coupled with an awakening to the metaphysical power of the vast interior of the Australian continent.

The Process of working on Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre

In 1990 I went back with Kevin Taylor to Central Australia to work with the fore-mentioned architect Gregory Burgess and environmental designer, now Aboriginal cultural adviser, Sonja Peters on the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre. This was to be a cultural centre to express the rich living history of the traditional owners, the local Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara peoples known as Anangu. To understand their deep and continuous commitment of care for and connection to their land, to one another and to their law – *Tjukurpa*, passed down as spirit stories. To Anangu all life is connected to a single force *Tjukurpa*, which is "timeless and immutable."³⁰

The work was undertaken a few years after a commissioned study into joint management in the park, titled *Sharing the Park: Anangu Initiatives in Ayres Rock Tourism* (1987). The report explains Anangu as 'hosts' and the visitors as 'guests'. It recommends that in order for there to be more understanding of Anangu's connection as traditional owners, and for both 'hosts' and 'guests' to be more 'comprehensible' to one another there was a necessity for Anangu to be more engaged with the tourists. In this way it was believed that there would be greater benefits towards Anangu's self-determination and the ability for them to "maintain their own distinctiveness." It would enable tourists to understand what land, experience and information was 'open' to them, and importantly enable them to appreciate and respect what was 'closed', for example the prohibited sites on and around Uluru.³¹ The Centre would educate tourists towards Anangu's perception of 'country' and importantly imbue in tourists an appreciation and respect for Anangu.

We spent about a month living in the Mutitjulu community (a housing settlement for both Anangu and Park Rangers). Walking through the desert, discussing the possibility of different sites, listening to Anangu's stories and aspirations and working with the joint management of the national parks. Anangu expressed themselves in interpreted conversations, taped monologues, drawings on sand, paintings of possible building ideas and road trips into the park. One painting depicts the *Tjukurpa* of the creation of Uluru, in which *Liru* (a poisonous carpet snake) and *Kuniya* (a python) fight forming marks and indentation on the rock face. The second painting is composed of horseshoe shapes representing Anangu sitting down during a ceremony, while dots in lozenge forms depict possibly the first Aboriginal representation of cars. (refer image left, third row p. 181).

³⁰ Stanley Breeden, *Uluru: Looking after Uluru-Kata Tjuta – the Anangu Way* (J.B Books, Adelaide, 1997), 15.

³¹ Ken Gelder, Jane M Jacobs, *Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Post-Colonial Nation* (Melbourne University Press, Australia, 1998), 114.

We learnt that structured meetings were an anomaly, so we set up an open door studio room filled with photos, drawings and models for informal encounters. One of the most poignant moments was when an elder, Barbara Tjikalta, drew her aspiration for the Centre in sand, a symbolic cupping of intertwined hands, of reconciliation and joint management. (Refer image, 3rd row middle, p181). I worked with the women, especially in relation to their cultural connection to plants. Anangu's way of viewing all landscape with reverence and meaning resonated with my previous experience in the desert. Early in the project Barbara walked us through the site, pointing to the ground, walking around the Spinifex, noticing the nuances and minutiae of site, the ephemeral marks painted by animals and plants. When explaining the experience she wanted visitors to have as they traversed the site, she pointed and said, "Minga (tourists) walk around touching trees, one by one, slowly, not just look at Rock. Walking, touching, then off!" as she pointed towards the future Cultural Centre site.³²

We also visited other areas of the park where infrastructure had been installed. While we were impressed with the park rangers' sensitivity to both the environment and Anangu, we were shocked by the lack of consideration and care taken in a world heritage site. Treated pine posts (often rotting), walkways, viewing decks and shelters adjacent Uluru and Kata Tjuta with fussy yet careless urban details and inappropriate colours that distracted the visitor from what they had come to experience. It seemed that generic structures and elements had just been sent from central office and installed. Another surprise to us was the way in which the base of the climb was cleared of precious trees and other vegetation, an amphitheatre for cars and buses to witness the 'conquerors' as they descended the Rock, triumphant. Anangu call tourists *Minga* meaning ants, as they appear as dark spots along a line, needlessly scurrying up and down Uluru. (Refer image left, 1st row, p181). Every year people either die or collapse during their attempt to climb, which distresses Anangu, not only because it is a sacred area to them but also as custodians they feel responsible for those who do climb.

We were told at the time of working on the project that the average visitor's trip to Uluru is approximately 1.5 days and other than climbing the Rock, and standing in carparks to view the sunset and sunrise, most do not walk in or experience the desert other than looking out of air-conditioned cars and buses. Our aim was to assist the Anangu in inviting visitors to experience and respect the traditional owner's culture and perceptions of country. We wanted to immerse the visitor in a visceral and perhaps metaphysical experience, to not only see the landscape, but experience it on a deeper level. To experience what we were beginning to appreciate. Beauty and care on many levels.

“That tourist comes here with camera taking pictures all over. What has he got? Another photo – take home, keep part of Uluru. He should get another lens – see straight inside. Wouldn't see big rock then. He would see that Kuniya living right inside there as from the beginning. He might throw his camera way then.”

Tony Tjamaja, an Anangu elder (September 1990)³³

³² Gregory Burges Architects with Taylor and Cullity and Sonya Peters, "Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre Masterplan Report", Unpublished, (1991).

³³ *ibid.*

Right: Site analysis, appreciation and consultation with Anangu and the National Parks staff included;

Anangu drawing their aspirations in sand, in paintings and in conversations.

Gaining an appreciation of site by walking, drawing, observing, talking on site and in the surrounding park.

Gaining an understanding of tourists.

Accompanying Anangu on trips into the wider park.

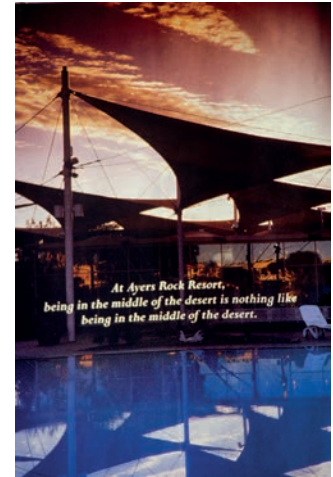


After much consultation, collaboration and analysis, a preferred site was chosen about one kilometre from Uluru. A site of low shrubs, Spinifex and Desert Oaks *Allocasuarina decussata*, both juvenile trees, known to Anangu as the Liru Warriors due to their narrow tall spear shape (the juvenile tree keeps this form for approximately 20 years until its tap root hits water) and large spreading mature specimens. The sinuous snake-like building would enfold around a large significant, dead Desert Oak. We collectively decided that no trees would be removed, minimal removal of vegetation would occur, and no further vegetation would be planted. During the early consultative process a number of park rangers wanted to include a range of the more spectacular plants from elsewhere in the park. This was discarded in favour of fully appreciating what was growing on this particular site, to respond to the subtle beauty of the immediate surrounding landscape. This approach, we believed, would also imbue an understanding that to care about both Anangu culture and the environment was to appreciate the particular in any given place.

There is a delicate microclimate created by the Rock, with the landscape being marked by the intermittent presence of water as it sheds from Uluru and disburses. As even micro changes in grade affect this fragile landscape of shifting sand dunes we decided there were to be no changes in levels and no construction of swales or kerbs. Precision was required when marking out the car and bus parks, as well as pathways so no trees were disturbed. To achieve this, carparks and paths were all marked out on site (in 45-48°C heat during a fly plague) by Kevin Taylor and Peter Ytrup the engineer. The allowable envelope for the new building only penetrated about one metre beyond its edge. The site would remain as close as possible to its indigenous state.

At the time an advertisement for the Sails in the Sunset Hotel (at the nearby Yulara Resort) stated that “being in the desert was nothing like being in the desert.”³⁴ Our aim was the opposite. Inspiration for the journey to the building came from the rhythmic meandering one has to do when walking between spaced Spinifex and other sparse vegetation. To that end, car and bus parks were held back 150–300 metres from the Centre. Long winding paths of compacted site sand edged in collected site brush encouraged visitors to slow down, to observe the patterns of the plants and the open ground with its memory of activity etched in the red sand. Walking as a conversation with the land, the visitor’s cadence in rhythm with the surroundings to be, albeit briefly, immersed in the landscape rather than only viewing from the car, or conquering as in the ‘climb’. This extended walk allowed the visitor time to be attuned to their surroundings with time to prepare for the *Tjukarpa* (Anangu dreaming) stories told in the Centre. This slowing down is another important aspect of encouraging a more careful and cultivated respect and reverie of Anangu’s living history and the seemingly robust yet actually fragile desert environment. It juxtaposes the ‘fast’ time of traveling in cars and our generally speedy Western life with the ‘slow’ continuous time of an ancient living culture. It encourages a cultivation and depth of understanding between the ‘visitors’ and the Anangu.

Walking in the sublime landscape of the desert, particularly in tune with the Anangu’s perceptions can elicit a sense of what Kevin Taylor and I coined ‘Deep Walking’; to feel not just the surface of the ground but to penetrate below and above the earth, to metaphorically feel the connection between different states of being, space and time. In *Walkscapes: Walking as Aesthetic Practice* Francesco Careri states that walking in landscape is “simultaneously an act of perception and creativity, of reading and writing of the territory and that the act of experiencing landscape in motion enhances the interaction between people and space... That nature is always changing between different states and has no beginning or end.”³⁵ Elizabeth Meyer writes of how the conceptual and intellectual



Above: The Advertisement states that ‘At Ayres Rock Resort being in the desert is nothing like being in the middle of the desert’ The Australian Weekend Magazine, circa 1990.



Above: Kevin Taylor walking to Uluru on the Liru Walk (between Uluru and the Cultural Centre), June 2011.

³⁴ The Australian Weekend Magazine, circa 1990.

³⁵ Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* (Editorial Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 2002), 50.



Above: Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre. A design approach where there is a minimal intervention into the landscape and where materials are, as much as possible, from the site and surrounding landscape.

underpinning of a design and its stories are partly made clear by movement through the landscape. “This unfolding through time and space affords the possibility of experiencing the sublime.”³⁶ This indeed applies to the walk to and from the Cultural Centre.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre I believe fits into Elizabeth Meyer’s theory and analysis of beauty and sustainability, in that it focuses on conserving and regenerating ecosystems, reveals the site’s processes, emphasises a visceral connection to ‘country’, culture and an appreciation of and care for the environment. It was a deliberate strategy that the hand of the landscape architect should be quiet, that the design should be considered at every level, but remain mostly invisible. The statement by Dutch landscape architects Bart Brands and Sylvia Karres, “Sometimes designing is very tempting. Sometimes not designing is the answer”, was how it was for us at Uluru.³⁷ On reflection, I believe it is also to do with ‘whittling away’ to find the essence of what truly felt like an environmentally, culturally and socially sustainable solution. If there is a certain understated beauty in the design and resolution then it most likely comes from this process of distillation. The beauty of the sinuous morphological building in relation to its site, Uluru and the wider landscape could only resonate if the landscape spoke of its indigenous nature. The minimal landscape design allowed Gregory Burgess’s building full expression. In Burgess’s words, “the building appears as a mysterious undulating presence of skin, sinew and shadow, emerging and disappearing, looking, approaching, withdrawing.”³⁸

John Beardsley cites George Hargrave’s words about his projects: “theatres of the environment”, landscapes that “reveal geophysical, biological, and cultural forces at work.”³⁹ At the Cultural Centre what was left out allowed the inanimate and animate environmental elements, as well as the cultural to be amplified. It allowed for immediacy, for being fully there in the landscape. It allowed an opening for visitors to take in and find reverberation in Anangu’s culture. By editing and adding very little into the landscape it allowed the landscape to speak of its unique qualities, its calling, ‘being in the desert, is all about being in this part of the desert’. There is a beauty in allowing the elemental forces to be at the fore and the supporting infrastructure to be subservient and fade into the background. By not noticing the interventions the visitor is allowed to focus on the beauty of what is there.

The nexus between the powerfully sublime landscape and Anangu’s precious cultural expression hopefully induces a transformation in the visitor’s understanding of the importance of sustaining both land and culture. The fragility of both has a visceral immediacy and poignancy. Maria Goula writes in her essay entitled *Fragility*, “Fragility as an attitude, not as a problem, must be interpreted as a hybrid concept that encompasses both environmental and cultural factors ...Fragility is a way of delving deeper into the identity of landscapes.”⁴⁰ At Uluru the sustained survival and flourishing of both the environment and Anangu’s living culture are indeed fragile and compel a quest for greater ongoing understanding. For me, this project more than any other has a deep emotional pull. When talking about the project I often find myself with a lump in my throat, it’s mysterious and comes up from behind. I try to prepare for it, even tell the audience that this emotional state may happen in the hope that I can avoid it, but it wins over. I am beginning to understand that it is most likely the precarious fragility of this place, in this time, and the need for the upmost care that elicits my involuntary emotional responses.

³⁶ Elizabeth Meyer, William S. Sanders (eds), *Richard Haag, Boedel Reserve and Gas works Park* (Princeton Architectural Press New York, New York, 1998), 25.

³⁷ Bart Brands, Sylvia Karres, “Reflective Progression”, *Topos European Landscape Magazine*, (Callway Verlong, Munich, 2004), 92.

³⁸ Dan Underwood, “Snake Charmer”, *Architectural Review*, November no. 1197, (1996), 50.

³⁹ John Beardsley, “A Word for Landscape Architecture”, *Harvard Design Magazine* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000), 5.

⁴⁰ Maria Goula, Daniela Colafranceschi (eds), “Fragility”, in *Landscape and 1000 Words to Inhabit It* (Editoria Gustavo Gili, SL, Barcelona, 2007), 69,70.

⁴¹ Box Hill City Council, *Box Hill Community Arts Centre: More than Bricks and Mortar* (The Council, Box Hill, 1991), 7.

⁴² Margo Osborne, Margo Osborne (eds) *The Return of Beauty* (Catalogue of Exhibition, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Design, Adelaide 2000), 7.

Below Left: The Heidelberg School of painters were influential in the painterly quality and colours of the ceramic work by artist Maggie Fooke, and the planting palette.
The Sunny South, T. Roberts, 1887, accessed 01/08/2013, <http://artsdiary365.wordpress.com/2012/01/>

Below Middle and Right: The ornamentation of the architecture and landscape elements at Box Hill Community Arts Centre have been influenced by the decorative art movements of the Bloomsbury Artists in the early to mid-1900s (right) and Friedersreich Hundertwasser in the early 1990s

Below Middle: Pulpit at Berwick Church, Vanessa Bell, Omega and After Bloomsbury and the Decorative Arts, photographer Howard Grey, Thames and Hudson Inc., (1984), 48.

Below Right: Ceramic pillars , Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Markthalle - Altenrhein, Switzerland, accessed 010813, <http://www.fotocommunity.fr/pc/pc/mypics/9180/display/1521347>

Exuberant Intervention Box Hill Community Arts Centre. 1989 – 1991.

Box Hill in Victoria had in the 10 to 15 years prior to the development of the Box Hill Community Arts Centre gone from a fringe outer suburb to become a regional commercial, retail and transport centre and with this transformation many of the local residents felt that the area was losing its identity. In 1988 Kevin Taylor was engaged to consult with the Box Hill community about the possibility of a Community Arts Centre to cater for the growing number of people in the community who had a desire to express themselves creatively. As a result of the study the financial commitment by council went from an initial \$7,000 to \$90,000 for the modest redevelopment of an existing building to \$1.2 million for a purpose-built Community Arts Centre, the first of its kind in Australia.

The design of the Arts Centre involved further consultation with the community, as well as collaboration with the architect Gregory Burgess, artist Maggie Fooke and a number of other craftspeople. This was my first experience of a truly collaborative process. Like a good friendship that grows and develops, a careful and respectful understanding of each person's strengths and disciplines, as well as the cultivation of the creative space in between, seemed to me to be the hallmark of good collaboration. I also gained an understanding of how important it is to creatively encourage a collaboration with the client, stakeholders and community members.

The detailing of the Centre heralded the crafted, ornamental and hand hewn, in keeping with the tangible expression "of the vitality of the local cultural life."⁴¹ Maggie Fooke's painterly ceramics were inspired by the Heidelberg School of painters who had lived and worked in the area in the early 1900s. Other influences included the works of Antoni Gaudi, Friedensreiche Hundertwasser, William Morris and the Bloomsbury Set. In this way the project was a reaction to Aldof Loos' belief that "ornamentation is a crime." Here the aesthetic and care of hand-crafted embellishment and ornamentation were catalysts for a socially and artistically sustainable community.⁴²

Image removed due to copyright.



The painterly and rich patterning in the outer landscape elements of the walkways, courtyards, pillars and seats was also expressed vibrantly in the planting palette. The design and selection of the planting was deliberately non-institutional, with a hint of the domestic and drew on my love of plants and gardening. It was informal yet repetitive, seasonal, colourful and slightly chaotic. Several years after completion Kevin Taylor and I visited the Arts Centre and a woman playing a violin was walking around the garden. She said she was improvising music inspired by the garden. As a designer this was a most satisfying encounter and validated the garden as being in creative conversation with the Centre's users as well as the building.

Philosopher Alain De Botton states that, "Professions of detachment (that) stem not so much from an insensitivity to beauty as from a desire to deflect the sadness we would face if we left ourselves open to all of beauty's many absences."⁴³ In a way the project was to stem the tide of insensitivity that was swallowing the Box Hill area and herald a more expressive and culturally sustainable way of being. One that could reverberate outwards.

The Arts Centre was also the first time I worked as a community artist. At the completion of the Centre there was a slight dispute brewing with the community garden located behind it. The residents who gardened were disgruntled by the large funds that had been awarded to the construction of the Arts Centre. As a neighbourly gesture, one of reconciliation and the desire to cultivate further creative reverberations within the community, as well as a cost-saving exercise, I devised a community arts project with individuals from both sides of the fence. Residents fashioned individually expressive timber pickets with the use of electric jigsaws. For the price of a few slabs of beer in exchange for seconds' timber, some hired equipment and lots of sausages we had our fence as well as happy neighbours. At the time the project was viewed as an exemplar of community art practice and a replica of the fence was exhibited at the *Hidden Imagination* exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1992. (Refer page 188)

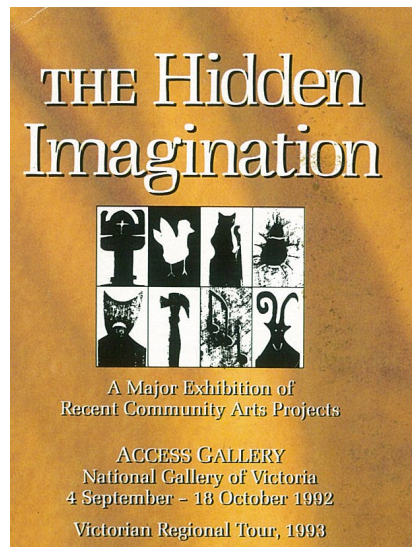
Above: The seasonally colourful, non-institutional planting is in conversation with the ceramic seat.

⁴³ Alain De Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness. The Secret Art of Furnishing Your Life* (Penguin, London, 2007), 13.



Above: Box Hill Community Arts Centre. An exuberant building and landscape expressive of the community's artistic aspirations. The thread of material presence is privileged in this project. Civic is also a thread that is expressed through the participation of the community during the process of creating the Arts Centre and their ongoing involvement and ownership. This has created a cohesive and ever expanding creative community.

Since studying visual arts my interest has shifted from community-based design and art and probably would not sway towards such a populist decorative element as the picket fence project. However, upon reflection, this first exercise in community art taught me a number of things. Firstly, that the designer or artist involved with the community needs to have a vision and set firm artistic boundaries for the works to be aesthetically successful for both the makers and those experiencing it. Secondly, that the completion of the working drawings is not necessarily the end of the design, and lastly, that patterning and multiples hold a magical, connective and ordering power. The overall process of community engagement taught me that the successful and creative engagement of community involves the ability to actively listen to and elicit from the community their aspirations and visions. That with a sense of respect, nurturing and care, a designer/artist can laterally transform these ideals into creative built form and landscape, where the users and visitors of the project have a sense of ownership and pride which is a catalyst for sustaining their own creative flowering.



Left: Box Hill Community Arts Centre, *Picket Fence*. Staff, Arts Centre community members and members of the community gardens constructing the decorative fence; a structure that 'joined' the two community groups through an inclusive creative process.

Above: The *Picket Fence* is recreated in 1992 in the National Gallery of Victoria for the exhibition on community arts entitled *Hidden Imagination*

⁴⁶ Anne Latreille, "The Garden as Organic Art or Inscriptions on a Clean Slate", Unpublished, (2010).

⁴⁷ Julian Raxworthy, SueAnne Ware and Julian Raxworthy (eds), *Sunburnt Landscape Architecture in Australia* (SUN Architecture Publishers and Authors, Amsterdam, 2011), 39.

⁴⁸ Ronald Jones, "Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art", Unpublished, (2011), 12.

Bottom Right: North Terrace, Adelaide. The Central zone of the Terrace is a striation of hedging, ornamental planting, grass, pathways and institution plazas.

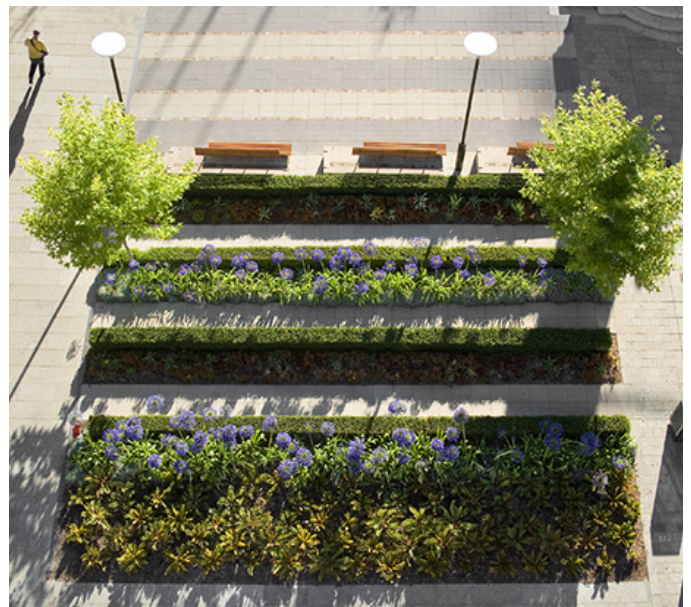
Below: *Desert Space*. Taylor Cullity Garden. A strongly patterned garden that abstracts the dryer landscapes of Australia where plants are spaced apart and one walks in a serpentine manner through the gaps in vegetation. The red sand ground plain creates a sculptural canvas.

Patterns and the Power of Multiples

A number of practitioners have commented on TCL's preoccupation with patterns.^{44, 45} Anne Latreille writes in her essay on the Taylor and Cullity Garden, "Just as the patterns of life evolve or change direction, so does the patterning that is integral to the Taylor Cullity garden. ... This garden is a place of experiment and ideas. Around every corner are patterns, pictures and textures that alter with the light and the wind, the season and the weather. ... They tell their own stories, which vary over time."⁴⁶ The power of simplicity in patterning is also expressed by Julian Raxworthy in regard to North Terrace. "TCL's scheme for North Terrace is beautiful partly for its simple but profoundly effective diagram, resulting from what they found on site."⁴⁷ This patterning at North Terrace is further explained in the next section on gardens - 'Gardens Cultivated with Care'. Ron Jones writes about the preoccupation TCL has with stripes, of how their simplicity allows a myriad of expression and scales.⁴⁸ It's interesting to reflect that in the early 1990s Kevin Taylor and I were more preoccupied with curved patterns as an ordering system and that it was Perry Lethlean's interest in straight lines and stripes that led to its popularity at TCL. I have learnt it is the straight line or stripe that allows the curved gesture more resonance.

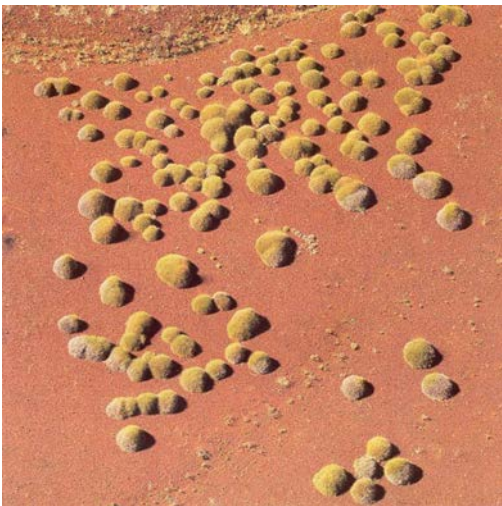
⁴⁴ Patterns, multiples and ordering systems in art, design and mathematics create a relationship to 'nature'. It is a conduit for our ability to realise the inherent pattern and form that creates structures in the natural world. "According to Osborne, The biologist E.O. Wilson in his book *Consilience, The Unity of Knowledge* postulates that: "there is an inherent connection between genetic and cultural inheritance, a gene-culture coevolution; that we are genetically wired to prefer abstract patterning, connections and ordering system, and that these relationships relate to our perceptions of beauty. For example, our gravitation towards harmonic proportions such as the golden mean at all levels from the microscopic to the macroscopic is because of our genetic-cultural encoding or memory. Wilson also writes about the imperative for humanity to understand this biological interconnectivity of being part of and dependent upon nature, and that through this understanding nature can be sustained. Maybe that is why plants are so enticing and memorable as they are extensively composed of a myriad of patterns and multiples, in many cases countless multiples to the point of having a sense of unending abundance.

⁴⁵ The evolutionary scientist Gregory Bateson's theory of evolution also talks of the interconnection created by patterns and multiples and he termed it the "pattern that connects". Annette Tietenberg interprets his theory as stating that patterns are found in all disciplines, and in all times of history and that "whoever works with patterns is close to no longer knowing any limits.



TCL's fascination with repetition, patterning and the abstraction of the Australian landscape is most evident in The Australian Garden, a botanic garden where the landscape design is dedicated to "the exploration and expression of the evolving relationship between Australians and their landscape and flora."⁴⁹ The strong minimal patterning of the *Sand Garden* seeks to distil and intensify the sublime experience of the Australian desert. A sense of reverence for the fragility of the desert is expressed by not allowing the visitor to enter the garden. As in a Japanese sand garden, the viewer keeps a respectful distance and in that way does not interfere with the garden's powerful elemental experience.

⁴⁹ Taylor Cullity Lethlean, "The Australian Garden Masterplan", Unpublished, (1995).



Below: *The Sand Garden* at the Australian Garden, abstracts the spacious sublime desert landscapes of Central Australia. The aerial image (left) of spinifex and red sand provided the inspiration for the planted discs.

Left: Hamersley Range, Pibara, *Down to Earth*, Richard Woldendorp, Tim Winton, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 94



Gardens Cultivated with Care

‘For Millenia and throughout world cultures, our predecessors conceived of happiness in its perfected state as a garden existence’⁵⁰.

(Richard Pogue Harrison)

Since I was a child I have always either dreamt of or constructed gardens. I grew up surrounded by a substantial garden which was cultivated by my mother, a trained botanist. Her love of plants and landscape has been a primary influence in my career. The first house I bought was because of a large mulberry tree. I cannot imagine a life without a garden or days without my companions, plants. While writing this essay at home during Autumn I gain inspiration from the daily nuances and the shifting qualities of light that are created in the garden that surround our haven, it’s heavenly. Pogue Harrison appears to think along the same lines – “One way or another, in their very concept and their humanly created environments, gardens stand as a kind of heaven, if not a kind of haven.”⁵¹

Ron Jones hits the mark in his analysis of the importance of gardens in many of TCL’s projects.⁵² They are indeed an important barometer of how people value a place, how the garden elements enable occupants (like the Box Hill violinist) a heightened and pleasurable sensory experience. Often Adelaide locals and visitors express their appreciation of North Terrace and they invariably mention the gardens, how it is indeed the plantings that pull people into and along the Terrace. During the construction period it was the installation of the planting that turned a tide of negativity towards the redevelopment. The linear striped plantings present as a backbone of repetitive hedges alongside hardy Mediterranean plants of varied textures, colours and seasonal flowering. Intended as a reinvigoration of the original Prince Henry Gardens, a number of plants, in particular the Cycads, make reference to the Victorian era of the historic buildings. It is the garden form that encourages a greater connection to both the historical and contemporary expression of the terrace. Gini Lee states that “the bold and playful garden plantings suggest an almost domestic gardening practice in their (TCL’s) highly detailed planting compositions.”⁵³ The challenge for me as the planting designer was to skate between providing a strong garden frame that was commensurate with the importance of historic cultural institutions while encouraging a sense of variety and textural play. In this way the planting combines with other crafted details to highlight the human hand, one applied with an intention towards consideration and caring for the public social realm.

In the pursuit of ongoing care for the landscapes that TCL design, I am often actively engaged in the post-construction maintenance of the gardens. If possible, I select the gardeners or at least meet with them to explain the overall vision for the project, as well as the individual requirements of the various plantings. As gardens are a cultural construct, their ongoing life and flourishing is dependent on human cultivation and care and to that end I often form collegiate relationships with the gardeners ringing them on an informal basis after either walking along or driving past North Terrace.

Right: Lines of textural planting in the central garden zone at North Terrace.



⁵⁰ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2008), 1.

⁵¹ *ibid*, X

⁵² Ronald Jones, “*Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art*”, Unpublished, (2011).

⁵³ Gini Lee, North Terrace, <http://architectureau.com/articles/north-terrace/>, 3.5. (accessed 010712)

The Mosaic Garden : A Garden in the City
Tarntanyangga/Victoria Square 2010 - ongoing

“Whether they are situated at its centre or at its margins, gardens have their proper locus in the polis, which for Arendt serves as a stage for human action.... They never exist independently of a world shaped by human action.”⁵⁴ (Richard Pogue Harrison)

The current Victoria Square has gone from a place of prominence, parterres and promenading in the 19th century to a degraded large un-glorified roundabout to a rather ‘care-less’, symbolic centre of the city. TCL have consciously imbued the design with a sense of care; one of rejuvenation and connection to sustainable ideals. Our aim through an inclusive and collaborative design process with client, community and the team of consultants, coupled with a rigorous, reflective and self-questioning design process is to transform the square into the real heart of the city. Hopefully we will succeed. In discussing the various design phases of Victoria Square and its connection to notions of beauty, care and sustainability, I am primarily going to concentrate on the southern garden known as the Mosaic Garden. Currently TCL has completed Detailed Design of the entire project and Contract Documentation of Stage One, which includes the northern section of the site and the central plaza. (Refer image of plan, p198). Construction of Stage One commenced in March 2013.

The Victoria Square sits within narrowed perimeter roads and is contained by a perimeter garden composed of a loose copse of majestic, tall, Spotted Gums with an underplanting of Cycads, the Cycads being a reference to the Square’s Victorian past. SueAnne Ware writes, “While these edge plantings in form acknowledge a colonial history, the planting palette of quintessentially Australian gums challenges the Square’s gardenesque legacy and offers a contemporary, post-colonial take on Australian public gardens.”⁵⁵ The garden sits centrally in the southern space embraced by the two arched arbours. These prominent armatures take their cues from the distinctive horizontal geographical character of Adelaide; the experience of parallel hills, plains and coast. Once it was decided to include a substantially sized garden within Victoria Square (a large garden was not a given in the brief from the client), TCL looked for precedents of similar sized gardens in a city context that were not botanic gardens. Surprisingly, we found very few, with Kathryn Gustafson’s *Lurie Garden* within Millennium Park being the most relevant. Many parks, squares or gardens had within them planted areas but not a large garden as such.

In the Masterplan Report we talked of a Garden Haven, an engaging respite in the city.

The following is a description from the report:

- A new experience of urban sustainable living through appropriate use of water, recycled materials and planting.
- A garden of respite and escape.
- A new immersive urban garden experience that captures the imagination.
- Gardens offering, beauty, sculpture and a variety of artistic expressions.
- A rejuvenating place to go for lunch or just relax.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2008), 46.

⁵⁵ SueAnne Ware, “Productive Friction: (re) making Tarntanyangga”, Unpublished, (2010)

⁵⁶ Taylor Cullity Lethlean, *Victoria Square Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Masterplan Report*, (2010), 28.



Left: The mosaic patterns created by Fire Stick Farming provide inspiration for the Mosaic Garden at Victoria Square.

<http://www.aussiebushadventures.com.au/blog.php?id=59> (Accessed 010813)

Right: Photograph of painting by Johnny Warangula Jupurrurla depicts the mosaic patterns created by Fire Stick Farming. Peter Emmett the cultural curator on the design of Victoria Square provided this image as further inspiration for the Mosaic Garden. Architect Peter Tonkin's idea of using the painting to generate the whole square's concept.

Conceptually, our starting point was looking at the patterns created by the Aboriginal practice of mosaic burning or Firestick Farming. An Aboriginal artwork depicting this control of the environment through fire by Johnny Warangula Jupurrurla (a Papunya artist) reinforced this notion. The metaphor of the burning patterns speaks of ecological connection, a mosaic of habitat and microclimates, both within the garden and radiating out to the broader landscape. Early in sketch design the TCL design team and Peter Tonkin from Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects (TZG) even considered using the painting as a starting point for the whole Victoria Square design, blanketing the painting over the entire site.

The following description of the garden is from the Masterplan Report:

"The Mosaic Garden is a vibrant and artistically interpretive mosaic of the plants and associated landforms of Southern Australia. Plants indigenous to the Adelaide Plains and Hills region radiate out from the Kaurna Centre of Culture (renamed in Detailed Design as Mullabakka – meaning shield) reinforcing the site's connection to its place of origin. Meandering pathways are reminiscent of the branching tracery of creek systems common to South Australia. 'Garden Clearings' are carved out of the native garden; a reminder of the history of land clearing for productive farming. In contrast to the unsustainable practice of previous generations these 'clearings' support and sustain both the community and the land, and are host to a number of activities. A number of spaces contain 'follies' or small structures while others demonstrate environmentally sustainable practices as well as relating to the nearby markets. The southern end of the garden is given over to the purification of water collected from the square and the surrounding area."⁵⁷

The landforms and planting in loose swaths of varied colours, textures, moods and seasonal interest is not naturalistic and deliberately shows the care and cultivation of the human hand. Ron Jones quoted Pogue Harrison's observation that gardens "give order to our relation to nature."⁵⁸ The objective in this garden is to be immersed in a particular abstracted beauty. A rejuvenating experience that will hopefully allow those who experience it to find reverberation in the sustainable ideals that underpin the design; a garden that "orders nature" in a sustaining way. As Pogue Harrison goes on to say "It is our relation to nature that defines the tension at the centre of which stands not only the garden but the human polis as such."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 38, 39.

⁵⁸ Ronald Jones, "Truth Itself is Constructed: Public Space as Public Art", Unpublished, (2011), 9.

⁵⁹ Robert Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2008), 48.

During Sketch Design the garden ideas were reassessed and further ideas were explored. For example, an intervention that was attempted was to carve a waterway in a straight line through the garden. This was perceived by Karl Telfer, the project's Kurna consultant and a number of others, as a violent European slash through the site. (Refer Right, Middle Row 2nd Left, page 195) The idea was discarded. Towards the end of Sketch Design the grades of the garden declined on an even grade 1.5 metres from north to south to reinforce the experience of being nestled into the Earth, as well as allowing water to collect in a bio-filtration system at the southern end. For the Adelaideans who live on the flat plains, even a slight change in level provides an otherness and the unexpected. "It is a fold in Adelaide's flatness,"⁶⁰ a gesture to further emphasise a sense of being earthed. The ground plain of local stone Setts, is laid with slight undulations that rise at the garden bed edges, a further modulating of the ground surface.

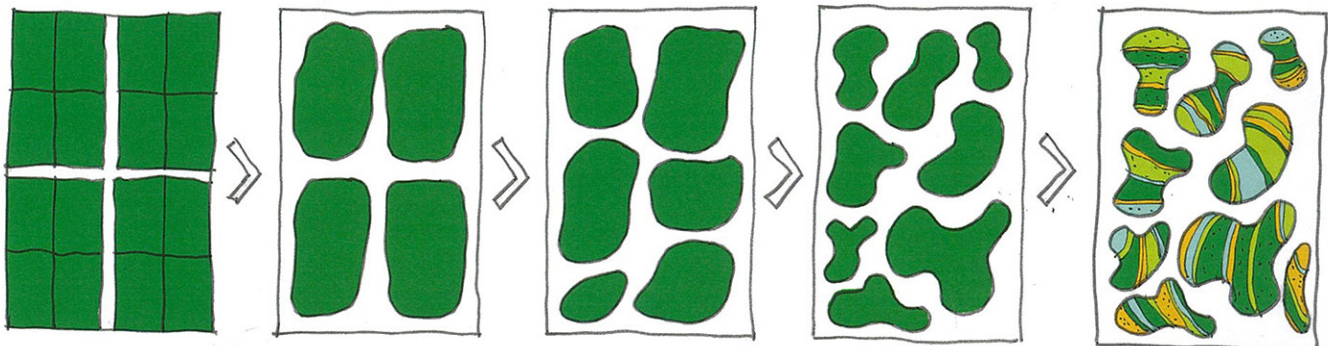
During Detailed Design TCL revisited the idea of mosaic and realised it to be a morphed form of a parterre. Canadian landscape architect and academic Phillippe Poullaouec-Gonidec posits that, "the parterre proposes an experience, that of another thickness ... in which the earthbound gaze gets lost in the infinite meandering of its compositions."⁶¹ The parterres in the 16th to the 18th century were formal, hierarchical, directional and limiting in the behaviours and activities they supported. By gradually morphing this tight geometry into a set of amorphous shapes TCL arrived at a pattern which has greater special variety, allows multiple journeys and supports more flexible open programmatic options. These characteristics fit with the aspirations of the 'New Civic'; a public space which has a flexibility, spontaneity and unpredictability. The 'New Civic' allows for diversity and encourages the meeting and interaction of difference, as well as supporting and being supported by changes in mobility due to new technologies of communication. The multiple egalitarian pathways carved out of the amorphous voids also speak of an Aboriginal way of moving through landscape, which moves around and between vegetation, particularly in dryer regions where plants are spaced apart and sit in their own shadows. This way of navigating provides the opportunity for endless journeys in both time and space. It allows for wandering rather than a direct destination. The exaggeration of distance and space creates an immersive timelessness, a feeling of being a little lost. It creates an inner sense of time, one which allows for reverie, imagination, and contemplation. By being lost in time and space we are able to find new ways of perceiving. "...if someone never gets lost he never grows up."⁶²

⁶⁰ SueAnne Ware, "Making Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga", Unpublished, (2010), 169.

⁶¹ Phillippe Poullaouec-Gonidec, Daniela Colafranceschi (eds), "Parterre", in *Landscape and 1000 Words to Inhabit It*, Editoria Gustavo Gili, SL, Barcelona, (2007), 140.

⁶² Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice* (Editorial Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 2002), 4.

Below: Diagram from Victoria Square Sketch Design (2010). The formal historical parterre is morphed to form the Mosaic Garden's amorphous garden beds.

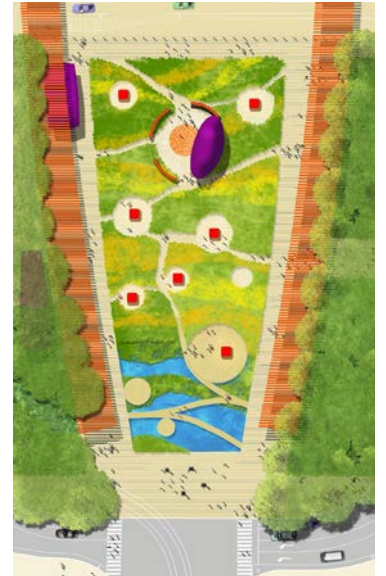
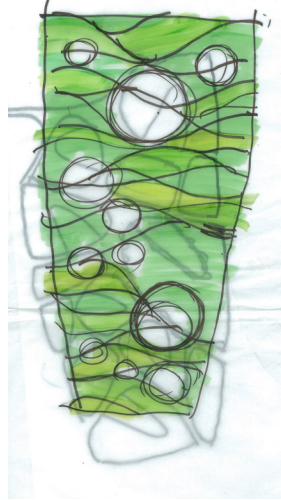
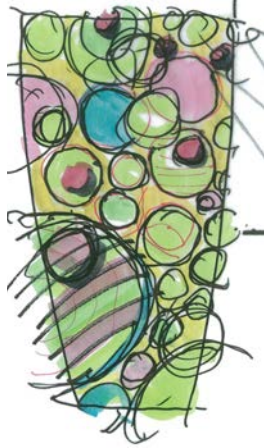
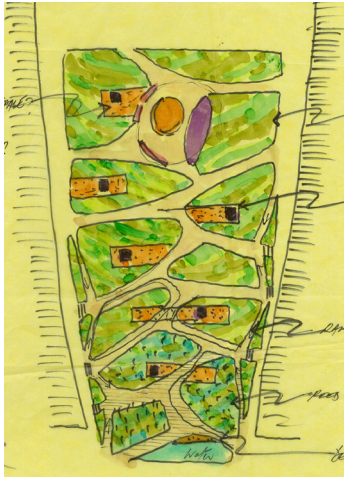


- Formal
- Symmetrical
- Directional
- Limited Program

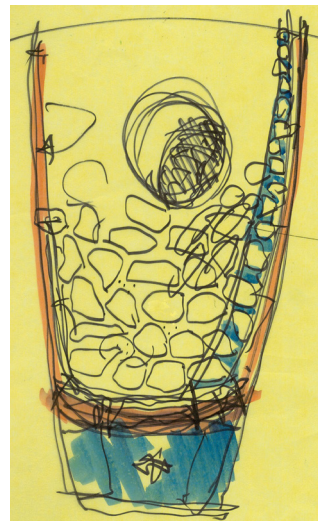
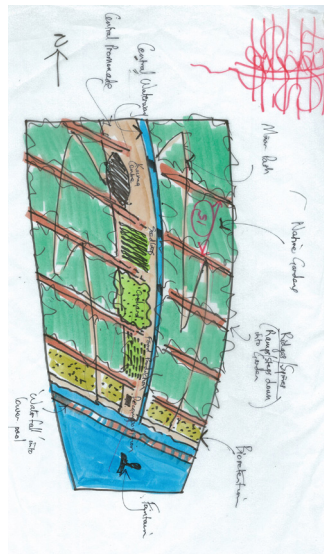
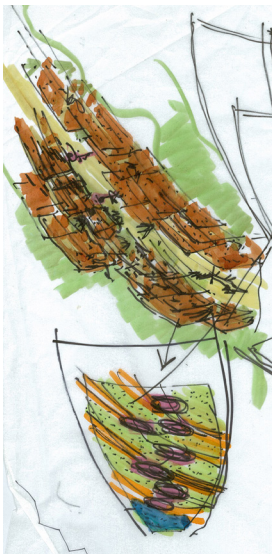
- Spatial Variety
- Multiple Journeys
- Open Program

The sketches of the Mosaic Garden and southern half of Victoria Square show the collaborative process of testing ideas.

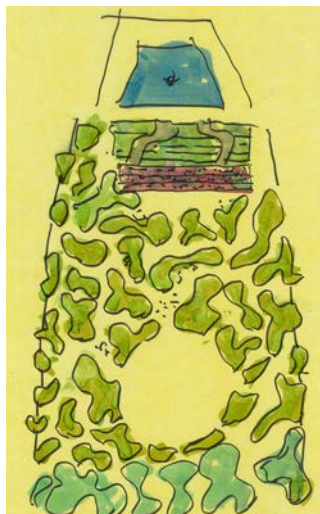
Masterplan



Sketch Design



Design Development



In the Sketch Design we also reassessed our conceptual underpinning for the design and wrestled with the size, form, elements and materials present in the garden. The design was in a constant state of flux. One by one, various elements were removed until the design came to what was believed to be the essence of this site; that of an immersive garden experience within a city. While conceptually the 'Follies' in the 'Clearings' felt strong and provided for various programming, the number required to make their inclusion resonate, along with the enlargement of Mullabakka the Centre for Aboriginal Culture, resulted in a squeezing of the immersive garden experience. At one stage the amorphous shapes straddled the arbours and extended into the perimeter garden, but this weakened the square's edge. Other iterations in Sketch Design included shaping the bio-retention and productive gardens in the same amorphous garden bed shapes as the overall native garden. In Detailed Design TCL settled on locating both gardens at the southern end in a more agricultural linear pattern befitting their functional tasks. This provided a balance and tension between the immersion of the mosaic parterre native garden and the more open linear structure of the other two garden types. A serpentine steel bridge across the Bio-retention Garden and wetlands provided a strong calligraphic gesture.

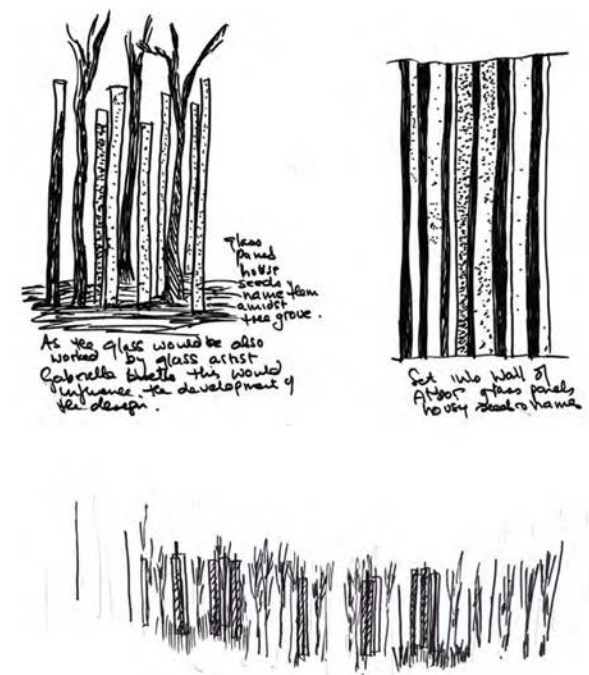
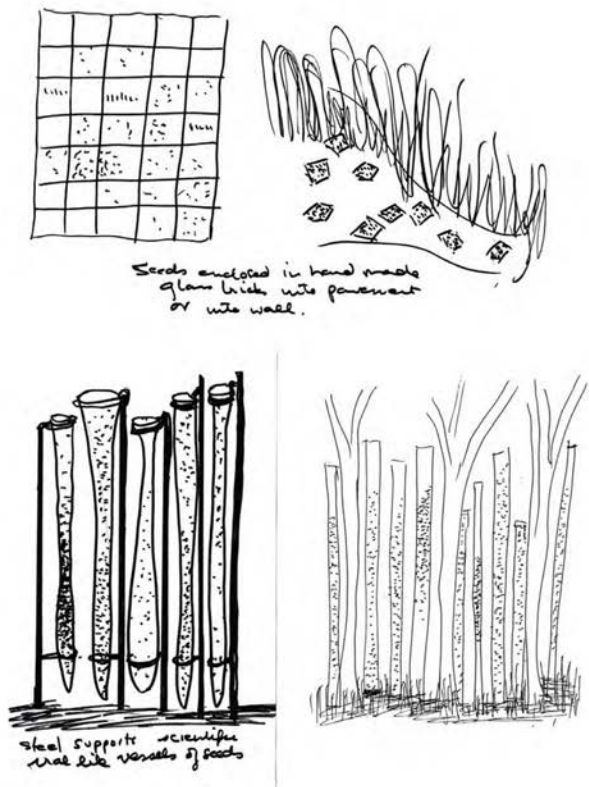
Along with the physical shifts during the design stages there was also a questioning about ways to engage the community. We felt that a relationship with the square and the garden would be greater if there was active participation alongside the more traditional passive garden recreation experiences. As in the Adam and Eve myth described earlier, city dwellers would gain a greater connection and understanding of the environmental and cultural underpinnings of the site by being actively engaged in the garden either by caring for and cultivating areas of the garden, or by coming across individuals, volunteer gardeners or cultural hosts who can impart an understanding of the garden. This could include information on the *Productive Garden*, the water recycling and bio-retention areas, biodiversity in the city, native plants and Aboriginal Kaurua culture, particularly in relation to Mullabakka. In some instances these enlightened gardeners or cultural hosts could be more theatrical or surprising in their interactions with the public and be part of ephemeral or temporary art installations or happenings.

The various stages of the project also included an integrated arts strategy with a major component focusing on the gardens. This strategy entitled *Towards Ecological Interventions within the Garden*, was created by myself in collaboration with artist Janet Laurence. The art interventions are intended to explore an aspect of the 'New Civic' as the 'New Habitat' with the understanding that humans have an integrated place within an ecosystem. The gardens are viewed as an opportunity to 'recharge the aesthetic experience of art, as an environmental strategy expressing beauty, which can aid to shift one's perspective from an egocentric to a more bio-centric perspective.'⁶³ Ideas for art installations included interventions or scenarios as habitat, an insect and pollen garden which amplifies the presence of insects and pollen in multi-sensory, evocative and surprising ways and a seed-bank or collection of seeds that enabled an experiential experience of the diversity and immensity of seeds.

In the design of the gardens and the Square as a whole we sought a balance of elements that was akin to the 18th century painter William Hogarth's expression of beauty. John Armstrong in *The Secrets of Beauty* states, in Hogarth's quest for beauty it was found to be in elements that "reward our desire for variety and respect our need for uniformity – perfectly balancing stimulation and repose, excitement and security. The experience of beauty is the mid-point between boredom and exhaustion."⁶⁴ Our struggle was about finding that balance to allow an immersive experience not as an end in itself but also to enable the sustainable ideals of understanding, empathy, respect, and care to have a greater amplitude and reverberation.

⁶³ Taylor Cullity Lethlean, *Victoria Square Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Masterplan Report*, Unpublished (2010).

⁶⁴ John Armstrong, *The Secret Power of Beauty* (Allen Lane, London, 2004), 6.



Ecological Interventions
Initial ideas by Janet Laurence for *Seed Bank* (Working Title)



Ecological Intervention, Insertion as Habitat,
For example a woven mallee root by James Darling and Lesley Forwood.
Above: *Wall Work 5*, James Darling and Lesley Forwood (2010)



Diagram from Victoria Square/ Tarntanyangga Detailed Design Report (unpublished) showing how the public are actively engaged in the garden and the Square

Victoria Square/ Tarntanyangga, Detailed Design Plan

- 1. Mosaic Garden
- 2. Bio-Retention Garden
- 3. Productive Garden
- 4. Perimeter Garden





Top: Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga, Mosaic Garden. An immersive garden in the city.

Bottom: Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga, Bio-Retention Garden. A functional yet aesthetic garden for cleansing storm-water from the surrounding roads and paving and to provide irrigation for the Mosaic Garden. It is also a place of education and interpretation about sustainability.

Conclusion

The notion of the essay began by exploring my propensity to strive for the elusive quality of beauty in TCL's projects and my art projects—a quality I often refer to as the 'soul' of the project. I came across Elizabeth Meyer's essay *Sustaining Beauty* wherein she makes a connection between beauty and sustainability, and from this reading I drew a number of questions for exploration. I uncovered that the conduit that joins beauty and sustainability within my and TCL's body of work is my innate desire to care for and nurture individuals, communities and landscapes and to elicit this propensity in others who experience the work. This pull towards care and cultivation is expressed physically in a striving for beauty and best fit through the medium of patterning, repetition, detailing and an appreciation of and abstraction of the Australian landscape. It is elaborated to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the particular project, through the threads of site, narrative, material presence, and civic.

The earlier projects of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Box Hill Community Arts Centre had a conscious commitment to community engagement and an innate desire to care for and nurture the visions and aspirations of those communities. This commitment was greatly enhanced by the creative collaboration between the project designers, other creative practitioners and the clients. In the Uluru project notions of beauty and care were sought out through appreciation of the elemental landscape and a response of minimal intervention and the use of the particular site's materiality, while in the Box Hill project it was through the expression of exuberance by the use of ornamentation, colour and crafted detailing.

In the mid to late 2000s I was questioning my contribution to the field of landscape architecture, asking myself what was important to me, what was the best way for me to interface and work creatively with the larger urban and civic projects. I and TCL wanted to re-engage with the earlier preoccupations of community engagement and cultural and environmental sustainability and bring them into focus in a larger civic project. We felt that while North Terrace and other major projects had been successful, these ideals had become clouded by the bigger civic gestures.

The redevelopment of the Tartanyangga/Victoria Square project was the first urban project that made the coalescing of the ideals of beauty and sustainability through the conduit of care more overt and conscious. The struggle with attaining the right expression and fit for the various gardens, the active involvement of members of the community as gardeners and cultural hosts and the emphasis on art as ecological interventions within the gardens combined to create an equal privileging of ideals. I came to understand the seamlessness between beauty and sustainability and the actuality of it being and/or rather than and/or. This provides a renewed consciousness and confidence in my work.

6.0

Appendix Essay

It's Hard Getting Messy When You're Compositional

Perry Lethlean

Introduction

**Perth 1990, a botanical
waterfront**

Geelong 2000, a civic waterfront

**Auckland 2010, a messy
waterfront**

Conclusion

Individual Conclusion

Introduction

Landscape architecture, in the 1980's was, in my experience, split between the scientific and analytical characterised by the work of Ian McHarg and the artistic and poetics evident in the work of Lawrence Halprin. I tended to the later.

My training and early practice indicated to me that landscape architects came up with their designs through a process of a thorough 'site analysis' which, in retrospect, particularly in urban settings, was superficial in its scope and left the designer powerless to make real changes. A site analysis focused on understanding the landscape through a limited definition—mostly describing the vegetation, materials, soils and microclimate. It did not allow the designer scope to make large urban interventions as it just reinforced a narrow understanding of the site's condition.

My experience in subsequent practices and projects dabbled in the 'improvement' of spaces in cities and towns. However, due to the restricted rules of engagement and the landscape vernacular of the time, I was responding to a 'limited landscape logic', unable or unwilling to deal with the edges, the built form, linkages beyond site and/or unable to dare to suggest architectural additions.

A Masters in Design (Urban Design) in 1990, under Tony Styant-Browne, Shane Murray and Leon van Schaik was a revelation to me. The studies, although architecturally focused, facilitated a new understanding of how landscape architecture within urban settings can operate at much larger scales, giving me the confidence to analyse and conceive of projects in a more expansive urban setting.

Importantly it broke down an institutional inferiority complex, allowing me an insight into relevant architectural and urban design theory and practice. This sense of breaking through a theoretical glass ceiling was palpable and immediate, propelling me to participate in architecture/urban design competitions outside of work hours. Examining the work of Mario Gandelsonas and his urban diagrams of Boston was particularly influential, as well as the subsequent studio mappings of Melbourne that utilised his analytical and graphic techniques.

My Masters studies consolidated two personal and generalised views; firstly, that urban design in its conventional sense was not much of a creative art, but instead a blunt instrument used to regulate positive outcomes relating to built form and land use. The design of meaningful public spaces in our cities was not going to be generated out of an urban designer's imagination. And, secondly, that architects dabbling in urban design typically had no problem designing architecture for urban spaces, but appeared to have difficulty in conceiving of public spaces first that might inform architecture.

These self motivated views determined for me that landscape architecture was a more relevant instrument to not only design the spaces of our cities, but also curate the frame in which these spaces are located, connected and activated. My subsequent practice allowed the design of large public spaces across Australia in which the public realm, the plaza, park, street and lane became the armatures for new development, new architecture and new relationships between solid and void.

In my early projects I was preoccupied with the formal compositional arrangement of public spaces, that were utilised to frame public uses. My practice has inverted somewhat so that I now explore how embedding complexity and opportunities for public activities can inform how the 'architecture' of the landscape is composed.

These shifts in my analysis, understanding and design of public space are revealed in the following review of three waterfront projects; Perth (1990), Geelong (2000) and Auckland (2010). Through examining these three projects over the past two decades, I can identify common design methodologies of practice as well as shifts in design practice. The selection of waterfront typologies, with similar scales, motivations and concerns is a revealing frame to observe the commonalities of thought and process, the external influences and the internal shifting concerns of Taylor Cullity Lethlean.

Perth 1990 a botanical waterfront

The Perth Waterfront Project is an unusual project to discuss in the context of twenty-odd years of practice at Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL). It only received second place it obviously never got built, no one knows about it, and it's not a TCL project! Yet I'll persevere, as it was the first project where some of my formative views on landscape architecture in Australia began to come together.

Description

Perth's CBD has one of the more dysfunctional relationships with its waterfront than any other Australian city. Its central business district is arranged via a linear street grid parallel to its river context. So far so good, but unfortunately the city's urban fabric ends some 200 metres from the water's edge, leaving an in-between space that is comprised of a flat lawn space and a riverside drive that extends some 1000 metres along the entire length of the CBD. This vacant paddock is used infrequently for events and an occasional soccer game and it has been the subject of many speculative designs, competitions and student studios.

In 1990, the Western Australian Government organised an international design competition focused on reconnecting the city to its river. It asked competitors to speculate on new ways of using and enjoying its majestic setting.¹

As a masters student, I entered this international urban design competition for Perth's waterfront and received a second place. This project, like many previous and subsequent ideas for Perth's waterfront was quickly shelved.²

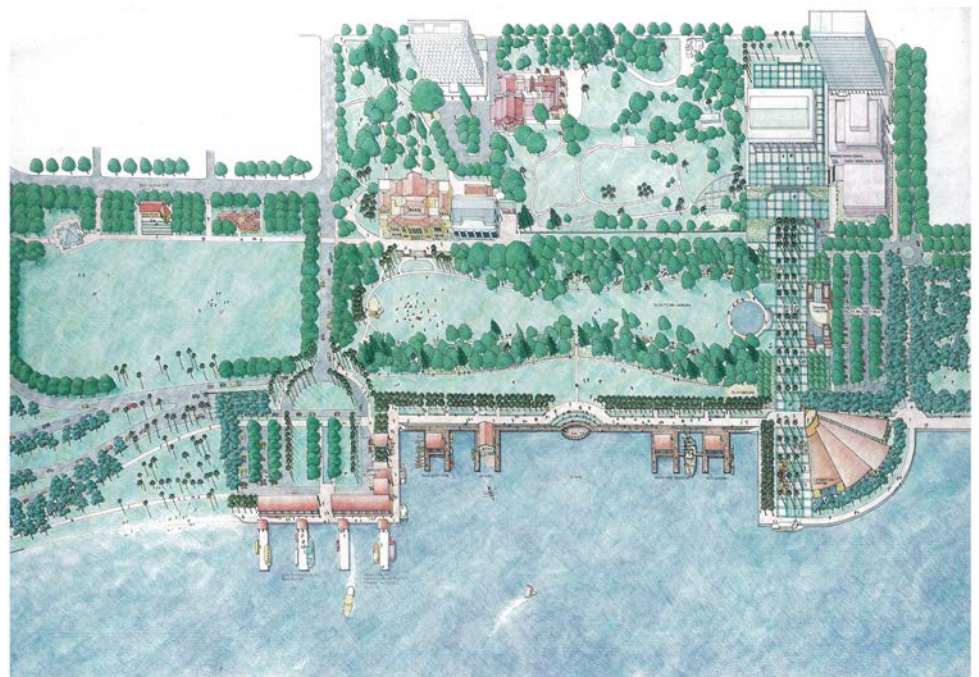
My design re-imagined Perth's foreshore as a vast botanical garden, structured according to the morphology of the city. Each grid extension of the city provided a direct connection to the Swan River and established a sequence of framed 'rooms' that were 'host' to series of abstracted landscapes that encapsulated Western Australia's botanical diversity. Perth's CBD has an urban intensity at its more elevated western end and tapers out towards the east. This transition, from civic and urban to more suburban reality, informed the expression of the landscape rooms from exotic landscapes that were ordered and stylised, located near to the urban heart, to more ecologically representative expressions the further the gardens were located away from the city centre.³

¹ Ralph Stanton, "Perth City Foreshore: Urban Design Competition 1991; A local urban designer's view", *Urban Design Forum*, no. 16 (1991): 2.

² "Entry Submitted by Perry Lethlean, Landscape Architect, *Landscape Australia* no 4. November(1991):355.

³ Professor Anne Beer, Professor Leonard Stevens et al., "Perth City Foreshore: Urban Design Competition 1991; A view of the assessors", *Urban Design Forum*, no. 16 (1991): 1.

ENTRY SUBMITTED BY PERRY LETHLEAN, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
ASSISTED BY ANDREW THOMAS, ARCHITECT
491 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065



Right: Second Prize competition entry drawings for the Perth Foreshore Competition 1990 as published in Landscape Australia no 4 November

Perth 1990 a botanical waterfront

Kinsaku Nakane and Pam Lethlean

The Perth project represents a milestone of sorts for my own design practice, it built upon influences of Japanese ideas of abstraction and symbolism, the seminal Royal Park project in Melbourne, analytical studies by Mario Gandelsonas and it was my first timid attempt to extend the boundaries of landscape architecture into the realms of urban design.

Australia's 'landscapes' at the time were under-represented as a subject matter for creative or transformative landscape architecture.⁴ We had a remarkably resilient bush school movement that was conceived of as a celebration of the beauty of the Australian landscape. Designers advocated the insertion of indigenous plantings in private and public projects as recognition of our distinctive landscapes and flora that were being constantly threatened. This was the ultimate response to a *genus loci* that said why not put back what was previously there? One of the best exponents was Bruce Mackenzie who created many indigenous foreshore landscapes in post-industrial sites in Sydney that were beautifully executed and, as Weirick has described, "the resolution of the concept in terms of planting design and detailing established not only the validity of this approach but gave it the conviction of a self evident truth".⁵

a unique opportunity exists for achieving a cohesive and powerful theme for landscape design throughout this country by realising and promoting the potential of the indigenous environment. (Mackenzie 1966)⁶

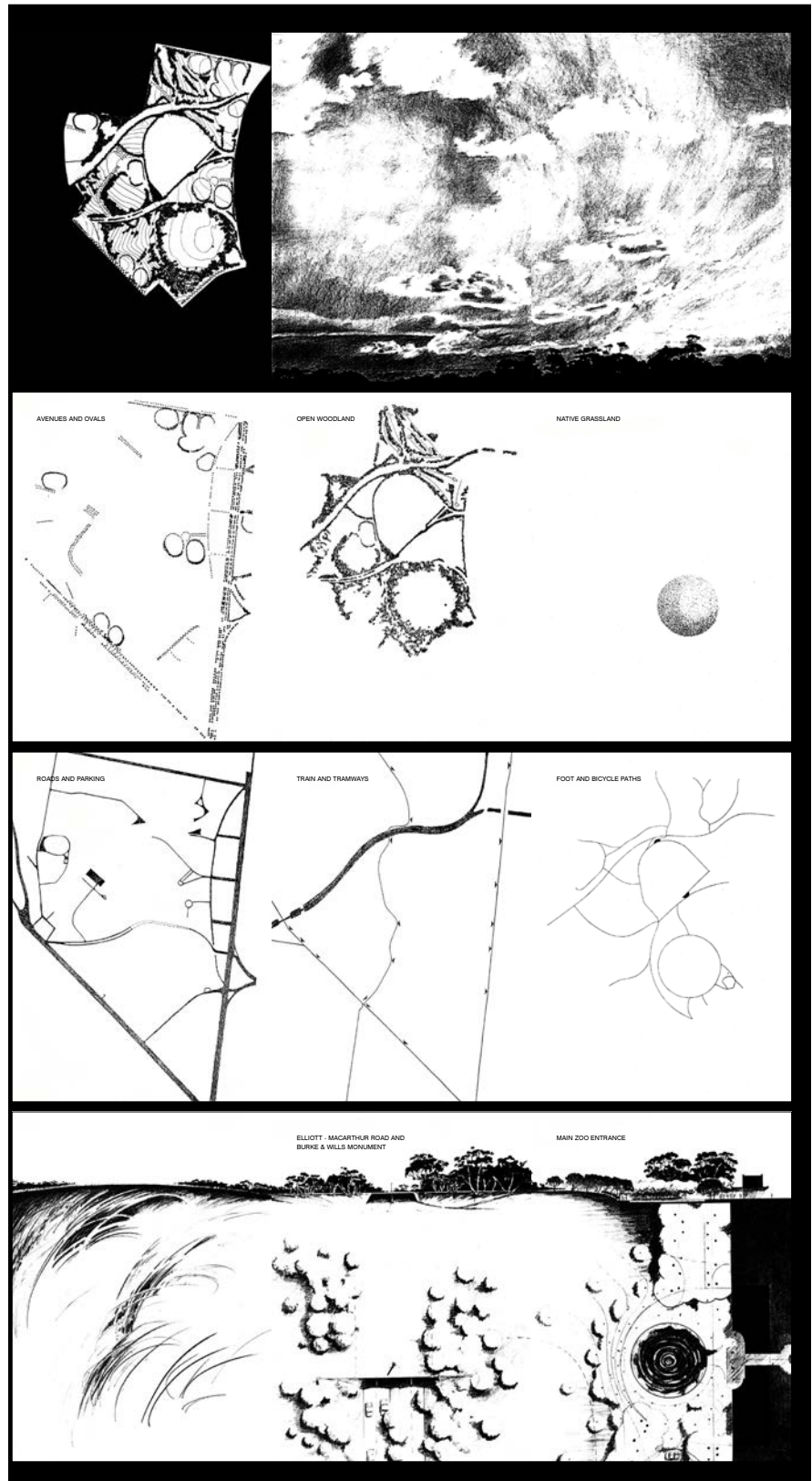
Many other successful revegetation projects existed—new parks had been created utilising indigenous flora, lovely gardens had been imbued with the flavour of the bush—but I couldn't see examples that placed the 'bush school' in an urban and civic context or elevated the indigenous context to a subject of an artful response. For some reason, in the hardscape world of CBDs and urban parks, designers got weak at the knees or were bludgeoned by committee thinking, ultimately resorting to the comfort of designs with more European sensibilities. Some examples existed, including Canberra's sculpture garden at the National Gallery, but the majority of our public garden heritage was and is still dominated by European landscape origins. In the Perth Waterfront Project I was asking why we couldn't have a great public garden at the edge of a city that wasn't cloaked with exotic flora but instead sought its inspiration from more relevant sources.

This attitude was no doubt influenced by the Royal Park competition winning entry by Laceworks Landscape Collaborative which was a beautifully realised distillation of site and local landscape sources that moved beyond mindless revegetation. Brian Stafford, co-author of this project, was an early mentor and employer and typically advocated a poetic reading of place that got to the nub of its 'story'. Revealing this 'story' involved the judicious editing of irrelevant accretions to reveal an underlying core and new pieces were added that, it was hoped, would reinforce the site's essential qualities. The idea of 'essential qualities' in landscape is of course a bit of a furphy, it really meant retaining and building upon the more legible, substantive and successful landscapes that already existed on site.

⁴ Perry Lethlean, "Japanese Gardens; Design Implications for Australia", Bachelor of Landscape Architecture RMIT University, 1986), 86–88.

⁵ James Weirick, "Beyond the Australian Image: New directions in Landscape Planning and Design" (paper presented to AILA Seminar, Canberra, 15 March, 1986).

⁶ Bruce Mackenzie in Julian Raxworthy, "Radar Landscape", *Architecture Australia*, March/April (2003): 29–30.



Right: Royal Park competition entry panels by Laceworks Landscapes Collaborative

Perth 1990 a botanical waterfront

Brian has had a longer-term effect on my design practice, particularly because of his emphasis on finding the 'right' site narrative. He was not interested in a metaphorical interpretation of place but he sought instead what he called the fundamental truth of a site. It was a way of seeing or understanding a context that he advocated was already there, if only we looked a bit harder. It was as if we could unfocus our eyes and look at a site with a filtered gaze that removed the superfluous detail to reveal the bones of a place. This approach still resonates in how I tackle my own designs.

For Royal Park this meant, for example, exposing the crown of the hill to reveal the horizon and silhouette of the fringing Sugar Gums. The project was artful in its elegance, rewarding for its subtlety and revealed that landscape architecture could draw its inspiration from a more local source.⁷

The Perth waterfront competition entry was of the Royal Park ilk but the site necessitated I add rather than edit. You couldn't edit a site that was already bare. The proposed four botanical rooms were represented somewhat abstractly in a painterly manner (by my mother!) which was partially a function of her painting style, and also a function of a design aspiration. I was proposing that Australian landscape architecture should be artful, to create spaces and experiences of delight, wonder, mystery and revelation that utilised our indigenous landscape and culture as the prime subject matter. Not through mimicry, but instead via all the tools of our game such as distillation, abstraction, perspective, miniaturisation and symbolism.

The design images represented a crude intent for landscapes of awe and delight. It was an attempt to reflect a shift from imitation to representation. I was interested in the set piece, the scenographic, the framed view, the landscape of imagination and idealised picture. These compositional approaches are common threads through my design practice. They were informed by two primary influences, Kinsaku Nakane and my mother, Pam Lethlean.

In Asia, the garden was thought of as an art form separate from architecture or agriculture, parallel in its value and autonomy with the arts of painting sculpture, music and poetry. A language from and a great range of expression were formulated. The cultivation and refinement of these gardens in many ways analogous to that of Western classical architecture. (Walker 1994)⁸

The influence of Japan and its gardens is considerable. The then Program Director of Landscape Architecture at RMIT, Jim Sinatra, sent me on a study exchange to Kyoto to study under Kinsaku Nakane in the mid 1980s. Over a six month period I visited two or three gardens a week forcing myself to sit, reflect and sketch the scenes before me. This visit and research were the subject of my undergraduate thesis. I witnessed and experienced garden scenes that were solely designed to be experienced and entered via the eye and imagination. Gardens of extreme refinement, such as Shisendo, Tofokujji and Ryoan-ji were each a construct of their unique culture, time, history and religious context. Nevertheless, they were designed artfully and were also beautiful visual experiences. I was struck by their sculptural plasticity, their incredible care for detail, compositional focus and a devotion to this via careful ongoing maintenance.⁹

⁷ Laceworks Landscape Architects "Royal Park: Submission for Stage II of the Royal Park Master plan" (Report written for the design development submission for Royal Park for the City of Melbourne, 29 June 1984).

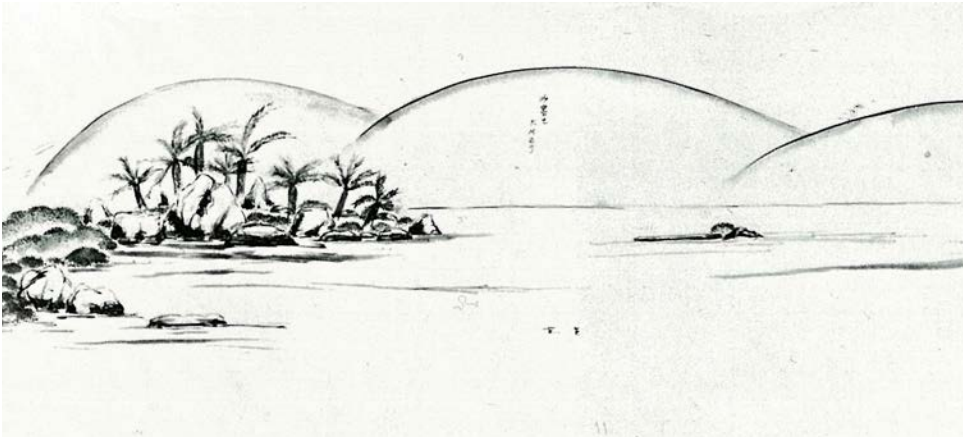
⁸ Peter Walker, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape* (Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1994), 243

⁹ Perry Lethlean, "Japanese Gardens; Design Implications for Australia", Bachelor of Landscape Architecture RMIT University, 1986), 86–88.



Right: The Perth Foreshore competition entry proposed four botanical 'garden rooms' aligned with the adjacent street grid. These painting by Pam Lethlean represented a different botanical theme to each of the rooms.

Perth 1990
a botanical waterfront



Kinsaku Nakane, my mentor in Japan, was a master of traditional Japanese gardens and created incredibly sculptural garden expressions, such as those in the Adachi Museum of Art and Taizo-in. Both were viewing gardens, beautifully composed, highly manipulated and well versed in manipulating scale. These were experiences I couldn't see matched in any contemporary landscape project in Australia.¹⁰

I was only too aware that these gardens were a product of a unique culture and I needed to judiciously select what might be relevant in a completely different context. In essence I wasn't interested in repeating the design language of Japanese gardens but was certainly keen to play with their design techniques.

These artistic compositions resonated for another reason. Nakane's sketches and the watercolours of his designs were beautiful evocations of the final built outcome. His work was an art, comprised primarily of set pieces to be viewed. They reminded me of my upbringing, living with my mother, an artist in oils, who primarily composed paintings of the Australian landscape, majestic scenes of rainforests of the Strzelecki Ranges, snow gums in the Gippsland high country and pastoral scenes with tall iconic gums located in the foreground. I'm not sure she had a philosophical bent on the subject matter; she was painting what she thought was beautiful and would sell. Nevertheless, I'm sure in my subconscious I was making mental connections between Nakane and his art, my Australian artistic upbringing and the potential for it to be realised as landscape architecture. I was brought up seeing my mother painting pictures of Australian landscapes, and was questioning why can't we create three-dimensional artistic constructions as the Japanese do?

Left: Concept drawing for clipped 'mountains' at Taizo-in, by Kinsaku Nakane

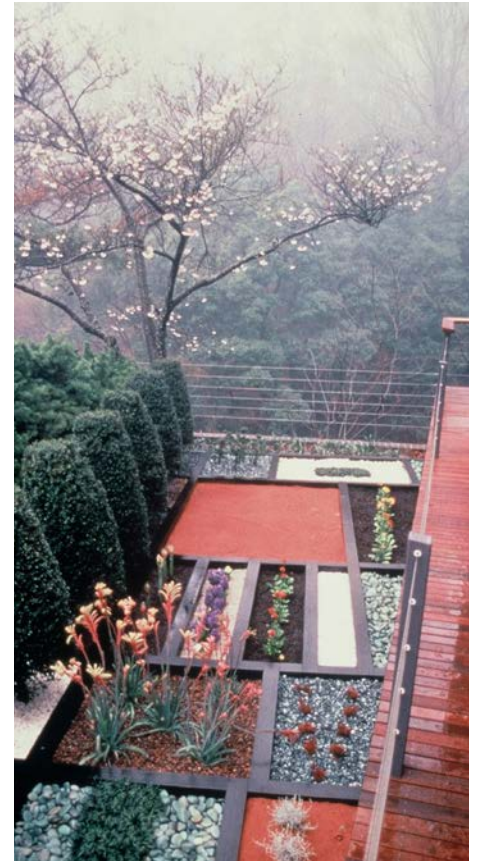


Top Right: The completed Taizo-in, Kyoto with the clipped hedges framing a backdrop to the stylized mountain stream.

Bottom Right: Painting of Eucalypts by Pam Lethlean. My mothers interest in the artistic expression of the Australian landscape has been a common thread in my own design practice.



Far Right: The 'bento' garden at The Consul Generals Residence, Kobe. A garden which fused Japanese design techniques with an Australian spirit and materiality.



Perth Summary

The landscape expressions represented in my designs for the Perth project were a product of Japanese–Australian influences. My tentative ideas were developed further with Kevin and Kate and explored at length in projects such as the Australian Garden, Forest Gallery, Consul General's Residence, Kobe and Birrarung Marr. The sand garden at the Australian Garden has direct parallels with many techniques and philosophies reflected in Japanese gardens. The Sand Garden, the centrepiece of the Australian Garden illustrated on page 52, consists of an open red sand field punctuated with circular planted disks. Like many Japanese garden precedents, access to the garden is denied. It is therefore a space to be viewed, a garden one enters via the imagination. Other common Japanese garden compositional and perspectival techniques, such as repetitive parallel forms across the view line and subtly shifting scaled elements to emphasise distance as well as a sense of sparseness and simplicity, were employed in the Sand Garden. These design tools were subsequently utilised in other projects such as the compositions for planting for Birrarung Marr, and perspectival elements utilised in the Forest Gallery as illustrated on page 66.

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ ibid

What had started out in Perth as an idea about artful and scenographic landscapes developed and evolved into a deeper exploration of the necessary programmatic realities and desire for more spatial diversity. Some of my singular idealism may have diminished in recent years, but only to enable more varied and in-depth design responses.

Geelong 2000 a civic waterfront

Geelong Waterfront represents TCL's first 'crossover' project between landscape and urban design. It captures an emerging understanding in our practice at the time of creating public spaces that connect to a greater urban network and morphology. Its varied spaces also explored, in one large-scaled project, a diversity of design themes common to our practice including seriality, narrative and metaphor.

Description

Geelong Waterfront redevelopment was designed in 1990. It was one of the first State Government projects that funded an urban design/landscape architecture project as a mechanism to attract large-scale private sector investment. It was also one of the first large-scale redevelopment projects in Australia led by a landscape architecture firm. It represents a recognition by government that the public realm is a key ingredient in the success of cities—a focus for civic identity, urban vibrancy, participation and urban renewal. This sounds passé now, but in 1990 in Victoria it was a revelation. These were qualities that moved beyond beautification, typical of the revitalisation of shopping strips of the 1980s, the client brief asked instead how can this be a significant destination, linked to its city, how can Geelong rediscover its waterfront? These questions and the scale of the project also moved beyond tasks typically considered as landscape architecture, particularly in Australia.

The project entailed redesigning the 2 kilometre north facing waterfront for \$25 million. It was informed by an urban framework plan prepared by Keys Young a Sydney urban design practice. The design had three conceptual undercurrents; connecting strategies, which involved providing legible physical and visual links between Corio Bay and the CBD and restoring connections along the entire waterfront edge via a continuous waterside promenade. This design strategy utilised techniques by the American architect, Gandelsonas, discussed in Mappings on page 198. The design also explored multiple ways of experiencing the waterside context, and referencing the history, materiality and maritime past. This narrative design approach is further discussed on page 58 and 91.

Experiencing the Public Realm

In 2010, the Copenhagen Landscape Architecture Institute facilitated a conference on projects and ideas that were generated from the 'as found'. This is a catchy phrase that has its genesis in an earlier genius loci approach to landscape design, where landscapes were generated, informed and built upon what were seen as the inherent qualities of place.¹²

The projects that were presented at the conference were small grafted interventions to a variety of unremarkable urban spaces and terrain vague scenarios that were often beautifully conceived and poetic responses to the selected sites.¹³ Despite the singular beauty of the responses, it was evident that designing from the 'as found' landscape can also be problematic. It assumes the urban setting is functioning, people can get to it, there are things happening, it's safe, activated, connected and legible. Yet many projects appeared to be stifled in their place specificity, unable to analyse, decipher and conceive of larger interventions to resolve the more fundamental urban structural and/or programmatic issues of the sites they were addressing.

The conference reminded me of my design practice in the 1980s and 1990s, with projects mostly confined to public parks, gardens and window dressing. I felt then that landscape architecture needed to broaden its scope and make more effective changes, which is why I undertook the urban design Masters studies at RMIT.

¹² "As Found: The 6th Annual World in Denmark" (Conference held at the University of Copenhagen, 17–19 June, 2010).

¹³ *ibid*



Images: Before and after photographs of the Geelong waterfront project showing the original brick surfaced waterfront and unconnected assets such as The Customs Building and the completed design from the same viewpoints showing the new material language and a narrative based design that referenced the sites industrial waterfront heritage.

Geelong 2000 a civic waterfront

Geelong was the first large project that was undertaken following these studies. It explores design methodologies that are both generated from the 'site' yet significantly move beyond the existing site paradigm. The works are conceived as 'site responsive' yet are also enabling frameworks for large public realm interventions. It originates from a place specific analysis, yet conceptually moves beyond the 'as found'.

What does this mean? Two methodologies are evident, one being a macro rational urban reading of the city that determines how a project can reinforce the underlying logic of its setting. This is informed by an urban analysis of context and structure of place; to nestle, connect and deploy the project within an existing urban armature. This contrasts with a site responsiveness that attempts to connect to a more poetic reading of place, where more personal compositional expressions are tested.

This supports what Gini Lee has observed about our practice believing we operate at the large scale and then at the micro but not often in the middle.¹⁴ This two-scaled approach is analogous to the design layers employed by Tschumi in the Lausanne Pont Ville competition entry of 1989.

Bernard Tschumi's project is comprised of a series of linking multi-programmed bridge structures that link the city of Lausanne across its valley, connecting the traditional centre to new urban development. These contemporary infrastructure additions to the historic city were derived from an understanding of Lausanne's distinct urban morphology, bridge typologies and an exploration of a greater urban structure.¹⁵ The design strategy extruded the gridded street patterns of the city to morph from urban voids on land to bridging architectural objects in space. The site responsive design was conceived at a city scale built upon the site's underlying urban patterns that also enabled a more idiosyncratic architectural response to the resolution of the proposed bridges.¹⁶

It is a strategy that establishes a seemingly rational urban frame that is both a host and an enabler for more irrational design interventions.

Similarly to Tschumi, our larger ideas are derived initially via analytical techniques to recognise what the fundamental 'moves' are that are required to both unite the setting and reinforce the experience of its context. In Geelong these comprised continuations of the Hoddle grid to the waterfront and creating a continuous waterside promenade with multiple water edge interfaces. The urban connections, between city and bay, and along the waterfront, are simple and logical outcomes. They set up a way to read the public realm experience that was previously absent. In a way we hope that these connections are self evident, as if they were always there and that the designers hand is absent.

These legible connections establish the 'frame' for more expressive design gestures, which in Geelong were represented by the serial patterning of the promenade and the flowing forms of Customs Plaza.

¹⁴ Gini Lee, "untitled", (Interview conducted on the 11th April 2011)

¹⁵ Bernard Tschumi, La Villette Competition Entry, "The La Villette Competition," Princeton Journal vol 2 "On landscape" (1985): 200-10

¹⁶ *ibid*

Right: Completed Geelong Waterfront redevelopment comprising a linear promenade, event spaces and nodal points, such as small harbours, that were located of the intersection extension of Hoddles grid.



Right: Tschumi winning competition entry for Louisiana that explained how the morphology of the city could inform new connections across a railway line.



Serial Patterning

Seriality refers to the establishment of time in the landscape, like the beat in a jazz band. It is a way one establishes a rhythm around which one can organise a landscape. (Walker)¹⁷

Geelong Waterfront Project has been well documented for its process of editing Geelong's urban connections referencing the material to a gritty more industrial past. The reviews of this project such as Catherin Bull's in *New Conversations with an Old Landscape*¹⁸ do not comment on the language of design or the preoccupation in the compositional arrangement of public spaces that were utilised as a frame for public uses, which is a constant undercurrent of our work.

This language of design began as a reaction to the postmodern historic landscape architecture of 'retro' materials, furnishing and forms of the 1980s. Elements such as brick paving, mock Victorian lights and seating and 'ye olde' signage were the elements of choice for designers and councils. I was particularly influenced by the public projects out of Barcelona, and the formal language of Peter Walker, and was exploring how these modern forms and materials could also connect to a narrative of place. These precedents were bold expressions, striking and modern and reflected a confidence in the art of landscape architecture. I wanted to make an impression; landscape architecture had to make a mark.

The public realms of many Australian cities are often an accumulation of ideas, mostly relating to infrastructure, with constructed spaces built to apparently function more efficiently. Some spaces relate to ideas of beautification and 'amenity' while others have had more civic agendas. It is also apparent some spaces don't have any idea at all. In some settings such as, Hobart's waterfront, this incoherence works charmingly and can be used as a generator of design.

In Geelong, however, the result of this intermixed agenda, was a grab bag of ordinariness. In such settings I have a predilection for legibility and clarity on a civic scale, to provide a visual and experiential cohesion to these urban contexts.

One method of achieving this cohesion is having a formal language characterised by the repeated use of vertical and horizontal elements along lines of movement. This formal motif is utilised in projects, such as Dyeworks Park, (pre TCL) Geelong, Craigieburn Bypass, Sydney University, North Terrace, Australian Garden and Kobe. In Geelong it is evident in the utilisation of concrete fins and planters that are located along the waterside promenade and Beach Road. Ron Jones has commented on it being an organising device, and it is certainly useful in this regard, but it is utilised for other functions.¹⁹

¹⁷ Peter Walker, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape* (Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1994).

¹⁸ Bull, Catherin Jane. *New Conversations with an Old Landscape: Landscape Architecture in Contemporary Australia*. Mulgrave, Vic.: Images, 2002.

¹⁹ Ronald Jones, "Truth is constructed: public space as public art" (paper written as a peer review for PhD and 20 year book, Melbourne 11 February 2011)

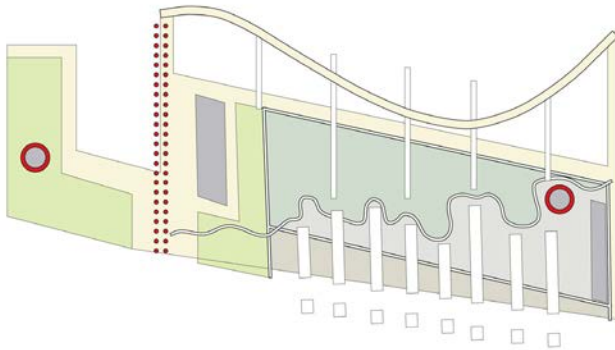


fig 1: option a

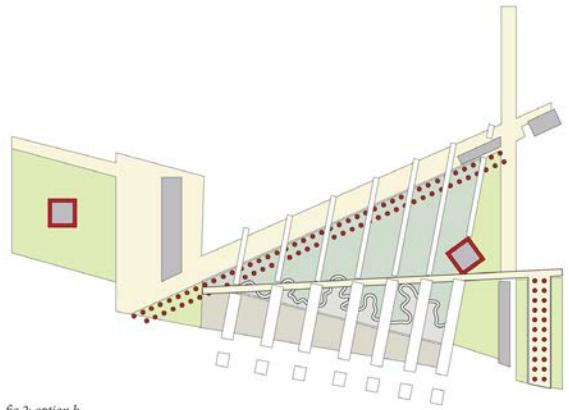


fig 2: option b

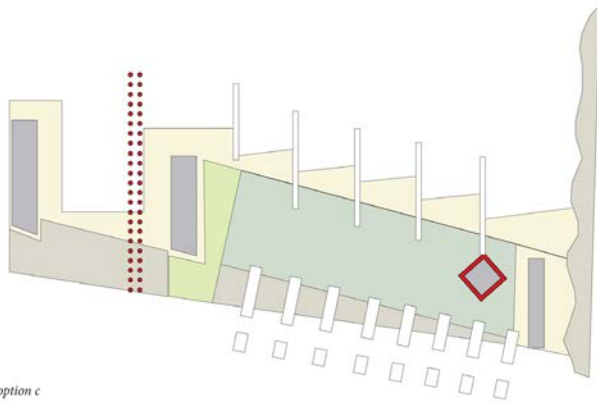


fig 3: option c

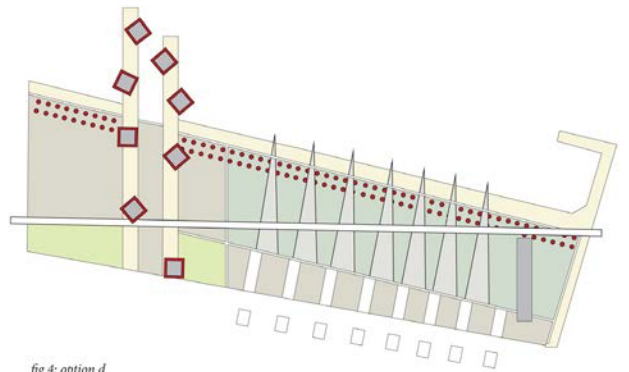
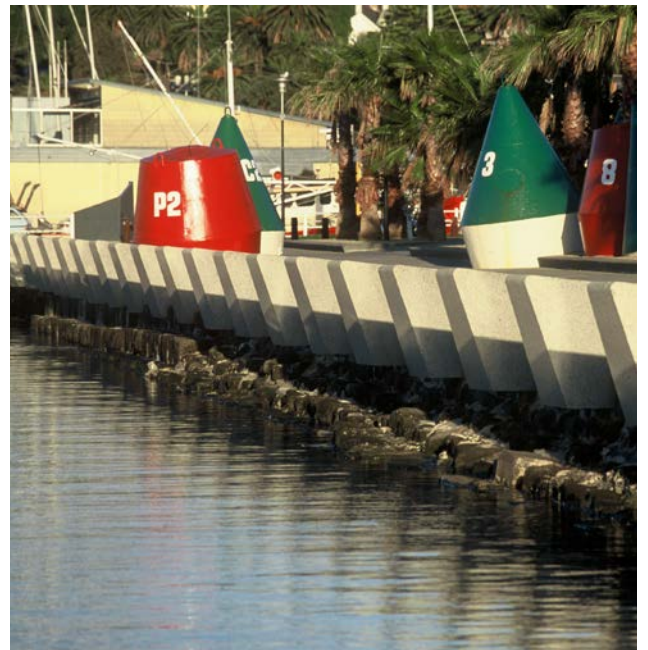
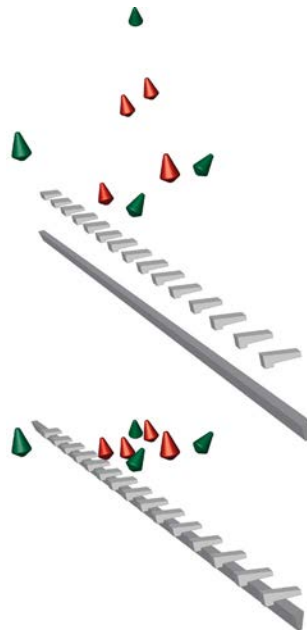


fig 4: option d

Above: Urban design diagrams testing ways to engage with the waterfront context. It is evident in these early studies that a repetitive linear structure was prevalent in each design and was finally realised in the approved design.

Right: Exploded axonometric of the promenade showing the logic of the repetitive 'fins' along the waterfront promenade. These 'fins' were used to visually unify the promenade and respond to the experience of walking.



Serial Patterning

Leon van Schaik, upon arriving at Craigieburn Bypass, looked up at the repeated blue louvres and called us 'drama queens'.²⁰ That initial reaction seems about right. It is principally used for its striking compositional potential and perspectival qualities. I use it to extend the visual field and unite an urban scene. Typically this 'striking' urban frame or scene has a tendency to come first, programmatic imperatives are a secondary order, arranged via the logic of the bolder moves.

Where the Perth Waterfront Project was designed to establish set and probably static dramatic landscape pieces, later urban projects, such as Geelong, recognised the limits of this intent, and looked at how to create visually arresting scenes that were experienced in the round.

The repeated elements respond to a landscape that is experienced in a linear manner. In Geelong we were designing promenade and driving experiences that purposely responded to the speed of the user. The intent was to introduce the idea of public movement to the city, involving the choreography of the promenade and the experience of the water's edge. The idyllic stroll and changing visual journey was the *raison de force* of Geelong. This made us consider how the repetition of elements arranged perpendicularly could allow for a number of conditions and experiences. This was a largely a visual play, transforming a seemingly solid edge as seen from acute angles in, to a series of frames that open up. They play with and expand the sense of distance. The driving experience along Beach Road utilises repeated tilted planters that are distributed some 10 metres apart in contrast to the finer-grain fins along the promenade that are distributed at a closer frequency.

As the Perth Waterfront was influenced by compositional garden techniques, so was Geelong, particularly with the arrangement of perpendicular elements to accentuate perspectival experience. This is a technique I experienced while in Japan and is utilised, albeit more informally, in gardens such as Taizo-in and Katsura-Rikyu.²¹ I was interested in utilising this compositional process in more formal and urban compositional arrangements. It was also referencing the work of Le Nôtre particularly at Parc de Sceaux and his Poplar-lined canals, which illustrated for me the extraordinary power of repeated elements over a horizontal ground plane. Peter Walker was similarly influenced by Parc de Sceaux and positioned his work in the 1990s as an art form that had its origins in the work of the land artists such as Smithson and Long, and a refinement and compositional distillation in the manner of Rothko and others.²² I remember not being convinced by his elevation of landscape architecture to an art which seemed to ignore the discipline's functional imperatives. However, I was taken with Walker's description of seriality that was utilised by these modernists.

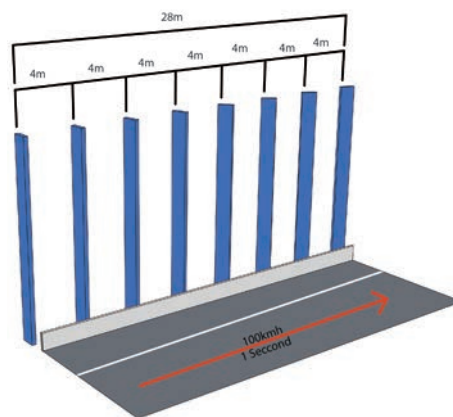
Seriality refers to the establishment of time in the landscape, like the beat in a jazz band. It is the way one establishes a rhythm around which one can organise a landscape. (Walker 1990)²³

²⁰ This event occurred during a site visit with Leon van Schaik upon the completion of Craigieburn Bypass in 2005.

²¹ Perry Lethlean, "Japanese Gardens; Design Implications for Australia," (Report written as part of a study exchange with Kinsaku Nikane, RMIT University, 1986) 86-88

²² Interview with Peter Walker and Martha Schwartz in Udo Weilacher, ed., *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art* Basel, Birkhauser, 1999), 217-226

²³ Peter Walker in Linda J Jewell ed., *Peter Walker : experiments in gesture, seriality, and flatness*, (New York, Rizzoli, 1990)



Top: 'Boat Planters' link the edge of the main waterfront road in Geelong.

Middle: The use of seriality or repetitive fins along the promenade.

Right: Blue concrete louvres elements are utilised along the Craigeiburn Bypass. Each of the louvres are slightly rotated in plan giving an animated rotation effect as driving pass.

Flowing Forms

Flowing Forms

Geelong waterfront was visually tied together via the use of repeated elements along the principle walkways. The design is also characterised by the use of narrative to communicate reference of the sites industrials and maritime past.

It would be preferable as suggested by Boeri and La Varra to accept differentiated readings of the urban landscape, readings which may reveal some inherited qualities from the past but may also be capable of repairing and clarifying opacities of the present. We need now to reinvent a language of the present, with strong new landscape identifiers, capable of integrating the complexity and contradiction of each place. (Giro 2006)²⁴

In contrast to the seductive momentum of globalisation with its resultant smudging of urban and landscape distinctiveness, Giro talks about the importance of contemporary design processes of connecting to a site's context and its complexities. This is not unusual in our contemporary landscape milieu and certainly it has been a constant line of thinking for our practice.²⁵

My work attempts to conceive of and build new landscapes that derive from their particular place, and attempt to capture or respond to the specificity of their culture and environment and all of their nuances. I understand that concepts of site, place and context are moveable feasts and are difficult to pin down. Equally my personal and collective readings of sites and the design choices that emerge are subjective and we make a multitude of choices along the way that inform the resultant design outcome. My work is not a science, it is a result of designer interpreting place.

I am also not searching for a prior condition or an inherent logic for the site that might imbue or, worse still, restore a nostalgic past. I operate on the assumption that our work is progressive, our landscapes are modern works, they embrace change and seek an improved environmental and community outcome.

How do I embrace the modern and connect to the site? One tool might be via program, and how these functional needs might be arranged. My understanding of Bart Brands is that he advocates this design methodology, carefully composing spaces via the specific program, circulation and functional requirements of the site. This logical and pragmatic way of working is certainly a component of our work but not the principle generator.

Another tool might be environmentally driven, via a landscape urbanist approach where a site's environmental parameters, systems and forces are used to drive the physical landscape outcome. Again we embed sustainability in the work but it's not the principal form generator. Although I am certainly predisposed to this environmental agenda, I have found that is difficult to apply as the dominant paradigm in urban conditions. In addition, these design generators privilege functional and environmental functions over a site's poetic, cultural and mythic potential, which, by contrast, my work has often turned to in connecting to a project's context.

Right: Customs Lawn, Geelong Waterfront. This important heritage building had been severed from the waterfront and used as a carpark. The design proposed a small park space that referenced this setting as a significant site of trade and maritime history.

²⁴ Christophe Giro, "Vision in Motion: Representing Landscape in Time" in Charles Waldheim ed., *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, (New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 94

²⁵ *ibid*



Flowing Forms

This idea of building upon a story of a place has many derivations; a narrative, a mythology, a peculiar history, a site pattern, or a community story.

If I reflect on Ron Jones and Brian Stafford's design of Royal Park: their work attempts to grasp the essence of a place; if the fluff and accretions were stripped back what would be left? What's the nub of the place? What would then be the powerful extant experiences that can be reinforced? That idea works beautifully in a parkland condition, with 'great bones' but it's a more difficult conception in an urban condition where the extant condition is not worth a pinch of salt. In these instances I turn to more symbolic and metaphoric methods of communication.

When I began the Geelong Waterfront Project, the Customs Building was in a neglected state, exacerbated by chain wire fences with an untidy carpark that blocked views and connections to the waterfront and obscured what is actually a beautiful Georgian sandstone building.

The site had few redeeming features. Editing away the accumulation of urban detritus was a satisfying first step. The next step was the design of a public space, a contemporary setting for the building which, we felt, needed due deference given its role in the development of Geelong.

The redevelopment of Geelong's waterfront was undertaken at a time when it was in the doldrums. It had just been through the Pyramid scandal, where local investors lost significant savings due to the collapse of a local investment firm. The recession had also hit Geelong, with high unemployment and a stagnant economy.²⁶ Our work was responding to a need to make locals proud of their city in some manner.

²⁶ Daryl J McLure in Walter Randolph Brownhill, *The History of Geelong an Corio Bay ; with postscript 1955-1990*, (Geelong Victoria, List Print, 1990) 738.



Right: Pre-rusted steel was used throughout the Geelong Waterfront as a reference to industrial and maritime materiality.

Left: Geelong's Custom Building with flowing forms of lawn referencing the original shoreline along the waterfront.



Flowing Forms

One way was to directly reconnect the town with its primary geographic asset, Corio Bay. Another strategy was to attempt strategies and narratives in landscape architecture that would provide moments of elucidation and pride in the distinctiveness of Geelong and its history.

The Customs Building was the only surviving remnant on the waterfront of Geelong's significant trading and maritime role in the development of Victoria. It had played a pivotal role in the administration of exports for the western pastoral regions, as well as importing personnel and infrastructure in response to the 1880s gold rush.²⁷ The historic flow of people and goods through this site and its important relationship to Corio Bay, were elements we felt needed to be conceptually restored. The idea of flow developed into topographic forms, furniture referenced cargo boxes, water rills returned water to the site and materials shunned civic surfaces for a more maritime character. It attempted to be intrinsically interpretive, for the public to get the intention, to enjoy the respect and reference to the site's heritage, without it being historicist or overly didactic. This is further illustrated on page 91.

So how literal are our landscape narratives? On one level, I gain pleasure if they connect with the public, that they 'read' the design, that they assist them to grasp a new understanding of their place, and to revel in the contemporary story of its conception. On another level, the design process necessarily distills, abstracts and stylises and that the public may only connect with partially, subliminally or not at all, and that all that is understood is that the design is driven by a designers coherent sense of place. The work therefore treads a fine line between literal and abstract and between nostalgic and obtuse. Sometimes, such as in the Customs Plaza, the line perhaps leans too far in one direction.

'Memory Pond' by Robert Owen with TCL, seemed at the time, to find the right line. Robert was commissioned as an artist for a plaza we were designing in Prahran (opposite). Robert discovered that this site was once a small swamp and a site for indigenous communities to gather and hunt for food. Robert, a great Australian modernist sculptor, wanted to tell this forgotten story in his design response, which comprised six small fountains composed of circles of stainless steel loosely arranged to imbue a reference to water lilies. From the centre of the fountains water delicately rises from the earth. This pattern of water and steel is further enriched at night with a myriad blue LED lights that are fixed into the pavement. These lights mirror the stars above, creating a reflection on the symbolic billabong of the plaza.

Robert's response was narrative driven, site responsive, and interprets history. Yet it is also modern in its refinement, abstracted in its realisation and sculpturally rich. It is populist in its subject matter and yet formally composed. It treads a fine line. The public enjoy the physical outcome, it's not read as art on a pedestal, but landscape architecture. It's a part of the urban scene. Do people get it? Not at first, although there are clues at the finer grain, there is access to the story depending on how far you want to go.

²⁷ *ibid.*,283



Right: The barcode waterway in front of Geelong's Custom Building reference the more recent method of recording and classification of goods coming into our ports.



Right: 'Memory Pond' by Robert Owen located in Grattan Gardens, Prahran

Flowing Forms

Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, particularly the Garden of Exile, still resonates for its intrinsically interpretive qualities. When I visited, the building was unfinished and the exhibition had yet to be installed, nevertheless I was struck by the power of the architectural narrative and its experiential qualities.

This came in part due to the highly charged subject matter—who wouldn't be moved? But also in how Libeskind managed to find the right balance between conceptual inspiration, conveying meaning, and reinforcing this message in the design of the physical experience.

The Garden of Exile relates to those who were forced to leave Berlin. The composition comprised of forty-nine tilted concrete columns with elevated Russian olive trees is read on one level as a memorial to the displacement of Jews and a symbol of hope. Yet this simple arrangement of forms has a richness of communication and experience. The tilted columns, with narrow undulating paths between, have a tilted ground plane, which is at first unsettling, the tilted columns further reinforce a displacement. The Russian olive trees planted at the top of the columns are seemingly unreachable, but nevertheless beautiful in their contrast to the austerity of the concrete forms. The messages of displacement and hope are powerfully experienced. It is intrinsically interpretive. It is uncomfortable and unsettling for the visitor, it displaces our normality and that's the point.




Image removed due to copyright.

Left: Garden of Exile by Daniel Libeskind at the Holocaust Museum in Berlin.

It is also compositionally strong; the proportions and austerity of the columns, the network paths and twisted canopy of the trees above are formally powerful in their own right. It works on a range of levels, the narrative or message has informed the composition. The experience reinforces the message. It strikes a balance; there is abstraction, metaphor and poetry. Not everyone gets it and there are many layers of emotional and intellectual discovery and that for me, defines its success.

Libeskind's project was a revelation for the potential of landscape architecture to not only convey meaning but for the message to be conveyed via the senses. It seemed to open design possibilities for the discipline to respond not only to program, form or symbolism but how these might be combined as a powerful experiential narrative. A colleague once told me that landscape architecture will never get the hairs on the back of the neck to stand on end, unlike say Mozart. After Libeskind's Garden of Exile, I wanted to prove him wrong.

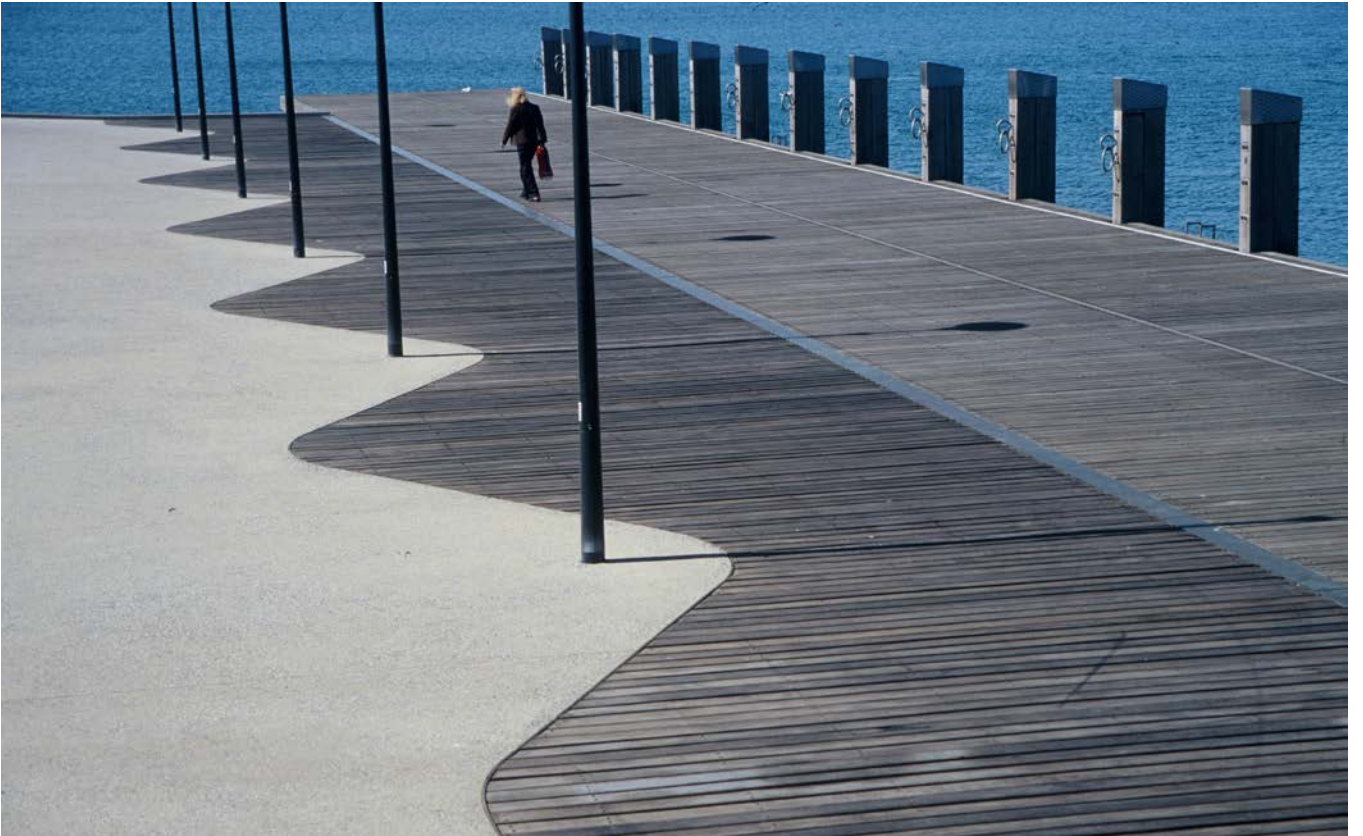
That landscapes can convey meaning is not a new idea, it's been around for centuries! Following the formal beauty of modernism, it was part of a common post modern design process, typical of many international landscape architects. My research and experience of Japanese gardens also revealed a history of landscape design that was principally about communication, symbolism and metaphor. But there was a moment in the early 1990s when for me things started to come together; I started to find my design voice. I had just commenced the urban design Masters at RMIT and had also begun to enter design competitions, first Perth, subsequently a cemetery competition followed by a foreshore in Brisbane, then others, all receiving a second or third place. The competition format which relies on clarity of communication, both graphic and textual, I found, supported the idea of narrative and the power of storytelling. Judges, I speculated, wanted an underlying poetic and logic, supported by a compelling representation. These competition techniques honed in hours of late night economic desperation, became part of a typical design response and one of my principal *modus operandi*.

Geelong Summary

Geelong Summary

Reflecting on the Geelong Waterfront Project, some eleven years later, it is evident that this was our first large-scale real 'urban' design project. We have promoted this project as an integrated urban design and it has won urban design awards nationally and internationally, and it was certainly successful in its ability to connect the city to its waterfront, provide new public water-focused experiences along it, and elicit community pride and private investment. Yet its civic scale and focus on a limited public experience was at the expense of more complex programmatic ideas. Landscape architecture was conceived on a city scale but it wasn't tackling the complexity of urban ideas. Buildings' settings were considered as adjacencies and the potential richness of diverse programmatic inputs both internally and externally were not fully explored. These were issues that, more recently, were being tackled in the Auckland Waterfront Project.

Right: Geelong's Waterfront provided new pedestrian promenade along the waters edge that linked a series of spaces such as harbours, park and beaches. The design approach was primarily concerned with providing strong compositions to these circulation networks. A holistic urban design and activation was not fully realised as part of this design approach.



Auckland 2010 a messy waterfront

Auckland

Auckland Waterfront is our most recent waterfront project. It represents for our practice the next generation of design thinking. The emphasis on compositional strategies and overt narrative privileged in Perth and Geelong at the expense of public realm and programmatic diversity has now been inverted in Auckland. Instead this new design seeks to fashion the public realm not just as a visual experience, but a more holistic urban setting with a richer programmatic potential.

Auckland Summary

Auckland has retained its functioning container terminal in close proximity to the CBD. Other parts of its waterfront had been 'cleaned up', mostly around the area known as the Viaduct, constructed around the time of the America's Cup, with a fairly conventional restaurant-focused precinct. The next section of industrial waterfront slated for redevelopment was at Wynyard Point, a 30 ha harbour precinct located in close proximity to the Viaduct. It is a site in transition, with future redevelopment anticipating a transformation of this harbour and site of industry, fishing and maritime uses into a mixed use precinct of predominantly residential and commercial uses.

A specialised delivery agency (Sea+City), was established to redevelop the site and an urban design master plan was recently prepared that focused on developable sites, scale massing and street layouts. The master plan is sensitive to the macro structure of the site but was unresolved in terms of the overall delivery timeline, public realm, land use mix, community infrastructure and place definition.

Taylor Cullity Lethlean with Wraight Associates were engaged to design the first phase of the master plan to be developed. This is a 5 ha site that encompasses roads, harbour, industrial sites, tank farms and storage sites. The new development was seen as a public realm demonstration project that would set the character of this new City of Auckland 'on the water', and in turn entice private sector investment.

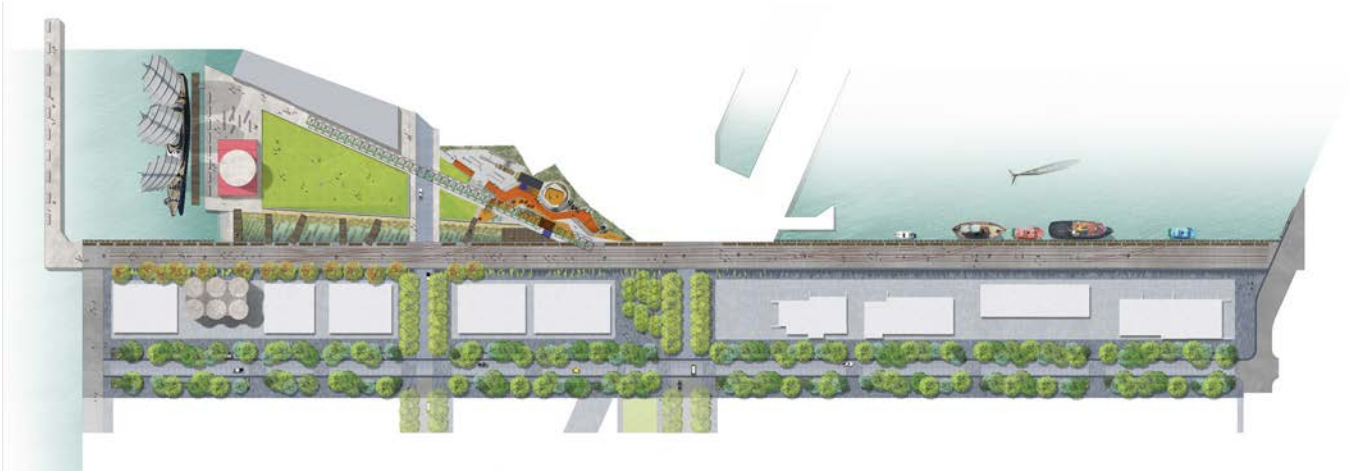
The master plan envisages that the public spaces of this precinct will operate much like the successful Viaduct, with an open undifferentiated ground plane, flanked by cafés adjacent to the water. Our design studies generated an alternative public realm vision for the site, where friction was encouraged, smelly fish was the attraction, rust, grit and patina are embraced and derelict artefacts are reprogrammed. This challenged some of the assumptions implicit in the original master plan.

Our design approach concentrated on two key strategies:

- Retention and enhancing of fishing and maritime industries that, we contended, should form the focus of new public experiences
- Examination of the site's peculiar archaeology of patterns and materiality to inform a new public future.

Top Right: Auckland Waterfront Concept Plan. A working waterfront forms the centrepiece of a new public destination comprising Jellicoe Street, a waterfront promenade and Silo Park.

Right: The waterfront comprise an ensemble of maritime activities, streets, parks, industry, promenades and harbour functions.



Mappings

Mapping refers to more than inventory and geometrical measure, and no presumption is made of innocence, neutrality or inertia in its construction. Instead, the map is first employed as a means of 'finding' and then 'founding' new projects effectively reworking what already exists.²⁸

The map gathers and shows things presently (and always) invisible, things which may incongruous or untimely but which may also harbour enormous potential for the unfolding of alternate events. (Corner 1999)²⁹

The urban design and landscape architecture at Wynyard Point was informed in part by a process of analytical mappings. I'm interested in the generative powers of mappings, particularly as a basis of knowledge and importantly as a potential generator of design propositions.

As discussed earlier my education in landscape architecture involved a lot of landscape analysis, typically ecologically based mappings of such elements as soils, trees, drainage geology and materials. This analysis was confined to an understanding of environmental systems. Using this knowledge to generate designs in urban spheres potentially limits the ability to connect the design to the more dominant paradigms of infrastructure, street and built form. In urban contexts where ecologies are essentially erased, and/or relegated to a sideshow, the dominant system to inform the structure of public realms is the latent morphologies of the city.

Extending the idea of mapping, as a means of learning and speculation, to an understanding of the urban fabric and the role of public space in its structure allows the designer to engage in a larger dialogue of the city built form and its public spaces.

²⁸ Architectus, "Wynyard Quarter: Precinct 1, Jellicoe Precinct" (Master plan was prepared for City of Auckland as part of Auckland waterfront redevelopment initiative, Auckland, 5th February, 2008)

²⁹ James Corner "The Agency of Mapping" in Denis Cosgrove ed., *Mappings*, (London, Reaktion Books, 2009), 224

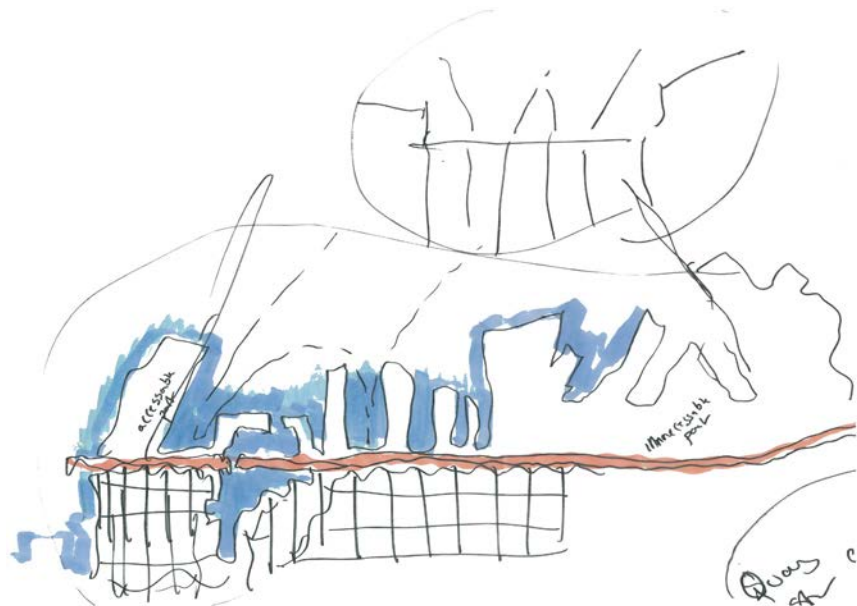


Far Left: Project Site at Wynyard Point located a few kilometres west of central Auckland.

Left: The original masterplan by Architectus showing a logical urban design structure which anticipated a series of sites for development over many years.



Right: circa 1900 showing Auckland's waterfront aligned along Quay Street comprising a series of landfill and finger wharfs. The project site is in the top right hand corner of the photograph.



Right: Mapping of Auckland's waterfront that attempts to understand the underlying pattern between the conventional grid of Auckland city and the splayed finger wharfs along Quay Street

Mappings

The work of Mario Gandelsonas is particularly influential. His diagrams are obvious in their simplicity, yet are derived from a rigorous analytical base. He explores various ways of illustrating urban relationships that are not performative or experiential, but structural. He reveals the hidden order of cities, their unique structures that organise the arrangement of buildings, streets, and infrastructure.³⁰ The maps reveal the influences of sequential development and urban ideas, and the intersection between these orders.

They are graphic distillations, and sometimes graphic exaggerations. His methodology sometimes whittles away superfluous textures, or edits extraneous information and/or amplifies the contrasts to reveal an urban structure, pattern or intersection that is both blatant yet revelatory.

What is, however, exasperating and challenging about this work, is that to date, it has not informed, to my knowledge, a physical urban design or architectural outcome. This beautiful evocation of the spatial language of cities, is not informing any subsequent spatial design. It is a convincing depiction of the structure of cities, a revelation, yet nothing seemed to emerge in terms of a design proposition.

Gandelsonas' work resonated with my landscape sensibilities. Typically crude landscape analysis techniques, such as blunt mappings of circulation, vector lines and street patterns were, through him transformed into sophisticated revelatory urban diagrams. The graphic distillation of hidden patterns or exaggerating the apparent gave me an insight into how I might creatively respond to sites in designing new city spaces. The 'as found' is given new meaning by Gandelsonas. His work reveals the latent condition at a larger urban scale. It is analytical and speculative and, it gives urban design a foundation.

Unlike Gandelsonas or, say, Corner, our mapping never ends in a beautiful diagram. It's an unfolding messy discovery, via analytical and speculative plotting and is part design proposition. Plans, photos writings, sometimes poetry or painting are often mined unscrupulously for an insight into place. We are often searching for an immutable logic, a hidden order, the thing that will make it a place that builds upon a specific understanding of this site.

The process shows how a particular project can be informed by, and can connect to, a morphology or structure of the city. This latent condition, often hidden, is used to establish the basic design armatures of the setting.

Just as cities have their distinct urban DNA built up over time, so too do waterfronts have their own unique grain and constructed morphologies. Waterfronts comprising formal edge lines, tabular topography contrasting with deep shelves, incisions, grooves and cuts are all distinctions. Each basin orientates and is spatially different, dependent in part on their way of dealing with turning movements, city relationship, tidal issues or wave surge. Each waterfront reveals an extreme contrast in scales between the infrastructure of the wharves and the apparent minutia of the utilitarian architecture servicing the workers and wharf functions.

These are also places of exchange between land and sea and the passage of ships, trade, workers and immigrants that connect cities and the global economy. The tracery of this movement is subtle but remains long after the ships have left.

³⁰ Mario Gandelsonas, *The Urban Text* (Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, 1991)

Auckland's long waterfront, including Wynyard Point, is also characterised by a sequence of splayed finger wharves that deviate from the city grid structure to deflect tidal conditions and thereby create calmer harbours. At Wynyard Point this splayed morphology revealed itself as a 'hinge' that formed the junction between two periods of the site's reclamation. In its first incarnation, in the 1840s, the entire length of the site was a continuous harbour edge condition, only to be later in-filled, along half of its length, by a large finger of reclamation that was subsequently used for bulk liquid storage. This ultimately created a smaller, more intimate, harbour condition.

The process of mapping reveals hidden truths, and fosters creative imaginings. The hinge is the distinctive urban condition on Wynyard point, it represents a shift between urban and waterfront uses, is a mark of historic development, and a response to local tidal conditions. Spatially the hinge needed to be retained as a disjunction between two grid conditions but we suspected it could be more physically evident and programmatically relevant. We chanced upon the idea of a functioning gantry that would be a centrepiece of the new park and an evocative response to the industrial language of the site and aligned to reinforce the urban morphology of the hinge. It is designed to be a visual folly, play structure, lookout, harbour and event infrastructure. It also forms the infrastructure for a proposed working dock. This facility is proposed to be used for the final 'fit out' of large super yachts located adjacent to a future working dock.

This referencing of past and contemporary landscapes is evident in both Auckland and Geelong. As Nikos Papastergiadis describes this condition as parafunctional space, he writes, "parafunctional space refers to zones in which creative, informal and unintended uses overtake the officially designated functions. In parafunctional spaces social life is not simply abandoned or wasted; rather it continues in ambiguous and unconventional ways... Discarded objects and the refuse of an earlier mode of production [gather] in these [parafunctional] sites."³¹

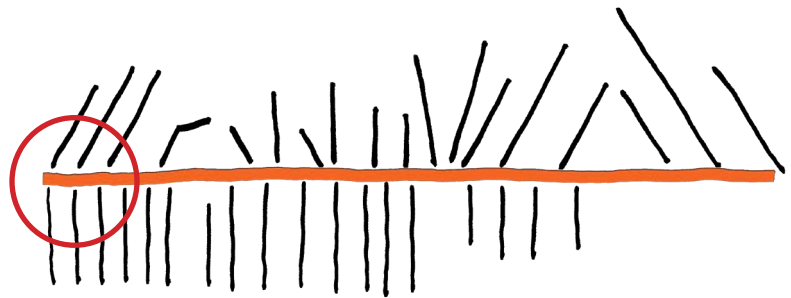
³¹ See "From Parafunctional Spaces to Shiny Ruins", with Scott McQuire, ed. N. Tsoutas Knowledge+Dialogue+Exchange: Remapping Cultural Globalisms From the South (Artspace, 2005), 83-100.



Above: Original sketch of gantry as a vertical marker defining the hinge point between the conventional grid and the splayed finger wharf.



Right: Mapping showing the line of Quay Street, site of a former coal rail line which forms the edge between the conventional city grid and the splayed finger wharves, that are aligned to deflect Auckland's tidal conditions. This hinge point between these 2 conditions was expressed as a Gantry in the final design.



Right: Gantry as built, utilised as part 'folly' bridge, lookout and ultimately when the plants grow, green infrastructure.

Increasing complexities

The Auckland Waterfront Project represents a more recent focus of the practice which attempts to embed friction, or multilayered programming into our public designs. Whereas Geelong's Waterfront illustrated an emphasis on set piece compositional expressions or a more singular strategic diagram, Auckland explores how these can also be informed by a more dynamic interplay of people uses and built form. This emphasis on a more multilayered 'public realm' represents a deeper interest and understanding of the city and the idea of what constitutes civic space.

My Masters in Urban Design at RMIT revealed opportunities for landscape architecture to operate beyond the superficial and peripheral. Early practice dabbled in the 'upgrade and improvement' of the spaces of cities and towns. There was a clear line of scope, between the external spaces and the built form edge and its internal functions and community. Considering how a designer might engage with architecture in a holistic sense was off limits in terms of a brief, but also was not in the typical landscape architect's skill set and ambit.

The Masters program was a revelation. The studies, although architecturally focused, facilitated a new understanding in me of how landscape architecture within urban settings can operate at much larger scales, giving a designer the confidence to analyse and conceive of projects in a more expansive urban setting.

It also allowed me to look at urban space as an integrated interplay between public and private space, built form and its functions and how each played a vital role in the vibrancy of our cities.

As discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the Masters gave me confidence that landscape architecture had a role to play in the design of our cities. It allowed me to imagine that landscape architecture was a relevant instrument to not only design the spaces of our cities, but also curate the frame in which these spaces are located, connected and activated.

This shift, from a view that public realm experiences of our cities are not drawn solely from landscapes but from many contexts and multiple dynamics is evident in the three waterfront projects and represents identifiable shifts in the design interests in the practice. As represented in the Perth Waterfront Project and again in Geelong, there was a preoccupation with the formal compositional arrangement of public spaces, that were utilised as a frame for public uses. This has now been inverted somewhat, particularly in Auckland and other contemporary projects in the practice, that we now explore how embedding complexity and opportunities for public activities can inform that composition of the 'architecture' of the landscape.

This can be encapsulated by the idea of encouraging 'friction' in our public spaces. That is, encouraging multiple ways of engaging in a public place through a range of ages, cultures and demographics. This sense of multiple programming, and many 'publics' is an identifiable civic thread in our practice, where instead of looking at public space as a formal foreground to public institutions and activities, as evident in the development of many 19th Century spaces in our cities, the public space is now the frame for the theatre of daily life. This is articulated by Hajer and Reijndorp in *The Search for a New Public Domain* where places are designed to host many and varied uses that encourage the interaction of diverse communities and demographics. Our recent work has explored how, within our compositional predilections, we can embed a richness of civic life that encourages community ownership and participation.



Top: Geelong Waterfront promenade, where repetitive fins and palm lined pathways provide a united and visually cohesive journey.

Right: Auckland Waterfront promenade where the friction between elements, working wharf, cafe and promenade provide the principal public experience.

Increasing complexities

In Auckland, a new-found urban design confidence enabled us to challenge flawed assumptions in the original master plan and extend the boundaries of what we considered constituted the public realm experience.³²

Working waterfronts are historically singular in program. Waterfront regeneration such as in Auckland, represents an important opportunity to replace the mono industrial typology, segregated from public life, with a water related public destination that provides a setting for true public engagement, and with a density and diversity that encourages multiple ways of social exchange.³³

More often than not, however, the singular maritime use is replaced by another singular use; the promenade and café. Although an important part of the waterfront mix, this condition often suppresses a diversity of other experiences, multiple ways of experiencing water, richness of water-based industry and urban density.³⁴

The pleasure of enjoying a meal, coffee or a beer in a beautiful waterside setting is not disputed. However, to have this as the only way of experiencing the view, is stifling and precludes a host of more public ways to engage in the setting. A complexity of programming of the public realm encourages a range of demographics to 'own' this new public space.

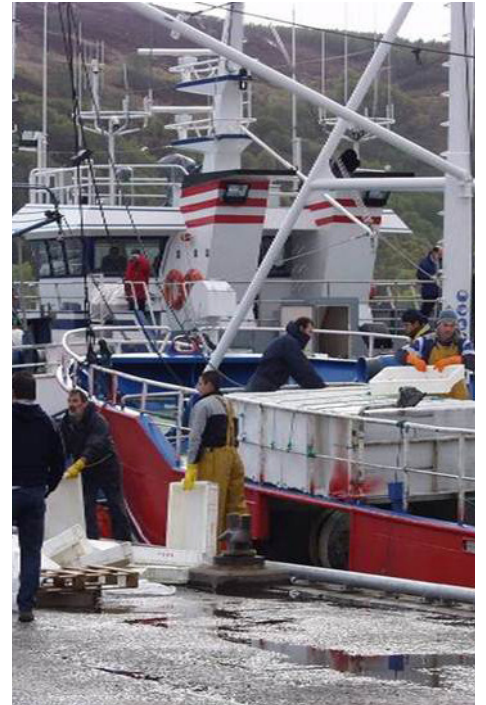
Jellicoe Harbour is the principal working north-facing harbour of Wynyard Point. It currently has an engaging diversity of uses including large industrial container ships, boat transport, fishing trawlers and an offshore ferry service. Most of these uses were to be phased out as part of the longer-term development process.

Instead of imagining a total transformation of this space, the majority of our team's design energy was spent determining how to weave future development and a public realm experience around these 'as found' conditions. This included articulating the intrinsic benefits of supporting existing harbour functions and actively facilitating a shift in how waterfront spaces are managed and experienced.

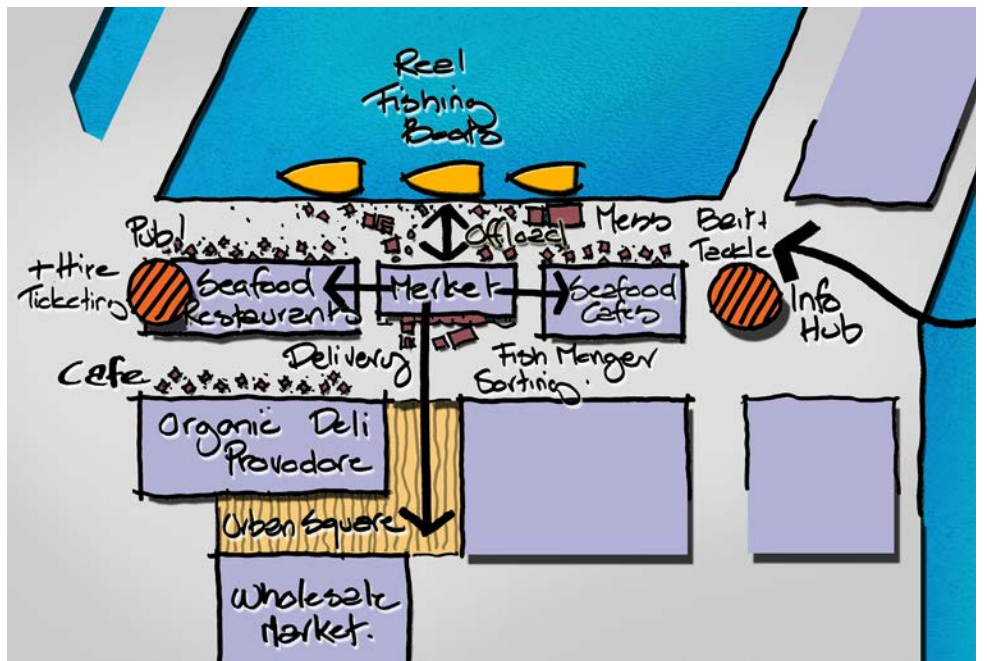
³² Perry Lethlean, *Waterfront Amnesia: Post Industrial Waterfronts and Search for Authenticity* (Paper presented to RMIT University School of Architecture and Design, Melbourne, 22 April 2010)

³³ Richard Sennett, *The uses of disorder: personal identity and city life*, (Allen Lane/the Penguin Press, 1971) PAGE NO.

³⁴ Lethlean, *Waterfront Amnesia: Post Industrial Waterfronts and Search for Authenticity*, 4



Right: The working wharf at Jellicoe Harbour which is used for fishing, ferries and large functions.



Right: Concept plan for Jellicoe Harbour which used the current functions of the working wharf as a generation of visitor destination. It also advocated future adjacent development should support this industry through cafes and markets and retail opportunities that utilised the 'catch' from the fishing industry.

Increasing complexities

Jellicoe Harbour currently operates as the base for a small fishing fleet and an offloading operation that is linked to a nearby fish wholesale market. The master plan had previously located development parcels close to the water's edge that would have maximised commercial return on the land in the short term and provided elevated waterfront views, but would not have allowed the servicing and unloading of the fishing boats.³⁵ This simple dimensional issue would have required the relocation of the fishing industry and, for the public, a loss of valuable 'authentic' harbour edge experience.

We successfully argued that the fishing industry was critical to the site's past and for its future. The industry is the main point of difference from the typical Auckland waterfront condition, and should be a centrepiece of an integrated fishing fleet home, fish wholesale and seafood retail market centre. Commercial programs for development sites close to the water should be focused on land uses that are related to the existing working wharf such as fishing, bait and tackle shops, a central fish market, fish and chip shops, visitor services and seafood dining.

This aspiration for a range of public programs and water-based activities creates friction between uses and users. This was intentional. Friction between uses and multiple transport modes requires the sharing of space and negotiation. By contrast, relegating a water's edge to solely pedestrian or cyclist uses ultimately creates a linear promenade with very little to either activate its edge conditions or create a sequence of destinations.

We were advocating that interruptions of flow, pauses in the path, a bit of grease and grime and the slowing down of the journey caused by friction between modes, differentiate working waterfronts from our cities and is ultimately more interesting.

Friction conveys an important message for all users. It relates that waterfronts in the new city are for everyone, it negates a common tendency for uniformity and minimises visual interference from the elevated café, commercial office or residential unit. This sense of a new civic approach to public space is evident on the ground where a feeling of community ownership, occupation and social exchange on the waterfront is palpable. This is in clear distinction to previous waterfront developments in Auckland that saw the promenade and public space as an attractive yet neutral foreground to the residential apartments or elevated café.³⁶ At Jellicoe Harbour, the provision of generous public seating in front of the café, the ability of trucks to unload in front of the upmarket restaurant and the ability to be entertained without purchasing anything, has provided all of the cues necessary to signal that this is a waterfront condition distinctively different from the past.

In Auckland what became evident was that the design of the public experience was much more than the wharf and promenade. It was a holistic and multilayered experience, comprising activity off land, activities inside buildings and maintaining viable industries. The actual physical 'design' will be hardly evident.

³⁵ Architectus, "Wynard Quarter: Precinct 1, Jellicoe Precinct" (Master plan was prepared for City of Auckland as part of Auckland Waterfront redevelopment initiative, Auckland, 5th February, 2008)

³⁶ Lethlean, *Waterfront Amnesia: Post Industrial Waterfronts and Search for Authenticity*, 5

Right: Concept plan to Jellicoe Harbour showing the promenade used for fishing functions as well as a setting for walking, public seating and cafes.



Right: Cross section through waterfront promenade showing how fishing, off loading provisions and market cafes can coexist and be a more interesting and activated visitor experience.



Right: Built outcome along promenade showing public grate seats edging the promenade and working wharf.



Increasing complexities

Similarly at 'Silo Park', located adjacent to the Jellicoe Harbour, we argued for a more diverse public experience, one that was informed by the extant condition. The triangular site was comprised of a cement depot, a small harbour and a working jetty facility. The master plan proposed that a large water feature occupy this triangle of land, flanked in the future by residential development and public facilities.³⁷ As part of our broader urban mapping we revealed that due to the central location of this precinct, it would be more valuable as a community park rather than as a decorative water element. As part of a micro-up analysis we identified that the site also contained an extensive array of crusty marine and industrial artefacts.

We proposed that Silo Park should consist of a number of different functions relevant to a site during the transition phase of development. A complexity was layered into the design to facilitate a range of hybrid uses: passive recreation, event space, youth precinct, industry and folly. Each program is new to the site, yet built from the pattern language and infrastructure and the mythology of place.

The gantry becomes a centrepiece of the Park as it is designed as a visual folly, play structure, lookout, harbour and event infrastructure. It also forms the infrastructure for a proposed working dock to be used for the final 'fit out' of large super yachts. The manufacture of these large sleek boats is a New Zealand speciality. Bringing this industry into public view and integrated into the design mix, reinforces an 'authentic', albeit glossy, waterfront experience.

In addition to the gantry, an existing silo, a large vertical feature of the site that had been slated for removal, was recast to become a signature light beacon, café and centre for adventure tourism including bungee jumping and climbing.

Bunds that are used to prevent industrial spills from silos are borrowed conceptually, to inform a topographic arrangement of open lawns, used for passive recreation purposes, sports and events.

The designs of both the Harbour and Silo Park represented a desire to engage in more than just the external spaces. The public experience had to be part of an idea about the 'workings' of the site, its programming both inside and out. We had found a design voice beyond the limitations of landscape architecture. The design proposition purposefully embeds friction and richness into the experience of the public realm. Buildings were designed not as neutral backdrops but as vital integrated components for the public realm experience.

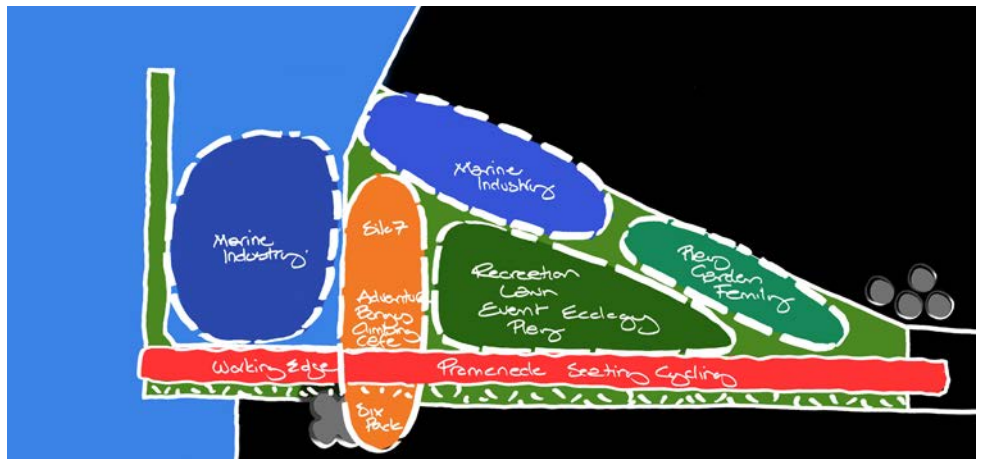
Reflecting on each of the three waterfront projects, it is apparent that the compositional design and the striking frame is still an important thread throughout my design practice. However, the work in Auckland also reveals a shift in design practice from an interest in figurative physical expressions to attempting to embed a more complex mosaic of experiences. Instead of conceiving of 'landscape' as the primary settings for our 'public', we now attempt more holistic urban scenarios that curate multiple ways of experiencing public life.

³⁷ Architectus, "Wynard Quarter: Precinct 1, Jellicoe Precinct" (Master plan was prepared for City of Auckland as part of Auckland waterfront redevelopment initiative, Auckland, 5th February, 2008)

Right: Silo Park is now a venue for passive recreation and play as well as a setting for more organised events.



Right: Concept plan for Silo Park which attempted to locate a range of functions within a tight spatial frame.



Right: Silo Park comprising the central lawn, Silos, Wetlands, Gantry's and promenade. The park is now a popular concert and film venue.



Increasing complexities

Important threads across TCL's practice and the work of its three directors, such as Civic, Material Presence and Narrative are evident across the three waterfront projects.

TCL's 'civic' thread is evident in many of our urban projects such as North Terrace and Victoria Square, where we attempt to conceive of public space as the true frame for community, public life and expression. Our recent projects have been strongly influenced by the thinking of Hajer and Reijndorp and we are actively seeking new ways to shape public space as vital settings for social exchange between many communities demographics and ages. The layering of multi programming of public space is one tool to achieve this and is certainly being tested in our work at Victoria Square, Adelaide and in Auckland's Waterfront.

TCL's 'material presence' thread captures our predilection for patterning, crafting, ornamentation and the fine-grain expression of materiality in projects across a range of project typologies. In national parks, this thread is examined more subtly with the careful selection of materials based on issues of durability, more than any aesthetic concern. In our parks and urban projects, material presence is expressed more confidently and reflects the importance we place on visually expressing the crafting of our work and the consideration of the fine-grain human experience. The sense of detail no doubt is influenced by the company's early small suburban and residential projects on low budgets that used detailing and rich contrast of materials to achieve the striking with little budget at hand. The three waterfront projects, particularly Geelong and Auckland, reflect this ongoing care and interest in the material presence and fine-grain detailing of public space. Both projects were concerned with utilising maritime materials in a contemporary and crafted manner. Auckland in contrast to Geelong, has made us examine how the use of site conditions and materials, the 'ready-made', can extend our material vocabulary and embed the project more 'authentically' in its setting.

TCL's 'narrative' thread describes our interest in communicating the underlying stories of the site and of the design's conception through public space. This was touched on in section 2.6 and is certainly an important part of the thinking behind the designs for Geelong and Auckland's waterfronts. In creating the Auckland Waterfront design there was a subtle shift, particularly as we had been focusing on keeping the existing 'narrative' of the setting available to the public. During the process it became apparent that designing metaphorical expressions was not needed nor appropriate. Narrative in Auckland became a means to reveal the site's extant stories: the hidden wharf is revealed, views to maritime industries are uncovered and working wharf industries once locked away are part of the everyday. This change of emphasis, from the overt narrative to more subtle interpretations and expressions, is similarly apparent across a range of more contemporary projects across the practice.



Right: Material Presence in Auckland is captured via the use of precast concrete blocks that were on the site, as a new water stair to the harbour.



Right: Promenade at Auckland which retained the original railway tracks to reveal the maritime functions of the site.

Conclusion

Three waterfront redevelopment projects have been reviewed according to contemporary design thinking and contemporaneous influences in their design generation.

By utilising the consistent frame of the waterfront project typology over a period of twenty years, commonalities of approach have been revealed that are equally relevant across a range of projects within my design practice. Equally, it has become apparent there have been noticeable shifts in my design approach over this extended period.

The research identified modes of landscape architecture practice that often extended the discipline into the sphere of urban design and looked at public realm strategies that connected and were informed by larger urban morphologies.

A strong compositional emphasis is apparent in early waterfront redevelopment examples, with the use of seriality via the repetition of elements, a feature of many designed components. Similarly these examples illustrated a narrative methodology of design that sought to be informed by site qualities, histories or mythologies and for the design to communicate these stories to the public through designed outcomes.

The research identified a shift in emphasis in my more recent projects, illustrated through the Auckland Waterfront redevelopment project, where the design focused on embedding a range of public activities within a retained working waterfront environment.

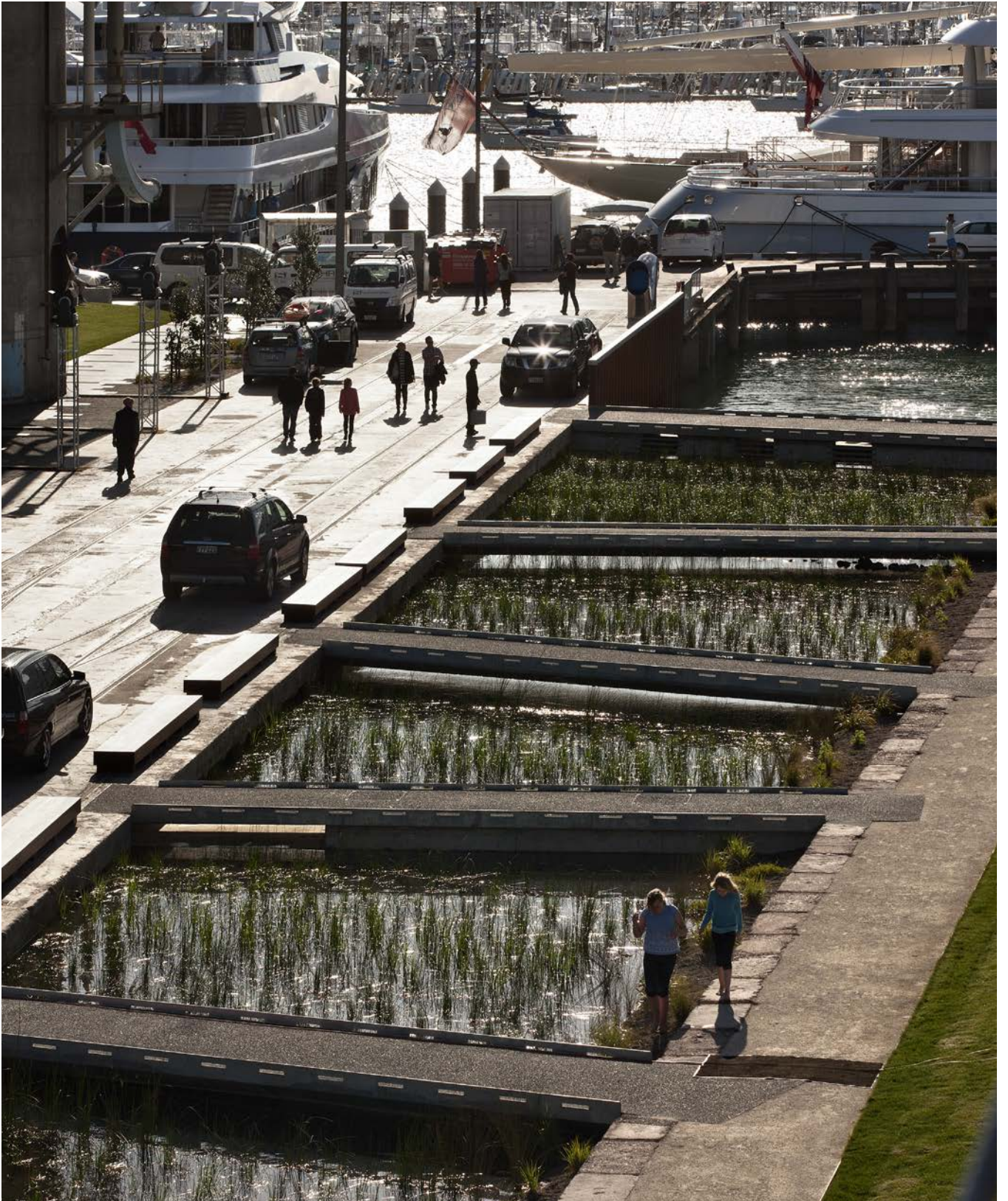
The study builds on and contributes to work in Australian Landscape Architectural practice and design research. Although studies in landscape architecture have examined historical projects within an Australian context as well as discussing important designers, there has not been a substantial examination of design process and thinking in contemporary Australian practice.

As such, this study provides additional insight into the underlying influences, philosophical underpinnings and contemporary designers that have informed my design practice and are part of a larger design approach of the TCL practice. The work has additionally situated my practice in the field of landscape architecture in Australia.

The examination of the public realm design of waterfront projects builds upon and contributes to the understanding of these spaces in Australasian cities. Previous studies and critiques have been more planning orientated. This work provides additional insights into one landscape architect's conception of the public realm of our cities and the influences that have informed the generation of design along three waterside edges.

The research has also identified key threads that are part of a broad design discourse in TCL, such as 'civic', 'material presence' and 'narrative'. These threads are in a way the DNA of our practice. This thesis researches and reveals their source and influences on our work. Through this reflective process I now have a deeper understanding of their ongoing relevance and potential to inform our future practice.

Right: Silo Park. TCL's most recent waterfront redevelopment represents a shift in the design practice, particularly relating to our 'civic' thread when attempting to embed complexity and friction in our public spaces.



**Appendix
Interview**

**with
Gini Lee**

The collaboration between Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity and Perry Lethlean, the way we work together and make design decisions was discussed during an interview with Gini Lee, that was organised in April 2011 as part of this PhD.

Gini Lee is the Elizabeth Murdoch Chair of Landscape Architecture at the University of Melbourne and was also part of the design review panel for the Victoria Square Redevelopment.

The conversation covered a wide range of topics including the way we collaborate between the three of us and with design partners outside of our practice. I have highlighted components of this conversation where the three directors discuss our collaboration and design process. The highlights are a shared openness to explore design ideas, and our different ways of approaching the design conversation. The following is an edited excerpt from that conversation.

Gini: I'm interested to know in your practice, and in particular the design of Victoria Square, what the balance might have been around the idea of the individual and the negotiation involved in collaboration. How each might have influenced an ongoing design conversation that allows ideas to shift and move?

Kate: It's very interesting in regard to the design of Victoria Square, particularly with the design of the garden, as it actually shifted and moved and went around in a bit of a full circle.

Kevin: On a project of this scale and importance you have got to have some sense that the design process will have a life of its own and it is something that is an entity in itself and is not just mine or someone else's .

For a design process to work in a collaborative manner and to allow a number of people to have meaningful input into it, each person has to respect that ideas and designs are going to change.

It's like in any conversation, you can either listen to what the person is saying and be part of an evolving dialogue, or you can just sit back impassively, formulating what you're going to say and then jump in to impose your opinion. We probably prefer the idea of an evolving dialogue.

I think one of the reasons collaboration has worked on Victoria Square, is that Peter Tonkin, Kate, Perry and myself, who were the principal people working on it, were all prepared to just let it evolve like an ongoing experiment. We all had ideas that we felt very strongly about, but there is a point where we need to respect the design process as an entity, with its own life. This respect allows each of us to override the last idea. Without that, you don't get this evolution of design.

Gini: It also seemed to me, as part of the design review panel for the project, that some of the shifts in design were actually forced upon you in a way that asked you to really start to rethink some of the detail. Was that right?

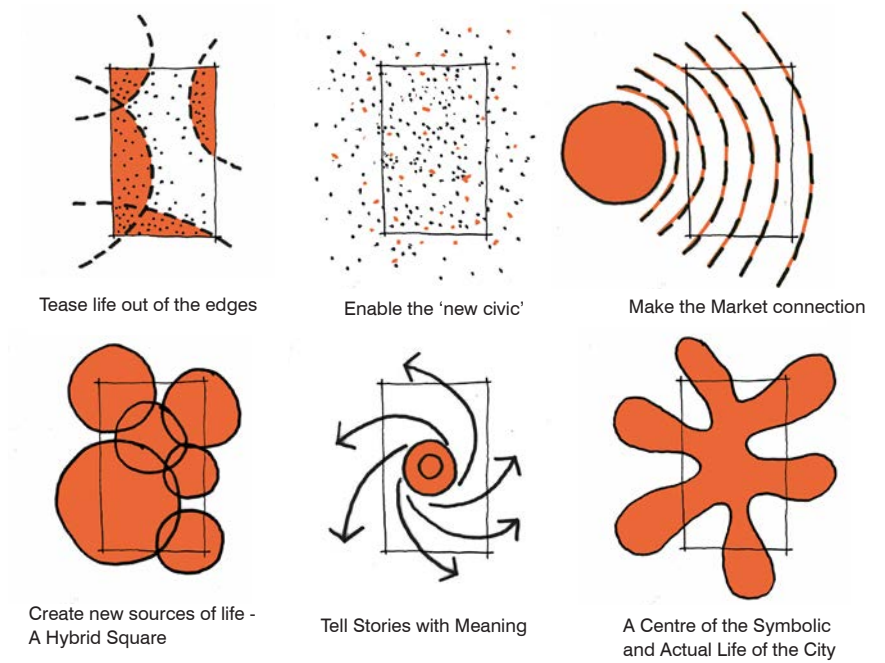
Kate: Yes, some of the shifts were forced externally and some of them were very strongly nudged or forced internally. For example, when we started shifting around what we were going to do in the garden, we sent around our idea to Karl Telfer, our Kaurna cultural collaborator and Peter Emmett, our cultural historian, and we got some really strong negative reactions to our ideas from both of them.

Kate: Both Karl and Peter thought our ideas were shifting the garden to a composition that was arranged via very forceful interventions. They thought it was too western of a design construct. They both preferred a garden design that could communicate a more informal, inclusive and egalitarian way of being.

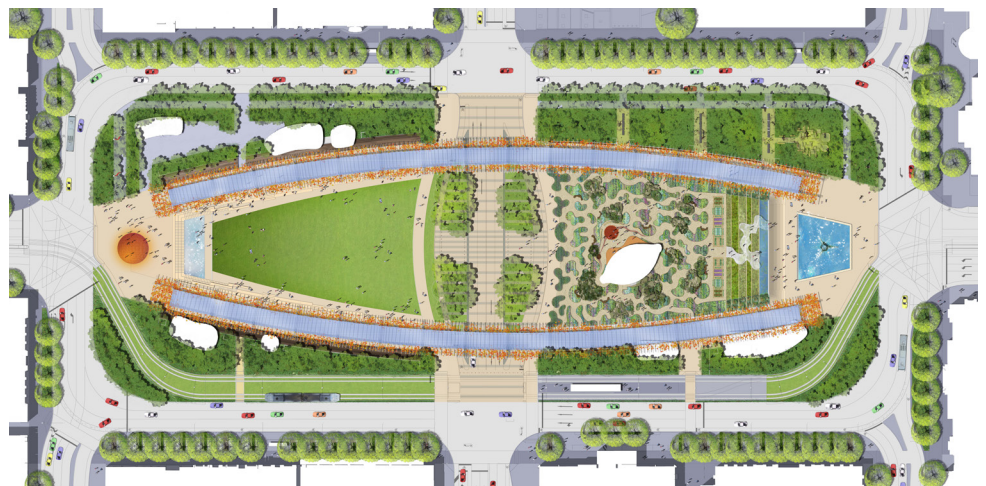
Kevin: To some extent Karl and Peter were holding onto the original concept and its underlying morality that we had been developing for the garden in Victoria Square. They had become, in effect, our design conscience on the project. As they weren't involved in our subsequent design meetings they hadn't therefore been part of our ongoing design journey. In their opinion our developed design concepts had gone too far from the original intent for the garden. They kind of said 'well hang on guys, you've lost the plot here'.

Kate: Their critique, we felt, was valid, we collectively said, 'It isn't working. Let's try something else.'

It was therefore an interesting form of collaboration, where two important colleagues, who were not necessarily part of the core design team, had an important role in reminding the team and project of its core values.



Right: Six Principles, Arising from the Master Plan, six principles guide the regeneration of the Square and surrounding precinct.



Right: An urban park in the centre of the city to reassert Victoria Square as the heart of Adelaide. The square is bounded by perimeter gardens of majestic eucalypts trees. An arbour embraces the central area as well as connecting the square north-south. The northern city end contains an event space and ephemeral water feature while the southern end houses a centre for Aboriginal culture 'Mullabakka', a large garden of Southern Australian plants, a productive garden and a biofiltration garden.

Gini: I'm also interested, in how the design team worked through the important issue of scale on this project, in particular how you resolved your main connecting idea of the arbor.

As a design review panel member, it was an important issue that we needed to work our way through. So, I'm just interested to know how you dealt with this design issue and how it was negotiated.

Kate: Well with the arbor was quite interesting because Peter proposed pretty early on that he wanted the arbors to be as tall as they are currently proposed. I don't know about Perry, but it wasn't until Kevin and I walked under DCM's entry canopies to the Melbourne Museum that we had a sense of what the proposed 8 metre height might be and this experience allowed us to feel comfortable about the scale. We often do that, we often wander around looking for precedent. It's a really big part of what we do.

Perry: Our immediate reaction was it's going to be too big.

Kate: Too dominating.

Perry: That reflection and reaction on major design pieces gets constantly reviewed, and discussed. In regard to the arbor, Peter will have a certain view of it and we will have a certain view of it. Ultimately through this tension, we will get to the right balance. The arbor was probably the main tension of the project.

Gini: That tension seemed to be very clear in those design review panel meetings, particularly when we were looking at the relationships between the architectural objects and the landscape.

I personally think that the resolution of the arbors will be really beautiful.

Kate: Do you think it's too tall?

Gini: I do. But, I don't mind too tall. I also needed to personally go and try and walk it.

This is why I'm interested to see how you actually negotiate this issue.

How you, not necessarily just for Vic. Square either, but how do you actually deal with that idea of fixing the scale, or being certain of the scale of things when you're doing something that needs to be bold.

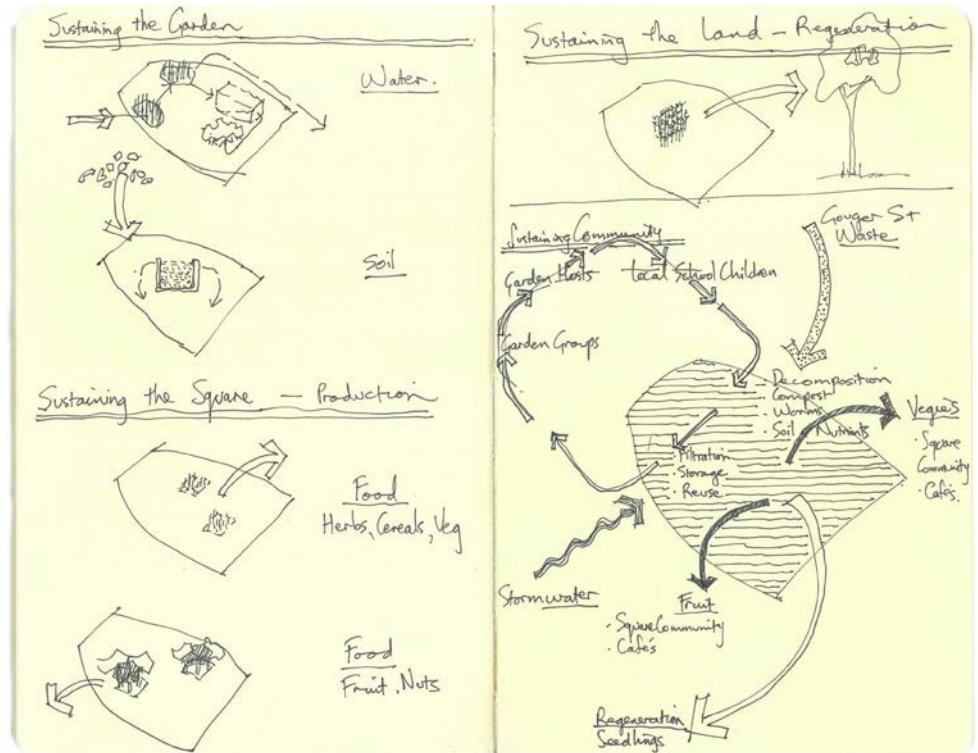
Kate: I think we work in different ways and have different skills and we defer to one another's skills.

Kevin: I've only got used to the scale of the arbors on Victoria Square by just going out there and standing there imagining, taking the drawings with me, imagining where it was, looking at the height of it against other objects like the tram poles and things like that.

Also with the arbors, it's not just about considering its scale via cross sections, it's also about its presence as a length. There is also its relationship to the width of the overall space. So it actually needs a certain height to achieve all those things as well as considering spatially what it feels like to just walk in it. They are all the things that took me a long time to feel totally comfortable with it.

Perry: In a way we were initially defining a response to the existing condition of Victoria Square, its disparate, amorphous, dysfunctional state, with roads going through it in multiple directions.

What all of the concepts in the beginning were trying to do was to work out strategies that would stitch it together, or unite it, or to discover what would be the gesture which says 'this is Victoria Square'.



Right: Sketch from Kevin Taylor's diary exploring ideas about creating a sustainable square.



Above: Cross section through proposed arbour comprised of repetitive pre-cast concrete arches.

The concept of an embracing gesture to the Square was our primary aim. This intent could have morphed into different architectural forms, but what remained constant as an idea was the need for an element or gesture that united the length at the square.

Kate: That is what made this proposal more compelling than the others. That it both united the length and also embraced the whole. Whereas the other concepts were either really ‘wow’ or comprised a number of different elements going on.

Kevin: Even before the idea of the embracing arbors, we played around with a whole lot of big plaza ideas.

Because it’s not just the arbors, it’s also the promenades under the arbors that make this an unusual public concourse. It’s not a square, it’s not a big plaza, it’s a stretched terrace, and that was a big turning point to go away from ideas around the big plaza.

The stretched terrace idea allows two soft elements in the middle, the big lawn and the big garden, which is completely different from some of the early schemes.

When I explain the design to people, I also talk about the fact that one of the distinguishing features of Victoria Square as a square, is that it has almost no edge activity. So you need to invent new edges, and the arbors and the arbor promenades are these whole new edges that have thickenings of terraces and cafes and the urban lounge elements that we’ve invented.

I think therefore the arbors are responding to a whole lot of very specific issues about the context and the identified need to create new active edges.

Perry: Going back to the idea of collaboration and intention.

What I find most satisfying and enjoyable is the beginnings of projects.

To get to the idea of these arbors and the idea of the embrace, we needed to test concepts and to put forward some wild and unconventional ideas.

We will all typically throw these preliminary ideas on the table, some will resonate, some won’t. The ones worth pursuing we might say “let’s try that one and for the moment and put it on the wall”. So we don’t lose momentum, we will try another idea and if its strong enough it also might make it to the wall.

When we have some divergent design responses, we will then examine them further and see whether, through design, they can be made to work. When this happens each of us gravitates to the design that we personally find more compelling.

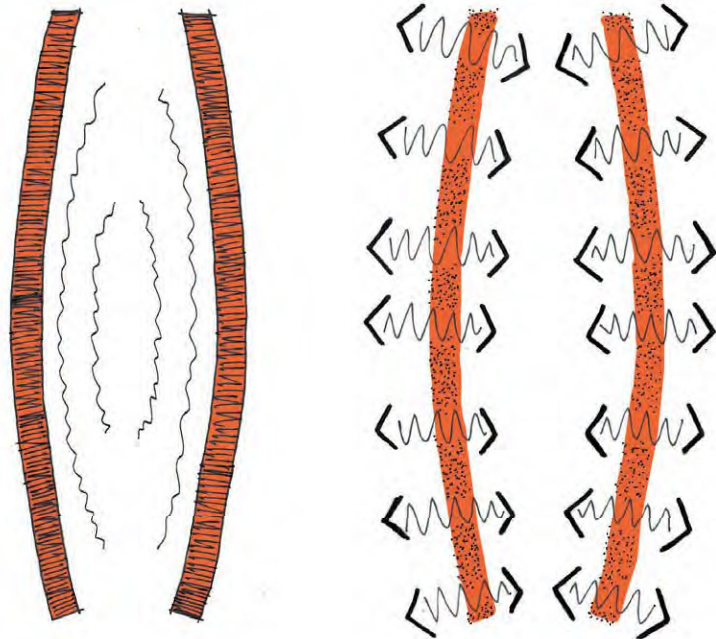
We each tend to push our pet concept as much as we can, to further improve it and to get it to work better. In a way we are trying to make it more saleable to each other.

I find that an enjoyable process because that is where real ideas are tested. This is a spatial testing of ideas more so than exploring underlying narratives.

What is interesting, is parallel to this spatial testing, is that we are also trying to discover what is the story of this place? What is its compelling reason for being and why will people go?

So a formal exploration is occurring on one end of the table and at the other end, a discussion about the purpose and narrative of this place. When the spatial and narrative come together in the middle that is when the design starts to gel.

...The sense of enclosure...actually creates a space for openness and the unexpected within.



Above Left: Enclosure, A pair of long arcing promenades/arbours creates a clearly defined inner space. Their holding or embracing form strongly defines the central space, an appropriate gesture for the symbolic heart of Adelaide.



Above Right: Permeability, While the arbours create an edge and suggest linear promenading, they are also permeable to cross movement. They thus encourage the migration of activities north-south and eastwest.



Right: The Urban Lounge stretches alongside the outer edge of the arbours enabling a shifting of conditions such as the cafe, terrace and the seat that allows for a range of activities along its length.



Interview with Gini Lee

Kevin: Perry's comment reminds me of something I think is important in this question about us filtering ideas. Perry, Kate and I have got quite different ways about thinking about the ideas in the centre of the table. The really big gesture, big moves, is something that Perry would bring to any one of those workshops where we're analysing what the options are, whereas Kate's quite likely thinking about what the materiality of something is, or designing at a smaller scale and I might just be flitting around anywhere in-between those two. So, I think part of the answer about how the filtering occurs is partly to do with the dynamic that, there are three quite different ways of even just thinking about the size of the concepts going on.

The conversation on Victoria Square highlighted different ways of approaching design issues between Kevin, Kate and myself. These difference have been accepted, embraced and fostered by the three of us since our first project, The Australian Garden. It is recognised as an important part of our practice approach.

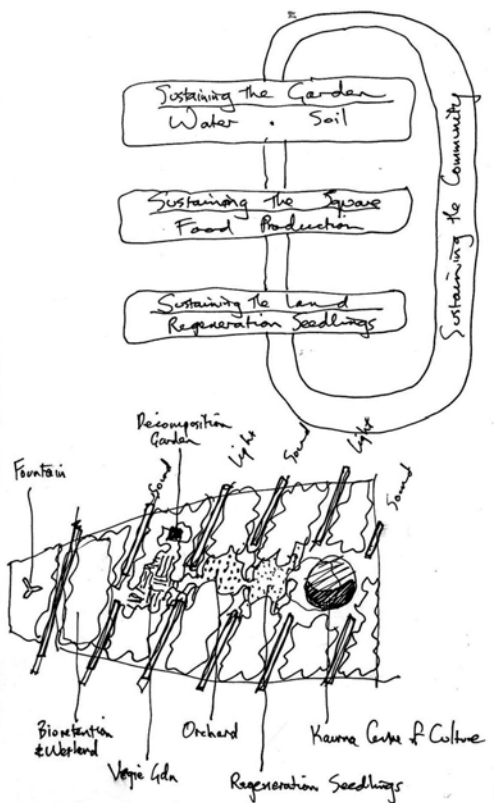
This chapter has explored our personal background and individual ways identified our commonalities and difference as designers. The next chapter examines our mode of practice through an examination of our projects.

Top: The partially sunken Mosaic Garden with a myriad of amorphous beds filled with plants from Southern Australia with particular emphasis on local and South Australian species.

Bottom: Victoria Square design is characterised by a central event lawn that will be utilised as a framed park space for nearby workers and host to major events on weekends.







Phd 16.10.10

Tripolar analysis — Td not as Poetic as previously assumed. Raises the question of whether narrative is as important as previously assumed.

- ⇒ Changed our ~~practice~~ perception of researched practices.
- ⇒ Analysis has revealed that there are not strong polarities, but definite tendencies.
- ⇒ Has helped us understand where our work now sits and where we want to be in the future.
- ⇒ Also acknowledged that the context is ~~one~~ gradually changing — how is that movement currently manifesting.

Threads — Australianness —

- Tim Winton quotes
- George Seddon quote.

— Materiality —

Left: Sketch from Kevin Taylor's journal 'PhD' dated 16.10.10

If I don't know I don't know
I think I know

If I don't know I know
I think I don't know.

In Australia we are progressively waking up to our not knowing that we don't know.
We are ~~also~~ realising that we do not know this place.
This transition is like a grieving process ~~is~~ is.

- Shock, denial
- protest, anger, guilt, sadness, fear
- disorganisation, despair, apathy, anxiety, confusion
- reorganisation, changed values, new meaning.

This period has social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions.
This is the context and challenge of landscape architecture in Australia in the coming decades.
Globalisation may be telling us that there is a sameness and universality to our world, but the northern people found a profoundly different land in the south.
What is exciting and critical is how we undertake this

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In Australia we are progressively waking up to our not knowing that we don't know.
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This transition is like a grieving process ie.

- Shock, denial
- Protest, anger, guilt, sadness, fear
- Disorganisation, despair, apathy, anxiety, confusion
- Reorganisation, changed values, new meaning

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Globalisation may be telling us that there is sameness and universality to our world, but the northern people found a profoundly different land in the south.

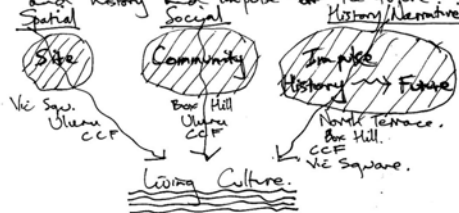
What is exciting and critical is how we undertake this meeting.

Different people and groups are concurrently at different points in the ignorance to knowing continuum.

Left: Poem from Kevin Taylor's journal 'Australian Landscape'

Phd - 8.07.11

I need to connect with the living culture of the place with which I am working. This is site and community and history and impulse for the future.



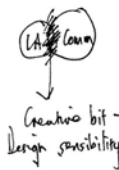
Why is the 'new civic' important to me?

- Open relationship with site
- Freedom for individuals
- Potential for a 'real' future, one that is undetermined & flexible but rooted in the reality of the site and community
- It is a dynamic/living relationship between site and community
- New Civic collates S + C + I.

Site / Community / Impulse
are my entry points into the living culture of place and therefore my relationship with the site and project.

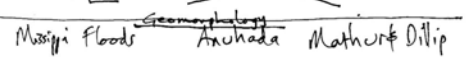


LA as spatial facilitator - tension b/w design spatial ability & community



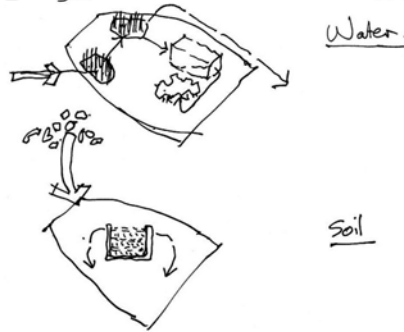
Discuss how I work with community?
- where do I place design?

Discuss micro-topography in N.T. & Vic. Sq.

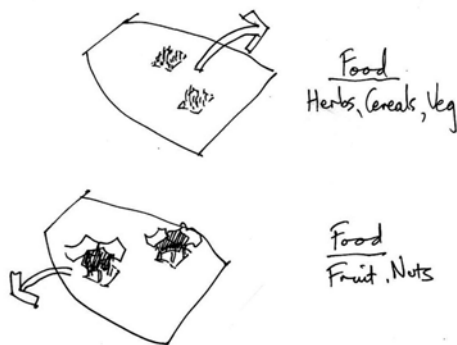


Right: Sketch from Kevin Taylor's journal 'Phd' dated 08.07.11

Sustaining the Garden

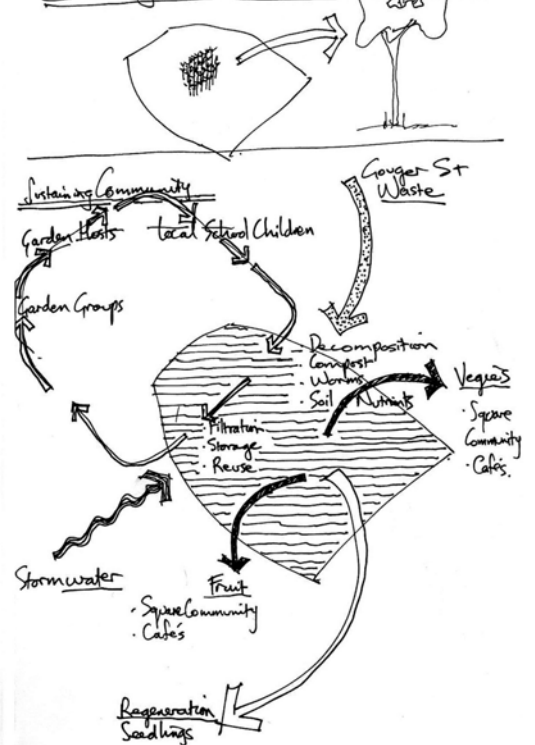


Sustaining the Square - Production



Right: Sketch from Kevin Taylor's journal 'Sustaining the Garden', 'Sustaining the Square' and 'Sustaining the land - Regeneration' date unknown year 2011

Sustaining the land - Regeneration



Appendix

Awards and Publications

Seminal Projects Awards and

Publications

Awards

Publications

Awards and Publications

Uluru

Publications

Lee, Gini. "Negotiations with Spinifex and Red Sand" In *Making Sense of Landscape Taylor Cullity Lethlean* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 86-93 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Lee, Gini "Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre" In *Sunburnt: Landscape Architecture in Australia* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Julian Raxworthy, 98-103 Amsterdam: SUN, 2011.

Bull, Catherin Jane. *New Conversations with an Old Landscape: Landscape Architecture in Contemporary Australia*. Mulgrave, Vic.: Images, 2002. 44-45.

Taylor, Kevin. "Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre." *Landscape Australia* 89 (2001): 26-29.

Contemporary Australian Landscape Design, BT Latitude Publishers, New South Wales, Pp 168-169 .

Awards

2002 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) National Project Award, Heritage Category for Uluru-Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre, NT.

1997 Special Mention – Centre for Australasian Cultural Studies National Award

1996 Winner – Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) (NT) New Institution Building Award

1996 Winner – RAIA People's Choice Award

1996 High Commendation – Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Building

Flinders Rangers

Publications

Lee, Gini. "Shifting presence: of and for the material landscape" In *Making Sense of Landscape Taylor Cullity Lethlean* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 100-105 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Bull, Catherin Jane. *New Conversations with an Old Landscape: Landscape Architecture in Contemporary Australia*. Mulgrave, Vic.: Images, 2002. 46-47.

"Project Merit Award in Landscape Architecture: Planning - Conservation Planning." *Landscape Australia* 90 (2001): 45-46.

Awards

2000 AILA National Project Award, Conservation Planning Category for Flinders Ranges National Park, Visitor Facility Development and Services Plan, SA.

Geelong Waterfront

Publications

Bull, Catherin. "What time, what place? Locating the waterfront at Geelong" In *Making Sense of Landscape Taylor Cullity Lethlean* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 140-147 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Asensio, Cerver Francisco., and Alejandro Bahamón. "Craigieburn Bypass Urban Design." *Ultimate Landscape Design*. New York, NY: TeNeues, 2005. 308-13.

Richardson, Tim, and Martha Schwartz. *Avant Gardeners: 50 Visionaries of the Contemporary Landscape*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008. 294-95.

"Merit Award in Landscape Architecture: Design - Public Spaces." *Landscape Australia* 81 (1999): 13.

Savery, Neil. "Waterfront Geelong." *Landscape Australia* 85 (2000): 13-15

Monument Architecture & Design 47 (2002): 64-65.

"Project Award." *Landscape Australia* 25.1 (2003): 20-21.

"Project Showcase." *Gardens Illustrated* June (2005): 100-01.

Awards

2004 International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) Vice President's Award of Merit.

2003 Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Australia Award for Urban Design.

2002 AILA National Award for Landscape Excellence and Design.

North Terrace

Publications

Lee, Gini. "North Terrace Redux: micro-topography and the civic" In *Making Sense of Landscape Taylor Cullity Lethlean* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 124-131 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Raxworthy, Julian "North Terrace" In *Sunburnt: Landscape Architecture in Australia* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Julian Raxworthy, 38-43 Amsterdam: SUN, 2011.

"North Terrace Redevelopment Stage 1." *Asia Pacific Landscape Design 2. Comp.* Pace Publishing Limited. Wuchang: Hua Zhong Ke Ji Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2006. 10-19..

Asensio, Cerver Francisco., and Alejandro Bahamón. "North Terrace." *Ultimate Landscape Design*. New York, NY: TeNeues, 2005. 298-303.

Awards

2006 AILA National Merit Award for Design in Landscape Architecture

2004 AILA National Award of Excellence for Planning in Landscape Architecture

2006 Adelaide City Council The Adelaide Prize 2006 Award of Excellence

2005 AILA Project Award of Design Excellence

2003 AILA Award of Excellence for Planning

2005 AILA Project Award of Design Excellence

2000 AILA Award of Merit, Planning and Masterplanning

2006 PIA Australia Award for Urban Design

2006 Adelaide City Council The Adelaide Prize 2006 Award of Excellence

Seminal Projects

Awards and Publications

Craigieburn Bypass

Publications

van Schaik, Leon. "The Pace of Landscape: Slow Drifting, the Freeway and Suburban Dreams" *In Making Sense of Landscape* Taylor Cullity Lethlean edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 22-29 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Russell-Clarke, Jo "Craigieburn Bypass" *In Sunburnt: Landscape Architecture in Australia* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Julian Raxworthy, 66-75 Amsterdam: SUN, 2011.

"Craigieburn Bypass." *Asia Pacific Landscape Design 2. Comp.* Pace Publishing Limited. Wuchang: Hua Zhong Ke Ji Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2006. 62-65.

"Craigieburn Bypass." *Landscape Design: Urban Furniture*. Ed. Catherine Collin. Singapore: Page One Pub., 2007. 180-181.

Comotti, Francesca, Ian Ayers, and Catherine Collin. *Sketch Landscape*. Singapore: Page One, 2009. 478-481.

Asensio, Cerver Francisco., and Alejandro Bahamón. "Craigieburn Bypass Urban Design." *Ultimate Landscape Design*. New York, NY: TeNeues, 2005. 322-25.

Parr, Adrian. "Craigieburn Bypass A Semiotic Entry Into Melbourne." *Artichoke* 12 (2003): 105-07.

Broome, Beth. "Snapshot." *Architectural Record* 08 (2005): 55-56.

Costa, Duran Sergi. *Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. Cologne: Daab, 2008. 300-307.

The Landscape of Contemporary Infrastructure, Nai Publishers, 2010, p 148 -149.

1000X Landscape Architecture, Dalian, China, 2009.

Urban Landscape Architecture, Rockport Publishers, Massachusetts, 2007, p 180-186.

International LD Annual 2007, Dalian, China, 2007.

Design City Melbourne, van Schaik, Leon, p112.

Awards

2006 AILA National Excellence Award in Landscape Architecture

2006 Australian Steel Institute Awards: Creative Steel Design Award

2006 RAI A Joseph Reed Award for Urban Design

2005 AILA Award of Excellence in Landscape Architecture

Forest Gallery

Publications

The Source Book of Contemporary Landscape Design, Collings Design, New York, 2008, p 518-523.

Atlas of Landscape, Loft Publications, Barcelona, 2008.

Avant Gardeners, Thames & Hudson, United Kingdom, 2008. Ultimate Landscape Design, teNeues, Spain, 2006, p 432-437.

New conversations with old landscape, landscape architecture in contemporary Australia, The Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd, Mulgrave, Victoria, 2002, p. 104-105.

Contemporary Australian Landscape Design, BT Latitude Publishers, New South Wales, Pp 156-159.

Emmett, Peter. "The Living Sculpture: The Forest Gallery as Multi-Media Landscape" *In Making Sense of Landscape* Taylor Cullity Lethlean edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 34-41 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Asia Pacific Landscape Design. Comp. Pace Publishing Limited. Wuchang: Hua Zhong Ke Ji Da Xue Chu Ban She, 2004. 100-105.

Awards

2002 AILA National Merit Award for Design: Building Context for Forest Gallery (in collaboration with Paul Thompson) Museum Victoria, Vic.

2008 AILA Award for Land Management in Landscape Architecture, Special Jury Citation for Horticultural Maintenance, Forest Gallery (in collaboration with Paul Thompson) Melbourne Museum, Vic.

2001 AILA Building Settings Award Commendation, for Forest Gallery (in collaboration with Paul Thompson), Melbourne Museum, VIC.

The Australian Garden

Publications

K.Meyer, Elizabeth "Grafting, splicing and hybridising: the strange beauties of the Cranbourne Australian Garden" In *Making Sense of Landscape* Taylor Cullity Lethlean edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Gini Lee, 60-69 America: Spacemaker, 2013.

Russell-Clarke, Jo "The Australian Garden, Cranbourne Botanic Garden" In *Sunburnt: Landscape Architecture in Australia* edited by Ware, SueAnne, and Julian Raxworthy, 104-113 Amsterdam: SUN, 2011.

Experimental Pattern Sourcebook 300 inspired designs from around the world, Rockport Publishers, Massachusetts, 2012, p 15, 189, 306.

Comotti, Francesca, Ian Ayers, and Catherine Collin. *Sketch Landscape*. Singapore: Page One, 2009. 472-477

Avant Gardeners, Thames & Hudson, United Kingdom, 2008.

The World Landscape Design Top-50 in 2007, Dalian, China , 2007.

Bull, Catherine. "A New Formalism." In *Landscape Architecture Australia* 111 (2006): 38-44. Print.

"Project Award in Landscape Architecture: Planning - Master Planning." In *Landscape Australia* 1.81 (1999): 27-28.

Treib, Marc. "Representing a Continent." In *Landscape Architecture* 10 (2007): 140-53.

Wintle, Sarah. "Australian by Design." In *Topos: Botanical Gardens and Zoos* 62 (2008): 20-26.

Awards

2009 IFLA (Asia Pacific Region) Design Excellence Award

2008 AILA National Landscape Architecture Award of Excellence

2007 AILA Award in Landscape Architecture

2007 Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia (CCAA) Public Domain Award, Precincts Commendation

2006 The Australian Tourism Awards for Best New Tourism Development

2006 South East Development Architectural Award

1998 AILA National Project Award, Master Planning Category

1997 AILA Landscape Excellence Award

2012

**World Architecture News Urban
Regeneration Award**

North Wharf Promenade, Silo Park,
Jellicoe Street
and The Gantry, Auckland, New Zealand

**New Zealand Urban Design Award
Built Category**

North Wharf Promenade, Silo Park,
Jellicoe Street and The Gantry,
Auckland, New Zealand

**Washington Waterfront Center Annual
Honor Award**

North Wharf Promenade, Silo Park,
Jellicoe Street and The Gantry,
Auckland, New Zealand

**Resene Total Colour Landscape
Award**

North Wharf Promenade, Jellicoe Street
and Silo Park,
New Zealand

**AILA National Landscape Architecture
Award for Urban Design**

Victoria Square/Tarntanyangga Urban
Regeneration Project, Adelaide, SA

**AILA National Landscape Architecture
Award for Design**

Wild Sea Exhibit, Melbourne Zoo, VIC

**Planning Institute Australia Plan to
Place Award of Excellence**

Chrisities Beach to Port Noarlunga
Foreshore Revitalisation, SA

**Australian Civic Trust Award and
People's Choice Award**

Witton Centre Redevelopment, SA

**Parks and Leisure Australia Planning
Award SA/NT region**

Lochend Masterplan

**AILA Victoria Design Excellence
Award**

Lonsdale Street Revitalisation,
Dandenong, VIC

**AILA Victoria Urban Design
Excellence Award**

North Wharf Promenade, Silo Park,
Jellicoe Street and The Gantry,
Auckland, New Zealand

**AILA Victoria Research and
Communication Commendation**

Tickle Booklets

**Local Government Award of
Excellence**

Burnie Waterfront Redevelopment, TAS

Sir James Irwin Presidents Medal, SA

Kevin Taylor

2011

Victoria Medal for Landscape Architecture

for the National Arboretum Canberra
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Vic)

Award for Planning

for Ensessakotteh Wildlife Rescue, Conservation and Education Centre
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Vic)

Excellence Award for Urban Design

for Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Master Plan
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Award for Design

for Northern Expressway Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Award for Design

for Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Australian Native Garden
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Commendation for Urban Design

for Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Project
Planning Institute of Australia (National)

2010

Award for Planning Excellence for Local Government 2010

for the Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Regeneration Master Plan

Commendation for Planning Excellence for Urban Design 2010

for the Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Regeneration Master Plan

National Award of Excellence for Design for Lartelare

Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

National Award of Excellence for Design

for The University of Sydney, Darlington Campus Australian Institute of Landscape Architects



2009**Design Excellence Award**

for Australian Garden Stage 1
International Federation of Landscape
Architects (Asia Pacific Region)

Award for Design

for Lartelare Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects (SA)

Award for Design

for The Sanctuary at Tidbinbilla
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (SA)

Award for Planning

for the Northern Expressway Urban
Design and Landscape Reference
Design Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (SA)

Overall State Winner

for the Adelaide City Playspace
Cement Concrete and Aggregates
Australia

Public Artworks Commendation

for the Adelaide City Playspace Cement
Concrete and Aggregates Australia
Public Domain Awards,

2008**Award of Excellence in Design**

for the Australian Garden Stage 1
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National)

Merit Award for Planning

for the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide
Masterplan
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National)



2007**Overall Award in Landscape Architecture**

for Australian Garden Stage One (with Paul Thompson)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC)

Award of Excellence in Design

for Australian Garden Stage One (with Paul Thompson)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC)

Award of Merit in Design

for Darlington Public Domain, Stage One University of Sydney (with Paul Carter)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC)

Commendation for Design in Landscape Architecture

for University of Adelaide North Terrace Frontage
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Commendation for Planning in Landscape Architecture

for University of South Australia Mawson Lakes Landscape Masterplan
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

2006**The Adelaide Prize 2006 Award**

for Excellence for North Terrace Redevelopment Stage One
Adelaide City Council

Overall Design in Landscape Architecture

for Craigieburn Bypass
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (National)

Merit Award

for North Terrace Redevelopment Stage One (in association with Peter Elliot Architects, Paul Carter and James Hayter and Associates)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (National)

Commendation Award

for Fire Stories, Chaumont International Garden Festival 2004
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (National)

Edna Walling Award for Residential Designed Landscape

for Taylor Cullity Residence

Australia Award for Urban Design

for North Terrace Redevelopment The Planning Institute of Australia,



2005

State Award for Landscape Architecture

for North Terrace Redevelopment Stage One (in association with Peter Elliot Architects, Paul Carter and James Hayter and Associates)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Award for Excellence for Design in Landscape Architecture

for North Terrace Redevelopment Stage One (in association with Peter Elliot Architects, Paul Carter and James Hayter and Associates)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Award for Excellence for Environment in Landscape Architecture

for South Australian Museum Forecourt
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

Merit Award for Design in Landscape Architecture

for Fire Stories Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA)

State Award for Excellence, Design Category

for Craigieburn Bypass
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC and TAS)

Award for Excellence for Design in Landscape Architecture

for Craigieburn Bypass
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC and TAS)

Award of Merit, Planning Category

for Springthorpe Masterplan
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (VIC and TAS)

Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design

for Birrarung Marr Stage 1 Implementation
Royal Australian Institute of Architects (VIC and TAS)



2004

National Excellence Award for Planning in Landscape Architecture

for North Terrace Precinct
Redevelopment Concept Design (in association with Peter Elliot Architects, Paul Carter and James Hayter and Associates)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Forum Australia Award in Urban Design, Commendation

for Birrarung Marr
The Planning Institute of Australia and Urban Design

Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design

for Birrarung Marr, City of Melbourne (in association with Paul Thompson and Swaney Draper)
Royal Australian Institute of Architects (National)

Vice President's Award of Merit

for Waterfront Geelong
International Federation of Landscape Architects

New Building Award Commendation

for Queen Elizabeth Hospital Stage 1 (Woodhead International Architects)
Royal Australian Institute of Architects (SA)

Joseph Reed Award for Urban Design

for Birrarung Marr, City of Melbourne (in association with Paul Thompson and Swaney Draper) Royal Australian Institute of Architects (VIC)



2003

Award for Design Excellence

for Birrarung Marr Stage 1
Implementation, Melbourne
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC)

**Commendation Award in the civic
design of urban space category**

for Little Mallop Street Redevelopment,
Geelong
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC).

**Commendation Award in the
residential category**

for Lewis Residence, Melbourne
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC).

**Commendation Award in the public
open space & recreational facilities
category**

for the Sidney Myer Music Bowl,
Melbourne
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC).

**Merit Award in the landscape art
category**

for Gratten Plaza, Stonnington
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC).

Award of Excellence for Planning

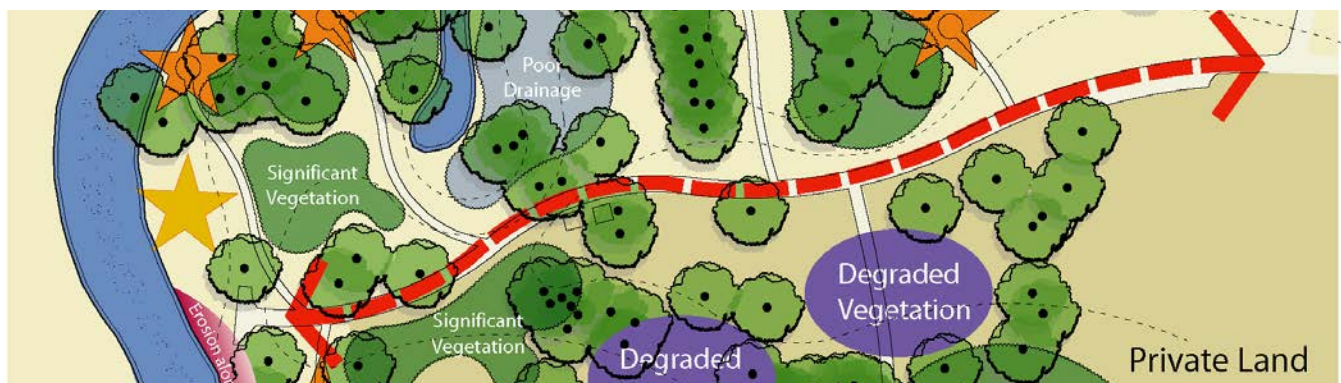
for North Terrace Precinct
Redevelopment Concept Design,
Adelaide
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (SA).

Award of Excellence for Environment

for River Murray Sustainable Recreation
Site Planning and Implementation
Guidelines
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (SA).

Merit Award in Design

for Mount Lofty Walking Trails - Morialta
Conservation Park
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (SA).



2002

Top Honour Award for Excellence in Waterfront Development

for Waterfront Geelong
The Waterfront Centre - Washington
D.C.

National Award of Merit. Building Context Category

for Forest Gallery, Museum of Victoria
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National).

Overall Landscape Excellence Award

for Steampacket Place, Waterfront
Geelong
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National).

Australia Award for Urban Design Excellence.

For Waterfront Geelong
The Planning Institute of Australia and
Urban Design Forum.

National Project Award. Public Spaces Category

for Steampacket Place, Waterfront
Geelong
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National).

National Project Award. Heritage Category

for Uluru Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre,
Northern Territory
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National).

National Project Award. Open Spaces and Recreation Award

for Carlton Gardens Playground,
Melbourne (in association with Mary
Jeavons Landscape Architects).
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (National).



2001

Awards for innovative and creative use of concrete - Best Overall Project

for Geelong Waterfront, Geelong
Cement and Concrete Association of
Australia,

Streetsmart Awards for Pedestrian Precincts – In situ concrete category

for Eastern Beach Road and Geelong
Waterfront
Cement and Concrete Association of
Australia

Overall Landscape Excellence Award

for Steampacket Place, Waterfront
Geelong
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Civic Design Award of Merit

for Steampacket Place, Waterfront
Geelong
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Civic Design Commendation

for Moreland Northern Plaza (in
association with Jane Shepherd.)
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Building Settings Commendation

for Forest Gallery, Melbourne Museum
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Building Settings Commendation

for Catholic Theology College, Vic
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.)

Open Space and Recreation Award of Merit

for Carlton Gardens Playground, Vic
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.)

Transport and Infrastructure Commendation

for Geelong Boulevards Gateway Entry
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Lighting Design Award of Merit

for Steampacket Place, Waterfront
Geelong (in association with Vision
Design Studio).
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).



2000

Overall Landscape Excellence Award

for Australian Consul General's Residence. Kobe , Japan
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (National).

National Project Award. Residential Category

for Australian Consul General's Residence. Kobe , Japan
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

National Project Award. Conservation Planning Category

for Flinders Ranges National Park, Visitor Facility Development and Services Plan
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Award of Merit. Planning and Masterplanning

for North Terrace Precincts Development Framework
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (S.A.)

National State Project Award (S.A) Category Design Parks and Recreation

for Cape de Couedic Visitor Facilities, Flinders Chase National Park
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

State Merit Award (S.A) Category Masterplanning

for Flinders Ranges National Park
 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects



1998**Urban Design - Built. City of Greater Geelong**

for Waterfront Geelong
Royal Australian Planning Institute
(Victorian Division)

**National Project Award.
Masterplanning Category**

for The Australian Garden
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects

**National Award of Merit. Design of
Public Spaces Category**

for Geelong Waterfront Redevelopment
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects

**Awards for innovative and creative
use of concrete - Best Overall Project**

for Beach Road Redevelopment,
Geelong
Cement and Concrete Association of
Australia.

**Streetsmart Awards for Pedestrian
Precincts – In situ concrete category**

for Geelong Waterfront Redevelopment
Cement and Concrete Association of
Australia

**National Award of Merit. Design in
Landscape Art Category**

for “Reminders of the Other”
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects

Project Residential Award

for Australian Consul General's
Residence. Kobe , Japan
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (Vic.).

Commendation

for Geelong Waterfront Redevelopment
Australian Institute of Landscape
Architects (VIC)

Overall Landscape Excellence Award

for Australian Consul General's
Residence. Kobe , Japan Australian
Institute of Landscape Architects (Vic.).



1990 - 1997**National Project Award. Design Category**

for Box Hill Community Arts Centre
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

National Award of Merit. Design Category

for "The World of the Platypus" -
Healesville Sanctuary, Vic
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

National Award of Merit in Parks and Recreation Category

for Hemmings Park Community
Playground
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

Overall Landscape Excellence Award

for The Australian Garden, Vic
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Vic.).

Masterplanning Project Award

for The Australian Garden, Vic.,
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Vic.)

S.A. Civic Trust Award. Winner Landscape and Streetscape Category

for M.J. McInerney Reserve, Croydon,
S.A.

Charles Joseph La Trobe Award, Design for Living

for Box Hill Community Arts Centre
(in association with Gregory Burgess Architects)

National Award for Community Planning

for "City Living Country Style - The
Goonawarra Story" (in association with
Sarkissian Associates Planners).
Royal Australian Institute of Planners

Award for Outstanding Planning Document

for "Timbara New Residents' Workshop"
(in association with Sarkissian
Associates Planners).
Royal Australian Institute of Planners

Award for outstanding Planning Document

for "Tenure Mix and Social Mix in
Retirement Housing" (in association
with Sarkissian Associates Planners).
Royal Australian Institute of Planners

Award for Outstanding Development Project

for Timbarra Smart Blocks (in
association with Sarkissian Associates
Planners).
Royal Australian Institute of Planners



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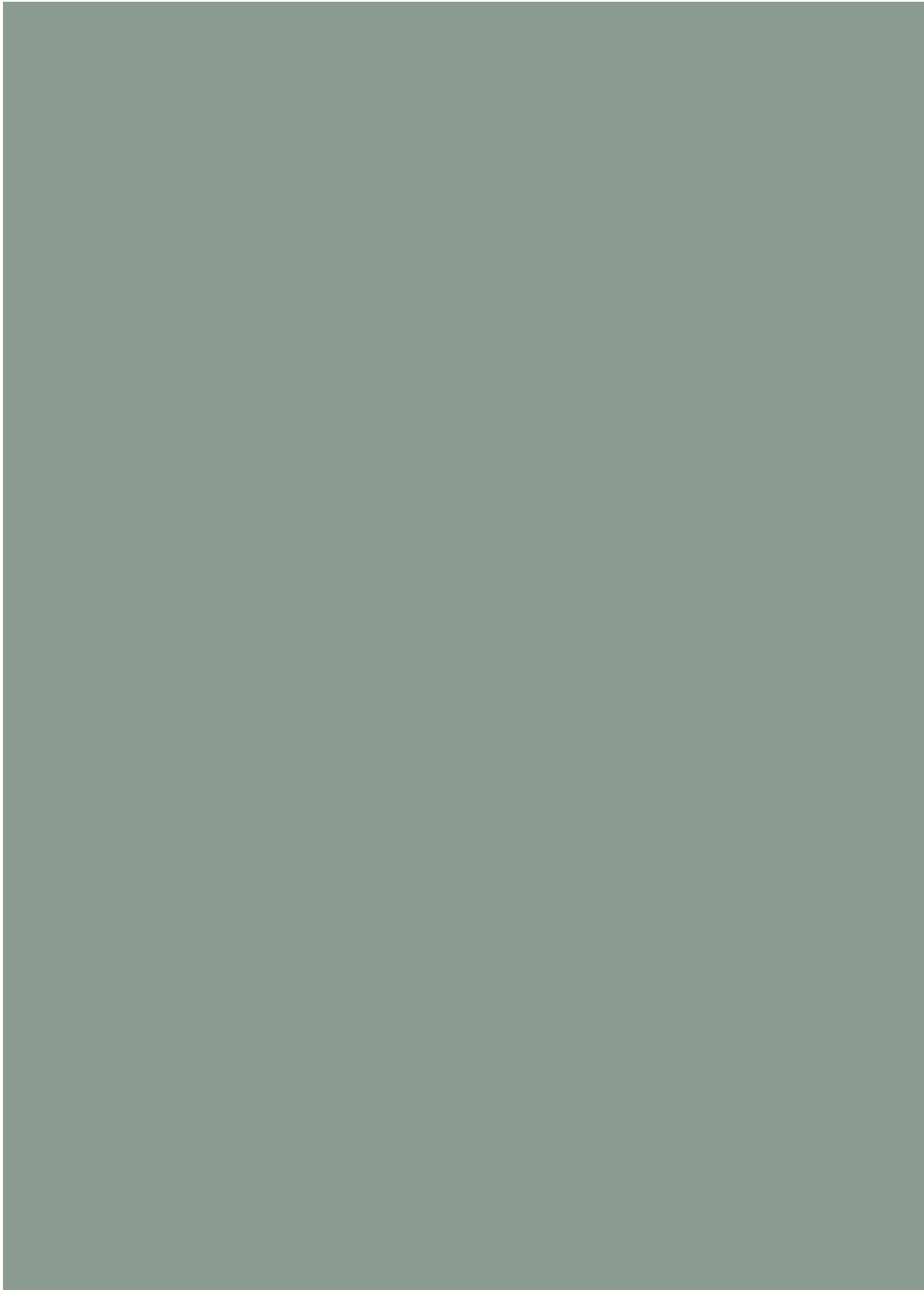
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ed to connect with the living
re of the place with which I am
ing. This is site and community

history and impulse for the future
Social History/Ne



is the 'new civic' important to me

open relationship with site
freedom for individuals

potential for a 'real' future, One that
is undetermined & mobile but rooted in

the site and community

Sustainable Community

Garden Hosts

Garden Groups

Local School Children

Gouger St Waste



- Decomposition
- Compost
- Worms
- Soil

- Filtration
- Storage
- Reuse

Nutrients

Fruit

Stormwater

- Square Community
- Cafés

