

Coexistence of Rational Definiteness and Irrational Oneness
An investigation of Robin Boyd's architecture and theoretical
approach through a Heideggerian perspective

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

Mauro Baracco
B. Arch

School of Architecture + Design
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University
November 2010

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.

Mauro Baracco

Date 15 November 2010

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been produced and finalized with the encouragement and help of many people throughout the years.

Some seminars were initially run by me as part of my teaching courses at RMIT University, School of Architecture and Design, to collect and research various material for the production of the drawings. The following people, students at the time of the research, were involved in different ways and times: Sophie Cleland, Peter Badger, Vasilios Barakia, Lucas Lau, William Kong, Ka Voh Chan, Julianne Nee, Annette Rubach, Louisa MacLeod, Andrey Soebekti, Lauren Kruger, William Corner, Stephanie Burrows, Julian Canterbury, Rodney Eggleston, Costas Gabriel, Yong Chen Goh, Chi Sun Goh, Ming Jun Lee, Howard Mok, Amanda Moore, Ken Ng, Ben Baird, Didier Chi Li Mow, Brendan Dawson, Mohd Hussin, Michael Christensen.

I would like to thank the following people for their contribution in further phases of graphic editing: Will Chan, Charity Edwards, Murray Barker, Cassie Ng, Teik Rong, Monique Brady and Giulio Lazzaro.

I would also like to thank Nina Dubovitz, Tamara Friebe, Megan White and Penelope Webster who were involved with the collection and cataloguing of writings and publications in general from various archive sources.

Many thanks go to Ben Akerman, who worked initially on the production of the graphic layout, and to Oliver Hutchinson for his invaluable process of further refinement which led to the finalization of the graphic layout of the whole thesis.

I wish to thank Mark Strizic, who very generously opened his archive to me and allowed me to use his photographs. I also wish to thank Jock Murphy and Madeleine Say of the State Library of Victoria for allowing me to reproduce Strizic's photographs while they were in the process of being transferred from the Strizic Archive to the collection of the State Library of Victoria. Further to this, I wish to thank the State Library of Victoria for the reproduction of photographs by Peter Wille and Wolfgang Sievers that are part of the Pictures Collection. Many thanks go also to the staff of the Australian Manuscripts Collection of the State Library of Victoria, who patiently endured my continuous consultations and the ones of the students involved with my teaching and research on Boyd.

Many thanks also go to Aaron Pocock, and the close empathy that is relevantly expressed by his more recent photographs of some of Boyd's works in relation to the theoretical framework that informs this thesis.

I would like to warmly thank the following people for allowing to visit their houses and for sharing thoughts and stories related specifically to them, and generally to Boyd's work: the director of the Robin Boyd Foundation Tony Lee, the former director of the Manning Clark House organisation for contemporary debate and discussion Penny Ramsay, Penleigh Boyd, Tim Hegarty, Lucinda McLean, Jen Aughterson, Maria Rajendran and Reg Rippon, Inge and the late Grahame King, Martin and Diana Young, the Dawes family, Frank (who passed away in November 2010) and Marylin Fenner, Maggie Edmond, Emma Forbes, Isabel Roberts, Julie Bryson, Janys Lloyd, Helen Clemson, Jason Alexander, Simon Watson, Gordon Sanson and Jenny Read, Ann Arnold, Michael Baker, Nic Dowse and Natalie Toohey, Peter Mitrakas, Mary Featherston, Julian Scanlan, Heather and Jack Le Griffon.

I wish to thank Shane Murray and Leon van Schaik for some initial precious discussions and advice; Francesco Tomatis for his inspiring philosophical views on Zen and existentialism in the many conversations we had throughout the years, even before commencement of this thesis; Sarah Whiting, Hilde Heynen and Teresa Stoppani for the constructive feedback received in occasion of their visit to RMIT; Jeff Malpas for his critical advice in regard to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger; Peter Corrigan, Mary Featherston, Doug Evans and Conrad Hamann for their continuous encouragement and crucial suggestions; my supervisor Peter Downton for his invaluable guidance and sharp sense of judgment.

I am immensely grateful to Catherine Murphy for her strong unfading encouragement; for her precious advice in regard to the writing and editing of the texts; for the rigour, but also exquisite sense of irony that she consistently shared with me.

Finally, I could never thank enough Louise Wright – without her endless help and infinite patience this thesis would have never materialized.

Abstract

This thesis examines the approach of Melbourne architect Robin Boyd (1919-1971) through a philosophical framework primarily developed from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

Boyd's approach to both theoretical discussion and design production – the former undertaken throughout his innumerable published works, the latter inclusive of an extensive body of built and unbuilt projects – resists the rational determinations of mainstream modernism through sensibilities informed by a sense of ambivalence, 'con-fusion' and other correlated dimensions that are in different ways discussed in this thesis: unclarity, vagueness, weakness, irresoluteness, elusiveness, ambiguity, indefiniteness, openness, release. These quintessential qualities of Boyd's approach and related works are all indicative of his inclination to rationally accept a comprehensible objectification of the world, and yet at the same time to hope for an incomprehensible dimension of reciprocal co-belongingness of physical and spatial entities. The thesis proposes that this paradoxical position – this coexistence of rational determination of individual entities, and irrational release to a dimension of all-inclusiveness/oneness – is a peculiar characteristic of this architect, and places him on the edges of the modernist culture and its related values.

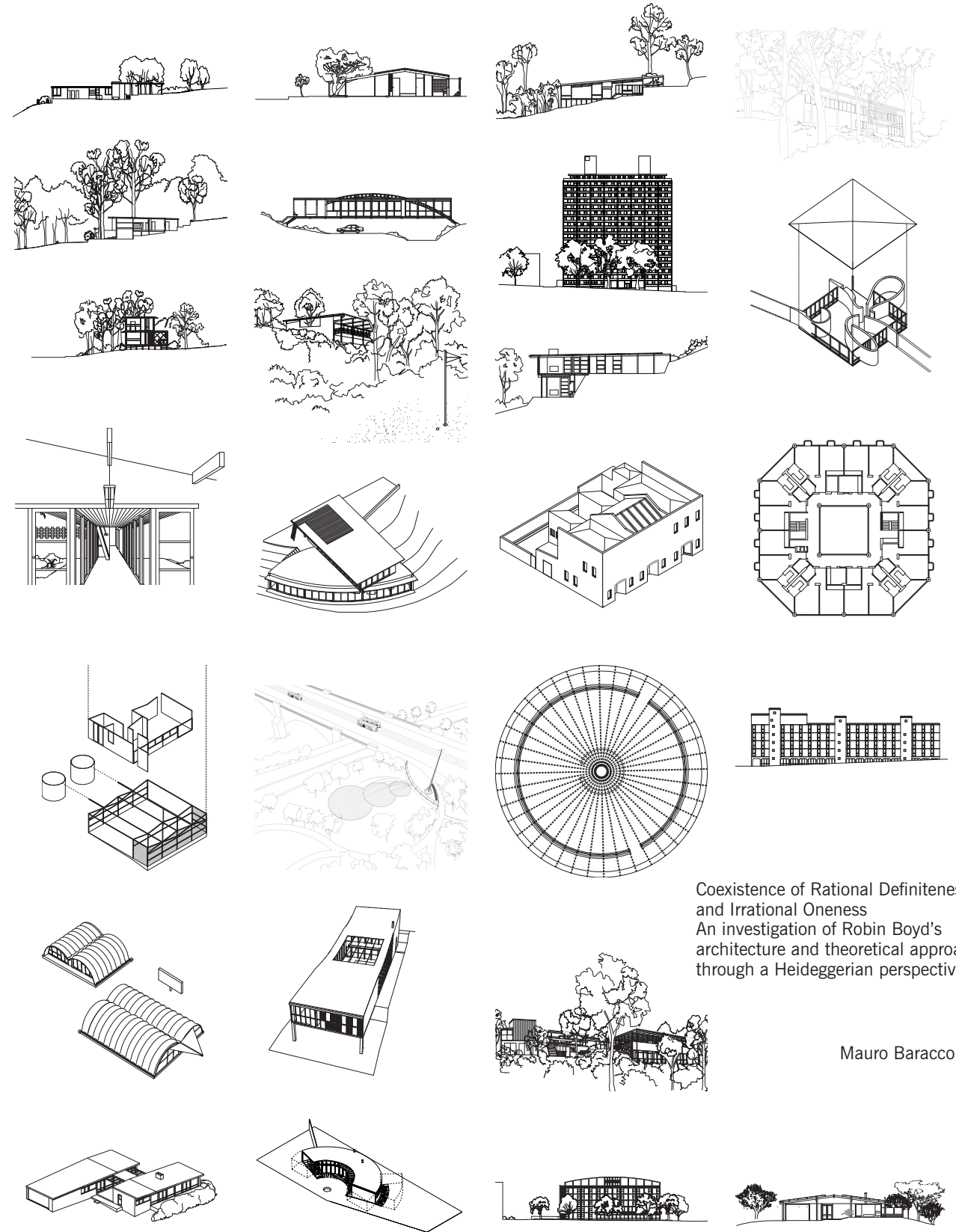
This is argued through two parts: a theoretical framing essay – part one – that is then discussed for its particular application to 36 specific projects – part two. The latter presents the projects anew by redrawing and photographing so as to detach them from their purely historical archival presentation and to provide a comprehensive and consistent documentation. This act is important and supportive to the PhD's framework that focuses on essential and philosophical notions of architecture rather than historical 'facts' or trajectories, therefore offering an alternative reading in comparison to the extensive body of existing material about Robin Boyd and his work.

Robin Boyd's work and thought are discussed as in empathy with some theoretical positions of Martin Heidegger, whose philosophy is analogously characterised by a condition of critical resistance towards a pervasive modernist approach that tends to conceive and perceive reality as if it was merely consisting of objective and individual physical presences. This modernist approach, extensively diffused in modern and contemporary architecture, is a direct reflection of both:

- a typical Western tradition of thought that is originally, since ever, inclined to identify being with presence,
- and
- the Western Modern creation and gradual amplification of the duality between subject and object, according to which reality and the world are perceived and represented as objective products of a cognitive process in which human beings are indeed the subjects, constantly considering themselves as "the relational center of that which is as such" (Martin Heidegger, *The Age of the World Picture*).

Alternative to this approach, Heidegger's philosophy proposes to release ourselves to irrationality, through a "meditative thinking" as a coexisting and parallel sensibility of the "calculative thinking" that predominantly informs rational and logical viewpoints. The paradoxical thinking of Heidegger embraces at once rationality and irrationality, accepting both these conditions as intrinsic of our being-in-the-world.

Boyd's approach, reflected in particular in the ambivalence of his writings and the sense of potentiality and spatial continuity of his projects, is investigated in relation to the above philosophical positions. The thesis argues that the application of this approach in Boyd's two different operative fields (theoretical discourse and architectural practice) is inclined to forms of 'con-fusion' and openness rather than clarity and determination. Boyd's ambivalence is discussed as alternative to many architectural positions of mainstream modernism, generally conditioned by the prioritization of rationality, and therefore condemned to produce outcomes that are trapped by forms of duality/correspondence that are merely dictated by logical accords and formulaic processes drawn by objective/scientific/rational types of determination.



Coexistence of Rational Definiteness
and Irrational Oneness
An investigation of Robin Boyd's
architecture and theoretical approach
through a Heideggerian perspective

Mauro Baracco

Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1	
Rational Definiteness and Irrational Oneness: coexisting conditions of Robin Boyd's Heideggerian approach	11
Part 2	
Introduction	77
Boyd House 1 1947	87
King House 1951 – 1952	99
Gillison House 1952	111
Manning Clark House 1952	123
Finlay House 1952 – 1953	135
Wood House + Shop 1952 – 1954	147
Fenner House 1953 – 1954	159
Bridgeford House 1954	171
Richardson House 1954	183
Holford House 1956	195
Haughton James House 1956	207
Southgate Fountain 1957 – 1960	219
Boyd House 2 1958	231
Lloyd House 1959	243
Clemson House 1959 – 1960	255
Domain Park Flats 1960 – 1962	267
Handfield House 1960	279
Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar 1961 – 1963	291
Tower Hill Natural History Centre 1961 – 1970	303
Wright House 1962	315
John Batman Motor Inn 1962	327
Arnold House 1963 – 1964	339
Baker House 1964 – 1966 + Baker 'Dower' House 1966 – 1968	351
McCaughy Court 1965 – 1968	369
Menzies College 1965 – 1970	381
Australian Pavilion at Montreal Expo '67 1966 – 1967	393
Lawrence House + Flats 1966 – 1968	405
Farfor Holiday Houses 1966 – 1968	417
Milne House 1966 – 1970	429
McClune House 1967 – 1968	443
Featherston House 1967 – 1969	455
'The First 200 Years' Exhibition 1968	467
Carnich Towers 1969 – 1971	475
Hegarty House 1969 – 1972	483
Flinders Vaults 1971 – 1972	495
Conclusion	503
References	509

Introduction

This thesis examines the approach of Melbourne architect Robin Boyd (1919-1971) through a philosophical framework primarily developed from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

This is argued through two parts: a theoretical framing essay – part one – that is then discussed for its particular application to 36 specific projects – part two. The latter presents the projects anew by redrawing and photographing so as to detach them from their purely historical archival presentation and to provide a comprehensive and consistent documentation. This act is important and supportive to the PhD's framework that focuses on essential and philosophical notions of architecture rather than historical 'facts' or trajectories. While the architectural designs undoubtedly have historical meanings and drivers, these arguments are not of primary concern here.

This type of interpretation is an alternative one in comparison to the extensive body of existing material about Robin Boyd and his work. Robin Boyd has a large body of work that has been documented and discussed in Australia – although many works are still being 'discovered'. Previous books and essays by various contributors – Geoffrey Serle, David Saunders, Zelman Cowen, Conrad Hamann, Harriet Edquist, Karen Burns, Philip Goad, Winsome Callister, Doug Evans and Helen Stuckey among others,¹ have generally read and placed Boyd's approach and works in relation to historical and cultural events that occurred throughout and parallel to his life and architectural career.

More generally, this framework also contributes to the development of an architectural theory beyond stylistic, aesthetic, cultural and social reasons of their own specific time. The philosophy of Heidegger has often been applied by other architectural theorists most commonly due to the parallel concern of spatial understanding. However, I argue here that this is often a problematic relationship characterised by simplistic couplings strongly based around literal symbolism. I attempt to contribute to this theoretical trajectory by avoiding this problem.

From this point of view, by testing the reflections that in different ways relate the spatial and architectural conditions of the projects to the characters that guide Boyd's theoretical approach through his writings and design works, this thesis also attempts to read his architectural resolutions as aphoristic and independent outcomes, released from and beyond all those stylistic or aesthetic reasons that are typically discussed as related to the specific historical moment of each project.

¹ See, among others: Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd. A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995. David Saunders, 'Afterword', in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970. David Saunders, 'Retrospective – Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 61, no. 1, February 1972. Zelman Cowen, 'Homage to Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973. Conrad Hamann, *Modern Architecture in Melbourne. The Architecture of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, 1927-1971*, PhD Thesis, Visual Art Department, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, July 1978. Conrad Hamann, Chris Hamann, 'Anger and the New Order: some aspects of Robin Boyd's career', *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, 1981. Conrad Hamann, 'Against the Dying of the Light: Robin Boyd and Australian Architecture', *Transition*, no. 29, 1989. Karen Burns, Harriet Edquist (eds.), *Robin Boyd: the architect as critic*, Transition Publishing, Melbourne, 1989, a complete publication/catalogue of all bibliography related to Boyd (with the list of all his writings, and all writings/reviews on both his design and published work), including also: Philip Goad, 'Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture'. Mauro Baracco, Louise Wright, 'Boyd in Melbourne', *Domus*, no. 808, October 1998. Helen Stuckey, 'Robin Boyd and the Revolt against Suburbia', *Imaginary Australia*, *B* Architectural Magazine, no. 52/53, 1995/96. Harriet Edquist (ed.), *Robin Boyd*, a monographic issue of *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, including, among others, the following contributions: Conrad Hamann, 'Envoie 1962-71'; Philip Goad, 'Robin Boyd and the Design of the House, 1959-1971. New Eclecticism: Ethic and Aesthetic'; Winsome Callister, 'The dialectic of desire and disappointment: Robin Boyd and Australian architecture'. See also Doug Evans, *Indistinct. Pierre Bourdieu and the Field of Architectural Production*, PhD Thesis, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, 2002

Beyond more direct architectural parallels, Heideggerian philosophy could be described as open-ended and paradoxical: *a state of wondering*. While I was initially drawn to Robin Boyd's writing and architecture for their formal qualities, peculiarities of his body of work invited reflection along Heideggerian lines. Boyd's work could be considered contradictory² and has been described as without a recognizable style.³ This quality, pervaded by a sense of 'wondering' and openness that is also reflected in Boyd's writing, is argued here as Heideggerian in nature, and characteristic of a 'poetic' approach that is continuously inquisitive in relation to our existence and experience of the world, and therefore alternative to the sense of assertion that typically informs modes and outcomes of mainstream modernist positions.

Also, to discuss Boyd through a philosophical position automatically places the approach and work of this architect beyond the ties and limitations of historical facts, with the intention to approach and discuss his contributions (both in the fields of architectural practice and theory) as universally valid and significant to the culture and architecture of any time.

This thesis does not claim that Robin Boyd was exposed to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger – there is no evidence that he read or discussed any work by this German philosopher. The bibliographic references of the Melbourne architect⁴ are hardly involved with the field of philosophy. Also, many of Heidegger's writings, especially the late ones produced after the Second World War which constitute a relevant philosophical background to the arguments sustained in this thesis, became translated into English only after Boyd's death in 1971. Heidegger's philosophies and some more recent derivations of his work are used in this thesis as theoretical references that are indirectly related to Boyd's thought and work.

Key points of Heidegger's philosophies are introduced below for their relevance to this thesis argument that is elaborated in the framework essay.

Heidegger's philosophy is consistently critical of the supremacy that Western thought and its various modern cultures have assigned to rationality and related conditions (including technology) in order to determine reasons/truths to explain fundamental existential issues which he argues are originally and essentially incomprehensible and irresolvable to human beings. Since his early work *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposes that through our sense of rationality and logic we place ourselves (as human beings) at the centre of any cognitive relation and from this position we tend to determine a world that is made up of entities always measured and proportioned against us. In this way we represent a world of objects that are determined and therefore comprehended by, and always in relation to, us/subjects. As an immediate reflection of this, as subjects we tend to feel part of this world, therefore to be in the world amongst other parts. According to Heidegger this conception of the world is rationally constructed – and consistently perpetuated – in order to enable us to come to terms with the most inexplicable question with regard to our existence: *why and how are we thrown into the world?* By constructing a world in

which we are subjects, and therefore by being in control of all other objects that are produced by us/subjects and still by us comprehended through forms of determinations that are related to us and our intrinsic characteristics, measures and proportions, we can cope with – we can overcome – our original existential "Angst".⁵

Heidegger's late works from 1950s onwards, and some contemporary interpretations of his thought – among others those of philosopher and architectural theoretician Massimo Cacciari – constitute a significant background of this thesis and they further extend and refine these positions by proposing the possibility to relate to the world and to consider our existence not just in, but essentially with it, through continuous indeterminate forms of wondering as a reflection of the embracement of both a rational/logical and irrational/illogical thinking. After all, as put by Heidegger:

"Reason and its conceptions are only *one* kind of thinking and are by no means determined by themselves but by that which has been called thinking, to think in the manner of the *ratio*. That its dominance arises as rationalization of all categories, as establishing norms, as leveling in the course of the unfolding of European nihilism, provides food for thought, just as do the concomitant attempts at flight into irrational. What is most serious, however, is that rationalism and irrationalism are entangled in a sort of reciprocal intercourse out of which they not only cannot find their way, but no longer wish to extricate themselves."⁶

The late works of the German philosopher encourage a cognitive approach that is paradoxically and illogically open – "released", in Heideggerian terms – to embrace both rationality and irrationality. Through the simultaneous use of both "calculative" and "meditative" thinking, it would be possible to say 'yes' and at the same time 'no' to technology, and ultimately "dwell in the world in a totally different way".⁷ This different way represents a critical shift from the tendency to objective determination as an approach that since the end of the Pre-Socratic philosophies has been increasingly guided by rationality in its own development throughout Western modern cultures. Heidegger's call for a meditative thinking as a parallel counterbalance to the supremacy of rationality is a critical, but never reactionary, response to the rationalist and progressive cultures that extensively inform mainstream modernism – it is a way that is alternative to the celebration of science and technology, both used by calculative thinking and its typical planning processes as means to reach tangible "definite results".⁸ The encouragement towards meditative thinking as an approach that coexists with and never replaces calculative thinking, is Heidegger's way to make human beings reflect on the sense of inescapability that characterises their original existential *Angst*, and therefore to make them wonder about the illusory nature of a world that is conventionally misconceived/constructed as a whole of individual objective entities that are determined and measured – thus comprehended – by human beings in relation to themselves, in accordance with a vicious circle that indeed draws human beings to elect themselves as subjects/relational centres of any rational and logical representation/understanding/comprehension of the world.

The supremacy assigned by modern cultures to rationality and calculative thinking is a further reflection of the Western identification

- 5 "As attunement, being anxious is a way of being-in-the-world; that about which we have *Angst* is thrown being-in-the-world; that for which we have *Angst* is our potentiality-for-being-in-the-world." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y., 1996 (original ed., *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1927), p. 178
- 6 Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1958 (original ed., Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1956), pp. 39, 40
- 7 "There are...two kinds of thinking, each justified and needed in its own way: calculative thinking and meditative thinking...We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us... We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside...I would call this comportment toward technology which expresses 'yes' and at the same time 'no', by an old world, *releasement toward things*. Having this comportment we no longer view things only in a technical way. It gives us clear vision and we notice that while the production and use of machines demands of us another relation to things, it is not a meaningless relation. Farming and agriculture, for example, now have turned into a motorized food industry. Thus here, evidently, as elsewhere, a profound change is taking place in man's relation to nature and to the world. But the meaning that reigns in this change remains obscure...If we explicitly and continuously heed the fact that such hidden meaning touches us everywhere in the world of technology, we stand at once within the realm of that which hides itself from us, and hides itself just in approaching us. That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery. I call the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology, *openness to the mystery*. Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way." Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1966 (originally ed., *Gelassenheit*, 1959), pp. 46, 54, 55
- 8 As observed by Heidegger, "(the peculiarity of calculative thinking) consists in the fact that whenever we plan, research, and organize, we always reckon with conditions that are given. We take them into account with the calculated intention of their serving specific purposes. Thus we can count on definite results. This calculation is the mark of all thinking that plans and investigates." *Ibid.*, p. 46

2 See Conrad Hamann, 'Against the Dying of the Light: Robin Boyd and Australian Architecture', op. cit.

3 See David Saunders, 'Afterword', in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit.

4 One of the most comprehensive documents in relation to Boyd's entire body of written and built works, including a list of the books of his own personal library is: Karen Burns, Harriet Edquist, *Robin Boyd: the architect as critic*, op. cit. – it is the catalogue of the homonymous exhibition curated by Karen Burns, Harriet Edquist and Philip Goad (the latter in the role of also specific curator of the bibliography presented at the exhibition and published in the catalogue) at LaTrobe Library, Melbourne, 3-28 July 1989

of being with presence. As pointed out by Heidegger, “in all metaphysics from the beginning of Western thought, Being means being present”;⁹ the process of objectification that has increasingly conditioned Modern cultures and their related beliefs in science and technology, goes hand in hand with the determination of the world as an object – an objective ‘presence’ made up of many other objective ‘presences’ – *in* which (rather than *with* which) human beings think to be, as subjects and “relational centres”¹⁰ of any determination/calculation, thus as subjects in control of the world’s objective measures.

“In distinction from Greek apprehending, modern representing, whose meaning the word *repraesentatio* first brings to its earliest expression, intends something quite different. Here to represent [*vor-stellen*] means to bring what is present at hand [*das Vorhandene*] before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm. Wherever this happens, man ‘gets into the picture’ in precedence over whatever is. But in that man puts himself into the picture in this way, he puts himself into the scene, i.e., into the open sphere of that which is generally and publicly represented. Therewith man sets himself up as the setting in which whatever is must henceforth set itself forth, must present itself [*sich...präsentieren*], i.e., be picture. Man becomes the representative [*der Repräsentant*] of that which is, in the sense of that which has the character of object.”¹¹

Since the end of Medieval and early Renaissance ages, Modern cultures have strongly accentuated the primacy of rationality and the correlated process of calculation and objectification of the world. As described by Heidegger:

“This radical revolution in outlook has come about in modern philosophy. From this arises a completely new relation of man to the world and his place in it. The world now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry. This relation of man to the world as such, in principle a technical one, developed in the seventeenth century first and only in Europe.”¹²

The culture of mainstream modernism – to which both Heidegger and Boyd directly belong and constantly refer in their work and research investigations – expresses further declinations of the emphasis that is traditionally assigned to rationality in the context of the Western modern thought’s tradition. Guided by terms and values such as ‘social progress’, ‘cultural revolution’, ‘avant-gardism’, ‘technical development’ and similar, many movements and ideological positions of mainstream modernist culture confirm an approach that is exaggeratedly based on both the original Western assumption that being means presence and the related consequential conception of a world determined as an object – as a whole of objective entities represented by human beings considering themselves as subjects and indeed “relational center(s) of that which is as such”.¹³ Ironically, the emphasis assigned to rationality, and science and technology as its related investigative fields, similarly strongly informs and conditions some theoretical positions that in reacting against these values are however condemned to still ‘depend’ on them in their ‘determined’

and ‘intentional’ counterattacking modes – modes that are therefore, paradoxically, still exaggeratedly guided by rationality as an investigative method to attack rationality, and by the over-conditioning presence of science and technology as ‘targeted enemies’.

The paradoxical thinking of Heidegger, in particular that of his late theoretical positions, embraces at once rationality and irrationality, accepting both these conditions as intrinsic of our being-in-the-world. According to the German philosopher, on the one hand we are intrinsically inclined to rational comprehension through a logical process of according that makes us understand/represent the world as a whole of interrelated entities that are indeed ‘present’ and objectified by us; on the other, and at the same time, we are intrinsically drawn to an irrational dimension that is incomprehensible to us in light of its ungraspable state of oneness/all-inclusiveness – a state where everything is one, therefore not graspable through forms of logical accords; a condition that is well described by Heidegger in these following words:

“This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world’s worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. This impossibility does not lie in the inability of our human thinking to explain and fathom in this way. Rather, the inexplicable and unfathomable character of the world’s worlding lies in this, that causes and grounds remain unsuitable for the world’s worlding. As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world’s nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding.”¹⁴

Our instinctive and inevitable sense of *Angst* is the symptom of our incapability to grasp but also eradicate this “simple onefold of worlding”. It is a reaction to the fact that we are at the same time incapable of comprehending this state and yet always intuitively drawn to it.

This thesis embraces this paradoxical type of philosophy as a sophisticated and effective way to reflect on the relevance of original existential questions and to indirectly take a distance from illusory and rather simplistic answers that the majority of mainstream modernist positions have put forward as ‘certain’ determinations of their investigative research. The thought and work of Robin Boyd is interpreted as strongly empathetic with the philosophical positions of the German philosopher. The sense of ambivalence and indefiniteness that in different and various ways characterises both the writings and the design works of the Melbourne architect is considered closely analogous to – an indirect and unintentional reflection of – the paradoxical coexistence of rationality and irrationality that informs Heidegger’s thought. Critical of the ‘sense of certainty’ that accompanies many formulaic theories in the context of modernism, the approach of both Heidegger and Boyd, in their respective fields of philosophy and architecture, is informed by an inclination to embrace rationality and irrationality, “calculative” and “meditative” thinking, exposure to both comprehension and incomprehension. This thesis explores these approaches as thoughtful means for the emersion and testing of investigative outcomes that in their sense of

9 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1968 (original ed., *Was Heisst Denken?*, 1954), p. 102

10 “Certainly the modern age has, as a consequence of the liberation of man, introduced subjectivism and individualism. But it remains just as certain that no age before this one has produced a comparable objectivism...What is decisive is...that the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject...when man becomes the primary and only real *subjectum*, that means: Man becomes that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth. Man becomes the relational center of that which is as such.” Martin Heidegger, ‘The Age of the World Picture’, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977, p. 128

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132

12 Martin Heidegger, ‘Memorial Address’, in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 50

13 Martin Heidegger, ‘The Age of the World Picture’, in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., p. 128

14 Martin Heidegger, ‘The Thing’, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971, pp. 179, 180

indeterminateness are alternative to the illusory sense of certainty that characterises both the methods and results of many modernist positions and further contemporary declinations; in addition to this, this paradoxical approach is proposed as an effective way to maintain the level of theoretical speculation always open and in a continuous state of wondering instead than illusorily pacified by determinations that are objectively and conclusively reached. This thesis proposes that this approach, conducive to explorative processes that are continuously inquisitive, is an appropriate way to speculate in regard to fundamental questions related to our existence, our experience of the world (as both a comprehensible determined object and an incomprehensible state of oneness/all-inclusiveness), and our correlated way to perceive and produce the world.

Proposing that this approach represents a 'poetic' dimension through which it is possible to critically resist – and continuously wonder on – the illusoriness of the determinations produced by modern – and in particular modernist – cognitive processes that are too emphatically based on rationality, this thesis discusses the work and thought of Robin Boyd as analogous to the poetic thinking of Martin Heidegger. It investigates certain characters that typically inform Boyd's approach in relation to his own writings and architectural works, and reads them as indirectly but substantially related to Heidegger's 'poetic' call for a dimension that encompasses at once rationality and irrationality, calculative and meditative thinking.¹⁵ The state of "nearness", advanced by the German philosopher as a poetic dimension that keeps us continuously on the balance between rationality and irrationality – comprehension and incomprehension – through its rationally hinting and deferring to something that is rationally impossible to grasp,¹⁶ is proposed as an allusion to Boyd's approach and his related writings and projects. Some conditions, such as those of ambivalence and potentiality among others, are discussed – throughout the main theoretical essay and the section that documents some selected projects – as 'poetic' sensibilities that are characteristic of Boyd's writings and design works respectively; their sense of openness and indeterminateness are proposed as qualities that are strongly in empathy with Heidegger's notion of 'nearness' – qualities that indeed encourage states of 'con-fusion', and continuous wondering, between rationality and irrationality, thus between sense of comprehension (of an objective world made up of objective elements) and sense of incomprehension (in regard to the rationally ungraspable state of oneness/all-inclusiveness of the 'world's worlding').

More specifically related to the thought and work of Robin Boyd, the ambivalence of his writings and the potentiality of his projects are tested through the discussion of an approach that similar in its own applications throughout the two different operative fields (theoretical discourse and architectural practice), is inclined to forms of 'con-fusion' and openness rather than clarity and determination. This thesis proposes that the sense of 'con-fusion' and ambivalence of this architect are indicative of an approach that is alternative to that of many architectural positions of mainstream modernism, generally conditioned by the prioritization of rationality, and therefore condemned to produce outcomes that are trapped by forms of duality/correspondence that are merely dictated by logical accords and formulaic processes drawn by objective/scientific/rational types of determination. Some reverberations of such modernist approaches are identifiable in the following phenomena:

- Productive and creative processes according to which forms are

direct translations of pre-determined ideas;

- A concept of space according to which a whole – a spatial whole – is considered as the result of individual and separate parts/entities that are logically accorded/interrelated by our perception; as a consequence of this, we tend to exclusively think that spaces are in between and over parts/entities, and that conversely parts/entities exist within spaces, but also separate them;

- Design processes that prioritize certain elements over others, therefore generating results informed by a sense of hierarchy between different architectural elements as parts of the project; as a consequence of this, architectural, interior, landscape and infrastructural elements are not only considered individual components of the project, but are also hierarchically interrelated between each other;

- Production and perception of urban, architectural and landscape projects as merely individual objective 'presences'; as such – as references to our subjectivity – they are considered as essentially means for our navigation, measuring and related comprehension of the world.

This thesis proposes that Boyd's approach, unconsciously in empathy with Heidegger's philosophical thought, is alternative and peripheral in regard to those of mainstream modernism, which the Melbourne architect embraces, absorbs and overcomes through a non reactionary but undoubtedly sound process of critical resistance. Boyd's approach to both theoretical discussion – widely undertaken throughout his innumerable published works – and design production – inclusive of an extensive body of built and unbuilt projects – resists the rational determinations of mainstream modernism through sensibilities consistently informed by a sense of ambivalence, 'con-fusion' and other correlated dimensions that are in different ways discussed in this thesis: unclarity, vagueness, weakness, irresoluteness, elusiveness, ambiguity, indefiniteness, openness, releasement. These quintessential qualities of Boyd's approach and related works are all indicative of his inclination to rationally accept the comprehensible objectification of the world, and yet at the same time to hope for an incomprehensible dimension of reciprocal co-belongingness of entities. The thesis proposes that this paradoxical position – this coexistence of rational thinking and irrational sense of hope/releasement – is the peculiar characteristic of this architect, and places him on the edges of the modernist culture and its related values. Discussing many of Boyd's writings, design works and cultural references, and the sense of empathy or difference between them, this thesis examines the alternative position of this architect in relation to other figures and outcomes of modernist cultures, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. For example, through a comparison with some theoretical positions of Walter Gropius, generally presented in previous existing writings as Boyd's theoretical reference besides being a colleague and personal friend, this thesis rather concentrates on the significant differences between the orthodox modernism of the German architect and the shifts that position the Melbourne architect aside from this same type of modernism.

The second part of the thesis, documenting and discussing 36 selected projects, represents the project component of this thesis. The projects have been selected in order to show an informative array of works over differing scales and programs, from single

15 Heidegger's positions have been often discussed as 'poetic' in their continuous critique of values and assumptions that are typical of Modern cultures – see among others David Halliburton, *Poetic Thinking. An Approach to Heidegger*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981. Heidegger himself wrote extensively on the nature of poetic thinking and its essential contribution to the embracement of rationality and irrationality – see, among his writings, Martin Heidegger, 'What Are Poets For?', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit.

16 "...thinking would be coming-into-the-nearness of distance... 'moving-into-nearness.' The word could rather... be the name for our walk today along this country path... Which guided us deep into the night... that... overwhelms the stars... because it nears their distances in the heavens... she binds together without seam or edge or thread... she neighbors; because she works only with nearness". Martin Heidegger, 'Conversation on a country path about thinking', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 68, 89, 90. More specifically in regard to the poetic dimension of nearness, Heidegger writes: "The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unfaltering nearness." Martin Heidegger, "...Poetically Man Dwells..."', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 226

houses to apartment buildings, community and public architectures, commercial projects and exhibition installations. Each project is entirely re-documented through new drawings – site maps, plans, sections, elevations, axonometric views and 3-D views – that have been produced for this thesis with intention, as well as illustrated with archive and recent photographs, and discussed through an individual text that is descriptive and theoretical at once. The projects of this section are explored as related, both directly and indirectly, to Boyd's theoretical approach and the various correlated speculations discussed throughout the main theoretical essay; some recurrent conditions of these projects – spatial continuity; reciprocal co-belongingness between architectural, landscape and infrastructural parts; and coexistence and mutual intertwinement of functional areas, among others – are proposed as reflections of the sense of ambivalence and potentiality that inform Boyd's theoretical approach. The re-documentation of these projects through the systematic production of types of drawing that range from territorial to urban, architectural and landscape scales and definitions is a deliberate strategy to test these works as theoretically and physically informed by conditions of spatial continuity and co-belongingness of parts.

The contributions of this thesis, as envisaged by the conclusion are; the re-documentation of Boyd's projects through the re-drawing process re-presents this work in a more comprehensive way than has been done in the past; an alternative reading of Robin Boyd's work in positioning Boyd's architecture and its relationship with space and form beyond a purely historical framework and; a further development of the application of Heideggerian philosophy to architecture.

The contributions of this thesis straddle the field of practice and the field of architectural theory and are the outcome of a particular combination: a practising architect who is also involved with the fields of philosophical and historical theories rather than an architectural historian. It is my argument that this condition offers particular insights not often found when argued from one of these positions and I will reflect on this further in the conclusion.

Furthermore, in the conclusion of the thesis I revisit the notions of my framework and reflect upon their validation and limitations. Also, other trajectories arising from this framework are introduced as possible further research that provide validation for such an approach being namely the notion of co-belongingness of the built and natural environment for its implications on how we consider notions such as sustainability and the occupation of the land.

Rational Definiteness and Irrational Oneness: Coexisting conditions of Robin Boyd's Heideggerian approach

The poetic condition: metaphysically *open* to the 'alien', yet metaphysically *close* to the 'familiar'

German philosopher Martin Heidegger delivered his lecture "...Poetically Man Dwells..." in 1951. This text was then successively published in 1954 together with other seminal essays and papers produced by him in the initial years of the 1950s.¹ French philosopher Gaston Bachelard published his book *The poetics of space* in 1958.² Both these works specifically investigate the poetic as a state in which the metaphysical inclination of human beings towards the process of objectification/representation can possibly become weakened and definitely less authoritative. In both these works, and in other writings written in the same period by Heidegger, the critique is directed towards the general process of conventionally – metaphysically – identifying being as a presence, and therefore perceiving the world as if it was merely determined by the duality subject (seer)-object (seen).

Both Heidegger and Bachelard accept metaphysics as an inevitable and unavoidable condition that constantly informs our way of being in, and relating to, the world; yet both these philosophers investigate the human capability of staying open, in a state of wonder and inquiry towards the inexplicable and unanswerable questions related to our being and condition, as a poetic dimension for overcoming – not certainly defeating – the conventional outcomes metaphysically produced by the rational process of determining reality. Through this philosophical thought we are guided towards the possibility of thinking/feeling/intuiting something which is different and 'other' from the recurrent conventional/rational (mis)conceptions which are constantly metaphysically inclined to validate theoretical stands such as:

- duality between subject and object;
- necessity of evidence and presence/visibility as exclusive criteria for the 'truth';
- state of conscience/awareness as the ultimate condition of our being.

Heidegger and Bachelard propose the poetic condition as a dimension in and by which metaphysical foundations become weakened and definitely less 'true'. Bachelard observes that "at the level of the poetic image, the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions."³ According to Heidegger "poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar. The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the

- 1 The book *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, published in Germany in 1954, collects writings that investigate the possibility of conceiving a type of thinking capable of being critical of the metaphysical condition which informs the rational nature of human beings. This collection includes, among others, works such as 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1953), 'Science and Reflection' (1953), 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (1951), 'The Thing' (1950) and ' "...Poetically Man Dwells..." ' (1951) – the first two are published in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977; the last three are published in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971
- 2 Gaston Bachelard, *The poetics of space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1994 (original ed., *La poétique de l'espace*, 1958; first translated in English, 1964)
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. xix

- 4 Martin Heidegger, " '...Poetically Man Dwells...' ", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 226
- 5 As suggested by Heidegger, the poetic dimension implies a sense of measuring which is different from the geometrical and scientific measuring imposed by rationality. "Poetry is a measuring. But what is it to measure? If poetry is to be understood as measuring, then obviously we may not subsume it under just any idea of measuring and measure. Poetry is presumably a high and special kind of measuring. But there is more. Perhaps we have to pronounce the sentence, 'Poetry is a measuring,' with a different stress. 'Poetry is a measuring.' In poetry there takes place what all measuring is in the ground of its being. Hence it is necessary to pay heed to the basic act of measuring. That consists in man's first of all taking the measure which then is applied in every measuring act. In poetry the taking of measure occurs. To write poetry is measure-taking, understood in the strict sense of the word, by which man first receives the measure for the breadth of his being...how can that which by its very nature remains unknown ever become a measure? For something that man measures himself by must after all impart itself, must appear. But if it appears, it is known. The god, however, is unknown, and he is the measure nonetheless. Not only this, but the god who remains unknown, must by showing *himself* as the one he is, appear as the one who remains unknown. God's *manifestness* – not only he himself – is mysterious...The measure consists in the way in which the god who remains unknown, is revealed as such by the sky. God's appearance through the sky consists in a disclosing that lets us see what conceals itself, but lets us see it not by seeking to wrest what is concealed out of its concealedness, but only by guarding the concealed in its self-concealment. Thus the unknown god appears as the unknown by way of the sky's manifestness. This appearance is the measure against which man measures himself." Ibid., pp. 221, 222, 223
- 6 As observed by Heidegger, "Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things in their belonging together. Gathering (*Versammeln*) comes to play in the place in the sense of the releasing sheltering of things in their region. And the region? The older form of the word runs 'that-which-regions' (*die Gegnet*). It names the free expanse. Through it the openness is urged to let each thing merge in its resting in itself. This means at the same time: preserving, i.e. the gathering of things in their belonging together...We would have to learn to recognize that things themselves are places and do not merely belong to a place". Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space' (original ed., *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969), in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 123
- 7 Gaston Bachelard, *The poetics of space*, op. cit., p. xxii

darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unfaltering nearness".⁴

Through the poetic image, through the dimension of the poetic, we metaphysically realize the existence of the unthinkable and the unrepresentable; yet at the same time we are destined to continuously metaphysically stay in a state of search and inquiry towards the unthinkable/unrepresentable. We can experience the 'nearness' of the unthinkable/unrepresentable and yet never reach its visible/rational representation. A poetic dimension has the capability of subverting the rational and conventional measuring through which we commonly relate to the world;⁵ it is through the subversion of this measuring that the inescapable conception of a world metaphysically determined by the duality between subject and object starts to fade, also bringing other conventional/rational certainties in its own process of fading/weakening. Through the fading of metaphysical conceptions, through the undermining of metaphysical foundations such as the notions of origin, end and linear progression, through the realization of the condition of a reciprocal "belonging together" between things,⁶ through the critique of the conventional metaphysical dichotomy between subject and object, also the notion of projection as a process directed to intentionally and pre-determinedly reach a conclusion loses its own sense of certainty, authority and absoluteness.

"To compose a finished, well-constructed poem, the mind is obliged to make projects that prefigure it. But for a simple poetic image, there is no project".⁷

This observation by Bachelard proposes the existence of a different, 'other', irrational and inexplicable state which pervades our imagination whenever it can figure out in absence of intentionality and projection. In this situation, rational/conventional foundations and canonical forms of measurement become irrelevant and useless; yet they still exist, but only veiled, confused and in crisis. In his turn Heidegger suggests that the poetical dimension makes us realize the existence/presence of that which is never rationally present – never rationally explicable, thinkable, visible, representable. The poetic dimension can keep us in a state of wonder, suspended over and beyond any logical/rational explanation, open towards an 'illumination' that will never resolutely reveal itself, confused in regard to resolutions which we cannot avoid pursuing as forms of completion, as logical/rational forms of accord.

The inevitable *logos*

As stated by the dictionary, the meaning of the term 'logic' is: "reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity."⁸ Some of the definitions related to the original Greek term 'logos' are: "word; reasoning; dialogue; talk; discourse; reason",⁹ but also "reasoning as the inherent activity in humans".¹⁰ Bachelard admits that "everything specifically human in man is *logos*".¹¹ Also Heidegger unhesitatingly affirms that "man is called the being who can think, and rightly so. Man is the rational animal. Reason, *ratio*, evolves in thinking".¹² Our rational thinking is unavoidably entwined with *logos*, discourse; we are inescapably destined to the logical forms of a rationalizing process – to thinking as a comprehending (from Latin, 'cum-prehendere' = grasp with). As soon as we comprehend/determine the unknown by positioning/reducing it into a relationship and by representing its image, we momentarily lose sight of both the

inherent mysteriousness and the sense of absoluteness to which we are exposed in our process of comprehending the unknown.¹³ It is impossible and un-thinkable to escape *logos*; if it were otherwise, we could never anyway realize or conceive it in a rational way – we could never rationally admit/represent this to both the world and ourselves. The poetic dimension, according to Heidegger, Bachelard and other philosophers not expressly discussed in this thesis, can provoke us towards non-rationality, positioning us *beyond* both *logos* and the self, keeping us in an inexplicable – poetic indeed – state, instinctively in search of that which cannot be rationally and logically grasped.

It is not surprising, perhaps, that the notion of *logos* is, or at least used to be, related at the same time to the sphere of the irrational. Heidegger reminds us that before becoming "since antiquity... interpreted in various ways: as *Ratio*, as *Verbum*, as cosmic law, as the logical, as necessity in thought, as meaning and as reason,"¹⁴ the term *logos* had been earlier involved, through the theoretical thinking of ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus,¹⁵ with the incalculable dimension of the "One is All"¹⁶ and the ungraspable notion of "Λέγειν (as)...to lay. Laying is the letting-lie-before – which is gathered into itself – of that which comes together into presence".¹⁷ Exposing us to a notion of *logos* that is originally informed by the paradoxical coexistence of rationality and irrationality, Heidegger's reflections also at the same time highlight the Western intrinsic inclination towards "presencing" as a rational and metaphysical form of truth to shelter from the disquieting confusion that would arise from meditating on the "storm of Being" that lays at the core of the very same paradoxical coexistence of rationality and irrationality:

"The question arises: How does the proper meaning of λέγειν, to lay, attain the signification of saying and talking?...The translation of λέγειν as gathered-letting-lie-before, and of Λόγος as the Laying that gathers, may seem strange. Yet it is more salutary for thinking to wander into the strange than to establish itself in the obvious. Presumably Heraclitus alienated his contemporaries at least as much, although in a entirely different way, by weaving the words λέγειν and λόγος, so familiar to them, into such a saying, and by making ὁ Λόγος the guiding word of his thinking. Where does this word ὁ λόγος – which we are now attempting to think as the Laying that gathers – lead Heraclitus' thought? The word ὁ Λόγος names that which gathers all present beings into presencing and lets them lie before us in it. Ὁ Λόγος names that in which the presencing of what is present comes to pass. The presencing of present beings...is...we say the Being of beings. Since the beginning of Western thought the Being of beings emerges as what is alone worthy of thought. If we think this historic development in a truly historical way, then that in which the beginning of Western thought rests first becomes manifest: that in Greek antiquity the Being of beings becomes worthy of thought *is* the beginning of the West and *is* the hidden source of its destiny. Had this beginning not safeguarded what has been, i.e. the gathering of what still endures, the Being of beings would not now govern from the essence of modern technology. Through technology the entire globe is today embraced and held fast in a kind of Being experienced in Western fashion and represented on the epistemological models of European metaphysics and science...Once, however, in the beginning of Western thinking, the essence of language flashed in the light of Being – once, when Heraclitus thought the Λόγος as his guiding word, so as to

- 8 *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide* (ed. by Catherine Soanes, Maurice Waite, Sara Hawker), Oxford University Press, New York, 2001
- 9 From *Italian-Ancient Greek/Ancient Greek-Italian Dictionary*, Avallardi, Milano, 1984 (my translation)
- 10 From *Il Nuovo Zingarelli, Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana* (Dictionary of the Italian Language), Zanichelli, Bologna, 1988 (my translation); an Italian dictionary is used here as a reference because the term 'logos' does not consistently appear in English dictionaries
- 11 Gaston Bachelard, *The poetics of space*, op. cit., p. xxiii
- 12 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1968 (original ed., *Was Heisst Denken?*, 1954), p. 3
- 13 Italian philosopher and politician Massimo Cacciari observes that: "il molteplice potrà esser detto, in quanto manifesta un *logos*. *Logos* implica il rapporto, la relazione: tra soggetto e oggetto, tra uno e molti. Implica perciò un calcolo. Esclude ogni immediatezza rivelativa. La cosa non ha nome se non perche' vista, compresa in uno sguardo, *teorizzata* appunto. Ma teorizzarla e' porla in relazione, coglierne le differenze specifiche, indagare a quali 'insiemi' appartenga." "Multiplicity can be said, as it manifests *logos*. *Logos* implies a connection, a relationship: between subject and object, between one and many. It therefore implies a calculation. It excludes any revelatory immediacy. Things do not have names except if they are seen, comprehended within a sight, indeed *theorized*. But to theorize things is like to place them into a relationship, to grasp their specific differences, to investigate which 'wholes' they belong to." Further in the same text Cacciari says that "il Logos a tutti comune (e')...quell'unita' che il molteplice mostra, si', ma come perduta, rivela, si', ma nella sua assenza." "The notion of *Logos* common to everyone (is)...a unity which is revealed by multiplicity, yes, but only as a lost and absent unity." Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, Adelphi, Milano, 1997, pp. 18, 19 (my translation)
- 14 Martin Heidegger, 'Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)', in *Early Greek Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1975 (original ed., in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1954), p. 60
- 15 Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535-c. 475 BC) was a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, a native of Ephesus, Ionia, on the coast of Asia Minor
- 16 Martin Heidegger, 'Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)', in *Early Greek Thinking*, op. cit., p. 59
- 17 Ibid., p. 63

think in this word the Being of beings. But the lightning abruptly vanished. No one held onto its streak of light and the nearness of what it illuminated. We see this lightning only when we station ourselves in the storm of Being. Yet everything today betrays the fact that we bestir ourselves only to drive storms away. We organize all available means for cloud-seeding and storm dispersal in order to have calm in the face of the storm. But this calm is no tranquility. It is only anesthesia; more precisely, the narcotization of anxiety in the face of thinking.¹⁸

Logos and despair

The anxiety that assails us in the “storm of Being”, while exposed to wonder on the “strange” coexistence of a world that is, at the same time, irrationally “gathered-letting-lie-before” and rationally “laying that gathers”, is in empathy with the sense of “despair” that is proposed by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard as the condition that intrinsically haunts human beings in their continuous and inevitable state of “sickness unto death”.¹⁹ Kierkegaard tells us that despair is an inherent human condition, since “the possibility of this sickness is man’s advantage over the beast, and this advantage distinguishes him far more essentially than the erect posture, for it implies the infinite erectness or loftiness of being spirit”.²⁰ According to Kierkegaard, the possibility of this sickness, as “sickness in the self”, is indeed associated to our inevitability to be and have a self:

“Thus it is that despair, this sickness in the self, is the sickness unto death.”²¹

It is an eternal, infinite and unsolvable condition, forever and since ever with us:

“no more than ‘the dagger can slay thoughts’ can despair consume the eternal thing, the self, which is the ground of despair, whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched.”²²

Our state of self as a “relation (that) relates itself to its own self”²³ is quintessentially ours in its inclination towards logos, towards the process of relating, towards rational and logical forms of accord; yet this very same state of self condemns us eternally to despair:

“This is the situation in despair. And however thoroughly it eludes the attention of the despairer, and however thoroughly the despairer may succeed (as in the case of that kind of despair which is characterized by unawareness of being in despair) in losing himself entirely, and losing himself in such a way that it is not noticed in the least – eternity nevertheless will make it manifest that his situation was despair, and it will so nail him to himself that the torment nevertheless remains that he cannot get rid of himself, and it becomes manifest that he was deluded in thinking that he succeeded. And thus it is eternity must act, because to have a self, to be a self, is the greatest concession made to man, but at the same time it is eternity’s demand upon him.”²⁴

The condition of despair is therefore inevitable, since it is implicitly rooted in our propensity to search for the unreachable. If this unreachable was reached/grasped/comprehended, then it would no longer be unreachable; however, it would immediately open in its turn to further un-representable and ‘poetically’ mysterious²⁵ dimensions, closely in empathy with the poetic dimensions of ‘con-fusion’ between logos and intuition that will be discussed later as intrinsic of Heidegger’s and Boyd’s theoretical positions.

- 26 Martin Heidegger, ‘Conversation on a country path about thinking’, in *Discourse on Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1966 (original ed., *Gelassenheit*, 1959), p. 68. This text, a dialogue between a teacher, a scientist, and a scholar, was written from more extended notes on a conversation between the three figures dating from 1944-45. It develops the theme discussed in ‘Memorial Address’, the first part of the book. The memorial address was written by Heidegger in 1955 in honour of the German composer Conradin Kreutzer; in this work Heidegger encourages towards a state of “releasement toward things” (p. 54), a state of a possible paradoxical coexistence between a conscious and unconscious way of perceiving: “we stand at once within the realm of that which hides itself from us, and hides itself just in approaching us. That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery... Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way... Yet releasement toward things and openness to the mystery never happen to themselves. They do not befall us accidentally. Both flourish only through persistent, courageous thinking.” Martin Heidegger, ‘Memorial Address’, in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 55, 56
- 27 Martin Heidegger, ‘Conversation on a country path about thinking’, in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 68
- 28 Michel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, André Deutsch, London, 1986 (original ed., *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, 1605 [part 1] and 1615 [part 2]; first translated in English as *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote*, 1755)
- 29 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, Heinemann, London, 1913 (originally published in instalments by the journal *Russkij vestnik*, 1868-1869)
- 30 In the initial pages of the book, Don Quixote is described as a “dry, meagre offspring, wayward, capricious and full of whimsical notions peculiar to his own imagination”, Michel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, op. cit., p. 21. Further on in the book: “(H)is understanding being quite perverted, he was seized with the strangest whim that ever entered the brain of a madman. This was no other, than a full persuasion, that it was highly expedient and necessary, not only for his own honour, but also for the good of the public, that he should profess knight-errantry, and ride through the world in arms, to seek adventures”; *ibid.*, p. 30
- 31 Massimo Cacciari, *L’Arcipelago*, op. cit., p. 73 (my translation); the original Italian text is: “Don Chisciotte è àtopon, senza luogo nel mondo, un assurdo indecifrabile per il logos”
- 32 In one of his conversations Prince Myshkin says: “I’m twenty-seven, but I know that I’m a child... I’m always afraid that my absurd manner may discredit the thought or the

Despair, openness, releasement, idiocy

Analogously ‘desperate’, in a desperate/inexplicable condition of *releasement* and *openness*, is the state of an unconscious waiting that is praised by Heidegger:

“Waiting, all right; but never awaiting, for awaiting already links itself with re-presenting and what is re-presented.”²⁶

If, as suggested by the German philosopher, “thinking would be coming-into-the-nearness of distance”,²⁷ then the despair, a positive intuitive despair, is that which characterises those who spontaneously, unconsciously, in-considerately, somehow faithfully and ‘idiotically’ – with no sense of projection, predetermination, predictability – wait for something that will never be grasped/revealed, something that is truly ‘in the distance’, destined to constantly and forever be ‘distant’ from us, who are capable of just and only reaching its ‘nearness’.

It is not surprising that two well known ‘irrational’ figures in the world of literature, Don Quixote, the ‘fool’ knight depicted by Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes,²⁸ and Prince Lyov Nikolayevitch Myshkin, the ‘idiot’ in the novel of Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky,²⁹ are in different ways pervaded by a ‘strange’, uncommon and not-straightforward logic which keeps them inclined – ‘desperately’ open – towards a sense of (in)comprehension, towards an unreasonable conclusion. Their own nature of unpredictability and un-projection is continuously and faithfully/unquestioningly open towards the occurrence.

The former is described as an illogical and insane character, pervaded by an unrestrainable imagination that places him out of and beyond his mind, in a continuous state of wandering, constantly and furiously drawn by an irrational yet noble search for justice throughout his many fights and battles, all originated by his own misinterpretation of reality – by his fantastic and imaginary (in)comprehension of reality.³⁰ According to Italian philosopher Massimo Cacciari, “Don Quixote is *àtopon*; he is placeless in the world – an indecipherable absurdity to logos”.³¹

Prince Myshkin, ‘the idiot’, the main character of the important work by Dostoevsky, has been widely described by literary critics as an ethical and spiritually superior figure, whose idiocy consists in an absolute lack of will and decision. His weakness and incapability of reaching firm decisions keeps him unconditionally open, in absence of a ‘proportioned’, appropriate, sense of determination, always inconclusive and in a condition of ‘ignorance’ and misunderstanding – unlimitedly waiting for an unreachable ‘perfection’.³²

Don Quixote and Prince Myshkin are constantly open towards the unconceivable, the irrational, the possible further unpredictable occurrence, the accidental, the *advenient*.³³ Their ‘poetic’ nature is directly laying in their own incapability of comprehending – framing, recognizing, concluding – reality within a logical form of logos.³⁴ The former is childishly irrational and in-considerate in his mis-understanding of reality to which he furiously and instinctively reacts; the latter is continuously undecided and inconclusive, ‘irresponsibly’ and unlimitedly disposed to approach and embrace reality in an un-judgemental, ‘humble’ and ‘forgiving’ way.³⁵ Through the foolish in-comprehensions/transfigurations of reality

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 76, 78

19 Despair as a quintessential condition – a “sickness” – of human beings is discussed in Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death* (original ed., *Sygdommen til Døden*, Copenhagen, 1849); among the various English editions of this book, the one that is referred here is: Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and The Sickness unto Death*, translated with introductions and notes by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1941

20 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death, in Fear and Trembling and The Sickness unto Death*, op. cit., pp. 147, 148

21 *Ibid.*, p. 154

22 *Ibid.*, p. 151

23 In his discussions of the intrinsic correlation between human beings and their inevitable state of self as “the relation (that) relates itself to its own self”, Kierkegaard symptomatically refers to “man (as)... a synthesis of the infinite and the finite”, anticipating and influencing the theoretical positions of Heidegger who later will investigate the paradoxical coexistence of irrationality and rationality in human beings – as observed by Kierkegaard, “Man is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation [which accounts for it] that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but [consists in the fact] that the relation relates itself to its own self. Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self. In the relation between two, the relation is the third term as a negative unity, and the two relate themselves to the relation, and in the relation to the relation; such a relation is that between soul and body, when man is regarded as soul. If on the contrary the relation relates itself to its own self, the relation is then the positive third term, and this is the self.” *Ibid.*, p. 146

24 *Ibid.*, p. 154

25 “Poetry... becomes even more mysterious. And so it must doubtless remain, if we are really prepared to make our stay in the domain of poetry’s being.” Martin Heidegger, “...Poetically Man Dwells...” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 224

leading idea. I have no elocution. My gestures are always inappropriate, and that makes people laugh, and degrades my ideas. I've no sense of proportion either, and that's the great thing; that's the chief thing in fact...You think I'm Utopian? A theorist? My ideas are really all so simple...There's no reason to be troubled because we're absurd, is there? You know it really is true we're absurd, that we are shallow, have bad habits, that we're bored, that we don't know how to look at things, that we can't understand... Do you know, to my thinking it's a good thing sometimes to be absurd...One can't understand everything at once, we can't begin to perfection all at once! In order to reach perfection one must begin by being ignorant of a great deal." Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, op. cit., pp. 541, 542

- 33 On the relationship between poetry, thinking and the notion of adventure as the experience of the accidental – of the *advenient* (from the Latin *adveniens* = that which arrives) – Martin Heidegger writes: "I shall mention poetry now only in passing. It is confronted by the same question, and in the same manner, as thinking. But Aristotle's words in the *Poetics*, although they have scarcely been pondered, are still valid – that poetic composition is truer than exploration of beings. But thinking is an *aventure* not only as a search and an inquiry into the unthought. Thinking, in its essence as thinking of Being, is claimed by Being. Thinking is related to Being as what arrives (*l'avenant*). Thinking as such is bound to the advent of Being, to Being as advent." Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism' (original ed., *Brief über den Humanismus*, 1947), in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977, pp. 240, 241. In this text Heidegger occasionally uses some French words, since this work directly addresses some questions posed to him by French intellectual Jean Beaufret. Both Beaufret's inquiry and Heidegger's response refer to an essay by French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre titled *Existentialism Is a Humanism* (Nagel, Paris, 1946). In the text edited by David Farrell Krell, which follows a first English edition of this work translated by Edgar Lohner and included in William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken (eds.), *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Random House, New York, 1962, a footnote by the editor referred to the French term *l'avenant* explains that: "*L'avenant* (cf. the English *advenient*) is most often used as an adverbial phrase, à *l'avenant*, to be in accord, conformity, or relation to something. It is related to *l'aventure*, the arrival of some unforeseen challenge, and *l'avenir*, the future, literally, what is to come. Thinking is in relation to Being insofar as Being advenes or arrives. Being as arrival or presence is the 'adventure' toward which Heidegger's thought is on the way." "Letter on Humanism", in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, op. cit., p. 241
- 34 Fyodor Dostoevsky did already establish a close form of correlation between his Prince Myshkin and Don Quixote when, in a letter

by the Spanish knight and the idiotic weakness of the Russian prince, incapable of comprehending/determining reality, logos is put in crisis and in a dimension of unclarity, indefiniteness, ambiguity – in the dimension of 'poetry'.

Robin Boyd's poetic condition: sense of openness, anger, irony

"The more poetic a poet is – the freer (that is, the more open and ready for the unforeseen) his saying – the greater is the purity with which he submits what he says to an ever more painstaking listening, and the further what he says is from the mere propositional statement that is dealt with solely in regard to its correctness or incorrectness."³⁶

Robin Boyd's manifold activity as a practising architect, a journalist and writer, a public commentator and occasionally an invited visiting teacher and critic of architecture in the world of academia³⁷ was fully operative and in a state of intensive development in the two decades of the Fifties and Sixties, while Heidegger was producing the important works of his second and last phase, following and carrying out the shift of his thought which is arguably marked by his *Letter on Humanism*, written in 1946 and published one year later.³⁸ The German philosopher died in 1976, five years after the sudden unexpected death of the Melbourne architect.³⁹

Boyd's thought and architecture are pervaded by an Heideggerian flavour in their way of continuously questioning and critically readdressing conventional logical truths and common beliefs, somehow always concentrating on the same problems and research questions,⁴⁰ constantly reiterating the importance of an essential, profound thinking – an essential grain of consideration – towards important and unavoidable issues related to architectural design and the inhabitation of architecture. In strong affinity to the philosophical thinking of Heidegger, Boyd's questions, argumentations and projects possess the intrinsic capability of raising and deferring to further questions, opening new angles and interpretations, always going beyond the sense of firmness which only apparently informs his statements – a sense of firmness and authority which at a closer and more accurate inspection, reveals all its own sense of mutability, vacillation, inconclusiveness, and even 'vagueness'.⁴¹

In his own – unconscious, unintentional and indirect – way, Boyd lays in the trajectory of a philosophical thought which through many and different perspectives⁴² has been continuously speculating on the problematic relationship between the metaphysical absoluteness of the world and the mere empirical level of comprehension that human beings can reach of it. Boyd's poetic and intensely Heideggerian sense of openness towards the unforeseen is reflected in the coexistence of the two indissoluble qualities which constantly inform his thought: the state of precision/determination and that of vagueness/inclusiveness. On the one hand his works and writings are characterised by a sense of certainty and clarity – so as to be assimilated to moving and persuasive "pamphlets";⁴³ on the other they are pervaded by an intrinsic sense of inconclusiveness, always in search of an abstract, rather obscure idea of 'unity' which in fact is consistently conceived and invoked only as a conceptual and 'diagrammatic' notion, never effectively explained in precise and accurate terms.⁴⁴

dated 1/13 January 1868 addressed to S. A. Ivanova, describing his ideas for *The Idiot*, he wrote: "The main idea of the novel is to picture a good man. There is nothing more difficult in the world than doing this. All writers, not only ours, but also all European who thought of representing a good man, have always given up...I shall remind that Don Quixote is the most completed among the good men of Christian literature...He is good merely because he is absurd at the same time". Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Biography - Pisma i zametki iz zapisnoj knizki F. M. Dostoevskogo*, Sankt-Peterburg, 1883, quoted in Vittorio Strada, 'Il "santo idiota" e il "savio peccatore"' ('The "saint idiot" and the "wise sinner"'), introduction to this following Italian edition: Fëdor Dostoevskij, *L'Idiota*, Einaudi, Torino, 1994, p. xix (my translation)

- 35 As observed by Prince Myshkin, "to my thinking it's a good thing sometimes to be absurd; it's better in fact, it makes it easier to forgive one another, it's easier to be humble." Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, op. cit., p. 542
- 36 Martin Heidegger, ' "...Poetically Man Dwells..." ', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 216
- 37 A detailed account of the biography and professional life of Melbourne architect Robin Boyd is succinctly narrated in the preface, and more exhaustively discussed in the rest of the book, by Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd. A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 1995. See also Conrad Hamann, *Modern Architecture in Melbourne. The Architecture of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd. 1927-1971*, PhD Thesis, Visual Art Department, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, July 1978
- 38 Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, op. cit.; see note no. 33 for details of this work
- 39 Robin Boyd was born in 1919. He unexpectedly died the 16 October 1971 as a result of a stroke suffered while coming out of the anaesthetic received for a minor surgery
- 40 As observed by Heidegger, "essential thinkers always say the Same. But that does not mean the identical". Martin Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, op. cit., p. 241
- 41 Australian architectural historian Conrad Hamann has already interestingly remarked that "at every point at which he (Boyd) establishes or reinforces a critical orthodoxy, he tends to counteract it, often in the same book or the same article, often in the same paragraph, sometimes even in the same sentence, with an affinity which appears to develop in his thinking and his writing toward what I would call the inclusive tendency in Australian architecture". Conrad Hamann, 'Against the Dying of the Light: Robin Boyd and Australian Architecture', *Transition*, no. 29, 1989, p. 14
- 42 Naming a few of them, and just from the world of philosophy, Parmenides, Descartes,

The 'desperate' and 'anguished'⁴⁵ approach of this architect to the world of architecture and the general Australian culture and society, the passionate 'anger' that pervades his writings⁴⁶ and the polemic irony which often accompanies his statements, comments and overall work,⁴⁷ are all symptoms of the poetic, uneasy dimension of openness that characterises his investigations. Moved and encompassed by this instable, disquieting and somehow 'tormented' position of inquiry, Boyd is constantly in search of a notion of unity as an ultimate, unconditional, essential level of comprehension which, however, can never be reached in these terms, since this level of comprehension would defeat its own presumed sense of essentiality and ultimateness in the very same moment of its own comprehension, given that comprehension as *logos* can be reached only by placing what is comprehended *in relation to* that which has already been comprehended, thus by automatically losing the hoped and potential – forever only-hoped and only-potential – sense of absoluteness and ultimateness of that which is to be comprehended.⁴⁸

Robin Boyd's poetic condition: coexistence of sense of precision and sense of vagueness

The coexistence in Boyd of both a disposition towards comprehension and the incapability of reaching it in a conclusive way is the quintessential condition of his own sense of anger and despair – a positive and constructive, 'noble', sense of despair which inherently permeates the open/unsolvable paradoxical coexistence of inclination to comprehension and impossibility to comprehend; in other words, sense of definition and sense of indefiniteness, sense of precision and sense of vagueness. But isn't the poetic dimension always irresolutely caught between these two conditions?

Italian writer Italo Calvino observes that "the poet of vagueness can only be the poet of exactitude, who is able to grasp the subtlest sensations with eyes and ears and quick, unerring hands...the search for the indefinite becomes the observation of all that is multiple, teeming, composed of countless particles".⁴⁹ In a following passage of the same book Calvino expresses a strong Heideggerian approach in relation to the human way of understanding and perceiving the world:

"Man...projects *his desire into infinity* and feels pleasure only when he is able to imagine that this pleasure has no end. But since the *human mind cannot conceive the infinite*, and in fact falls back *aghast* at the very idea of it, it has to make do with what is indefinite, with sensations as they mingle together and create an impression of infinite space, illusory but pleasurable all the same."⁵⁰

Vagueness as a condition of openness towards the unexpected and the indefinable – a condition that on the other hand is also instigated by an attentive and precise, yet never conclusive, observation of reality – informs the human state of *releasement* which is invoked by Heidegger as a dimension for "dwelling in the world in a totally different way...through persistent, courageous thinking",⁵¹ in a 'desperate' tension towards an absolute and unconditional type of comprehension. Vagueness as a condition of openness and indecision in which human beings find themselves, incapable of deciding and reaching a conclusive and ultimate definition, is a dimension of 'wandering', in which an aimless and incoherent movement is the coexisting unavoidable cause/effect of the inclination towards an

Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger come to mind among others

43 Australian architectural historian Philip Goad observes that “Boyd’s buildings have like his writings, the engaging presence and power of the pamphlet at the frontier. With the pamphlet, the reader is to be moved and the reader is essential as the pamphlet is by its very nature an article of immediate pertinence. The content of the pamphlet is strong, persuasive and often has the poetic power of the maxim.” Philip Goad, ‘Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture’, in Karen Burns, Harriet Edquist (eds.), *Robin Boyd: the architect as critic*, Transition Publishing, Melbourne, 1989, p. 14

44 Although recurrently encouraged and praised throughout Boyd’s writings, the term and notion of ‘unity’ is never defined in a persuasive and detailed way. It is symptomatic that among the many occasions in which this term is discussed, also a passage from the introductory essay to the book *Living in Australia*, one of Boyd’s late writings, hence representative of his most mature theoretical thinking, fails to articulately elaborate on this notion, simply restricting itself to a rather vague depiction of this term as a forgotten quality related to an idea of architecture that only superficially and momentarily – just in an “apparent” and “temporary” way – has gone “out of style”: “The young counter-counter-revolutionary wants a more radical revolution than any of the preceding skirmishes along the trail that has been followed so far by modern architecture.... He is compulsively opposed to the one element that used to tie together all architecture, whatever the style: a sense of unity or order... That...is how architecture went out of style...I believe its apparent passing to be temporary”. Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, pp. 12, 13

45 That of ‘Angst’ (normally translated as ‘anguish’ or ‘anxiety’) is a fundamental notion of Heidegger’s philosophy, which in this thesis is consistently related to the work and approach of Robin Boyd; according to the German philosopher, the condition of ‘Angst’ is intrinsically, existentially, related to our *Da-sein*, to our *being-in-the-world*: “we must recall that being-in-the-world is the basic constitution of *Da-sein*. *That about which one has Angst is being-in-the-world as such*... What *Angst* is about is completely indefinite... The world has the character of complete insignificance. In *Angst* we do not encounter this or that thing which, as threatening, could be relevant. Thus neither does *Angst* ‘see’ a definite ‘there’ and ‘over here’ from which what is threatening approaches. The fact that what is threatening is *nowhere* characterizes what *Angst* is about. *Angst* ‘does not know’ what it is about which it is anxious. But ‘nowhere’ does not mean nothing; rather, region in general lies therein, and disclosedness of the

exact observation and definition of reality⁵² – that same reality of which, however, it is forever impossible to reach full exactitude and definition.

Robin Boyd’s poetic condition: coexistence of the familiar and the unknown

“In the familiar appearances, the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is – unknown.”⁵³

The familiar appearances are familiar precisely because they are recognizable and describable, since they have been comprehended – conventionally measured and proportioned – in relation to the rest of our acquired knowledge. A poetic approach is capable of thoughtfully, attentively and reflectively observing the familiar appearances of the everyday reality, and through this “meditative thinking”⁵⁴ coming to see the ‘alien’ – the unusual, the unconventional – as a ‘visible hint’ deferring to that which is forever invisible, unknown and inexplicable. Through the poetic dimension the unknown remains unknown, yet the search for it and for its own comprehension at an unconditional and absolute degree is forever on, in a continuous state of openness towards the unknown and the unexpected.

Through the poetic dimension the poet of exactitude cannot avoid to be, also and at the same time, the poet of vagueness – a precise and attentive observer of reality, thus continuously inclined towards the definition and representation of the world, yet a relentless searcher of that which is beyond the margins of definition, thus imbued with a state of vagueness not only because somehow overwhelmed by the transfigurations resulting from his own meditative and accurate thinking/observation of reality, but also because incapable of reaching an absolute degree of definition/comprehension. In this state of ‘meditation’, openness and vagueness, the poetic dimension is inherently pervaded by a condition of ‘despair’, anguish and even anger – the ‘anger’ that together with irony moves Robin Boyd throughout his writings and works. If the anger is a symptom of his tormented irresolvable absorption of the contradiction between the inclination towards comprehension and the impossibility of comprehension – between his inclination towards the notion of ‘unity/whole’ and his incapability of understanding and describing this same notion in its full degree of absoluteness – Boyd’s irony is a constructive and efficient means for indirectly revealing this contradiction.⁵⁵

Boyd’s transverse sense of modernism: differences from Gropius

In this perspective the sense of modernism that accompanies Boyd in his work and thought is quite peripheral and transverse in relation to the orthodox ideology of the canonical modernist agenda, its general tendency to be drawn by a dimension of linear progression as the condition of any investigative process, and the associated creation of memorable images/pictures/representations throughout the very same process of investigation.⁵⁶ The overall research carried out by Boyd through his writings and architectural works – his reiterated critique of ‘featurism’ as a simplistic response to both a general fear of Australian environments’ realities and an indulging ‘parroting’, by many ‘anglophilous’ and ‘austerican’ Australians, of cultural and historical styles and forms of the “Old Country” (England) and the “rich country”

world in general for essentially spatial being-in. Therefore what is threatening cannot approach from a definite direction within nearness, it is already ‘there’ – and yet nowhere. It is so near that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath – and yet it is nowhere. In what *Angst* is about, the ‘it is nothing and nowhere’ becomes manifest. The recalcitrance of the innerworldly nothing and nowhere means phenomenally that *what Angst is about is the world as such*.” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1996 (original ed., *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1927), pp. 174, 175

46 Conrad and Chris Hamann use the term ‘anger’ in the title of their seminal article on Boyd, originally published in 1981 and later republished in 1992: Conrad Hamann, Chris Hamann, ‘Anger and the New Order: some aspects of Robin Boyd’s career’, *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, September/December 1981, pp. 26-39; later republished in *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, pp. 17-43

47 Many comments and remarks have been written in regard to the pervasive sense of irony of Boyd’s writings; see, among others, David Saunders when he depicts an analogy between the “sardonic” tones of Boyd and those of Australian comedian Barry Humphries: “After Boyd exposed this Australian’s thoughtless pursuit of *features*, Barry Humphries set upon his emotional and social deficiencies. The sardonic statements of truth were recognized, the points taken.” David Saunders, ‘Afterword’, in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 152. Also Geoffrey Serle refers to Boyd’s irony by suggesting a comparison between the ethical positions of Melbourne artist John Brack and those of Boyd: “John Brack has said...that...‘Unless my work contained humility, it would fail. I could use irony, but not superiority.’ Humility, irony, not superiority: Boyd came to know this too.” Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd. A Life*, op. cit., p. 130

48 According to Cacciari, “L’immagine del tutto-conoscere senz’essere conosciuti rivela l’essenza stessa dell’Utopia...un *Panopticon*, uno sguardo capace di *comprendere* tutto in sé non può per definizione essere visto. I miei occhi incontrano sempre uno sguardo come il mio, limitato”. “The image of a wholly-knowing without being known reveals Utopia’s own essence...a *Panopticon* as an example of a look that is capable of wholly *comprehending* within itself, cannot be looked at by definition. My eyes always meet a look which is as limited as mine”. Massimo Cacciari, *L’Arcipelago*, op. cit., pp. 77, 78 (my translation)

49 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Vintage, London, 1996 (original ed., *Lezioni Americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio*, 1988; first translated in English, 1992), p. 60

50 Ibid., p. 63 (my italics)

51 Martin Heidegger, ‘Memorial Address’, in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 55, 56; see note no. 26 in this section of the thesis,

(America)⁵⁷ – is in a way characterised by an underlying modernist ‘progressive’ spirit of modernism.

According to Belgian architectural historian and theoretician Hilde Heynen the term ‘modernism’, associated to a sense of “orientation toward the future and the desire for progress...can be understood as the generic term for those theoretical and artistic ideas about modernity that aim to enable men and women to assume control over the changes that are taking place in a world by which they too are changed”.⁵⁸ Considered in relation to this definition, Boyd’s invitation to realize that Australia is “a country far removed in space and time from both the Old Country and the rich country, with its own separate, special truths, values, realities, and strengths”⁵⁹ and therefore potentially disposed to get rid of featurism because potentially “ready to return to the qualities of the innocent era, while restating them in twentieth-century terms”⁶⁰, is certainly informed by a notion of modernism that is here canonically associated to the concepts of progress and change – the new “twentieth-century terms” evolved from the “innocent era” – together with the idea of national identity.

However, if on the one hand Boyd’s overall thought is characterised by a subliminal inclination towards the positivist – canonically modernist, indeed – notion of cultural and technological progression, at the same time his approach is on the other hand inherently and generally more nihilistic, critical, ironical, ambiguous – transversally rather than directly placed – if compared to the heroic uncritical certainties of many other modernist and internationalist positions. Boyd’s modernist inquiries are generally informed by a recurrent degree of ambivalence and eclecticism which somehow reflect his energetic, rather frantic, spread out and dispersed activity, entirely and consistently devoted to the search and definition of “the realities of design”⁶¹ and other qualities such as clarity, unity and coherence, and yet forever doomed to the impossible description/representation of these conditions and qualities in their unconditional state of absoluteness. From this point of view Boyd is truly a tragic and desperate – transverse indeed – modernist ‘hero’, capable of surfing, rather than solving, the contradiction that intrinsically lies in his research.⁶²

Haunted and provoked by the contradictions of his research, Boyd’s ‘heroism’ is in fact substantially dissimilar from the ‘positive’, continuously and incontestably ‘proactive’, type of heroism that commonly characterises other diffused modernist approaches, often inspired by an uncritical notion of progressivism and positivism, as well as recurrently animated by the rhetorical demand for ‘invention’. For instance, in spite of similarities that are recurrently and rather superficially depicted between Boyd and prominent modernist architect Walter Gropius,⁶³ the former shows a capability of embracing changes, shifts and unexpected outcomes/occurrences which is very different from the certain and definitive auras that pervade the declarations of the latter, in support of progression and affirmative of an idea of history that could only be conceived as guided by an indisputable process of moving forward, conventionally dictated by a linear type of development. If for Boyd “design was an open-ended process...not to invoke forms, but to exist in a continual state of flux...a...position of perpetual inquiry... (and) continual architectural speculation”,⁶⁴ the modernist spirit of this Melbourne architect is fundamentally remote from the mainstream, typically avant-garde,

- in which a passage from this work is already quoted, including these terms
- 52 Discussing the correlation between the notions of poetry, vagueness and exactitude, and applying his argument to the work of Italian writer and poet Giacomo Leopardi, Calvino draws a relationship between the terms 'wandering' and 'vague', at the same time suggesting that Leopardi "maintained that the more vague and imprecise language is, the more poetic it becomes...Starting out from the original meaning of 'wandering', the word *vago* (vague) still carries an idea of movement and mutability, which in Italian is associated both with uncertainty and indefiniteness and with gracefulness and pleasure". Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, op. cit., p. 57. In following pages of the same chapter, after having quoted an extensive passage from the *Zibaldone*, a work by Leopardi that is informed by precise and accurate descriptions in order to depict "a list of situations propitious to the 'indefinite' state of mind" (p. 58), Calvino writes: "So this is what Leopardi asks of us, that we may savor the beauty of the vague and indefinite! What he requires is a highly exact and meticulous attention to the composition of each image, to the minute definition of details, to the choice of objects, to the lighting and the atmosphere, all in order to attain the desired degree of vagueness." (pp. 59, 60)
- 53 Martin Heidegger, " "..."Poetically Man Dwells..." ", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 225
- 54 As suggested by Heidegger, meditation does not require any special condition or situation; it is possible and applicable in every moment of our everydayness: "Yet anyone can follow the path of meditative thinking in his own manner and within his own limits. Why? Because man is a *thinking*, that is, a *meditating* being. Thus meditative thinking need by no means be 'high-flown'. It is enough if we dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history." Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 47
- 55 Cacciari praises the role of irony – the role of laughing instigated by the power of comedy – as an appropriate means to talk about logos and its measures: "Volere che la misura del logos abbia il dominio sulle cose dell'uomo è massima irragionevolezza. Le utopie di pace della commedia capovolgono quelle della filosofia, poiché il carattere-demone delle loro 'personae' rende evidente l'inconcepibilità di 'vera' pace. Solo la distanza del riso rende possibile parlarne, rende 'giusto' il nostro discorso intorno ad essa, e non vuota utopia, chiacchiera sofisticata." "It is greatly unreasonable to will that the measure of logos dominates over man's things. The utopias for peace invoked by comedy overturn those proposed by philosophy, since the demon-figure of their 'personae' (characters) makes

sense of modernism that goes symptomatically hand in hand with Gropius's demagogic rhetoric that thunderingly calls for 'inventions' and 'changes' by proclaiming, in rather dramatic tones, that "*new buildings must be invented, not copied*...Architecture must move on or die. Its new life must come from the tremendous changes in the social and technical fields during the last two generations. Neither medievalism nor colonialism can express the life of the twentieth-century man. *There is no finality in architecture – only continuous change*".⁶⁵

Boyd's sense of openness towards the inexplicable, his 'perpetual inquiry/speculation' for the unknown/inexplicable, is never rationally and 'strategically' supported by a predetermined type of agenda – the same which, on the other hand, guides the clarity and determination of Gropius's projections in pursuit of universal, 'scientifically' demonstrable truths accessible through the "key (of) ...an objective common denominator of design...an optical key...the impersonal basis as a prerequisite for general understanding...as the controlling agent within the creative act".⁶⁶ Gropius's ideology loudly and demandingly announces "the need to change", incapable of realizing as well as consequentially further questioning, that the new forms expected from artists and architects in their attempt "to seize the magic of the fourth dimension of time by depicting motion in space"⁶⁷ cannot avoid to be still 'conventional' forms destined to indefinitely miss their ultimate dimension of originality and absoluteness, always defeated by their own reassuring certainty of having 'seized' – literally 'grasped'⁶⁸ – the sense of 'magic' of a new, unknown dimension. Failing to perceive the intrinsic 'illusoriness' of the 'magic',⁶⁹ these new forms are eternally frustrated by their own inclination to clearly – logically – comprehend and express the "new order"⁷⁰ of the modern world.

Boyd's sense of vagueness and irresoluteness: 'The (endless) Pursuit of Pleasingness'

The dimension of openness in Boyd is the reflection of an inquisitive state which wonders/wanders and very often loses the linear thread of the inquiry, "impatiently and intuitively leaping"⁷¹ across various points, never consciously and premeditatedly calling for changes or inventions, offering answers which at a closer sight confuse rather than clarify the terms of the inquiry. His seminal chapter 'The Pursuit of Pleasingness' published in the book *The Australian Ugliness* is a symptomatic example of Boyd's encyclopaedic and inclusive knowledge through which not only he supports a 'difficult' and 'non-straightforward architecture',⁷² but also tends to lose himself and the reader among the rich list of mentioned references, architects and theories. At the end of the chapter, Boyd does apparently offer an answer, which is however readable more as a hesitant and tentative opening rather than a dictating and imperious call – an answer that in fact does not describe or explain in full and clear extent the terms of its own argument:

"The Parthenon...is a perfect example only of its own remote, majestic, rather pompous kind of beauty. Modern architecture can be beautiful in this way. It can also be beautiful in the delightful, relaxed, drowsy sense. It can also be frivolous, forbidding, robust, tensed, tough, brutal, gentle, warming, even witty. In short, it can have character. It can reflect real life as well as it can romanticise it and disguise it...The important thing is the appropriateness of

evident the inconceivability of a 'true' peace. Only the distance of laughing enables us to talk about it, and makes our discourse 'right' in relation to it – not just an empty utopia or a sophistic talk." Massimo Cacciari, *Geo-filosofia dell'Europa*, Adelphi, Milano, 1994, p. 77 (my translation)

- 56 As remarked by Heidegger, "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word 'picture' [*Bild*] now means the structured image [*Gebild*] that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before." Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., p. 134
- 57 Featurism is consistently criticized by Boyd in his writings and public discussions; a passage from one of the various introductions from the book *The Australian Ugliness* symptomatically states, in anticipation of the many condemnatory observations which constantly inform the entire book, that "the disease of Featurism...sweeps Australia in epidemic proportions"; Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, Penguin, Sydney, 1963, p. 13 (revised edition of *The Australian Ugliness*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960, which is here the elected bibliographic reference). More specifically, chapter no. 3 'Anglophiles and Austerians' (pp. 55-73) discusses featurism as a reflection of "parrot's imitation,...one of the best ways to kill one's own national identity"; Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960, p. 65
- 58 Through a very clear description of the difference between the terms 'modernity', 'modernization' and 'modernism', Heynen writes: "The experience of modernity provokes responses in the form of cultural tendencies and artistic movements. Some of these that proclaim themselves as being in sympathy with the orientation toward the future and the desire for progress are specifically given the name *modernism*. In its broadest sense, the word can be understood as the generic term for those theoretical and artistic ideas about modernity that aim to enable men and women to assume control over the changes that are taking place in a world by which they too are changed." Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1999, p. 10
- 59 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 73
- 60 Ibid., p. 153
- 61 Ibid., p. 224
- 62 "«Eroe» sarà, allora, non chi supera la contraddizione, ma chi più consapevolmente la *patisce*". "A «hero» will be, then, not who prevails over the contradiction, but who *suffers* it in the most conscious way". Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, op. cit., p. 112 (my translation)
- 63 Boyd's work and thought has been repeatedly and widely read as directly influenced by Walter Gropius, with whom the Melbourne architect established a friendship from 1953 onwards – for more details on the

the shelter to the job being done, and the psychological effect on the occupant of the space to the shape, scale, proportions, colour, details of the space. The desirable things are that all these relate to and are disciplined by the concept, or motive, in hand, and that this motive is impeccably forthright and unsententious in its acceptance of the realities of the situation, that it does not try to make a silk purse on every occasion, that it is strong enough to accept the naked truth, even when the truth is dull, even when it seems ugly."⁷³

In this 'desperate' search for the omni-comprehensive and omni-disciplining spirit of the "concept/motive", Boyd somehow generates a first level of confusion by listing many, even opposite, possible states of a beautiful architecture. Furthermore, he proposes the equivalence between the notions of character and coherence as a quality of a good architecture; yet he never explains how we can firmly and absolutely express whether an architecture is informed or not by a character that is identifiable with a form of coherence – after all it may be argued that a possible character, in architecture and other disciplines, may be that of incoherence. Moreover, Boyd underlines the importance of considering the "realities of each situation", yet he does not elucidate any objective process which may enable to clearly pinpoint the margins that frame the definition of the term 'real'; it is indeed definitely more likely, in general, to read a particular situation and 'its realities' in many different ways – through many different personal ways of evaluating the grain of realism and to apply it to the various aspects of that very same situation. Still, and besides all this, Boyd warns the reader to find a motive capable of accepting "the naked truth"; but if this truth depends on all our subjective criteria in conceiving and recognizing terms/notions such as coherence and reality, how is it possible to precisely, objectively, establish the boundary between the concepts of 'dullness' and 'excitement', as well as those of 'ugliness' and 'beauty'? In addition to all this, through the conclusive lines of 'The Pursuit of Pleasingness' we are once again exposed to, and somehow disorientated by, the recurrent paradoxical coexistence of the notions of specificity and universality by which Boyd's thought and architecture are constantly accompanied⁷⁴ – in this case the specificity of each singular situation and the universality of the process that is inclined, forever hoping, to reach the comprehensive 'concept/motive'.

Difference between Boyd's irresoluteness and Gropius's assertiveness

Differently from Gropius – according to a degree of difference which places the modernist ambit of the Melbourne architect in a dimension substantially distant and dissimilar from the mainstream type of modernism of the German architect – Boyd hopes for unity and comprehension, yet at the same time intuitively feels that this hope is for ever destined to be unfulfilled. The founder of the Bauhaus is, on the other hand, definitely convinced – and also undoubtedly more 'convincing' in the unhesitant rhetoric of his writings and architecture – regarding the possibility to unconditionally achieve objective and absolute truths; he emphatically believes in the possibility to definitely unveil and represent the invisibility/mysteriousness of the fourth dimension of time and to inevitably, 'scientifically', seize the unknown margins of expansion of a modern world which is increasingly and relentlessly in progression, uninterested in – and removed from – old cultures and architecture, in a state indeed of "new growth...from the roots...under the impact of the machine".⁷⁵

relationship between these two architects see Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd. A Life*, op. cit. (chapter 8: 'Powerful patrons and the Cadillac cult'), pp. 158-176, and 'The Boyd/Gropius Letters', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, pp. 118-131. However, there are many and substantial dissimilarities between the two different types of modernism that characterise these two architects, and a reconsideration of their relationship would be worthy of a full and deeper study

64 Philip Goad, 'Robin Boyd and the Design of the House 1959-1971. New Eclecticism: Ethic and Aesthetic', *Transition*, no. 38, op. cit., pp. 184, 185

65 Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1955, pp. 73, 75

66 In a chapter of *Scope of Total Architecture*, emblematically titled with the question: *Is There a Science of Design?* – Gropius shows the sense of determinism that is intrinsically embedded in the positivism of his overall thought, continuously in search of objective ordering measures: "**Common Denominator for Design.** Educators in design have started to bring new order into the findings of philosophy and science. A basic philosophy of design needs first of all a denominator common to all. Some of the initial groundwork in the formulation of a language of design has been done by the Bauhaus, by Le Corbusier and Ozenfant in *L'Esprit nouveau*, by Moholy-Nagy in his *The New Vision* and *Vision in Motion*, by the teachings of Josef Albers, by Kepes's *Language of Vision*, by Herbert Read's *Education Through Art* and particularly by Le Corbusier's *Modulor* and by others in these and related fields. Will we succeed in establishing an optical 'key,' (sic) used and understood by all, as an objective common denominator of design? This can, of course, never become a recipe or a substitute for art. *Intellectual art is sterile, and no work of art can be greater than its creator. The intuitive directness, the short cut of the brilliant mind, is ever needed to create profound art. But an optical key would provide the impersonal basis as a prerequisite for general understanding and would serve as the controlling agent within the creative act.*" Ibid., p. 37

67 In such a way Gropius invokes a call for change, accordingly describing the reasons and purposes for this call: "**The Need for Change.** This shift in the basic concept of our world from static space to continuously changing relations engages our mental and emotional faculties of perception. Now we understand the endeavors of Futurists and Cubists who first tried to seize the magic of the fourth dimension of time by depicting motion in space. In a picture by Picasso the profile and front of a face are depicted; a sequence of aspects is shown simultaneously. Why? This element of time, apparent in modern art and design, evidently increases the intensity of the spectator's reactions." Ibid., pp. 33, 34

The sense of vagueness and irresoluteness continuously detectable in Boyd and in his positive/open incapability of strongly and definitely affirming a conclusion – a sense of hesitancy that is symptomatically in tune with the uncertain, in a way 'idiotic', understanding intrinsic to the marginal condition in general⁷⁶ and to the lateral state of Boyd's place and thinking in particular – 'saves' this Melbourne architect from the obvious linearity and simplistic un-criticalness of the modernist perspective which on the other hand takes Gropius and other avant-garde positions to be paradoxically trapped by the scientific progressivism that guides their blind and unquestioned necessity to invent, produce, represent a 'style' of design in their attempt to reject styles. Gropius is impeded by his own determination to desperately and intuitively realize that his call for an architecture without formalistic style, his declared rejection of "the hunt after formalistic 'style' features",⁷⁷ is nothing else than the paradoxical confirmation of an authoritative and uncritical tendency to a form of an omni-comprehensive state – that of the absolute absence of a style.⁷⁸

Driven by this theoretical approach, Gropius is continuously assertive in his uncritical inclination to qualities which are described and comprehended in absolute terms. Among them, the definition of harmony in relation to that of beauty is an emblematic example when compared to the usual vagueness through which Boyd discusses the very same topic. Despite a direct referring of the latter to the theory of the German architect, only a superficial reading would propose a degree of similarity between the two different positions. Gropius is unequivocally drawn by an idea of harmony as an omni-comprehensive notion when he proposes that an absolute and universal type of beauty is possible only in the perfect harmony of technical and aesthetic attributes.⁷⁹ But the state of harmony is an utopian dimension, never achievable by our persistent paradoxical conflict between the inevitable inclinations to riskily move, on the one hand, towards an absolute comprehension, and to safely inhabit, on the other, the relative comprehension – this latter being the only possible resolution always attained by our logos.⁸⁰ Boyd's inconclusive way of discussing the concept of an absolute beauty – an apparently harmonic and universal kind of beauty in the name of which "the judges might select a Miss Universe"⁸¹ – not surprisingly produces pages full of details and examples which in their turn never surely affirm a final response, limiting themselves to suggest how "conformation to 'perfect' proportions may lead only to a vapid prettiness",⁸² and conveying hesitant statements to remark that in light of "the vagueness of the word (beauty)...there can be many sorts of beauty".⁸³

It is even more intriguing to notice that in the lines which introduce the sentences quoted from Gropius's text and the consequent discussion on beauty and harmony, Boyd firmly, but never dogmatically, questions the validity of notions such as 'control', 'balance' and 'perfection', confirming at the same time both his own inclination towards the "fascination of the unexpected"⁸⁴ and yet his conscious disposition to accept, to absorb, the inevitability of our rational propensity towards a sense of "proportion, balance, rhythm, scale and so on".⁸⁵ In a similar fashion, through the polemic flavour that pervades an earlier passage of the same chapter we are reminded that "on the day when all building accords to the cosmic harmony, all men will live in order and peace of mind. (However) the secret of the harmony escapes us temporarily";⁸⁶ indeed it could not be

68 Among others, the term "grasp" is listed as a synonym of "seize", *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, op. cit.

69 Among others, the term "illusion" is listed as a synonym of "magic", *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, op. cit.

70 Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, op. cit., p. 37, already quoted in note no. 66 of this section of the thesis

71 Symptomatically Boyd likes to describe himself as a "persistent, impatient intuitive leaper...(who) prefer(s) a challenging gap for the essential leap". Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 13

72 Very interestingly Conrad Hamann reads Boyd as an architect who is not only opened to "a 'difficult' and...'non-straightforward' architecture" (Conrad Hamann, 'Against the Dying of the Light: Robin Boyd and Australian Architecture', op. cit., p. 19), but also inclined to embrace the indissoluble simultaneous coexistence of the two opposite notions of *singularity* and *plurality*: "his later career... was marked by a commitment to more distinct contradiction, ambiguity and complexity in architecture, a heightened expression of movement and tension in design and in ideas and theories surrounding architecture, and a linking of discordant parts with a particular sinew of circulation and structure...so that within a single comprehensive and pluralistic architectural form, you would have an Australian architecture emerging which would in some way acknowledge the simultaneous obligations of the country, the suburb and the city". Ibid., p. 14

73 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., pp. 205, 206

74 Commenting on the support accorded by Boyd to the principle of "the functionalism of the particular" in his article 'A New Eclecticism?', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 110, no. 657, September 1951, I wrote: "Boyd looks with favour at the 'functionalism of the particular', a functionalism that is destined every time to be necessarily conditioned by the specific, contextual situation; according to an equation based on the paradoxical relationship between the 'global' implication of the term *functionalism* and that inevitably 'local' of the term *particular*". Mauro Baracco, 'Young Australian architects. For a "resisting" architecture, beyond the relation local/global. Four projects in Melbourne', *Casabella*, no. 688, April 2001, p. 99

75 As proclaimed by Gropius, "*Modern architecture is not a few branches of an old tree – it is new growth coming right from the roots...We live in a period of reshuffling our entire life; the old society went to pieces under the impact of the machine, the new one is still in the making. The flow of continuous growth, the change in expression in accordance with the changes of our life is what matters in our design work*". Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, op. cit., pp. 91, 92

76 On this topic see Mauro Baracco, ' "Idiocy"

otherwise, since harmony as an absolute and omni-comprehensive notion is forever denied to us and to our rational logos. Harmony as an inexpressible absolute dimension of balance and perfection is destined to be forever missed by us, who are forever 'temporarily' inclined to miss it, since our projection towards it continuously reaches its nearness, in its turn continuously hoping to pass over this 'moment'.

The general sense of hesitancy that characterises Boyd's affirmations, together with his capability of embracing the opposite yet inseparable sides of the same equation, reflect his intuitive registration of the paradox that informs human beings: the connatural problematic coexistence of our tendency 'to move' towards an absolute comprehension and our desire 'to stay' on the relative, partial, comprehensions which are continuously acquired day by day and stored in the dictionary of our knowledge. Boyd's thinking, somehow in the same trajectory of Friedrich Nietzsche's and other nihilistic philosophers' and writers' positions, is suspicious of the level of clarity that is supposedly gained through the production of a new definition, through the setting up of a new word.⁸⁷ The Melbourne architect in fact warns us: it is through the illusion of the 'good proportion', and through the conventionality of similar reassuring concepts and measures which are rationally formulated simply to allow us to feel in control of reality, that we can design for 'familiarity'.⁸⁸ The design process for the familiar implies the application of appropriate attributes and conditions in order to achieve a predetermined conception of appropriateness in relation to the solution. But Boyd is always interested in 'more' than this, always open to impossibly grasp the inexpressible; always consciously feeling that the sense of control based on a presupposed level of familiarity with the world is never absolutely 'true' and conclusive.⁸⁹

The indefinable 'something more'

"The something more" constantly searched for by Boyd is notionally defined and yet never clearly explained as the "appropriate character"⁹⁰ for the building; indirectly assimilated to a "visionary quality",⁹¹ it is described as a "transcendental vision (that) still irrepressibly springs up occasionally, involuntarily (it has to be involuntary; it evades zealous pursuit)".⁹² It is a visionary entity, absorbable by our comprehension only as a name, a term, but not as a theory. It can be intuitively perceived, not certainly rationally explained, said, expressed, shown, framed into a representation. The 'involuntary' state of the 'something more' cannot be extensively described; it can be only 'occasionally' sensed – yet never fully grasped – as the outcome of a design process which operates in absence of a predetermined intention, indeed 'evading zealous pursuit'. In the context of this perspective, the notion and quality of 'the something more' is somehow analogous to the involuntary experiences which can similarly spring from the Heideggerian dimension of *releasement* – a dimension that keeps us unconsciously "waiting...but never awaiting"⁹³ for the visionary state of the notion suggested by Boyd. As remarked by the Melbourne architect, we can only consciously learn, exercise and express the "techniques of design",⁹⁴ effective measures/norms/tools which keep us in the hope of experiencing and comprehending the inexpressible visionary quality of 'the something more'. Through these undecidable definitions of the inexpressible, further, dimension of 'the something more', through such indeterminate and evocative, not certainly elucidatory, observations, we are once more exposed to the hesitant rhetoric

- and marginality', in Sisto Giriodi, *A Piedmontese Atlas*, Celid, Torino, 2001, pp. 11-14, and Mauro Baracco, 'Between Sicily and Melbourne'; brief notes on the privileged condition of marginality', *Transition*, no. 61/62, 2000, pp. 136-137
- 77 Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, op. cit., p. 92
- 78 As symptomatically observed by architectural historians Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co in relation to Gropius's Bauhaus building and its links to the Werkbund tradition, as "a new *Künstlerkolonie*, it was the perfect expression of a form that placates all tensions through the 'communitarian' equilibrium precognized by the Werkbund. In that sense, the policy of mediation that activated Gropius as director of the Bauhaus is also plain to read in his architectural designs: in them the tensions of the avant-garde are once and for all resolved into a 'style' whose first prisoner, despite all his protestations to the contrary, was Gropius himself". Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1979 (original ed., *Architettura Contemporanea*, 1976), p. 151. In another chapter of the same book, discussing the work of Hannes Meyer, Gropius and other architects close to both the Neue Sachlichkeit aesthetic and the Bauhaus ideology according to which "form was reduced to a tendentially scientific process approaching pure technique and function", the authors underline the strong sense of ambiguity that characterises "the rigoristic emphasis of an architecture alien to all formal demands"; *ibid.*, p. 173. Also Kenneth Frampton suggests the existence of a recognizable style – 'a recognizable approach' – in Gropius when he observes that during the last two years of Gropius's tenure of the Bauhaus school, there was "the gradual emergence of a recognizable Bauhaus approach, in which a greater emphasis was placed on deriving form from productive method, material constraint and programmatic necessity". Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: a critical history*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1992 (original ed., 1980), pp. 127, 128
- 79 "Only perfect harmony in its technical functions as well as in its proportions can result in beauty." Walter Gropius, *Scope of Total Architecture*, op. cit., p. 4; quoted by Boyd in *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 198
- 80 In Cacciari's words: "tra volontà-di-durata del potere e volontà-di-critica del sapere, tra queste decisive potenze, quale armonia può darsi se non quella che *s'immagina* in Utopia?" "What harmony can be offered between these two authorities – the will-to-permanence of power and the will-to-critique of knowledge – if not that which *is imagined* in Utopia?" Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, op. cit., p. 80 (my translation)
- 81 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 198
- 82 *Ibid.*
- 83 *Ibid.*, p. 199
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 197

of this architect and to its typical inconclusive – 'desperately' inconclusive – air.

An angry, open, 'scribbler'

Differently from Gropius, Boyd is never possessed by specific intentions to teach or educate; through his writings and the sense of 'anger', polemics and wittiness that accompanies them, he rather strives to convince himself more than the public, disseminating on the latter all his knowledge and concerns, and overall applying them to different and various topics which are always substantially marked by the same reiterated positions and inquiry questions. Symptomatically, Boyd wrote and designed profusely, talking and raising discussion about architecture on every possible occasion, somehow frantically and obsessively moving in his research – as obsessively as Don Quixote and Prince Myshkin in their 'absurd' and impossible search for perfection⁹⁵ – not necessarily and merely drawn by the will to demonstrate certain, clear and precise solutions to the issues debated in his discussions. As suggested by Philip Goad, "Boyd wanted to incite discourse at every level...Boyd was everywhere"⁹⁶ through "writings (with)...a terse wit and fluency"⁹⁷ through a "convincing and extremely persuasive prose"⁹⁸. However, this persuasive spirit is subliminally inclined to open and unfold the contradictions which lie in our reiterated belief in the possibility of linear and demonstrable forms of theorization, rather than being strategically in search of expressible and clearly describable truths.

Boyd's prose is persuasive and certainly very sophisticated in its wittiness and promptness, but is never specifically informed or guided by the will to show an objective truth, by the necessity to teach what is right or what is wrong. It is a prose for creating a wider discourse and a public awareness on architecture and related disciplines, as well as the collateral effects produced by them on the general culture and society. Roy Grounds picked the most appropriate term – "scribbler" – to address Boyd's nature;⁹⁹ the hurried and abundant production of the latter emblematically reflects his great generosity in exposing himself and participating in a wider world not necessarily contained within the disciplinary boundaries. Boyd's unlimited availability, his unrestrained openness to the architectural and cultural discourse, are never undermined by concerns specifically expressed by close collaborators – he 'obliviously'¹⁰⁰ neglects, un-sees, un-understands the potential negative effects which may arise from his public exposure.¹⁰¹ His fertile and repeated production of writings, talks, projects and overall work, does not contemplate the attainment of precise and decisive conclusive moments of solution. The profusion of his production and participation in the world is rather a way to be continuously dynamic and in search, in movement towards an unreachable absolute level of comprehension, yet inhabiting the many moments of a partial comprehension, the many moments of relative theorized truths which in their turn feed the ongoing unstoppable research of this architect.

Resistance to representation

Architectural historian and theoretician Mark Wigley has symptomatically described the evasive, uncertain and inconclusive nature of the typical 'excessive over-talking' of architects through a comparison with the very different approach generally shown by doctors, normally used to communicate dry and laconic messages in their delivery of definitive, conclusive and solving 'prognostic'

- 85 Polemically commenting on a sense of certainty/reassurance as recurrently based on conventional – and conventionally taught – attributes, Boyd writes: "A command of the technique of architectural composition, of proportion, balance, rhythm, scale, and so on, is of course essential to an architect, but the way of everyday modern architecture, as taught in most schools and practised in most streets, is not to control these elements but to be controlled by them. The student is taught not the method of driving so much as the end to which he must drive. He is taught, under the heading of balance, not the sensorial strength of the various forms of unbalance but only how to achieve even balance; under scale, not the odd power over the emotions of unfamiliar scale but only how to preserve 'perfect scale'; under proportion, not the fascination of the unexpected which Mondrian turned to account, but only how to aim for 'good proportion'; in the sum, how to design for familiarity." *Ibid.*, p. 197
- 86 *Ibid.*, p. 188
- 87 German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche observes: "Wherever primitive mankind set up a word they believed that they had made a discovery [Entdeckung]. How different the truth is! They had touched upon a problem, and by supposing they had solved it, they had created an obstacle to its solution. Today, with every new bit of knowledge, one has to stumble over words that are petrified and hard as stones, and one will sooner break a leg than a word." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, already quoted in Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1995 (original ed., *La sfera e il labirinto. Avanguardia e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70*, 1980; first translated in English, 1987), p. 7
- 88 "The student is taught...how to achieve even balance...how to preserve 'perfect scale'... how to aim for 'good proportion'; in the sum, how to design for familiarity". Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 197; see note no. 85 of this section of the thesis, in which the full passage including these words has been already quoted
- 89 On the relationship between the idea of familiarity and the process of assigning names, Italian writer Andrea De Carlo affirms that "non sappiamo con certezza le ragioni di niente. In compenso abbiamo i nomi. Ne abbiamo per tutto quello che vediamo e sentiamo e facciamo o anche solo immaginiamo. Se incontriamo qualcosa che non ha un nome, ne inventiamo subito uno. E quando abbiamo una buona scorta di nomi, ci sembra di avere una buona *familiarità* con il mondo...Perché i nostri equilibri sono precari, anche se facciamo finta che siano tanto solidi e durevoli. Per questo passiamo il tempo a imparare nomi e dare nomi, e a comprare e vendere immagini di stabilità e *familiarità* e durezza". "We don't

verdicts.¹⁰² This difference not surprisingly reflects the grain of resistance towards representation, conclusion, objectification, which is emblematically entrenched in the more 'poetic'/'artistic' character of architecture, in this substantially dissimilar from the more 'scientific'/'resolving' way of medicine. Yet, a resistance inclined to truly criticize and destabilize cannot avoid being inconclusive in its turn – it is destined to be improbable and 'ineffective', interminably in the act of 'impossibly resisting', never placated by any resolatory moments of victory, continuously and problematically resisting our inescapable metaphysical inclination to theorize and represent.

It is in this perspective that Robin Boyd's profuse activity and pervasive 'presence'¹⁰³ must be read and interpreted, as the tangible incarnation of an overall sense of openness towards reality, conscious of the conventional dimension that unavoidably characterises the measure of our acquired knowledge of reality but also, at the same time, with the realization of our instinctive hope for improbably going beyond – for destabilizing – this dimension, through a continuous process of questioning that is applied in relation – in resistance – to the rational/conventional level of our knowledge. The coexistence of the two inextricable inclinations to move towards the level of an absolute comprehension and to continuously inhabit the partial and conventional states of comprehension – "that dramatic accord (*concordia discors*) between the great struggle of philosophy, pure nostalgia for wayfaring, and *pietas* for the 'well-founded-earth'"¹⁰⁴ – is the unsolvable paradox that animates Boyd's thoughts and projects, enabling him to be open, never fixed on predetermined ideas, and also for this, forever undecided between the appropriateness of a sense of placeness and/or placelessness for architecture.

Between placeness and placelessness

In the initial part of the introduction written for the book *Living in Australia*, a collection of his most intimate thoughts and observations on the condition of living and dwelling, Boyd reveals his own unresolved ambivalence between the 'progressive' hope for a culture of standardization directly related to the development of the prefabrication technology, and a simultaneous, more 'nostalgic', realization of the importance of individual values as unequivocal preconditions of the design of the house. On the one hand, inevitably in search of a universal and 'absolute' sense of placelessness, Boyd praises the disappearance of the individual "psychological comforts of the private cave"¹⁰⁵ which are forced on us by humanity; at the same time, on the other hand, inescapably conditioned by the sense of trust that human beings instinctively repose in the sense of placeness – a sense of placeness which at a different level inherently pervades all specific, particular and private forms of appropriations related, and consequential, to a subjective process of acquisition of knowledge – he still believes in the "individual house...(as) a unique medium of personal artistic expression...the concrete expression of a series of intangible qualities commonly known as a way of life...its essence is always secreted inside".¹⁰⁶

Boyd's inclination towards the concept of the house as a non custom-built product of a prefabrication system, thus as the outcome of a process intrinsically informed by a character of universality, coexists with the awareness of our impossibility to drop the very particular, specific, "individual" "needs of privacy" and "personal

- know with certainty the reasons of anything. On the other hand, we do have names. We have names for everything we see, feel, do or even just imagine. If we encounter something without a name, we quickly invent one. And when we have a good supply of names, we think to have a good familiarity with the world...Because our equilibria are precarious, although we pretend they are very solid and durable. For this we spend time in learning names and assigning names, as well as buying and selling images of stability, familiarity and durability". Andrea De Carlo, *Pura Vita* (Pure Life), Mondadori, Milano, 2001, pp. 53, 54 (my translation, my italics)
- 90 "The something more is most simply described as appropriate character." Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 15
- 91 Expressing his support towards the notion of the "something more" Boyd says: "I am aware that it is dangerous to support a temporarily unfashionable idea like that. I realize that the chief objection to architects held by a great many people outside the profession, including numberless long-suffering clients, is directed against the visionary qualities in architecture." Ibid.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Martin Heidegger, 'Conversation on a country path about thinking', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit. p. 68; see note no. 26 of this section of the thesis, which already refers to these words and the associated meaning
- 94 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 15
- 95 "Don Quixote is...an indecipherable absurdity to logos"; Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, op. cit., p. 73 (my translation), see note no. 31 in this section of the thesis. Reflecting on himself, Prince Myshkin says: "to my thinking it's a good thing sometimes to be absurd...One can't understand everything at once, we can't begin to perfection all at once! In order to reach perfection one must begin by being ignorant of a great deal"; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, op. cit., p. 542, see note no. 32 in this section of the thesis
- 96 Philip Goad, 'Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture', op. cit., p. 12
- 97 Ibid., p. 11
- 98 Ibid., p. 12
- 99 That Grounds used to call Boyd with this nickname was originally recorded in Conrad Hamann, *Modern Architecture in Melbourne. The Architecture of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd. 1927-1971*, op. cit., p. 205; it was successively reaffirmed by Goad, who refers to Hamann's text in Philip Goad, 'Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture', op. cit., p. 15
- 100 The term "oblivious" is provided by the dictionary (*The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, op. cit.) with synonyms such as "unaware", "unconscious" and "unmindful" – all these could for instance be appropriately related to the 'idiotic' condition of both Don Quixote and Prince Myshkin
- 101 As observed by Hamann, "at first the term ('scribbler') had connotations of affability, but

feelings" which guide our way of inhabiting the house. As observed by the Melbourne architect through the 'dramatic (non) accord' of opposites which drives his logical *dis-coursing*:

"The prefabrication technology which it (the home) has been evading for half a century must catch up with it before long, and then unpredictable things will happen. The house may arrive at the building site in three or four readymade boxes on the trays of semi-trailers and be erected by lunchtime, looking like a stack of three or four boxes that might have arrived readymade on the trays of semi-trailers. Gazing dreamily into the mists of the computerised future, as most architects like to do, it is tempting to forecast the end of the home as we know it, and many succumb to the temptation. The custom-built house, they explain, will be as uncommon, unreal and unnecessary as a custom-built car is today. Perhaps they are right, but I don't believe it. That is, I don't believe it will happen as soon as they suppose. I don't believe it will happen while people still live in much the same way as they do today: in two-generation families, with certain needs of privacy from the rest of society and certain needs of privacy within the family. I don't believe it will happen while a certain amount of individualism is still permitted in society. I think that a house, although it is essentially the same sort of thing as a car to the technologist and the urban planner and the mass-producer of materials and equipment, is different from a car because of its living psyche...It is the concrete expression of a series of intangible qualities commonly known as a way of life. No matter how basically it changes shape as new techniques permit or encourage radical rethinking, it will always be that expression, as intimate as a cave if not as a womb...Even if the crowding of the world eventually forces all individual houses off the ground on to various kinds of multi-level platforms, still it will be an emotional haven... here in the house one is toying with personal feelings".¹⁰⁷

Boyd's open vagueness, his reiterated sense of inconclusiveness, is here as evident as ever, once more as a reflection of his predisposition to embrace the two opposite responses of the same question/issue and undecidably preserve them both as valid and appropriate – as the two different and equally plausible arguments of the *aporia* that is implicitly generated by their coexistence.

Boyd's 'weakness'

Almost twenty years earlier, in 1951, Boyd wrote an article for the International magazine *The Architectural Review*, in which he had already widely expressed his own sense of ambivalence and indecision, his typical incapability to definitely determine a final ultimate verdict, and his recurrent proclivity to the dimensions of openness and inconclusiveness. Praising the condition of ambivalence, rather than that of a definitive selection, between the two poles of 'Organic' and 'Functional' architecture, Boyd welcomes the spirit of "a new eclecticism",¹⁰⁸ in this confirming the difference of his own digressing, rather 'hesitant', grain of modernism from the sense of 'infallibility' that pervades the orthodox positions of many modernist architects and critics, including Swiss historian Sigfried Giedion. The earlier assertive tones of the latter to underline an equally assertive and definitive state of polarity between two opposite sides, are detected and brought out by the Melbourne architect who is instead open to embrace a "muddle-headed vacillation" between the organic and functional approach:

" 'The artist', wrote Dr. Giedion (in the 1949 edition of *Space, Time and Architecture*), 'has the right of choice [between Organic

- as time went on it irritated Boyd considerably. The name became positively menacing when... Grounds began telling him quite bluntly that he did not think Boyd's writing was doing himself or the firm any good in a long-term commercial sense". However, as still recorded by Hamann, Boyd finally disregarded Grounds's advice: "Romberg recollects that Boyd went through a crisis of conscience over this – he loved writing, yet was being told, by a man whom he had long admired, to give up. Yet there is little sign that Boyd heeded Grounds ultimately." Conrad Hamann, *Modern Architecture in Melbourne. The Architecture of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd. 1927-1971*, op. cit., p. 205
- 102 Mark Wigley, untitled unpublished paper presented at *Formulation Fabrication. The Architecture of History*, 17th annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ), Wellington, New Zealand, 16 November 2000
- 103 "Boyd was everywhere. In the newspaper, on the radio, on the television, in the popular home journals. He was a spokesman, a critical voice rather than a sage of architectural wisdom or bequeather of tectonic canons." Philip Goad, 'Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture', op. cit., p. 12
- 104 Massimo Cacciari, 'To Dwell, to Think', *Casabella*, no. 662/663, December 1998/January 1999, p. 7
- 105 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 5
- 106 Ibid.
- 107 Ibid., pp. 4, 5
- 108 Robin Boyd, 'A New Eclecticism?', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 110, no. 657, September 1951, pp. 150-153. In this article Boyd discusses and compares two houses, one by Roy Grounds in an 'Organic' style, the other by Harry Seidler in a 'Functional' style, ultimately suggesting that the apparent difference between these two stylistic approaches and related outcomes, is irrelevant. Symptomatically polemical in regard to the propensity to assign definitions as a means to seek clarification and differentiation between entities, Boyd wittily raises confusion rather than clarity by listing many definitions in the initial part of the article: "The difficulty, of course, is to define the difference and to find suitable sub-classifications for each building. One, undoubtedly, is Organic; but it could be also, according to recent analyses, Regionalistic, Empirical, Humanistic, Romantic, Irrational or merely Cottage Style. The other is, of course, Functional; but some may prefer Rational, Geometric, Post Cubist, Mechanistic or merely International Style." (p. 151)
- 109 Ibid., pp. 152, 153
- 110 Ibid., p. 153
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 Among others, see Gianni Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti (eds.), *Il Pensiero Debole* (The Weak Thought), Feltrinelli, Milano, 1983, and Ignasi de Solà Morales, 'Arquitectura Dédil/Weak Architecture', *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i*

and Geometrical], of saying according to his own point of view which pleases him and which he will follow'...Giedion assumed then, as did most reviewers of the divergent schools, that the choice must be final, that the forks of this crossroads were spread so widely that there could be no bridge between them...It was assumed that the artistic choice was binding for life and that an architect who attempted to walk with one foot on each road, who would dream of jumping occasionally from one road to the other, was as far beneath contempt as a nineteenth century eclectic, and as surely doomed to ridicule in the mud. But later Dr. Giedion stated (AR Feb. '50) the need 'to leap from the rational-functional to the irrational-organic'...Could an architect be accused justifiably of muddle-headed vacillation if he felt himself free to draw upon different parts of the scale according to the emotional impulse of the occasion? Although the buildings under discussion express the different personalities and backgrounds of their designers, is it inconceivable that two such different but competent buildings could have been produced by the one man? Might not an architect select, in a new era of vital eclecticism, the mood best suited to the time, the place and the purpose?"¹⁰⁹

Signalling his own affinity with the sense of de-legitimization of metaphysical truths, Boyd symptomatically introduces a positive connotation for the term and notion of 'weakness': realizing that "at the present moment of hesitancy, at the height of the discussion of the differences, there is a certain restraint against change on every architect who has once set his foot on either road",¹¹⁰ Boyd at the same time rhetorically wonders, without being concerned at all, about the fact that "to switch to the other side might indicate a weakening of resolve and lack of decision".¹¹¹ Embracing the 'weak' state of indecisiveness, he indirectly anticipates the interpretations that only later, from the beginning of the Eighties onwards, will be inclined to propose the 'weak thought' as a further implication of the crisis of the fundament, in the trajectory of the destabilizations proposed by Nietzsche and Heidegger, and the overall philosophical tradition which derived from their thinking.¹¹² Unconcerned about the possibility to switch from organicist to functionalist approaches, in fact proposing that "architecture can surely allow its practitioners an occasional change of mood",¹¹³ Boyd's sense of openness tends to 'confuse' and 'weaken' the boundaries which should supposedly mark the precise ambits of these two stylistic categories. However, he never peremptorily counteracts the existence of this difference, neither arguing for the elimination of the dichotomy, nor trying to 'demonstrate' that this dichotomy is wrong and inappropriate, nor leaning to any of these two architectural categories; he rather accepts, absorbs and overcomes the conventional separation that is commonly affirmed between them, somehow suggesting that the definitions conventionally attributed to them – the representations within and through which these architectural categories become objectified – are inevitable (as inevitably determined by our rational logos), although almost irrelevant.¹¹⁴

Through the "weakening of resolve and lack of decision" we can continuously, positively, oscillate between them, destabilizing the inevitable definitions by which they are conventionally validated and recognized. In this way we can overcome this dichotomy and also, at the same time, more 'essentially' move indefinitely in search of their "apparent mutual aim" – an "ultimate simplicity of means".¹¹⁵ Once again Boyd concludes his argument by referring, somehow deferring,

Urbanisme, no. 175, October/December 1987

113 Robin Boyd, 'A New Eclecticism?', op. cit., p. 153

114 In Boyd's words: "For these buildings, and the schools they represent, are surely not as incompatible as some men suggest. No conflicting theories of any significance lie behind them, however hotly denunciative the parties on the opposing sides become at times. There is no more than the difference of mood which attended their conceptions. A pot of oil or a tin of paint; a view or a chair on the lawn: the smallest adjustment of one architect's outlook, stimulated by a fine afternoon or depressed by a neighbouring eyesore, might be sufficient to change the key to which all materials and details are tuned." Ibid.

115 In Boyd's words, some of which already quoted above in the main text: "At the present moment of hesitancy, at the height of the discussion of the differences, there is a certain restraint against change on every architect who has once set his foot on either road. To switch to the other side might indicate a weakening of resolve and lack of decision. But the theoretical discrepancies between the schools are of less importance than the apparent mutual aim to achieve ultimate simplicity of means." Ibid.

116 Cacciari has described Heidegger's research as informed by the condition of a silent eternal waiting – a dimension of silence which inevitably permeates the inexplicability of the notions questioned by the German philosopher. In a paper which reviews the book *Modern Architecture* written by Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co, Cacciari widely refers to Heidegger's seminal essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', observing that "the uprooted spirit of the metropolis is not 'sterile', but *productive* par excellence. It is the definitive rupture of the Subject's natural-being that permits it the will-to-power over nature. Heidegger knows this...The problem is not with the form of building in itself. What is absent is not the 'fitness' of building to spirit, in which case spirit would be foreign to its home. The problem lies in the fact that spirit may no longer dwell – it has become estranged from dwelling. And this is why building cannot 'make' the Home (*Dimora*) 'appear'...dwelling is being in the *Geviert*, experiencing dwelling as a fundamental condition of one's own being, feeling oneself to be a 'dweller'. But is it possible to build for 'dwellers'? Only 'dwellers' can do so. And it is precisely the 'dweller' that is absent today. Heidegger limits himself to reconfirming man's uprootedness in the face of false and useless attempts to recompose him organically, to make him again organism, plant, root... Heidegger says that it is necessary to 'learn to dwell'. He keeps listening for the call to dwell. But no god calls. It is rather the present crisis itself that calls. But how can the crisis call to dwell? Heidegger cannot say...There is no doubt that Heidegger keeps listening for the call to dwell. But this listening

to the conclusive and absolute dimension of a notion – the "ultimate simplicity of means" – which similarly to those of the "motive" and the "something more" respectively invoked in his books *The Australian Ugliness* and *Living in Australia*, is substantially vague and undefinable, although intrinsically pervaded by a sense and quality of omni-comprehensiveness. How are we supposed to clearly and fully understand the absolute degree of an ultimate simplicity of means? And also, how can we precisely establish the boundaries between 'simplicity' and 'complexity' of means? Boyd's hope for the 'ultimate simplicity of means' is symptomatically silent; it is silently present in its impossibility to be rationally expressed and explained – it silently speaks through its own tending towards an impossible and unreachable, forever only potential, absolute dimension of omni-comprehension.

Boyd's Heideggerian 'silence'

The condition of silence already marks Heidegger's overall thought – through philosophical investigations which in their difficult attempt to undermine, but not certainly erase, the unavoidable metaphysical sphere of our thinking, are continuously open to unanswerable inquiries. Heidegger's open and 'hopeful' silence can never be filled up with answers, solutions, conclusions; it is a resisting and poetic state of silence/releaseament that eternally waits for conclusions which will never appear, and never will be comprehended, in their absoluteness. Inevitably destined to a hopeful and for ever silent condition of listening, Heidegger's philosophy can only reveal, and open undecipherable inquiries in regard to, the contradiction of human beings, whose intrinsic nature is essentially "*productive*", uprooted and alienated from "the Home" and yet at the same time perennially concerned of the possibility of dwelling – for ever in search of the capability of being rooted.¹¹⁶

Analogous to the silent and inconclusive position of waiting/wondering that continuously impregnates Heidegger's copious quantity of works, also Boyd's insistent and abundant production of thoughts and projects is essentially 'silent'. It is silenced by the noise of his profuse, generous and dispersed 'scribbling', by the noise of the angry and witty approach that guides his reflections, by his own unconcern with regard to the formulation of definitive and conclusive responses, as well as by his own continuous, strenuous, 'desperate' and destabilizing practise of resistance towards the uncritical attitude of many orthodox modernist tendencies which on the other hand are generally drawn by the will to representation/designation of an ultimate and conclusive theory/form. Boyd's silence is the silence that saturates those who are conscious of being unavoidably invested by the inevitable and unsolvable paradoxical coexistence of the inclination towards an unreachable absolute comprehension and the inhabitation of a relative comprehension.

"In the familiar appearances, the poet calls the alien as that to which the invisible imparts itself in order to remain what it is – unknown."¹¹⁷

Once again Heidegger's words help to read Boyd's sense of openness towards the inexplicable/unrecognisable – a sense of openness continuously evoked and released by the poetic 'silence' which lies in the 'non definitive explanations' constantly offered by this architect as inconclusive and just conventional answers to his calls for the unknowable. In his continual call for the "real thing" and the "whole thing" Boyd urges us towards a definitive and ultimate "synthesis" of solutions which can hopefully contemplate all the 'real' aspects – "the whole thing", indeed – of the project, and consequently fuse them into

is just silence. What speaks is not dwelling, but the *crisis* of dwelling. And its language is *critical*: to be exact, division, detachment, difference. In illustrating the condition of dwelling, Heidegger describes the difference that divides us from dwelling...he tells us of the total impotence of shelters disguised as homes, of cities disguised as places. In Heidegger this critique appears in the form of listening, of waiting. But this wait is recognized to be a *priori* indefinable. The reasons for our separation from dwelling-building are contained in the overall history of Western thought – in the very translation of Greek *tekne* into European technique. The representation, the presentation of the present, has been up to this day the fundamental characteristic of thought. Western thought treats being as presence. But *where* does our thought relegate that which we call presence? Being-present presupposes an 'unconcealedness.' In Being conceived as presence a fundamental unconcealedness is in force which, however, Western thought is unable to grasp...But what is building if not the bringing to presence of the fundamental unconcealedness of dwelling? Dwelling and the thinking about the essential origins of being are connected: thinking for dwelling. But this essential origin remains hidden and mysterious for Heidegger – his thought does not reach that far. In addition, history and the destiny of Western thought are moving in the direction of technique – not in that of production, but in that of scientific productivity. Can a sense of dwelling re-emerge in this destiny, a sense of building as the production of the unconcealedness of dwelling? In his waiting, Heidegger unmasks all false appeals – but he remains waiting, listening...Heidegger does not call for the construction of homes – he doesn't criticize, like Spengler, the absence of homes. Instead, he debunks the pretense of calling homes those buildings that are just lodgings or constructions; and debunks the incredible linguistic confusion between lodging and nostalgia for home that constitutes the specific form of architectural ideology. How could Heidegger call for the construction of homes by those who are no longer dwellers? For he knows that this is an essential condition, the fate of contemporary man. But Heidegger, of course, remains waiting, listening, hoping for the call. The essence of dwelling lies in 'remaining', in 'staying on' – not in any place, but in a place that provides peace. Dwelling is being-in-peace...Here, not in refuges, not in hidden places, but here, in the unconcealedness itself, lies being-at-home. *Shepherds*, says Heidegger, dwell in this unconcealedness 'outside of the desert of the desolated earth'...But these shepherds are *invisible*, and the law that they guard, in which the earth stays within the safety of its limits of possibility, is also *invisible*". Massimo Cacciari, 'Eupalinos or Architecture', *Oppositions*, no. 21, Summer 1980, pp. 107, 108

117 Martin Heidegger, ' "...Poetically Man

an omni-comprehensive "motive":

"To be real it should be based on a motive which recognises all the practical and psychological problems connected with the building and synthesises the solutions to all of them in a single driving architectural theme...To be free from the sirens of beauty, pleasingness, delight, is to be free to create and to appreciate the real thing, the whole thing".¹¹⁸

The parts, the whole, the all

However, the notion of the 'real/whole thing' can never be definitely reached in its own absoluteness; it is immediately lost in the moment of its comprehension – an inevitably partial comprehension, as it is unavoidably grasped by relating and comparing the notion of the 'whole/real/single driving theme' to other parts of our logos, of our discourse. The 'whole thing' searched for by Boyd is destined to be no more than a 'whole part' – a "*hólos* (whole) as a part of a larger grouping and, in turn, a *méros* (part) as a *hólos* composed of parts"¹¹⁹ – that is incapable of achieving its own potential dimension of *allness*, a dimension which is eternally present only in its condition of unfulfilled potentiality, considering in fact that "if experience cannot achieve the definition of *the All*, every whole is a part and every part is a whole, depending upon our point of view and the aim of our investigation".¹²⁰ That of the *whole* is the notion used by Boyd in order to poetically represent the invisible, unknown and incomprehensible notion of *the all*. Boyd knows that our inclination towards the absolute comprehension – *the all* – is unequivocally destined to produce relative comprehensions – *parts*. The notion of the whole as a "strengthening of the part"¹²¹ is the only form of 'totality' – not certainly 'allness' – that we can "conventionally-practically" grasp;¹²² furthermore, in addition to its own inescapable degree of conventionality, this notion is also substantially informed by a sense of vagueness which derives from the impossibility of precisely determining the level of a definitive completion in regard to the list of "all the practical and psychological problems...(that are intrinsic to)... the whole thing".¹²³

The vagueness that informs the notion of the 'real/whole thing' is the same as that of all other 'mis-conclusive' notions called by Boyd throughout his writings and his overall theoretical discussion. Animated by his own poetic nature – truly poetic in Heideggerian terms – the thought of this Melbourne architect is well aligned to Cacciari's more contemporary post-Heideggerian proposition according to which since "the All is unknown and its 'idea' offends the *integrity*, the beauty, the health of concrete things, of the *parts* – i.e. their essence as *wholes*... (then) the part wants to free itself of the dominance of the All, not to be a part, but to become a *hólos*".¹²⁴ Our logos recognizes partial/relative comprehensions which are in fact a *whole/hólos* of singular/partial meanings reciprocally grouped in an inter-relational way. Our logos inescapably leads us to logical wholes in the form of "grouping", 'true' representations that would be "false" if they lacked of "a meaning";¹²⁵ yet, at the same time, these conventional and relative truths still reflect our instinctive inclination towards the comprehension of the unknown and inexplicable absolute. Confirming their own intrinsic state of (a partial) totality and conclusion, these wholes are destined in their turn to remain, by nature, vague, 'uncomprehended' and 'incomprehensive' even at their conventional level of a relative comprehension.

- Dwells..."', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 225
- 118 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., pp. 223, 224. The call for a unifying theme, capable of comprehending and synthesizing all the various aspects and problems of the project, not only specifically informs this seminal book, but also pervasively accompanies Boyd's research throughout all his life and work
- 119 Massimo Cacciari, 'The Shards of the All', *Casabella*, no. 684/685, December 2000/ January 2001, p. 166
- 120 Ibid. In this essay Cacciari discusses our impossibility to grasp the dimension "of the All" in relation to the circularity that indissolubly interrelates – indistinctly 'confuses' – the notions of 'the part' and 'the whole': "What is *part*? How to define it? In Book V of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle lists the following meanings: *part* (*méros*) is that into which a quantity (*posón*) is subdivided; that into which form (*eídos*) can be subdivided, independently of quantity; that into which the whole (*hólos*) is divided, that of which the whole is composed; that into which the *logos*, the discourse that expresses a thing, is subdivided...Therefore the part is the product ('pars' from 'parere?') of an operation ('part' as *nomen agentis*) of subdivision of a whole, albeit a form or a quantity...And yet – it has been said that a whole can be mutilated, if it is deprived (*stéresis*) of an essential part... The whole remains something different from the sum of its parts – but at the same time the parts determine its 'health'...The part can decide to separate from the whole, but the whole cannot secede from its parts. But haven't we already seen that the term 'part' has a meaning only in relation to the whole? How can a part be a part unless it is referred to a whole? A circularity between part and whole remains. But if part and whole *participate* together in a *single process*, it will be impossible to subordinate the former to the latter. In reality we are looking at *two parts* that, together, form an *all*. The whole is just as 'distant' as the part from a state of all-being. In Aristotle the distinction is very clear: the whole is *one* quantity, *one* given form. How can it presume to not be a 'part'? Of course scientific considerations must know how to halt their analysis at the point of defined *groupings*, but it is evident that no form or no quantity can be absolutely independent of the others. And thus it will always be possible to consider a given *hólos* as a part of a larger grouping and, in turn, a *méros* as a *hólos* composed of parts. If experience cannot achieve the definition of *the All*, every whole is a part and every part is a whole, depending upon our point of view and the aim of our investigation". (p. 166)
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 As observed by Cacciari, "The All cannot be found on earth or in heaven, and neither can we find any 'process' of the All. There are only 'wholes', conventionally-practically definable,

We cannot escape the process of concluding, comprehending, framing into a representation. We cannot avoid the act of naming and determining a meaning/form as a temporary moment of conclusion, as a partial comprehension – as the most 'real', 'conventional' and 'practical' form of comprehension, given that the absolute comprehension, the unconditional *all*, is 'false', forever remaining 'false', unknown and unreachable. On the other hand these partial comprehensions as 'wholes of parts' are in their turn 'suspiciously' true and concluded in their own state of conventional truths, despite being the only comprehensions allowed to us. Boyd's overall research is constantly 'desperately' entangled in these unsolvable issues. His architecture as well as the theoretical calls of his writings are pervaded by the spirit of potentiality – by a sense of openness that is continuously charged and never fulfilled although every time activated by the temporary state of conclusion that conventionally frames each of his finished works and theories.

Reduction to partial, objective, re-present-ations

Since we cannot escape the process of comprehending as concluding/framing into a 'present' meaning/form,¹²⁶ Boyd accepts our instinctive process of reducing as bringing to a comprehensive/synthesized conclusion (from the Latin *re-ducere* as to bring to, to lead to) – a conclusion that is definitely 'present' as a logical/grasped form of representation. Boyd serenely accepts our destiny, our inclination towards a conclusion, a synthesis, a 'whole'; at the same time he remains tragically/desperately/poetically vague in regard to the meaning of all the various yet similar synthetic notions advanced through the discussions and calls of his writings. Boyd is aware of the degree of conventionality that defines the sense of reduction/synthesis which is consistently called for by him. He realizes that it is no more than a conventional/logical moment of conclusion/comprehension; a partial form of re-present-ation; a limited conclusion destined to be partial, defective, inconclusive and somehow 'inappropriate' forever, confirming in its turn the inappropriateness of our inevitable and continuous search for a dimension of absoluteness which is eternally denied to our logical/rational nature.

Reduction as a conclusive and comprehensive form of synthesis is the way through which Boyd serenely absorbs and reflects our metaphysical inclination towards *logos*, discourse – towards a sense of order based indeed on logical interrelations between the elements of discourse. Yet reduction as a laconic and silenced form of synthesis, which is 'silenced' by the inter-relational blending of the many into a whole, maintains an unequivocal sense of openness beyond an apparent – exclusively apparent – sense of conclusion. The sense of reduction and unity which informs both the overall look of Boyd's architecture and the general recurrent form and style of the theoretical 'conclusions' proposed by this architect, is never ultimate and/or definitive; it is a sense of reduction that in the intrinsic process of contraction of each partial synthesizing accord preserves and continually releases an impulse of expansion as an endless act of openness towards an inexpressible and inconceivable, indeed illogical, absolute form of comprehension/conclusion – towards the illogical moment of an omni-comprehensive accord between all the individual partial elements of our logical discourse which, on the other hand, are constantly and inescapably read by our rational representations as reciprocally inter-correlated.

- that are parts of the World which, in itself, is indeterminate. No 'whole' can claim the right to the status of 'allness'. No foundation can call for its will to be more than 'part'. Each 'part' will struggle to dominate the others, but it will not, as a result, cease to be a 'part'. The 'part' that manages to structure itself more completely as a 'whole' will be able to have more value than the less 'consistent' ones. The 'whole' is but a strengthening of the 'part'. The 'part' is 'all': all that exists are 'parts' in reciprocal struggle. 'All is false': Adorno's famous aphorism, overturning the 'dictum' of Hegel, thus seems to conclude a path that begins with Kant: it is possible to speak meaningfully of the 'all' only within the limits of Aristotle's *hólos* or *pán*." Ibid.
- 123 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., pp. 223, 224; see note no. 118 in this section of the thesis, already referring to the notion of the "whole thing"
- 124 Massimo Cacciari, 'The Shards of the All', op. cit., p. 166
- 125 "the all that is not conceived as whole or as grouping is 'false', just as the part conceived as a mere fragment that cannot be retraced to a *meaning* is 'false'." Ibid., pp. 166, 167
- 126 "Since in all metaphysics from the beginning of Western thought, Being means being present, Being, if it is to be thought in the highest instance, must be thought as pure presence, that is, as the presence that persists, the abiding present, the steadily standing 'now'." Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, op. cit., p. 102
- 127 Massimo Cacciari, *Dell'Inizio* (On the Beginning), Adelphi, Milano, 1990, pp. 27, 32, 33 (my translation); in its original Italian version, the text says: "Oggetto esterno e autocoscienza non si rimandano l'un l'altro, cercando invano reciprocamente di 'fondarsi' o sopraffarsi, ma formano una originaria dualità, che, proprio in quanto tale, esclude ogni 'metodo' all'Inizio, ogni 'costruttiva' idea di principio o di *arché*...non si dà altra percezione se non la percezione di rappresentazioni *oggettive*, di rappresentazioni, cioè, cui corrispondono oggetti nello spazio...Altrettanto reale è il perceptum sia che io immagini, sia che io sogni, sia che 'inciampi' nel giudicare, sia che compia un'esperienza scientifica. In *tutti* questi casi, intuisco nello spazio fenomeni, apparenze che sono certamente *in me*, e che, non tuttavia, ma *per questo*, poiché questa è la natura stessa del percepire, appaiono come effettivamente 'fuori' di me...Come è in me tutto il tempo, così in me è il senso esterno. Dunque, è del tutto coerente affermare che la coscienza di me mostra in uno l'esistenza degli oggetti nello spazio, ma nel senso preciso che la coscienza di me è *in uno* senso interno *ed esterno*: rappresentandomi, mi rappresento di necessità anche ob-iecta nello spazio, *come fuori* di me."
- 128 As stated by Cacciari: "La nostra 'natura' è quella dell'immagine." "Our nature is that of the image." Ibid., p. 51 (my translation)

But this illogical moment of omni-comprehension is after all 'illogical' only because it is, literally, not decipherable – not graspable – by our rational logic. Yet, this omni-comprehensive and ultimate level of identity between the spheres of subjectivity and objectivity is a quintessential dimension of human beings. It is a quintessential dimension that cannot be rationally and logically explained, and that is in its turn accompanied by another parallel, similarly quintessential, human quality – the inclination to read the world as if it was formed by a duality of opposite layers: 'internal/subjective/representing' elements, on the one hand, and 'external/objective/represented' elements, on the other. As observed by Massimo Cacciari through a reinterpretation of Kant's philosophical positions,

"external objects and self-consciousness do not refer to each other, pointlessly trying to reciprocally 'found' themselves or overwhelm each other, but rather constitute an original duality which, precisely as such, excludes any 'method' from the Beginning, as well as any 'constructive' idea of origination or *arkhe*...there is no other perception but that of *objective* representations, that is: representations which refer to objects in space...Always and similarly real is the perception from either my imagination, or my dreaming, or my 'stumbling' into a judgement, or my scientific experience. In *all* these cases I do intuit phenomena in space – appearances which are certainly *within me*, and which, not however, but *for this*, since this is indeed the nature of our perceiving, appear as effectively 'outside' of me...The external sense is within me, as much as all time is within me. It is therefore totally coherent to affirm that the consciousness of me shows at one the existence of objects in space, precisely in the sense that the consciousness of me is both internal and *external* sense *in one*: through the representation of myself, I necessarily represent to me also objects (ob-iecta) in space, as if they were outside of me".¹²⁷

The human nature is therefore that of representing objective phenomena, and through them make sense of the world, without consciously realizing that what we represent and/or read as external is already, since ever, within us.

Since our nature is intrinsically and ineluctably characterised by the inclination to produce images,¹²⁸ we are inescapably inclined to constantly image and/or imagine, and to use the representations of our process of both imaging and imagining as elements that allow us to 'being in control of' the world – as partial comprehensions generated by our *logos* in order to understand the world and communicate our understanding of the world to others.

It is in the context of this theoretical proposition that Boyd's inclination towards reduction must be read as a desperate and impossible attempt to reach an absolute level of synthesis; as a desperate and continuous 'act of hope' for an idea of total unity which, however, can only be abstractly intuited and for ever searched for by a *logos* – our human *logos* – that is incapable of comprehending it. After all, as we have just seen through Cacciari's observations, our original and intrinsic state of unity between – our comprehension of – subjectivity and objectivity, is by nature translated into a duality by our *logos*. Incapable of retaining this inherent level of comprehension in such a state of absoluteness, our *logos* re-processes it into a state of relativity through which we can literally 'come to terms' with

- 129 Bernard Smith, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', (1959), in Bernard Smith, *The Antipodean Manifesto. Essays in Art and History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1976, pp. 165, 166; this writing was first published as a foreword to 'The Antipodeans' Exhibition held in the Victorian Artists' Society's Galleries, East Melbourne, August 1959
- 130 The text for 'The Antipodean Manifesto' was finally written by Bernard Smith, who re-elaborated and edited notes and thoughts of the other co-signing authors – the artists Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Brack, Bob Dickerson, John Perceval and Clifton Pugh
- 131 "Today Tachistes, Action Painters, Geometric Abstractionists, Abstract Expressionists and their innumerable band of camp followers threaten to benumb the intellect and wit of art with their bland and pretentious mysteries... wherever we look, New York, Paris, London, San Francisco or Sydney, we see young artists dazzled by the luxurious pageantry and colour of non-figuration... Modern art has liberated the artist from his bondage to the world of natural appearances; it has not imposed upon him the need to withdraw from life... As Antipodeans we accept the image as representing some form of acceptance of, and involvement in life. For the image has always been concerned with life, whether of the flesh or of the spirit. Art cannot live much longer feeding upon the disillusion of the generation of 1914. Today Dada is as dead as the dodo and it is time we buried this antique hobby-horse of our fathers." Bernard Smith, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', op. cit., pp. 165, 166. More extended discussions on the role of 'resistance' played by the Antipodean approach against both non-figurative art tendencies and fashionable internationalist modernist trends, are recounted in Christopher Heathcote, *A quiet revolution: the rise of Australian art 1946-1968*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1995, and Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes: culture, theory and the visual in the work of Bernard Smith*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1997
- 132 Bernard Smith, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', op. cit., p. 165. The critique against the 'fashion' of abstract art is further confirmed by the discussion in the chapter called 'Figurative and Non-Figurative' that is included in Smith's book *Australian Painting*, originally published in 1962, three years after the 'Antipodean Manifesto'. This chapter, at that time the last one of the book (before the publication of the new current edition with additional chapters by Bernard Smith himself, Christopher Heathcote and Terry Smith), analyses the difference between the cultural contexts of Sydney and Melbourne, describing the former as more inclined towards the reception of non-figurative art and the latter characterised by a general 'reaction against Abstraction' – *The Melbourne Reaction against Abstraction* is indeed the title of the last heading of the chapter. In the

– make sense of – the world. Our logos cannot escape the production of terms and definitions, in other words: representations, images, figures, concepts, 'objective', 'constructed' and 'framed' conclusions. Their reciprocal interrelation continuously guarantees communication throughout the world, understanding of the world and therefore a sense of measurement and control upon the world.

Embracement of figurativeness: parallels between Bernard Smith and Robin Boyd

"Art is, for the artist, his speech, his way of communication. And the image, the recognizable shape, the meaningful symbol, is the basic unit of his language. Lines, shapes and colours, though they may be beautiful and expressive, are by no means images. For us the image is a figured shape or symbol fashioned by the artist from his perceptions and imaginative experience. It is born of past experience and refers back to past experience – and it communicates."¹²⁹

In such a way Australian art historian and critic Bernard Smith praised figurativeness as an inescapable condition for communication and conveyance of meanings when in 1959, together with seven Australian artists who co-signed the 'Antipodean Manifesto',¹³⁰ he took a distance from the 'fashionable' spirit of non-figurative art which had originally raised from the avant-garde agendas of Modernism in the second decade of the century and was increasingly pervading the modernist character of the internationalist trends over the years following the Second World War.¹³¹ Smith's critique is strongly and substantially directed against the recurrent claim according to which non-figurative art would be the bearer of a "new language", and therefore considered as the latest – 'newest' indeed – fashionable trend in the modernist art tradition; as observed by the art historian,

"the widespread desire, as it is claimed, to 'purify' painting has led many artists to claim that they have invented a new language. We see no evidence at all of the emergence of such a new language nor any likelihood of its appearance... We are not, it seems to us, witnessing in non-figuration the emergence of an utterly new form of art. We are witnessing yet another attempt by puritan and iconoclast to reduce the living speech of art to the silence of decoration".¹³²

It is interesting to notice that, although Smith's defence of figurative art is undoubtedly a strong point continuously reiterated throughout the pages of this short manifesto, at a closer sight, however, his passionate commitment to such principles seems more a reflection of his belief in our ethical responsibility towards communication rather than a definitive censorship of non-figurative art. Still in the same writing Smith concedes indeed that "certainly the non-figurative arts can express moods and attitudes, but they are not capable of producing a new artistic language".¹³³ But what are 'moods' and 'attitudes' if not positions, stands, reflections of characteristic postures? As such they are indeed 'images' that represent, perhaps only evocatively and indirectly, ideas and theoretical meanings. Moods and attitudes are after all still objective 'external forms' produced by the act of both imagining and imagining that which is put forward by their own producers; in addition to this, moods and attitudes still have the power to communicate and activate further interpretations on the part of their readers/recipients. In regard to this argument it would be definitely

- final pages under this heading, on his way towards the conclusion of the book, Smith symptomatically underlines his critique of abstraction as a fashionable art tendency, often supported by simplistic beliefs into the equation 'novelty = progress', by quoting and putting into context a statement by Eric Westbrook, director of the National Gallery of Victoria from 1956 to the initial years of the Seventies: "A reaction was bound to follow. Not surprisingly, it came from Melbourne. It had been foreshadowed by a statement made by Eric Westbrook, the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, at a Council of Adult Education Summer School held at Albury in January 1958, in which he sweepingly condemned the more extreme forms of *avant-garde* painting: 'most of the pictures painted today were unintelligible nonsense... If an artist were to kick a hole in his canvas and then exhibit this as a new work there would be some people who would say this was advancing the frontiers of art. Some of the public today think that any change or novelty necessarily means progress in painting.'" Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1962, p. 328
- 133 Bernard Smith, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', op. cit., p. 165
- 134 "Painting for us is more than paint." Ibid.
- 135 Smith observes "that as the 1950's drew to a close in Australia, most of the younger painters of the post-war generation were experimenting with some form of abstract painting which they felt suited their temperament. It is clear that the non-figurative modes of painting will continue to play a prominent part in Australian art in the foreseeable future. But the claim of abstract painters to be the sole Guardians of contemporary art is heard less in the land. It is unlikely that figurative painting will be replaced entirely by an art without images. But the course of Australian art after 1959 is beyond the scope of this book". Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting. 1788-1960*, op. cit., p. 331
- 136 As cogently observed by Peter Beilharz in regard to Bernard Smith's thought, "art... worked somewhere between imaging and imagining. But the claim was also being made here that communicative art had some kind of cultural referent or connection in experience. And note, it was presumed that the purpose, or one purpose, of art was to communicate"; Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes: culture, theory and the visual in the work of Bernard Smith*, op. cit., p. 107
- 137 In Beilharz's words, "Smith's work treats the question of origins as largely indeterminate. Against Said in *Orientalism* Smith refuses the idea that culture like power flows unilaterally, from the centre out onto the peripheries or colonies. In positive moments, Smith argues, different cultures converge... cultures become entangled. There is a strong sense of caution in this way of thinking against overinterpretation or reliance on dubious notions of origin such

plausible to sustain that abstract and non-figurative art – the art of 'paint' instead than 'painting', as ironically proposed by Smith¹³⁴ – still produces, after all, images and figures. They are still objective representations and their only difference from the representations generated by figurative art is that their images are less immediately or directly recognizable. However, they are still interpretable, and therefore capable of generating discussion, debate, communication. It is not surprising that Smith's animosity against non-figurative art considerably softened in the years which followed the publication of the 'Antipodean Manifesto'. Once figurative art was no longer in danger to be swept away by the fashion of non-figurative art, Bernard Smith started to more serenely accept the presence of the latter as a "prominent part in Australian art".¹³⁵

However, Smith's degree of mitigation in his 'attack' against non-figurative art is not the main point of the discussion that is carried out here, and I leave this to further examinations within other possible contexts of investigation. The point that needs to be strongly highlighted in regard to Bernard Smith's general critique of non-figurative art is essentially the definitive acceptance of the image – and the absorption of its own inevitability – as a quintessential character of our unavoidable logical nature. Closely, although indirectly and unconsciously, aligned to Cacciari's proposition according to which our innate logos is not able to read the level of absoluteness between the 'inner' and 'outer' spheres which respectively encompass our subjectivity and objectivity, Smith's appeal for figurativeness as a 'conventional' means for communicating, absorbs and therefore embraces our inherent predisposition towards the production of images – towards the products of our 'imaging' and 'imagining'.¹³⁶ Smith unambiguously realizes that the image, both as a graphic/visible and conceptual/mental representation, is an inevitable result of our rational and productive logical process, which is constantly and invariably in search of objective conclusions, of forms of *finis*, of conclusive *de-fini(s)*-tions. Smith accepts this process, accepting at the same time the level of quintessentiality that characterises the production of 'objective' images 'logically' perceived as external from the subject, but also the level of conventionality that informs their apparent exteriority. Since we can't escape the process that produces images which are indeed finalized to communicate in – and take the measurement of – the world, Smith's sophisticated way of denouncing the irresolvable aporia that condemns us to read generated images as if they were external determinations, consists in assigning extreme importance to the nature and presence of the image, and yet, at the same time, destabilizing and weakening the image and its own presupposed definite objective meaning(s) by literally 'mixing them up' throughout the continuous shifts and hybridisations which according to this art historian inform the nature of communication. Smith proposes that artists produce images, refer to images, communicate through images, and in this way they contribute to the production and stimulation of culture; yet, he is highly suspicious of terms and notions such as 'authenticity', 'originality' and 'uni-directionality' as conditions of the overall cultural production.¹³⁷ Smith's thought pointedly encourages the production of images, as this process is quintessentially and unavoidably part of our logical nature constantly inclined to read a duality between subject and object, interior and exterior; yet, on the other hand, this same thought realizes that the image is no more than just a conventional form of determination – this realization is confirmed by Smith's scepticism in regard to the existence of unilateral and merely particular/objective meanings conveyed by images. Somehow Smith is

as authenticity. In this view of the world, as always already mixed, it never becomes clear exactly what or who came first. We only ever know cultures in traffic". Ibid., p. 187

138 Bernard Smith, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', op. cit., p. 166

139 Ibid., p. 167

140 According to Smith we advance in our process of knowledge and comprehension by relating every new encountered thing to what we already know. Clearly, this process of comprehension relies on our inevitable inclination to continuously produce and catalogue images and definitions, which can act as models of comparison after having been determined, and therefore having become 'familiar'. As pointed out by Beilharz while discussing Smith's work *European Vision and the South Pacific. 1760-1850*, written in 1960 and published by Oxford University Press, "As we encounter the unfamiliar we... are bound to translate it. Smith's thinking rests on the idea that while difference is fundamental, humans think through similarity. This is what makes us humans, anthropologically speaking. In order to explain the new (or anomalous) we say that it is *like* something; we think through metaphor". Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the antipodes: culture, theory and the visual in the work of Bernard Smith*, op. cit., p. 76

141 Specifically referring to the text of 'The Antipodean Manifesto', but also in relation to the overall thought of Bernard Smith, Peter Beilharz writes: "The *Manifesto* was really an attempt, among other things, to place art activity within national and global culture... We were at home or not, in Melbourne or the metropolis; we carry all kinds of cultural baggage, today, English by precedent, American by media, Australian by place, multicultural by circumstance; we are Lémontey's people, the absent centre of a universe without centres, everything and nothing all at once, similar, yet different... The idea of Australian art meant something more than art in Australia; this was not, emphatically, a matter of national character or national style, but a question of similarity and difference, of the cultural traffic that this experience confers and marks upon us. We are Australian, antipodean, whether we like it or not; we can flee from the fact, to the centres or elsewhere, but it will follow us. Smith's claim, in *The Antipodean Manifesto* and elsewhere, however, was more than this; that our stigmata were more than this, to be worn with pride or at least acceptance. We are what we are. What we are, among other things, is permanently displaced Europeans who take our sense of place with us... We need, in this view, to refer to our sense of geographical place or environment as well as to our sense of cultural place, or ways of thinking and seeing... But we cannot even be parochial in this because we are not a provincial people: our province is also European... But we are Europeans, as well as

capable of embracing and absorbing the two coexisting quintessential natures of human thought: on the one hand, the incomprehensible, intuitive, level of absoluteness – an illogical absolute state of identity – between subject and object, between imagination and images; on the other hand, the logical construction of the duality between subject and object, between the spheres of the inside and the outside, between, indeed, imagination and images.

Smith's simultaneous praising for the local and the global, for the relative and the absolute, is reflected in his belief that if on the one hand "we do seek to draw inspiration from our own lives and the lives of those about us... (and) we have both a right and a duty to draw upon our experience both of society and nature in Australia for the materials of our art",¹³⁸ on the other hand "nevertheless our final obligation is neither to place nor nation. So far as we are concerned the society of man is indivisible and we are in it".¹³⁹ Smith's recognition of these human states – an intuitive state of identity between subject and object, and a logical/rational state of difference between them – as both quintessential and ineluctable to us, and his capability of dealing with them both, without ever favouring one of them over the other, is also symptomatically reflected in his sophisticated sense of ambivalence between the inseparable notions – always reciprocally interrelated and intertwined by this art historian – of the local and the global. As our logical nature inevitably perceives and produces forms of duality between the subject and the object, continuously generating objective definitions for understanding/measuring – and communicating throughout – the world, Smith realizes that the production of images is indeed an inescapable process that allows us to communicate and participate in the construction of cultures.¹⁴⁰ Yet, these objective determinations result from our typical way of perceiving reality, and all phenomena in general, through forms of duality – according to a cognitive process that is inherently driven by our logical nature, incapable of comprehending any state of identity and absoluteness between subject and object. In light of the possibility of these incomprehensible forms of absoluteness, every objective determination is definitely more complex – certainly less 'objective' – than what it seems, and unequivocally related to its own opposite. Symptomatically, in the context of this thinking, the apparent 'duality' between the notions of placeness and placelessness, of local and global, results characterised by a high degree of relativity and indistinctness, somehow ambiguity, indecision, 'multiformity', 'confusion' and 'uncertainty' between these two terms.¹⁴¹

In light of this sophisticated spirit of ambiguity characteristic of Smith's thought, but also more generally in light of Smith's overall theoretical stand, especially in the way it has been presented and discussed in the lines above, it is possible to draw a strong and direct affinity between the positions of the art historian and those of Robin Boyd.¹⁴² These two intellectuals, of the same generation,¹⁴³ have both extensively and substantially operated in the cultural and social context of Melbourne, relevantly contributing, through their writings and works, to the creation of a general theoretical position constantly in favour of a non parochial idea of local identity, pervaded indeed by a sense of continuous intertwining with sympathetic references from other international worlds. As already suggested by architectural historians and critics Conrad and Chris Hamann, both Smith's and Boyd's ideal equation is represented by the coexistence of a profound

antipodeans, so the reference is not to 'them' and how 'they' see 'us', it is also to how we see ourselves, for we also feel ill-at-home here, as we do elsewhere. This apparently dual, but actually multiform identity is something which we cannot escape – nor should we, though it confuses us, makes us feel uncertain and obliged to adopt identities that fit too neatly, feel to snug". Ibid., pp. 109, 110

142 I thank my colleague Professor Doug Evans of RMIT University (from which he retired at the end of 2006) for having initially pointed out the possible existence of some analogies between Bernard Smith and Robin Boyd, and consequently stimulated me to investigate and elaborate on this matter

143 Bernard Smith was born in 1916 and is currently living in Melbourne; Robin Boyd was born in 1919 and died in 1971

144 Commenting Boyd's ideas in regard to the "Victorian Type" as expressed in his early work *Victorian Modern* (originally published in 1947 by the Architectural Students' Society of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects), and drawing a comparison with some observations advanced by Bernard Smith in the introduction of his book *Place, Taste and Tradition* (first edition by Ure Smith Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1945), Conrad and Chris Hamann write, intercalating some quotes from both the writings, that "The Type's great virtue was a direct response to surroundings, with something 'inherited from a century of Victorian living', and 'something borrowed from the more sophisticated experience of California'... In all, The Type is rather like the art Bernard Smith hoped for in *Place, Taste and Tradition*, published in 1945. Smith argued that 'a people's struggle with the social and geographical environment', and their use of the most valuable international sources, would produce both a tradition and a lively art which would 'reflect the life of the Australian people' ". Conrad Hamann, Chris Hamann, 'Anger and the New Order: some aspects of Robin Boyd's career', *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, September/December 1981, p. 28

145 In the conclusive pages of the chapter 'Figurative and Non-Figurative' – which are also the conclusive pages of the early edition of *Australian Painting* – Smith observes that "although the Antipodeans were not overtly nationalistic in outlook their exhibition did represent, among other things, an attempt to defend an indigenous tradition against the uncritical acceptance of currently fashionable overseas modes. In one sense the formation of the group may be seen as a part of a growing uneasiness among many Australians at the prospect of being swamped culturally by what Arthur Koestler has called 'coca-colonization'. Similar uneasiness was also expressed in the lectures and writings of Robin Boyd, the architect son of Penleigh Boyd and cousin of the artists, especially in his book *The Australian Ugliness* (1960), which proffered a trenchant criticism of modern vulgarities in contemporary Australian design that were

interest towards the local context and the ability of recognizing and absorbing sympathetic "valuable international sources".¹⁴⁴ It is symptomatic to observe that Smith himself explicitly refers to Boyd's sense of defence of the indigenous tradition in the context of a passage of his book *Australian Painting*, in which the Antipodeans are described as pervasively in support of local cultures and traditions, although without ever supporting any possible idea of nationalism; in addition to this, the resistance of the Antipodeans and other analogous positions against simplistic and fashionable internationalist trends of 'coca-colonization' confirms the existence of a parallel and alternative way of considering modernity, well beyond the conventional celebration of its characters "in the name of progress".¹⁴⁵ Boyd's transverse sense of modernism, the same which was earlier discussed in comparison to the orthodoxy of Gropius's thinking, is definitely in tune with the critique that Smith's thought addresses towards the inclination to exalt "the *avant-garde* at any price".¹⁴⁶ It is not surprising that the transversal approach of both these two figures is critical of the sense of canonization that characterises the ideological trajectories which indirectly emerge from the programmatic intentions of the historical avant-garde positions¹⁴⁷ and which delineate the mainstream tendencies of the following Modern Movement in two parallel paths: on the one hand the belief, theorized by Giedion, into the "secret synthesis... between the rational and... irrational... between the domain of thought and that of feeling";¹⁴⁸ on the other a rather progressive, "programmatic concept of modernity... (in which) rationality and functionality were the qualities that were given first priority".¹⁴⁹ I shall come back to the analogy that links Smith's and Boyd's responsiveness in relation to some myths enforced by canonical and mainstream types of modernism, as well as to their sophisticated inclination – a 'releasement' truly Heideggerian in spirit – towards the coexistence, rather than synthesis, of the rational and the irrational. Before this, I would like now to linger a little longer on Boyd's sense of relativity/ambivalence between the notions of the 'regional' and the 'international', the local and the global – an attitude that distinctly characterises the thinking of the Melbourne architect, and that discloses a strong similarity with the theoretical positions of the art historian.

Ambivalence between the notions of the 'regional' and the 'international'

Some comments by Peter Beilharz on Smith's idea of local culture and tradition as inclusive of local and global sources, can be appropriately referred to Boyd's similar attitude towards the same issues.

"Smith spoke harshly of cultural nationalism, the Jindyworobaks movement with the phoney naturalism of its claims to return to pure singular culture – as though the French or English influences on Australian painting could be reversed by fiat. The Jindyworobaks were in pursuit of something completely elusive, something like the image of 'authenticity', a free Australia without any outside influences. As Smith replied, no cultural development had ever followed this path, for culture itself was a process of absorption and adaptation, of change rather than eternity... we lived always in change, even if not with change of our own choosing. Change, traffic, contact, difference were the kinds of processes that made up culture. The purists and nativists were reactionary, for they sought to identify national art and national character with landscape. But culture, as we know it, springs not from the soil or even from beautiful if paradoxical mirage-representations of it. Culture, like identity is human and therefore transient. Authenticity is a redundant, indeed a dangerous notion".¹⁵⁰

also being justified in the name of progress.” Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting. 1788-1960*, op. cit., p. 330

146 Symptomatically Smith expresses his scepticism in regard to the rhetoric of the *avant-garde* – traditionally associated to the search for the new, and for this embraced by mainstream modernist positions – when he backs up some forms of resistance against this trend, observing that, among other examples, “at a philosophical level, the essays entitled *The End of Modernity* (1959), by the poet, James McAuley, were also a reaction against the slothful acceptance of the *avant-garde* at any price”. Ibid.

147 Hilde Heynen discusses the architectural *avant-garde* positions of the early Twentieth Century as pervaded by the urge of the new, and indirectly related to the following mature phases of the Modern Movement, either involved with the call of values such as ‘progress’ and ‘rationality’, or in support of an idea of modernity based on the relationship between the rational and the irrational, in the name of that dimension of synthesis between space and time that is canonized by Sigfried Giedion: “the *avant-garde* radicalizes the basic principle of modernity – the urge toward continual change and development, the rejection of the old and the longing for what is new...The *avant-garde* is indeed inclined to sacrifice itself on the altar of cultural advance – if the price of obtaining mastery over the future is one’s own destruction, it is fully prepared to pay it... the *avant-garde* emerges as the embodiment par excellence of a transitory concept of modernity...The issues and themes around which the modern movement in architecture crystallized are related to the *avant-garde* logic of destruction and construction... The architectural vanguard nevertheless did not become as uncompromising and as radical as its counterparts in art and literature. Most architects never renounced the principle of rationality, even if it stood for a bourgeois value...It would be a conceptual misunderstanding, therefore, to identify the modern movement as the architectural *avant-garde* of the twenties and thirties... It is nevertheless productive to confront the concept of the *avant-garde* with the ideas that were structuring the discourse of the modern movement”. Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, op. cit., pp. 27, 28, 29; the whole chapter ‘Constructing the Modern Movement’ (pp. 26-71) in Heynen’s book is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the relationship and forms of continuity between the early *avant-garde* positions and the following mainstream tendencies of the Modern Movement

148 Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1980 (original ed., 1941), quoted in Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, op. cit., pp. 38 and 40

Closely aligned to Smith’s critique of nationalism as a dangerous and rhetorical notion, destined to deceive itself in its attempt to reach an improbable level of originality/authenticity, Boyd proposes an intriguingly ambiguous reading in support of a ‘new international’ architecture, the main quality of which would consist in its intrinsic capability of simultaneously expressing a sense of Australianess and internationalism.¹⁵¹ The architecture praised by Boyd is sophisticatedly characterised by a sense of relativity and ambivalence between the notions of the local and the global, since the most significant examples informed by this new interpretation of the International Style are described as without both nationalist characters and “any noticeable ‘regional’ quality...(and yet) remarkably similar in all countries”¹⁵² in light of their common inclination towards the expression and the consideration of their own specific local conditions. The notions of ‘change’, ‘traffic’, ‘contact’ and ‘difference’ mentioned by Beilharz as a series of conditions that according to Smith contribute to the formation of culture in general, are analogously implicit in the idea of ‘the new international’ suggested by Boyd. All these terms, all these situations, are in fact blended together, indivisible from each others, in favour of a notion of architecture that is inevitably regional and international, local and global, at the same time – an architecture that does not emphasize local, regional and national tones in a parochial or chauvinist way, but that rather considers and expresses them as instinctual inflections of inherited international models.¹⁵³

At a conceptual and more philosophical level, this sense of continuous reciprocity between the coexisting notions of the local/regional and the global/international is the reflection of Boyd’s ability, similarly to Bernard Smith’s analogous theoretical position, to impartially encompass the two conditions which characterise the human nature: the logical/rational form of duality that our process of perception ineluctably establishes between subject and object, and the intuitive, illogical and rationally incomprehensible form of absoluteness between these same two terms. The apprehension of the coexistence of these two conditions is equivalent to the realization of the impossibility of separating sense of placeness from sense of placelessness, thus: sense of the local from sense of the global. This inevitable coexistence of sense of placeness and sense of placelessness – of sense of the local and sense of the global – is in its turn a parallel reflection of the ineluctable coexistence of the two opposite aspects of our human nature, as it was discussed earlier in these pages: on the one hand, the inclination towards the static inhabitation of the partial, framed, objective and conventional – grounded ‘in place’, indeed – relative comprehensions which are continuously acquired and ‘stored’ by our rational cognitive process, and, on the other hand, a continuous dynamic propensity towards an ungraspable – ungrounded and ‘in absence of place’, indeed – absolute comprehension which would include and un-differentially perceive subject and object, inside and outside, here and there, and all other forms of duality produced and conceived by our logos.

Boyd and Smith, and both their analogous way of being indecisively, ambivalently and ambiguously inclusive in relation to the notions of the local and the global, the indigenous and the international, are guided by the capability of reading relationships, rather than conflicts, between the notions of here and there. In some way their idea of identity as an outcome of inseparable and often indistinguishable

terms within the process of traffic and exchange which generate and stimulate the production of culture, lies along the same theoretical trajectory that characterises Cacciari’s inquiry in regard to the possibility of an ‘original’ illogical logos – a notion of logos as “*One is All...from λέγειν* (that)...even more originally...properly means the laying-down and laying-before which gathers itself and others”¹⁵⁴ – as an incomprehensible dimension for the coexistence of static/*sedentary* sense of inhabitation (“ethos, *sedes*”) and *ecstatic* sense of movement (“*ek-static* essence of thought”):

“Is a *logos* of architecture possible, in the most original sense of the term? This is the same question Heidegger asks with respect to thought: is a non-calculating-designing thought possible, a way of thinking that does not arrange the elements according to its own univocal perspective possible? A thought that is, instead, inclusive-connective, capable of harboring difference, or re-positing difference within itself, staying open to the *Adveniens* without premeditation? It would be a *logos* (*legein, colligere*) of the relation between ethos, *sedes*, on the one hand, and the *ek-static* essence of thought, on the other; a logos that proportions impulse to dwelling, an idea of dwelling that necessarily dwells also in the most ‘heroic furor’, on the one hand, and in caring for the Open, on the other, the questioning regarding that Beginning that defies definition, that is the voice that beckons Eros toward his unreachable goal.”¹⁵⁵

These observations symptomatically pivot on the Heideggerian notion of *releasement* which was earlier discussed as a state that is continuously open to the ungraspable dimension of an absolute comprehension¹⁵⁶ – a state that is here pervasively echoed by Cacciari’s wonderings in regard to the possibility of “a non-calculating-designing thought...capable...of staying open to the *Adveniens* without premeditation...a logos that proportions impulse to dwelling...on the one hand, and...on the other, the questioning regarding that Beginning that defies definition, that is the voice that beckons Eros toward his unreachable goal”.¹⁵⁷ In relation to the spirit of inclusiveness that characterises Boyd’s and Smith’s thinking, these same observations also disclose an inclination towards a difficult and illogical embracement of the incomprehensible and yet inescapable intermingling between sense of movement and sense of stasis, sense of rootedness and sense of unrootedness, sense of restless inhabitation (of the partial comprehension) and sense of restless and unfulfilled wandering (in search of an absolute comprehension). Interesting art and architecture, capable of significantly contributing to the creation of a local identity, are, according to Smith and Boyd respectively, constantly generated by the intertwinement and hybridisation of rooted and unrooted sources – local and international references which bounce and infiltrate over each other, reciprocally communicating and mis-communicating by means of an intuitive state of co-attraction and empathy. In the context of such a theoretical frame, the notion of displacement directly emerges as a significant issue; as a direct reflection of the inseparability between the dimensions of the local and the global – between the concepts of ‘the regional’ and ‘the international’, and the associated conditions of marginality and centrality which seem to continuously and hauntingly pervade the reflections of all Australians involved in the investigation of the issue of local identity.

“The Australian artist, we might say, is a migratory bird who owns not one home but two – the new world of Australia and the old world of Europe. The attempt to live entirely in either

149 Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, op. cit., p. 46

150 Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the Antipodes*, op. cit., pp. 33, 34

151 See Robin Boyd, ‘The New International’, *Architecture*, vol. 39, no. 2, April-June 1951, pp. 61-62

152 Ibid., p. 62

153 Boyd states: “There will be regional habits of structure and detail persisting for many years yet. They may be accepted and appreciated for their own worth. But there is no architectural or moral justification for exaggerating and glorifying these habits...No one who is seriously trying to build rationally likes to be told that his work is (a) a copy and (b) inferior to the model. Thus it is considered the highest praise to class a building as ‘Australian’. Yet the buildings in other countries which are most admired by the leading local architects are very frequently those without any noticeable ‘regional’ quality. And these admirable buildings are becoming remarkably similar in all countries”. Ibid., p. 62

154 Martin Heidegger, ‘Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)’, in *Early Greek Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 59, 60. References to this work by Heidegger have been made earlier: see notes from no. 14 to no. 18 of this section of the thesis

155 Massimo Cacciari, ‘To Dwell, to Think’, op. cit., p. 7

156 Refer to note no. 26 in this section of the thesis

157 Massimo Cacciari, ‘To Dwell, to Think’, op. cit., p. 7, already quoted above in the main text

158 Bernard Smith, ‘The arts’, *Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Committee* (Melbourne, Olympic Committee, 1956), p. 18; already quoted in Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the Antipodes*, op. cit., p. 99

159 “A «hero» will be, then, not who prevails over the contradiction, but who *suffers* it in the most conscious way”. Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, op. cit., p. 112 (my translation), already quoted in note no. 62 of this section of the thesis

160 The concept of a trajectory of empathetic positions beyond chronological and geographical boundaries is here derived from the notion of 'topological space' that is discussed by Italian philosopher Vincenzo Vitiello as the condition of lineages and traditions based on layers which are hermeneutically interrelated by proximity and empathy in character and spirit rather than in time or place. Vitiello describes his proposed notion of *topological space* as a structure of layers consisting of a plurality of 'dynamic forces' (so called *topoi*), which are "horizons of meaning generating histories". By interrelating and interfering with each other, these *topoi* act as the real responsible of the articulation and re-organization of different references, times and places into trajectories and groupings in which the coexistence of all individual parts is not necessarily established through proximity of time or space. As suggested by Vitiello, "In questo spazio del tempo, o meglio: dei tempi degli indefiniti percorsi – in questo spazio in cui pure tutto è già da sempre accaduto – sono tutte le direzioni e tutte le peregrinazioni 'possibili': le lontananze si approssimano, le prossimità si allontanano. Hegel è contemporaneo di Agostino; lontano, in altro *topos*, abita Schelling, contemporaneo di Plotino. Ma sono rapporti, connessioni, mai esclusivi, questi che s'intrecciano nello spazio della topologia. Altri rapporti, altre connessioni sono sempre 'possibili' ". "In this space of the time, or better: of the times of indefinite routes – in this space, in which everything has since ever already occurred – all directions and all wanderings are 'possible': distances approximate to each other, and proximities become distant from each other. Hegel is contemporary of Augustine; far away, in another *topos*, lives Schelling, contemporary of Plotinus. However, the relationships and connections that reciprocally intertwine with each other in the space of topology, are never exclusive. More relationships and connections are always 'possible' ". Vincenzo Vitiello, *Elogio dello Spazio* (Eulogy of Space), Bompiani, Milano, 1994, p. 59 (my translation). For a further discussion of the notion of 'history by layers' and the idea of a tradition based on empathetic references, see Mauro Baracco, 'The fit-out for Pause Exhibition; a project of my tradition', in Catherine Murphy (ed.), *Pause*, RMIT University Press, Melbourne, 2001

161 More positions in empathy with Robin Boyd's theoretical approach are discussed later in this section of the thesis

162 The term 'suspicion' was used by Nietzsche to express his scepticism towards the presupposed undisputed sense of validity commonly assigned to any 'objective truth'. According to Nietzsche, all objective truths,

world is for him a spiritual death, and he draws his strength and whatever wisdom he has from a kind of perpetual flight. He is a permanently displaced person whether he sits under the gum tree or walks upon the Pont Neuf. And his dilemma is no passing phase."¹⁵⁸

These reflections by Bernard Smith are adamantly clear in regard to the inevitability of a state of inclusiveness – as well as to the impossibility and irrelevance of a decisive choice – between the old 'international' world of the centre and the new 'regional/provincial' world of the margin. These same reflections also symptomatically identify both this sense of inclusiveness and this impossibility of choice as a condition of "perpetual flight" – as a state of "dilemma" that is destined to be continuously endured by antipodean natures. In some way the realization of this sense of displacement is a manifestation of the original and unavoidable 'anguish' towards which, according to Heidegger's call, we should open ourselves, disposed, according to the Heideggerian spirit of a statement by Cacciari which has already been mentioned, to be 'heroes' who do not prevail over the contradiction, but rather suffer and endure it in the most conscious way.¹⁵⁹

The illusory notions of 'origin' and 'purity'

This capability of enduring the contradiction, an attitude that is indeed equivalent to the capability of being open – and openly inclusive and indecisive as well – towards different and heterogeneous sympathetic references, is a pervasive and intrinsic connotation of Boyd's and Smith's transverse sense of modernism. Furthermore, the capability of enduring the contradiction is synonymous of the capability of inclusively and equally embracing the two inclinations which are inescapably connatural to the human nature: the tendency towards a static and rooted inhabitation of partial comprehensions which are generated and grasped by our logical perception of the world as an accord of subject-object dualities, and the tendency towards a dynamic and unrooted – 'ex-static' indeed – search for an ultra-logical, *One as All*, ungraspable absolute comprehension. In the context of this perspective, sense of displacement, openness, inclusiveness and irresoluteness become terms all closely intertwined within the frame that encapsulates the lateral and transverse sense of modernism typical of Boyd, Smith and other theoretical positions. These positions are here proposed as parts of a same trajectory, although not necessarily located within the same historical period or geographical place, nor necessarily conscious of the existence of all the other empathetic components of the trajectory; they are positions that interrelate with each other in a 'topological space'.¹⁶⁰ Among others, philosophers Martin Heidegger and Massimo Cacciari, whose thought and work are here continuously discussed, definitely lie in this trajectory of empathetic positions, somehow setting the characters of its own general theoretical context. The theoretical context that connects these and other positions to Robin Boyd's transverse sense of modernism¹⁶¹ is decisively informed by a sense of 'suspicion'¹⁶² and critical resistance towards the sense of certainty and infallibility that constantly pervades some orthodox tendencies of canonical modernism and their recurrent belief in the possibility to reach objective 'truths' by means of a linear, progressive and scientific approach – the same approach previously described as characteristic of Gropius's *modus operandi*.

all objective determinations, are nothing else than illusions that have forgotten to be as such. In this perspective, Nietzsche, but also Heidegger who was highly influenced by the former, is constantly 'suspicious' and critical of any sense of incontestable truthfulness and validity which, according to the progressive and scientific character of mainstream internationalist (and colonialist as well) types of modernism, would inform new objective outcomes. On Nietzsche's and Heidegger's sense of suspicion towards objective, rational and scientific truths, see, among others, Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity. Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-Modern Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge UK, 1988 (original ed., *La fine della modernità*, 1985). On the distinction between different concepts of modernity, see Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, op. cit., in which the Belgian historian observes how a programmatic idea of modernity, inherently influential to an orthodox modernism and to its celebration of the notions of future and progress, is based, in words by German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas, on the development of "objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic... for the enrichment of everyday life – that is to say, for the rational organization of everyday social life"; Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity – an Incomplete Project', in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991 (original ed., 1983), quoted in Hilde Heynen, op. cit., p. 11

163 Bernard Smith, *Place, Taste and Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979 (original ed., Ure Smith, Sydney, 1945), pp. 30, 31

164 Ibid., pp. 78, 79

Symptomatically Smith's and Cacciari's thoughts are remarkably similar in regard to the equation that interrelates the condition of displacement as an inevitable quality of contemporary society to the notions of identity and tradition as complex outcomes of processes of 'assimilation', 'mutation' and 'differentiation', rather than reflections of nationalist forms of cohesion. Critical of the idea of nationalism and the associated notion of purity, Smith writes in his book *Place, Taste and Tradition*:

"A national tradition arises from a *people* as they struggle with their social and geographical environment. Yet the evolution of such a tradition only arises from the gradual assimilation of many overseas tendencies as they react upon the local conditions of the country. So this study is largely concerned with the mutations which have occurred in styles and fashions originating overseas as they have been assimilated into conditions, social, political, moral and aesthetic, existing in Australia. The general tendency of art during the last two centuries has been toward an international fusion of many national styles. This tendency has cut across firmly-established political and national boundaries, and is one that has been ignored by those local prophets who have championed and fought for a purely national art. For, indeed, a *purely* national art can only be considered to-day as an archaic movement running counter to the dominant historical movement. A national tradition in Australian art should be sought for, not in the hopeless endeavour to create an *art-form* peculiar to this continent – as aboriginal art was – but an art the nature of which will grow from the features of a changing Australian society. Such an art, while maintaining many international connections and drawing from varied international sources, will reflect the life of the Australian people and their movement in the imbricated structure of Australian society. Since life in the Australian cities, in heavy industry, the mines, offices and factories, and life in the country, the squatters, small farmers, shearers and agricultural labourers, repeats conditions common in part to other countries, e.g., England and America, Australian art will continue to bear a close relation to such overseas arts. But where life in Australia differs from these countries, then it is to be expected that art here will differ also."¹⁶³

Further on in the same book, reiterating his suspicion in regard to the idea of 'purity', Smith observes:

"There is no such thing as an Australian *art-form*. Lines and colours of themselves have no nationality. It is only after certain combinations of form and colour have become *associated* with a race or nation over a long period that structural art-forms may be said to have a racial or national quality. So it is that we speak of Indian art and Celtic art irrespective of subject. There is, for instance, a Post-Giotto Western European art-form, but it is very doubtful whether we can separate out from this formal tradition a separate French, German and English art-form, though we may legitimately differentiate between their national styles, which arise from a consideration of both form and content. Certainly in Australia, apart from the art of the aborigines, there has been no separate formal development; nor in our own time, when the formal qualities of art are becoming increasingly determined by factors that are international in scope and operation, does there seem to be any chance of such a *purely* national form arising in the future."¹⁶⁴

Smith's notion of purity as a concept that is mythical and abstract in its absoluteness rather than tangible and effectively graspable, is in the same 'topological space' of Cacciari's idea of the absolute *Beginning/Origin* as an un-representable, indescribable, concept – always with us and yet never comprehensible as a state of "In-difference in regard to

- 165 Massimo Cacciari, *Dell'Inizio* (On the Beginning), op. cit., p. 303 (my translation)
- 166 Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the Antipodes*, op. cit., p. 187
- 167 As observed by Italian philosopher Ilario Bertoletti discussing Cacciari's philosophical thought and quoting from one of his early works: "In ogni ente [l'Inizio] esiste poiché ogni ente ek-sistendo fa-segno di una provenienza indiscorribile, che il suo esserci e il suo divenire non 'spiegano', non disvelano. Ogni ente, *non-altro* da sé, si rivela come *singularità* che sfugge alla rete delle relazioni". "In every entity [the Beginning] exists because every entity makes-a-signal, through its ex-isting, of an unspeakable origin, which cannot be 'unfolded', nor unconcealed by its being/becoming-entity. Every entity, *not-other* than itself, discloses itself as a *singularity* that eludes the network of relationships." Ilario Bertoletti, *Massimo Cacciari. Filosofia come a-teismo* (Massimo Cacciari. Philosophy as a-theism), Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 2008, pp. 57, 58 (my translation); all chapter 2, 'A-teismo trascendentale' (Transcendental A-theism), pp. 41-67 of this book, is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the complex and paradoxical definitions that are proposed by Cacciari in relation to the notions of 'beginning' and 'singularity'
- 168 "Il luogo dell'Inizio è un'atopia". "The place of the Beginning is an atopia". Ibid., p. 58 (my translation)
- 169 Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the Antipodes*, op. cit., p. 187
- 170 Massimo Cacciari, 'To Dwell, to Think', op. cit., p. 6. That of "*means/midst* of communication" as a way to move and proceed through the complex and irresolvable duality/equation between the 'static' process of Dwelling and the 'ex-static' process of Thinking, is a condition that is indirectly but unequivocally related to the critique of the absolute idea of *Beginning* – and therefore to also Bernard Smith's belief that cultures and identities are the outcomes of complex processes of traffic and exchange – particularly when in following passages of the same article Cacciari proposes that "dwelling...(is) a difficult relation, always in danger. Nothing ensures that it will not be snapped apart – in fact, the relation appears constantly precisely in the form of its laceration: thus, therefore, the fable of an original abode – thus, therefore, the illusion and the deception of a perfectly uprooted path – thus, finally, the *hybris* of the designer that seeks to incarnate the idea, forcing everything into the 'future' ". Ibid., p. 7
- 171 Ibid.. p. 6
- 172 Bernard Smith, 'The arts', op. cit., p. 18; see quote in the text related to note no. 158 in this section of the thesis
- 173 Massimo Cacciari, 'To Dwell, to Think', op. cit., p. 6
- 174 Beilharz observes that "Smith refuses the idea that culture like power flows unilaterally, from the centre out onto the peripheries or colonies. In positive moments, Smith argues, different cultures converge...cultures become entangled. There is a strong sense of caution in this way of thinking

the forms of time...(an) indeterminable (*ápeiron*) Open".¹⁶⁵ Beilharz's observation according to which "Smith's work treats the question of origins as largely indeterminate"¹⁶⁶ further contributes to underline the empathy between the art historian and the philosopher. For them both the idea of *Beginning/Origin* in its absolute dimension of *One as All* is always with – but also inexplicable to – us. It is a dimension of perfect singularity which, as such, is indefinable by our logos; it is a notion that is also intrinsically double, ambiguous, contradictory, since its implied state of singularity is automatically applicable to all 'single' relative, objective, entities and their own inherent states of beginning.¹⁶⁷ If therefore those of origin and nationalism are indefinable *atopie* out of and without place¹⁶⁸ – inadequate and illusory notions in their attempt to establish certainties and legitimate theories – if "in this view of the world, as always already mixed, it never becomes clear exactly what or who came first...(then) we only ever know cultures in traffic".¹⁶⁹ Smith's idea of a chaotic and unpredictable traffic as an appropriate condition to expose us to the entanglement – rather than accord – of cultures, reverberates "*in the means/midst* (of communication)...the bridges, the gates, the streets, all the 'machines' that cross them, all the information that circulates, all-pervading Logos-Action"¹⁷⁰ which, according to Cacciari "runs-radiates, apparently, wherever it wishes"¹⁷¹ as an *atopia*, a dimension with no place for 'dis-placed' inhabitants – for 'permanently displaced migratory birds', Smith would say¹⁷² – as "simply passers-by":

"The places of our identity as simply passers-by; this then is what the architect must design, if he is strong enough to renounce the mimesis of the idea. *Passagenwerke*, his buildings, declarations of the impossibility of dwelling, of abiding. His 'place' is the *atopia* par excellence, because every place (every 'genius loci'), for him, would be simply an element in a network without boundaries, in which production, trade, communication intertwine."¹⁷³

Cacciari's dimension of *atopia* and Smith's condition of displacement, empathically related to each other, clearly embrace the process, 'in traffic' and through 'intertwinement of communication', of cultural hybridisation, and the associated sense of impossibility, implausibility, inexpressibility in regard to the idea of 'beginning' and other "dubious notions of origin such as authenticity".¹⁷⁴

The complex notions of (Australian) 'culture' and 'tradition'

The similarity between the positions of the Italian philosopher and the Australian art historian becomes even more intriguing if considered in the context of Boyd's theoretical approach, always intensively involved with the critique of concepts such as origin, beginning and authenticity, although through argumentations that are structurally less meticulous in comparison to the examinations that typically drive the inquisitive approach of Cacciari and Smith. When the Melbourne architect engages with such issues, the discussion unrolls along the same level of vagueness, inconclusiveness and contradiction that recurrently informs his overall process of investigation and speculation. Furthermore, when the main points of the speculation are directly or indirectly related, as it often occurs in Boyd's writings, to topics such as 'cultural interchange', 'cultural identity', 'historical tradition', 'origin of cultural/historical traditions' and 'difference/equivalence between the notions of the local/regional and the global/international', the level of ambivalence and relativity becomes even more accentuated. In some extent this is a direct reflection of Boyd's intrinsic way to outline and discuss an argument – a way undoubtedly less rigorous if compared to the more systematic approach that characterises the

against overinterpretation or reliance on dubious notions of origin such as authenticity". Peter Beilharz, *Imagining the Antipodes*, op. cit., p. 187

175 See notes no. 99 and 101 in this section of the thesis

- 176 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 55
- 177 As observed by Boyd, "There can be few other nations which are less certain than Australia as to what they are and where they are. Even in the second half of the twentieth century a generation of Australians which is not too old to lead in politics and board-rooms still refers to England as 'Home', to the Commonwealth as 'The Empire', and to their own nationality as 'British'. Most Australians, however, consider these terms pleasant enough but no longer realistic. The British lion, it is realised, is preoccupied with its own problems and not much help out here. There is even a trace of superiority in the popular attitude to England. The novelist, the late Nevil Shute, always gathered an eager audience when de-discoursed on his favourite topic of the eminence of Australia next century, with a hundred million people and the spiritual leadership of the Commonwealth. But there are other busy people who do not picture Australia ultimately connected with Britain, but who would sign her up tomorrow to economic junior partnership with the United States in a ceremony tumultuously applauded by a million jiving teenagers. The historical, cultural and economic justifications for both these attitudes are overlaid by a slightly neurotic condition brought about by loneliness. The physical isolation from the West is only partially alleviated by radio and jet travel. Australia still feels cut off from what she thinks of as her own kind of people, and the obvious cure of her loneliness, fraternisation with her neighbours in Asia, is not acceptable. The immigration policy remains rigidly opposed to Asians and even its madly offensive, if unofficial, name of 'White Australia Policy' is sacrosanct." Ibid., pp. 55, 56. The entire chapter 'Anglophiles and Austerians' of this book, pp. 55- 73, is devoted to the discussion of Australia's imitation of historical, cultural, economic and aesthetic models of both England and the United States of America
- 178 Ibid., p. 65; see also note no. 57 in this section of the thesis, in which the attitude towards "parrot's imitation" has already been quoted and referred to the notion of identity
- 179 Among the many writings in which Boyd discusses the direct relationship between Anglo-Saxon and Australian traditions, see his book *Australia's Home*; in the initial pages of this work, referring to the typical "English taste for privacy", Boyd discusses the one family house type that is extensively disseminated all over Australia as indebted to habits and models which were imported since the beginning of colonization: "Each family asked, when the day's work was done, for isolation from the next family. Each member asked for the possibility of privacy from the remainder

argumentations of the historian Smith and the philosopher Cacciari, both punctiliously 'trained' to the art of disquisition through the inherently 'scientific' nature and implications of their own respective disciplinary fields. Boyd is after all an architect and a prolific 'scribbler',¹⁷⁵ not an academically trained scholar. He juggles with his own multiple activities and generously participates in the general cultural debate through statements and opinions which are constantly polemical and ironic. Always open to the arena of discourse, unconcerned of the degree of ambivalence that, induced by his unrestrained openness, informs his polemic and ironic approach, Boyd unhesitatingly launches himself to challenge the rhetorical acceptance of conventional simplistic determinations commonly generated by superficial interpretations applied to the notion of 'historical/cultural tradition'. One of the conventional trends highly condemned by him is the diffused attitude that pervades and disposes a large part of Australian society towards an uncritical imitation of English and American conditions, gratuitously transplanted into the Australian built environment as a pervasive form of reassurance – a way to establish, underline, and belong to, a 'tradition'; a way to anaesthetize the pain of "loneliness...(and) physical isolation from the West".¹⁷⁶ Boyd's critique is substantially directed against any forms of unquestioned and oversimplified imitation of both the old and the new worlds; his condemnation is aimed against the rhetorical common viewpoint according to which a large part of the Australian public believes that models from both the old traditional world, England, and the new progressive country, United States, would represent the appropriate solution for providing Australia with a recognizable identity – for erasing the condition of displacement inherently associated to its sense of 'loneliness'.¹⁷⁷

Yet, Boyd's anger against these forms of a simplistic and 'infantile' imitation – in his words, "the parrot's imitation...(of) the little boy mimicking his big brother's actions without fully understanding what he is doing"¹⁷⁸ – is on the other hand continuously backed up by the realization that Australian culture is inevitably interrelated with the Anglo-Saxon spirit that pervades both the English and the American worlds.¹⁷⁹ Sympathetic to Smith's idea of culture as a dynamic result of continuous processes of assimilation and mutation, Boyd's positions in regard to the character of Australian architecture embrace the unavoidability of a mutual and reciprocal interrelation between international and local references – a level of interrelation in which the terms and concepts of 'international' and 'local' are always relative and in a perpetual state of negotiation, somehow in their turn contributing to that condition of displacement mentioned above as a significant notion in Smith's and Cacciari's thought. Not surprisingly Boyd's vagueness and inconclusiveness are poignantly reaffirmed when he discusses the reciprocal reverberations between the international origins of some historical and traditional Australian legacies and relevant local qualities and conditions of this land. Although Boyd admits the inevitability of English traditions in the formation and development of Australian culture,¹⁸⁰ thus realizing the inevitability of Anglo-Western models over the local culture, on the other hand, as we have already seen, he angrily accuses Australians who imitate English and American sources:

"They know – all Australians know very well – that here is a country far removed in space and time from both the Old Country and the rich country, with its own separate, special truths, values, realities, and strengths."¹⁸¹

of the family. The nation was built on the principle that for every family there should be a separate house and for every person there should be a separate room. The pattern of this culture, through the years and across the great distances, was fairly consistent. Each town was in essence a great sea of small houses around a commercial and industrial island." Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1968 (original ed., Melbourne University Press, 1952), pp. 11, 12

180 Still in regard to the English traditional culture of privacy as a character automatically inherited by the Australian domestic types, Boyd writes: "Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Englishmen began building houses on the east coast of this warm land of curious life and unknown vastness...These Englishmen, marines and convicts, and their few women, had left the England of the Adam brothers; of tall, pastel-tinted rooms, gilded ornament and gleaming silverware; of Wedgwood and the water-closet – a state where domestic building for the privileged had reached physical and artistic maturity. Many of them, not having been privileged, knew nothing of these things. But all of them had the acquired English taste for privacy, and it was this taste which remained a prime motive through the subsequent generations of home-building." *Ibid.*, p. 11

181 Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., p. 73, already previously quoted in this section of the thesis (see text related to note no. 59). A few years later, addressing the Australian public through the series of ABC radio talks known as the *Boyer Lectures*, Boyd will reiterate this concept, adamantly stating that "this country is not the U.S.A., nor the U.K., nor Scandinavia. It is not European and not Asian. And the details of life's realities here are not the same as the details in any other place. And we have no real civilization unless we express somehow the realities of our own life in this unique place." Robin Boyd, *Artificial Australia, The Boyer Lectures 1967*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1968, pp. 9, 10

182 See Robin Boyd, 'The state of Australian architecture', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 56, no. 3, June 1967, pp. 454-465

183 *Ibid.*, p. 454

184 *Ibid.*, p. 455

185 Robin Boyd, *Victorian Modern: One hundred and eleven years of modern architecture in Victoria, Australia*, Architectural Students' Society of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, Melbourne, 1947

186 *Ibid.*, p. 8

Boyd's sense of ambivalence between these same issues – an ambivalence that is consistently generated, in his discussions, by an unresolved and indefinite inclusion of the notions of 'the local' and 'the international' – becomes even stronger a few years later, when the Melbourne architect, invited to write some reflections on both modern traditions and contemporary directions of Australian architecture, supports and at the same time denies the importance of looking at international references and fashionable trends.¹⁸² In the initial part of his discussion he polemically states:

"This rejection of world fashion by Australian architecture is probably its strongest attribute. It would in fact be something to cheer about if one could be convinced that the rejection followed careful consideration and was not based largely on conservatism. Unfortunately it is only the more sophisticated fashions from overseas that are rejected, and then only temporarily, until they have been around for a decade or more. Local inbreeding of fashion is active all the time; for instance the present, passing flush of clinker brick and brown creosote or the rage for that Neo-Mansard fascia or false roof."¹⁸³

Yet, in further lines of the same text Boyd remarks that:

"nevertheless...the relative freedom from the erratic forces of fashionable competition and from excessively over-stimulated creative energy is by no means necessarily bad. It could be the most valuable characteristic of Australian architecture."¹⁸⁴

Once again the suggestions advanced by this Melbourne architect imply a process of negotiation and exchange between international and local conditions, as well as between old traditional legacies and new situations; appropriate responses to the specificity of cultural and geographical contexts are the result of this continuous and indefinite state of negotiation – somehow a dynamic and unsettled (un)balance – between the conditions of the global/international and the local/regional. This state of negotiation is after all the intrinsic condition for thoughtful and quality architecture – a concept that accompanies the many definitions of 'intelligent' and 'appropriate' architecture which are recurrently disseminated throughout Boyd's profuse collection of writings since the observations on Victorian architecture as outlined in his early work *Victorian Modern*.¹⁸⁵ A passage of this book clearly states that some relevant architectural works – imbued, on the one hand, by traditional local characters, yet, essentially constituted, on the other, by imported international genes – were produced in the context of a positive period of stability in the history of Victorian architecture; a period that lies between the 'struggling' hard times of the foundation phases and the years of greedy development through the Gold Rush in the second half of the 19th century:

"These pioneers, few in number and not embarrassed with opportunities, mothered Victorian building with unerring guidance through the awkward age. Today the few of their buildings left by progress rot peacefully, unhonoured but unworried: little gems that still shine through all the paste of later generations...It was the short interlude after the town had settled down but before the gold was found: after the struggle for a roof to the head but before the rivalry for splendour. The buildings had developed in quality, but had not lost their character. They were still essentially English, but realistic and Australian to the extent that the English pattern was sensibly simplified and adjusted. They were strictly styled, but undeniably creative: direct, light, and embarrassingly sincere. And they were produced under trying conditions."¹⁸⁶

In another writing, a critical review of architectural works in the Mornington Peninsula¹⁸⁷ written three years after his study on Victorian architecture, Boyd dwells, once more, on the ambivalent line of negotiation, and to some extent 'confusion', between the concepts of 'regional' and 'international'. Symptomatically, the beginning and the end of this review express different and somehow opposite statements, both directly concerned with the notion of regionalism. Following his initial affirmation, according to which "the houses on the Mornington Peninsula do not represent a distinct regional style",¹⁸⁸ Boyd outlines, in the final lines of the article, that this body of works reflects "a spontaneous public movement, the closest thing to an architectural renaissance to be seen this century in Australia".¹⁸⁹ On the one hand Boyd realizes that the recurrent characters of many works in this specific region are rather international/global in their 'rational' spirit:

"The most significant lesson of the area is that here the rational approach to building has been accepted by the public and even by the speculative builder."¹⁹⁰

On the other hand, however, his thought is drawn by the fact that this approach, this inclination to international/global 'logic', is connected to the tradition of this specific region:

"Mornington Peninsula did not develop overnight this taste for logic. Bones of the current movement are buried in its history. From the late seventies of last century, when it built lookouts and kiosks on the high cliffs above the ocean beaches, it learnt to use timber in a light open frame. It discovered the possibilities of outdoor living. It discarded urns, imitation stone and cast-iron, favourites of the inner suburbs."¹⁹¹

In Boyd words, this architecture can be aligned to international/global trends as supportive of "plans...(that are) simple and free...building materials...(that) discard their stiff clothes...(and are) naked and unashamed,...(and a) general logic of planning and construction which modern architects have advocated for the last two or three decades"¹⁹² and yet is at the same time vigorously engrained into the regional tradition of its place – to the extent to be called a "movement", a term repeatedly used by Boyd in this article – "for the Mornington Peninsula...deserves credit for having been for over half a century the testing ground for progressive movements in domestic architecture".¹⁹³ Furthermore, the sense of particularity – of regional specificity – that informs Boyd's equation between the terms 'local tradition' and 'movement' is intriguingly reinforced by the term "spontaneous"¹⁹⁴ which is suggestive of dimensions involved with the spheres of 'impulsiveness/irrationality'¹⁹⁵ and 'impromptness/subjectivity/particularity'¹⁹⁶ – dimensions that are on the opposite side of the sense of 'rationality' and 'objective logic' which are described at the same time in the article as defining characteristics of the tradition of this region with the form of "a bent isosceles triangle extending for some fifty miles with the southern fringe of Melbourne's sprawling suburbs as its base".¹⁹⁷ Also in this occasion Boyd remains essentially ambivalent, despite the apparent lucidity of his review, in regard to the significance and plausibility, for architecture, to be either local or global. He is not interested in tracing exact delimitations for precisely pinpointing and encompassing the different spheres which are associated to the terms 'local/regional' and 'global/international', and their related implications. Rather, he is interested in outlining unmeasurable forms of a reciprocal interrelation, negotiation, and somehow identification, between these two notions, without necessarily being conclusive or exhaustive in relation to the degree

187 Robin Boyd, 'Mornington Peninsula', *Architecture*, vol. 38, no. 4, October-December 1950, pp. 148-152. The Mornington Peninsula is located south-east of Melbourne, between Port Phillip Bay and Westernport Bay

188 *Ibid.*, p. 148

189 *Ibid.*, p. 149

190 *Ibid.*, p. 148

191 *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149

192 *Ibid.*, p. 149

193 *Ibid.*, p. 148

194 As seen above (see text referring to note no. 189), Boyd describes the architectural approach pervasive of Mornington Peninsula as indicative of "a spontaneous public movement"; *ibid.*, p. 149

195 Among others, terms such as "instinctive", "impulsive", "unconscious" and, indirectly, "senseless" and "irrational" can be found as synonyms of "spontaneous", *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, op. cit.

196 Arguably, the terms "impromptu" and "unpremeditated", both listed as synonyms of "spontaneous" in *ibid.*, suggest a condition of illogical logos as a dimension in which entities are not logically/accordingly premeditated, therefore and indeed involved with a dis-accorded individual/subjective/particular state of relative oneness rather than with an accorded collective/objective/general state of absolute oneness

197 Robin Boyd, 'Mornington Peninsula', op. cit., p. 148

198 See *Casabella* no. 261, May 1961, a monographic issue called, and devoted to, 'Quindici anni di architettura italiana' (Fifteen years of Italian architecture) – the years between 1945 and 1960 are commonly identified as the 'reconstruction phase' that followed the Second World War

199 A section of this monographic issue of *Casabella*, called 'Six Questions on Italian Architecture', includes the response of eighteen architects (some of them joined in groups) invited to answer six questions. Question no. 3 was asking: *In your opinion, to what extent and in what forms can we find outside Italy the tendency to revivals and deviations from the main stream of the modern movement of which Italian architecture has been accused?* The architects invited to participate in this forum were (in alphabetical order): Carlo Aymonino and Leonardo Benevolo; Max Bill; Robin Boyd; Edoardo Caracciolo; Giancarlo De Carlo; Ignazio Gardella; Vittorio Gregotti; Roberto Guiducci; Douglas Haskell; Paolo Portoghesi; Ludovico Quaroni; J.M. Richards; Aldo Rossi; Luciano Semerani, Silvano Tintori; Giuseppe Samonà; Marco Zanuso. Ibid., pp. 3-34 (with summarized English translations in the conclusive pages of the issue, pp. x-xiii)

200 Ernesto Nathan Rogers (1909-1969), one of the directors of the Italian architectural group BBPR (Gianluigi Banfi, Lodovico Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti, Ernesto Nathan Rogers), was editor of *Casabella* from 1953 to 1965. He is one of the most influential references to the generation of Italian architects who were deviating from mainstream modernism after the end of the Second World War, as well as one of the intellectuals who best represent the Italian 'transverse' sense of modernism, never totally aligned to the mainstream modernist currents of rationalist and functionalist architecture. In his editorial published in the very same issue of *Casabella* devoted to the discussion of 'Quindici anni di architettura italiana' (Fifteen years of Italian architecture), he says: "It is to the credit of Italian architecture that it was among the first to recognize that the energy of the Modern Movement was about to die out in a negation of its own principles because, though born as a method of continual research and the consequent renewal of interpretative idiom, it was about to close itself off – this very movement which had struck down the academic concept of styles – in a fossile (sic) style incapable of change during the dynamic process of history... What the most restless, the most lively, the best part of Italian architecture (or at least what I consider to be the best) has achieved in the last fifteen years has been useful in making the 'modern style' more flexible, in broadening the concept of function, and in recovering the sense of history. This corresponds to operations which, for all their varied implications and personal interpretations, may be put over a common denominator: the awareness of time in the determination of the concept of space; time not as an autonomous

of specificity of each of these two concepts. The relevant message conveyed by this and other writings of the Melbourne architect is represented by the confirmation of a degree of relativity between the notions and terms of 'local' and 'global', as well as 'regional' and 'international'. It is not relevant to try to identify precise demarcations between them; it is definitely more interesting and insightful to dwell on the undefined and uncertain balance between these terms, and reflect on the contributions that the state of relativity and negotiation between these terms can continuously offer to the dynamic process of formation and development of cultures and traditions.

The unavoidable deviations from the unavoidable 'middle-ness'

The processes of adjustment and negotiation which continuously, although often unconsciously, guide Boyd's general discussion and approach towards the reciprocal interrelation between architectural, cultural and historical studies, are in their turn the direct reflections of the notion of 'deviation' to which this architect refers in a positive way. It is not surprising that in 1960 he was invited to contribute to an international forum organized by the Italian architectural magazine *Casabella*¹⁹⁸ to reflect on the "deviations from the main stream of the modern movement"¹⁹⁹ that had been distinctively undertaken by Italian architecture, and possibly other international positions, throughout the fifteen years that followed the end of the Second World War in 1945. Symptomatically, in empathy with the theoretical approach that accompanies the aesthetic and formal resolutions of Italian architects in their digressing from mainstream modernist positions – digressions that are also discussed by Italian architect and *Casabella* editor Ernesto Nathan Rogers in the pages of the same issue that includes Boyd's contribution²⁰⁰ – Boyd supports and embraces the process of deviation, a process that guides – and locates in the same 'topological space' as analogous to each other – both the 'transverse' sense of modernism of the Melbourne architect and the personal adaptations, the critical shifts, which had been generally and historically undertaken by Italian architects in regard to the internationalist directives of the mainstream currents of the Modern Movement. In addition to this, because of his inherent aptitude to ambivalence and relativity, Boyd's endorsement for the process of deviation is clearly connatural; it is indeed described by him as an unavoidable condition, always existing in its being a particular form of modification, an "individual interpretation", from the similarly existing – although abstract, unreachable, incomprehensible – idea of an absolute accord that is associated to the notion of 'middle-ness':

"Every country expresses phenomena of deviation, as the main stream (of the modern movement) is currently undoubtedly caught into an intricate process for determining the ideal level of 'middle-ness' (*which is unreachable anyway*). However, even assuming it was possible to identify this mainstream middle path, there would always be deviations – I would prefer to call them *individual interpretations*. If Italy is currently characterised by a higher number of deviations, this must be attributed to the possibility, for Italians, to be more individualist in comparison to the majority of the others; good on them if they can enjoy conditions which still allow individualism to prosper."²⁰¹

Open to the coexistence of both the absolute, ungraspable, ideal level of 'middle-ness' and the relative, partial, notion/process of deviation from it, Boyd's approval for the latter – for the process of 'individual interpretation', as he admittedly prefers to say – is essentially a Heideggerian way to praise the production of partial

present in opposition to a completed past, but as a continuous change which, at any moment in the present, contains all the past and transforms it... Our way of looking at the whole of the past (including the most recent) abandons without our rejecting the Modern Movement, some of its postulates, which had essentially been a break with history and ended by alienating new works from the very process that had determined them, and even from the real environment to which they thought they belonged in their entirety. A great many sometimes contrasting consequences follow from the present development of Italian architecture: as a rule, our works do not oppose or ignore the pre-existent environment, because we consider it a part of what we construct; thus, whatever we build in urban or natural settings we try to work into those settings: in the best cases as harmonization, in the less successful cases as camouflage. Parallel to this more revealing interpretation of places, understood as space characterized by a given culture, there was an attempt to come to a better understanding of the needs of the tenants, with respect to their social and individual standing; in this way, the Modern Movement, which had started out in the direction of the metropolis and social-levelling, considering more abstract humanity than real men, became enriched with human feeling. I do not mean to say that this is due exclusively to the Italians, but it can be stated that our critical work was the most deeply committed and the most knowledgeable in this respect." Ernesto N. Rogers, 'The Next Step', *ibid.*, pp. ix, x

201 Robin Boyd, 'Reply to Question no. 3: *In your opinion, to what extent and in what forms can we find outside Italy the tendency to revivals and deviations from the main stream of the modern movement of which Italian architecture has been accused?*' (my translation, my italics). Boyd's full contribution – his response to all six questions – is published in Italian (only a brief summary of each contribution from all participating architects is translated in English, in the conclusive pages of the issue). The Italian version of the passage quoted here in the main text, extrapolated from the conclusive lines of Boyd's response to question no. 3, states: "Ogni paese presenta fenomeni deviazionistici, in quanto la corrente di centro sicuramente sta ora subendo un tortuoso processo per determinare quale sia la via di mezzo ideale (che peraltro è irraggiungibile). E tuttavia, anche quando tale via di mezzo dovesse venir individuata, sempre vi saranno delle deviazioni, che io però preferirei definire interpretazioni individuali. Se poi – oggi come oggi – l'Italia ne ha in maggior numero, il fatto dev'essere attribuito alla possibilità che hanno gli italiani di essere più individualisti che la stragrande maggioranza degli altri; e buon per loro se dispongono di condizioni in cui l'individualismo ancora trova modo di prosperare." *Ibid.*, p. 9

202 On the Heideggerian dimension of *releasement* related to our "meditative

truths – i.e.: 'the individual interpretations' – as objective means that attract our attention while we "meditate on what is closest...(in a state of) releasement toward things and openness to the mystery"²⁰² – i.e.: the mysterious ideal level of 'middle-ness' – by unconsciously "waiting... but never awaiting...and so by waiting, by in-dwelling in releasement"²⁰³ towards the absoluteness/oneness of the idea of accord that goes hand in hand with the notion of 'middle-ness'.

Boyd and the Italian deviations from mainstream modernism

Furthermore, by praising the ineluctability, and welcoming the occurrence, of forms of individual interpretation/deviation, Boyd confirms once more his intrinsic predisposition towards the notions of negotiation, ambivalence and openness. As mentioned above, his positive response to the concepts of deviation and interpretation is symptomatically expressed in the context of the examination of a culture – the Italian architectural culture after the Second World War – which considerably deviated from a mainstream modernist-internationalist tradition generally invigorated by the belief in an equation of reciprocal correspondence between the notions of rationalism, technological advancement and social progression. It is not surprising to detect a solid sense of commendation throughout the comments expressed by the Melbourne architect in relation to the individualistic digressions of Italian modern architects. Boyd finds himself indirectly attuned with the 'weaknesses' and 'hesitations' of which Italian rationalist architecture has been accused by critics and historians who indeed consistently described the individualist aura of many modernist positions of this Mediterranean country as regrettably detached from the social, cultural and political fervours which densely contributed to the intense and radical changes and transformations of the 20th century. *Casabella* magazine has historically been the arena of polemical and controversial discussions of the Italian 'transverse way' – the Italian 'individual interpretations' – in relation to the mainstream currents of the Modern Movement. In the same issue with the questionnaire posed to Boyd and the other invited architects, Rogers himself refers to some of the polemics that since the second half of the 1950s informed the pages of the Italian magazine, sometimes as part of the debate between old modernist and new emerging generations within the Italian context, sometimes as reflections of simplistic interpretations of international critics and historians – among them, Reinher Banham,²⁰⁴ to whom I will come back later in this essay – incapable of understanding the close link between the various historical/cultural traditions of Italy and its typical way of thinking modernity – and many of the principles of the associated Modern Movement – as not merely related to the equations according to which the notions of 'rationalism' and 'social progression' would go indisputably together with those of functionalism and technological evolution.²⁰⁵

Italian art and architectural critic Edoardo Persico, one of the earliest editors of *Casabella* magazine,²⁰⁶ anticipates Rogers, although through a sense of condemnation rather than support, in describing the ambiguous, 'transverse', types of ideologies that place Italian modernism in a marginal, alternative, position in comparison to the mainstream tendencies of the Modern Movement. He clearly indicates the aspirations for a European rational architecture when he invokes a close interrelation between aesthetic, cultural, economic, social and political forces,²⁰⁷ at the same time outlining the problematic, rather tenuous, engagement with such aspirations by the majority of Italian

thinking" as an everyday thinking that "need by no means be 'high-flown'. It is enough if we dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest", see Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 47 and 55 in particular, but generally all essay, pp. 43-57; see also note no. 26 in this section of the thesis

203 Martin Heidegger, 'Conversation on a country path about thinking', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 68 and 86; see also text previously quoted, related to note no. 93 in this section of the thesis

204 See Reyner Banham, 'Neoliberalty. The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 125, no. 747, April 1959, p. 231-235

205 Rogers has always proposed a constructive form of critique towards the Modern Movement, continuously calling for approaches of empathetic continuity – rather than rupture – with the past generations of modernist positions, but also firmly responding to critics and historians who too quickly and superficially attacked the new generations of Italian architects after the Second World War as inclined "to abdicate from the Twentieth Century" and its cultural and technological revolution – this being the argument of an article published by English architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham in 1959 (see note no. 204 above) which, among other writings, was produced as a reaction to an earlier article by Rogers (Ernesto Nathan Rogers, 'Continuity or Crisis?', *Casabella*, no. 215, April/May 1957, pp. 3-4) and in its turn generated further debate. Rogers indirectly refers to this debate: "And some have voiced their protest against the shortcomings of the Modern Movement by trying to cast aside its whole history, without taking into account its valid and indispensable experience. I have always considered inadequate and even pusillanimous the position of those who, in order to reject or oppose an historical, artistic, or political, or even scientific movement, emphasise only the negative aspects of it without penetrating to its basis, without projecting themselves into its essence, or accepting, modifying, or rejecting it in the most substantially implicit part of those principles that I would call 'institutional'. Therefore, it is nonsense to take it out on the country priest or the dishonest industrialist or brutish activist for discussing the Church, Capitalism, and Communism. Nor, returning to our subject, is it sensible to criticize the Modern Movement, seizing only on some superficial or modish aspects, and deluding oneself that one has passed beyond the Movement, while actually one has fallen into another mode based on ephemeral (sic) taste and not on profound analysis. I have several times pointed out the limits of this substantial inadequacy (see *Casabella* n. 215) and even of the error underlying certain other undertakings (for example, the so-called neoliberalty style). Nor have I spared the presumptuousness and generalizations of certain Italian and foreign

modernist architects, described by him as generally pervaded by the lack of a sense of faith and the incapability "of believing into clear ideologies".²⁰⁸ Aligned along similar theoretical positions, Vittorio Gregotti, himself editor of *Casabella* for 15 years, and assistant editor under Rogers's direction when Boyd was invited to contribute to the magazine,²⁰⁹ has more recently proposed that "great ideas truly transformative were not certainly a common mark in the Italy of those years".²¹⁰ The preference assigned by Italian rationalist architects to the sphere of aesthetics can be read as the reflection of both the general lack of a 'revolutionary' character and a tepid interest for ideological and programmatic visions advocating interrelation between architectural, social, cultural and political issues. For the Italian rationalist architects of the 1920s and 1930s "the space of freedom – of a creative freedom – is not a social one, but rather that of the encounter between the subject and the absolute".²¹¹

This encounter between the spheres of the absolute and the particular, this embracement of both logical objective comprehension and illogical subjective release to incomprehension, this coexistence of opposite and yet 'con-fused' dimensions, critical of simplistic unilateral correspondences between aesthetic, social and political values, quintessentially defines the alternative, marginal, positions of Italian architects in relation to the Modern Movement. It is not surprising that this dimension is fully embraced and supported, warmly encouraged, by Boyd's capability of dwelling on the problematic coexistence, and unsolvable 'con-fusion', of rational objective definiteness and irrational absolute oneness.

In empathy with the transverse sense of modernism that characterises the thought and work of the Melbourne architect, the Italian inclination to deviation from mainstream modernism is also the reflection of an acute spirit of negotiation/adaptation that since the crisis and decline of the Roman Empire, has historically been pervading Italian people for centuries in their individualist resistance against, and enforced endurance of, many continuous occupations under the domination of other European imperialist and absolutist nations. Differently from Austria, Prussia, England, France, Russia, Spain, Portugal and other European kingdoms or empires, Italy has never been a unified and cohesive nation. Italy has never been part of the group of European superpowers that were constantly informed by expansionist and colonialist aspirations – Italy has actually been the constant victim of long and continuous repressive dominations exercised all over its own territory, mainly by the Austrian, French and Spanish Empires as well as, although more subliminally, by the Vatican State. Since the fall of the Roman Empire and the shift of the cultural, economical and political barycentre from Rome to Byzantium which marks the beginning of the Medieval Age, Italy has not been an independent and unified country for a long time. From the end of the Roman Empire between the 5th and 6th centuries until the second half of the 19th century, including the culturally enlightened and politically peaceful period of the Early and High Renaissance during the 15th and the first two decades of the 16th centuries, Italy's territory has been constantly divided in regions under the domination of several different European nations.²¹² As a reflection of this, Italy has never been in a condition, since the dissolution of the Roman Empire, to act as an imperialist and absolutist nation in relation to the rest of the world – on the contrary, Italy is rather a country historically characterised by the presence and coexistence of many different and variegated

critics – the high priests of vestal virgins already buried alive for having lost their virginity (see *Casabella* n. 228) –; without their hasty judgement the matter would have been cleared up much more constructively; also because, in the field of ideas, those less gifted with personality are unable to stimulate activity or escape from the purely physical law that every action is met *only* by an equal and contrary action." Ernesto N. Rogers, 'The Next Step', op. cit., pp. ix, x

206 *Casabella* magazine was founded in 1928 in Milan by Guido Marangoni. Edoardo Persico (1930-1936), one of the finest intellectuals of Italian modernism, was involved with the editorial board of the magazine since the end of 1929. In 1932 the architect Giuseppe Pagano was appointed editor, with Persico acting officially as Pagano's assistant editor, but effectively being the editor of the magazine; from 1935 the two of them, Persico and Pagano, became officially co-editors of the magazine

207 "Il fondamento del 'razionalismo'...è in questa intuizione della necessità di forze nuove che si inseriscano in uno stato di fatto 'europeo', non soltanto come idee estetiche, ma anche come forze di cultura, economiche, sociali, politiche." "The foundation of 'rationalism'...lies in the intuition for the necessity of new forces capable of inserting themselves in a state effectively 'European', not only as aesthetic ideas, but also as cultural, economic, social and political forces." Edoardo Persico, 'Punto ed a capo per l'architettura', in Giulia Veronesi (ed.), *Edoardo Persico – Scritti d'architettura (1927/1935)*, Vallecchi Editori, Firenze, 1968, pp. 161, 162, originally published in *Domus*, November 1934, (my translation)

208 In the same essay Persico argues that the overall situation of Italian rationalism – except for Milan and Turin, "industrial cities in which 'rationalism' acquires a revolutionary tone, truly 'European', against the middle class world" (p. 161) – is pervaded by the incapability of setting and reaching ideological targets: "Il 'razionalismo' italiano è necessariamente refrattario all'impeto delle tendenze europee, perché in esso non è mai stata una fede. Così, dall'europeismo del primo 'razionalismo', si è passati, con fredda intelligenza delle situazioni pratiche, alla 'romanità' e alla 'mediterraneità', fino all'ultimo proclama dell'architettura corporativa...il problema dell'architettura nuova in Italia diventa quello stesso dell'arte in generale. Gli artisti debbono affrontare, oggi, il problema più spinoso della vita italiana: 'la capacità di credere a ideologie precise' ". "Italian rationalism is necessarily recalcitrant to the force of European tendencies, since no faith has ever pervaded it. From the European dimension of its first 'rationalism', Italy has then opportunistically shifted to the 'roman tradition', the 'Mediterranean character', and the recent idea of a corporative architecture... the problem of the new architecture in Italy is the same of that of art in general. Today

local cultures and traditions, with regional centres (such as Florence, Bologna, Parma, Perugia, Pisa, Venice, Vicenza, Mantua, Pavia, Palermo, Genoa among many others) that are as vital and culturally relevant as the main cities, and densely rich of their individual historical background.

The incapability of developing unitary cohesive directives – the impossibility, as lamented by Persico, to express unilateral 'clear ideologies' in relation to rationalism and modernism in architecture, and culture in general – is not surprisingly a direct reflection, at many levels, of the fragmentation of Italy into individual cultures and traditions. It is in the name of individualism – individualist processes of assimilation, overcoming, reappropriation and reinterpretation of all the different cultural traditions which were imposed in different times and places – that the various Italian regions and their people have been continuously resisting and reacting to the many continuous moments of military, political and cultural invasion. Through this subtle process of resistance by assimilation and reinterpretation, through a non-confrontational – oblique rather than straight – relational mode towards each new foreign invasive culture, Italians have increasingly refined the inclination to negotiation and the exercise of deviation that pervasively characterise their approach to the world.²¹³ The geographical location of Italy, a threshold between East and West Europe as well as between Africa, Middle East and Europe, has in its turn certainly contributed to the accentuation of its own negotiating nature. Hinging between all these different worlds, Italy not only has the political and economic necessity to keep the dialogue alive between itself and its variegated neighbours, but also continuously facilitates unfinished and permanently open conversations between the extremely different worlds and cultures of North and East Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to this, the strong sense of differentiation and often complex degree of communication between the many distinctive coexisting regions of Italy, each of them with its own dialect, cultural traditions, typical food and other inherently specific characters, is not certainly conducive to the notion of a monolithic single unity, to the idea of one absolute 'truth', or to incontrovertible and undisputable – "clear", as indeed put it by Persico – types of ideology.

What is interesting here is not so much Boyd's ability to identify and discuss the Italian way of deviating from a mainstream canon – this is after all a common and well known characteristic of the Italian creative and productive approach – but rather the sense of sympathy that is subtly and yet unequivocally expressed by the Melbourne architect for the Italian way to relate to and participate in the world. The inconclusive and comprehensive nature of Robin Boyd sympathetically relates to the non-confrontational mode that informs the Italian inclination to absorb and diverge from universally 'approved' canons. The affinity between the non-confrontational approach of both Boyd and the Italians can also be symptomatically read as a reflection of two cultures – the Australian and the Italian – which have been historically the object of forms of colonization/occupation by expansionist nations, and which have traditionally found their way and overcome the invasive colonizing culture through types of resistance based on subtle processes of assimilation and absorption rather than on forms of direct opposition or rejection. Australian-born academic writer Germaine Greer has written interesting pages in regard to Australian society, proposing a direct relationship between the rejection

artists need to face the most difficult problem of Italian life: 'the capability of believing into clear ideologies' ". Ibid., pp. 164, 167 (my translation)

209 Vittorio Gregotti (1927-), one of the Italian architects who emerged after the Second World War as associated to the so called Neoliberty group, was *Casabella's* editor assistant when Rogers was editor in chief, and later was appointed editor of the magazine from 1981 to 1996

210 "Le grandi idee autenticamente trasformatrici non erano certo un patrimonio comune nell'Italia di quegli anni." Vittorio Gregotti, 'La mimesis della ragione' (The mimesis of reason), *Rassegna*, no. 31/3, Year IX, September 1987 (monographic issue on *Interior in Milan and Como 1927-1936*), p. 5 (my translation)

211 "Lo spazio della libertà, della libertà creativa, non è quello sociale, ma quello dell'incontro tra soggetto ed assoluto", *ibid.* (my translation)

212 A symptomatic moment in Italy's history is the geographical and political parcelling that follows the definitive fall of Napoleon and the general restoration throughout Europe as sanctioned by the Vienna Congress in 1815 – three kingdoms, five dukedoms and one principate, all independent although mainly in the expansionist hands of the Hapsburg and the Bourbon monarchic families, in addition to the Vatican state and the San Marino Republic, contributed to make Italy's footprint look like a patchwork of bits and pieces, all the opposite of a united and cohesive territory

213 After all the inclination to negotiation seems to be an original Italian character if we think of the tendency to assimilation and integration as an intrinsic quality of the Roman Empire throughout the process of expansion over, and annexation of, new foreign territories. A symptomatic reflection of this can be also traced in the embracement of the 'conquered' foreign cultures as constitutive parts of Rome and the Roman civilization in general; this is clearly revealed by the heterogeneous dimension that informs the cultural, ethnic and religious mix of the city of Rome since its early ages, a condition that is truly opposite to the cultural and ethnical homogeneity that essentially characterises Athens and the ancient Greek cities in general. As observed by Massimo Cacciari: "Nella civiltà greca la città è fondamentalmente l'unità di persone dello stesso *génos*, e quindi si può capire come *pólis*, idea che rimanda a un tutto organico, preceda l'idea di cittadino. A Roma invece fin dalle origini – e questo è proprio il mito fondativo romano – la città è il confluire insieme, il convivere di persone diversissime per religione, per etnie, ecc." "In the ancient Greek civilization the city is fundamentally a unity of people of the same *génos* (race), therefore we can realize how the idea of *polis*, a notion that refers to an organic whole, precedes the idea of the citizen. On the contrary, in Rome, since its origins – this is indeed the founding Roman myth – the city is

of "the notion of a single fixed identity...(a sense of) Australian evasiveness...(and) a preferred approach (that) is easy, rather than confrontational",²¹⁴ suggesting that these and other quintessentially Australian related characters are pervasively influenced by the original non-confrontational nature of Aborigines.²¹⁵

Through the lens of his own intrinsic sense of openness/evasiveness/easiness, Boyd can instinctively focus and empathically relate to the favourable situation that allows late modernist Italian architects to individualistically reinterpret the recurrent canons established by mainstream modernism. In praising their 'individual interpretations' Boyd indirectly anticipates a notion – that of interpretation – that will become increasingly more relevant and referential in the context of the Italian theoretical discourse regarding the fields of architecture, philosophy and literature throughout the post-structuralist and post-modernist revisions of modernism in the second half of the 20th century. Following the seminal publication on aesthetics written by Italian philosopher Luigi Pareyson in the initial years of the 1950s,²¹⁶ other important studies involved with the worlds of existentialism, phenomenology and hermeneutics consistently discussed the contribution of individual interpretations and their indissoluble ties with the spheres of ambiguity and openness as relevant parts of the cognitive process and the production of theoretical ideas. Among others, the works of philosophers Umberto Eco, Gianni Vattimo and Massimo Cacciari (the former two have been students of Pareyson), writer Italo Calvino and historian Manfredo Tafuri, which are all in different and many ways related to Heidegger's philosophical thought, are decisively influential in criticizing metaphysical concepts such as centrality, linearity or absoluteness, proposing instead the presence of many and variegated narratives, of infinite individual provisional interpretations, of many 'weak' and uncertain truths.²¹⁷ The following sentence by William de Baskerville, main character of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*, well expresses the general Italian criticism that from the 1950s onwards has been consistently directed towards approved and reassuring canons established in the context of modernist ideologies:

"Perhaps the mission of those who love mankind is to make people laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh*, because the only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from insane passion for the truth."²¹⁸

Robin Boyd can immediately relate to this mood; an indirect and merely intuitive degree of affinity with Manfredo Tafuri, whose work started to be published from the early 1970s, therefore only after the death of the Melbourne architect, can be traced along an equation that includes on the one side the appreciation of this Australian architect for the individualistic interpretations of Italian late modernist architects, and on the other the suggestion, put forward by the Italian historian, that histories are 'provisional constructions' based on analytical and interpretative processes, therefore on individualistic exercises of re-appropriation and rearrangement of the findings.²¹⁹ The Italian inclination to diverge from mainstream modernism through many individualistic interpretations is after all a reflection of historical and cultural Italian characters, and in light of this the 'neoliberty' and neorealist deviations commended by Boyd not surprisingly anticipate the Tafurian notion of history that in an interview with the Italian historian conducted and published by a Melbourne-based architectural magazine is described as "a construction made up upon clues, a circumstantial process built up on a series of traces which remain on a battlefield when the battle is over".²²⁰ Boyd's

the merging together, the gathering of people who are very different in regard to their religion, ethnicity, etc." Massimo Cacciari, *La città* (The city), Pazzini Editore, Villa Verucchio (Rimini), 2006 (original ed., 2004), p. 9 (my translation)

214 Germaine Greer, 'Whitefella jump up. The Shortest Way to Nationhood', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 11, Black Inc. Publishing, Melbourne, 2003, pp. 59, 60

215 According to Germaine Greer, "The evasiveness of white Australians is another sign of Aboriginal influence. Australians find the notion of a single fixed identity which must be known to all at all times deeply disturbing... In Britain accent places everyone in a neat pigeonhole of class and affluence; social intercourse is largely a process of identifying and locating individuals in a dense social context, which in turn produces a difference very different from Australian evasiveness... In life as distinct from TV Australian shyness is real; it is based on a principle of waiting to see whether an individual is worthy, a 'good bloke', 'dinkum' etc., rather than figuring out how much money he's got and whom he might be related to as a ground for friendship. Australians don't, as Americans do, confront total strangers with a barrage of questions, 'Where'y'from?' etc., and when so confronted tend to give non-committal responses, rather than spill their guts. The preferred approach is easy, rather than confrontational. Similarly the Aboriginal way is not to confront or interrogate anyone, whether a first acquaintance or an old friend. Blackfellas never put themselves in a position where they are asking to be lied to; what you want to tell you tell, and what you are silent about remains unspoken." *Ibid.*

216 Luigi Pareyson, *Estetica. Teoria della Formattività*, Bompiani, Milano, 1988. Originally published between 1950 and 1954 as a series of instalments for a philosophy journal, this work has become a book only 34 years later. No English translation has been published so far. A review of this work, by Elio Franzini, was published, and also translated in English, in an issue of *Domus* in 1997. It is a good reference to familiarize with the specific content of this work (the most important and seminal out of all Pareyson's works) and the notion of interpretation that is relevantly and consistently investigated throughout Pareyson's philosophical thought. Franzini observes: "to Pareyson, as manifested in other of his volumes and not just in aesthetics, knowledge signified *interpreting*; and he considered interpretation...that process in which the image and thing identified with each other in a unique form within a 'personalistic' practice. In fact (in Pareyson's words here quoted by Franzini), 'the concept of interpretation is the outcome of the application to knowledge of two cardinal principles in the philosophy of mankind: first of all, the principle according to which all human activities are always both receptive and active. Second, the principle stating that all human activities always are personal'." Elio Franzini,

positive embracement of the possibility to always and generally, not just exclusively for Italian architects, deviate through individual interpretations is conceptually analogous to the notion of history put forward by Tafuri a few years later as an incomplete and "intermittent journey through a maze of tangled paths, one of the many possible 'provisional constructions' obtainable by starting with...chosen materials",²²¹ as a game of cards with no end, constantly rearranged and modified through the reshuffling of the cards.²²² We may say that Heidegger's "deconstruction of the notion of time and history as a category of the spirit"²²³ has profound ramifications in both Tafuri and Boyd – certainly in a direct way for the Italian historian, who intensely studied and absorbed Heidegger among other philosophers; only in an unconsciously influential way for Boyd and the intrinsic inclination to the sense of negotiation, deviation, incompleteness and relatedness that consistently guides this architect's approach throughout his own extensive design projects and theoretical writings.

Boyd's deviations from Reyner Banham's dogmatic positions

The Heideggerian spirit that inherently pervades Boyd's work and thought differentiates this architect from the rigid and rather dogmatic positions of English architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham, to whom the Melbourne architect constantly refers in his active participation in the ongoing international debate that from the end of the Second World War continuously questions the plausibility to trace threads of "continuity or crisis"²²⁴ in regard to the ethics and aesthetics of the modernist traditions inherited from the first half of the century. Four years after having officially formalized the birth of a 'new Brutalist architecture',²²⁵ assertively determined a list of points to identify its characters,²²⁶ and celebrated this architecture as "a major contribution"²²⁷ since the architects and artists involved with it "have stopped speaking to Mansart, to Palladio and to Alberti",²²⁸ the English historian strongly attacked the Italian 'Neoliberty' investigations and their accentuated inclination to deviate – in Banham's terms, "to retreat"²²⁹ – from mainstream international modernism in their revisitation of local pre-modernist traditions. Distinctively emboldened by his own faith in the notion of 'progress' and in the role of technology as its most immediate form of expression, Banham is adamantly convinced that the technological revolution that followed the First World War "has given Western architecture the courage to look forward, not back, to stop reviving the forms of any sort of past, middle-class or otherwise",²³⁰ and that therefore to reconsider and reinterpret pre-modernist traditions – "to wear the discarded clothes of previous cultures"²³¹ – "is infantile regression".²³²

Symptomatically, Boyd's positions disclose an intense, although indirect, affinity with the 'deviating' paths of the young Italian architects and the openness to negotiation that at many different levels informs their typical design approach. This is clearly discernible not only through the previously mentioned supportive comments that Boyd addresses in favour of the digressions of Italian late modernist architecture as the focus of the forum organized by *Casabella* in response to some accusations of regression from mainstream modernity,²³³ but also through the distance that in a non-belligerent and yet explicit way is taken by the Melbourne architect from the dogmatism which inevitably leads Banham a few years later to announce the death of New Brutalism, following some degrees of deviation that in their turn had started to inform both the theoretical investigations and built outcomes of architects originally labelled

'Estetica. Teoria della formatività' (review of the book), *Domus*, no. 795, July/August 1997, p. 132. As a further reference to this work see also Max Rieser, review of Luigi Pareyson's *Estetica. Teoria della Formatività*, in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Summer, 1962), pp. 454, 455

217 The work produced by these authors is extensive and widely published. I would like here to refer to just a few of them as examples, even symptomatically in the words of their respective titles, of the post-structuralist and post-modernist mood that in the second half of the 20th century is increasingly inclined to put in crisis the certainties of rationality, metaphysics and logic: Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, Hutchinson Radius, London, 1989 (original ed., *Opera Aperta*, 1962), in which the author stresses, as observed by David Robey in the introduction of this work, on "the insistence on the element of multiplicity, plurality, or polysemy in art, and the emphasis on the role of the reader, on literary interpretation and response as an interactive process between reader and text" (p. viii), with the book beginning with "an attack on the structuralism of the 1960s for its insistence on the intrinsic, 'objective' properties of works of literary art" (p. xxvi); Gianni Vattimo and Pier Aldo Rovatti (eds.), *Il Pensiero Debole* (The Weak Thought), op. cit., and Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity. Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-Modern Culture*, op. cit., in which the analyses and reinterpretations of Heidegger, Nietzsche and other philosophers lead to a general dismembering of the idea of an absolute truth, proposing instead 'truths' which are dynamic, weak and tolerant – perhaps less reassuring, but certainly more attuned to the fragmentation that characterises society in post-modernism; Massimo Cacciari, 'Eupalinos or Architecture', op. cit., in which the author, referring to Heidegger's thought, dwells on the paradoxical condition that keeps human beings consistently inclined towards the truth and yet never capable of reaching it, in accordance to theoretical positions that consistently inform the work and thought of this Venetian philosopher. Italo Calvino's entire work is informed by a complex coexistence and unsolvable balance between sense of precision and vagueness, logic and absurd, rational and irrational. Manfredo Tafuri's entire work, which strongly refers to the philosophical positions of Heidegger and Nietzsche, is characterised by a consistent sense of criticism in relation to ideology – Mark Wigley has symptomatically described the thought of this Italian historian as informed by a "logic of contradiction without stable synthesis", and George Teyssot has emblematically observed that "while some writers have been looking for harmony everywhere, Tafuri was searching for traces of disharmony"; see Mark Wigley, 'Post-Operative History', and George Teyssot and Paul Henninger, 'One Portrait of Tafuri', both these essays in *Any*, no. 25/26, 2000, monographic

by the English historian as quintessential interpreters of this New Brutalist architecture.

In an article that reviews and discusses Banham's book *The New Brutalism*,²³⁴ Boyd not only expresses his overall scepticism in regard to the limiting dogmatic narrowness that precludes the English historian to include more and different works under the umbrella of 'brutalist architecture', but also significantly remarks on the inelasticity of Banham's theoretical framework and his rigid promptness in declaring the end of this late modernist movement – which had been coined by himself just a few years earlier – following the completion of Alison and Peter Smithson's Economist Building in London, an architecture still generated, according to the accusations of the English historian, by the "restricting traditions of artistic creation".²³⁵ Through his own sharp sense of irony Boyd clearly reads the static, limiting, views that condemn the English historian to a notion of history made up of defined, determined and concluded 'truths' – the New Brutalism being one of them:

"So it happened that the day on which the Smithsons achieved a worldly success with a fine piece of practical professional architecture, New Brutalism died. The building was just a 'craftsmanly exercise within the great tradition' as Banham rightly observes. It was the end of their personal stand for absolute basic architecture. It was a retreat, as Banham sees it, to art of some sort, and that is a pretty serious accusation coming from him."²³⁶

As further observed by Boyd, the aesthetic and ethic agenda of New Brutalist architecture, so strictly set up by Banham, is in the end incapable of relating to the everyday world:

"The greatest hope of every architectural evangelical movement like New Brutalism is that it will lead the world away from seductive aesthetic pleasures to the pure intelligence of building. The failure of New Brutalism...was that it preached almost exclusively to the converted. It was a would-be 'sort of social dialogue'...that remained an architectural monologue. The problem still with us is to build our accepted ethics into that 'working morality' for day to day building".²³⁷

What it has just been highlighted above as inexcusable and unacceptable to Banham – a project in the form of a "craftsmanly exercise within the great tradition as...the end of their (the Smithsons') personal stand for absolute basic architecture"²³⁸ – is the consequence of a complex process of mediation and dialogue undertaken by the English couple in order to address the assigned brief and appropriately situate this project in its own urban, cultural and social context. The rethinking and theoretical readjustments that from the 1960s, after their initial decade of 'revolutionary' projects, accompany the Smithsons and make them increasingly aware that "architecture's first duty is to the fabric of which it forms part"²³⁹ reveal a new and deeper degree of engagement with the everyday world as a quality that distinctively emerges in their 'shifted'²⁴⁰ approach towards reality. Boyd praises these new operative conditions; to him and his inclination to the notions of negotiation, deviation and individual interpretation in relation to reality, it is completely admissible that the Smithsons' "innocent confidence was broken by confrontation with the politics of building".²⁴¹ Proactively open to the situation and contingent reality of each project, in support of their individual, specific, process of adaptation to existing

issue on Tafuri titled: *Being Manfredo Tafuri – Wickedness, Anxiety, Disenchantment*

218 Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, California, 1984 (original ed., *Il Nome della Rosa*, 1980), p. 491

219 Among the many books written by Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, published in the same year of Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, is perhaps the most directly involved with the proposition and discussion of the historical reconstruction as a process that is always provisional, interpretative, far from reaching an absolute or single truth, and critical of the idea of a founding incontrovertible 'beginning/origin', a position that is fully embraced by Cacciari, as it is mentioned earlier in this thesis. In the introduction of his book, all deeply involved with the discussion of these themes, Tafuri states: "Immediately the historian is confronted with the problem of the 'origins' of the cycles and phenomena that are the objects of his study...And why a beginning? Is it not more 'productive' to multiply *the* 'beginnings', recognizing that where everything conspires to make one recognize the transparency of a unitary cycle there lies hidden an intertwining of phenomena that demands to be recognized as such? In effect, to link the problem of history with the rediscovery of mythical 'origins' presupposes an outcome totally rooted in nineteenth-century positivism. In posing the problem of an 'origin', we presuppose the discovery of a *final* point of arrival: a destination point that *explains* everything, that causes a given 'truth'...Operating on its own constructions, history makes an incision with a scalpel in a body whose scars do not disappear; but at the same time, unhealed scars already mar the compactness of historical constructions, rendering them problematic and preventing them from presenting themselves as the 'truth'. Thus analysis enters into the center of a series of battles and takes on the characteristics of a struggle: a struggle against the temptation to exorcize sicknesses, to 'cure'; a struggle against its own instruments; a struggle against contemplation. Every analysis is therefore provisional... 'true history' is not that which cloaks itself in indisputable 'philological proofs', but that which recognizes its own arbitrariness...History as a 'project of crisis', then. There is no guarantee as to the absolute validity of such a project, no 'solution' in it...To undo the mass of threads artificially tangled together, we shall have to lay out many independent histories alongside each other, so that we may recognize, where they exist, their mutual interdependencies or, as is more often the case, their antagonisms". Manfredo Tafuri, 'Introduction: The Historical 'Project', *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, op. cit., pp. 3, 12, 13, 18

220 *Transition's* editors and Sue Dance, 'Interview with Manfredo Tafuri', *Transition*, vol. 2, no 3/4, September/December 1981, p. 9

conditions, encouraging individual digressions – unlike Banham who only indignantly sees 'retreats' from the ethic and aesthetic of New Brutalism, always applying the same accusative tones and terms, to the Italian Neoliberty architects earlier, and the Smithsons later – Boyd sympathises with the diversion undertaken by the two English architects:

"When faced with the workaday politics connected with a building in the West End, the Smithsons bent their principles too far to keep Banham with them. But they got something built. They knew that the heroic 'swagger' of Brutalism which was good for the lecture platform, or for a competition entry or for a small house, had to be modified slightly for a school, more for a public building, and almost completely rewritten for St. James's Street, where stuck-on stone was better appreciated."²⁴²

The situation – the reality of the situation of each project – is to Boyd the most relevant out of the all conditions that affect the design approach. Different from Banham's constant proclivity to celebrate technology and technological revolution as the main reason of modernist architecture, Boyd's attention to the specificities and potentialities of each project makes him an architect who is able on the one hand to take advantage of the technological aids, and yet, on the other, to stay safely immune from overestimating the role and consequences of technology. In one of his early contributions for *The Architectural Review* magazine, taking a distance from conventionally applied functionalism, and preliminarily touching on the shape and technology of new tensile structure, a topic that will be thoroughly discussed by the Melbourne architect in a few following articles for the English journal, Boyd calls for attention to – and strong consideration of – the real situations of the project:

"The quality most conspicuously lacking from international modern architecture is not beauty, but reality. Out buildings lack the confidence to be themselves, the strength and honesty to be what the situation makes them – ugly, if necessary, if the purpose is ugly. Architecture has accepted a sort of Hays Office emotional standard, a sophisticated but essentially chocolate-box ideal of prettiness, a timorous, sedate desire for conformity of the soul of the building. Even while the architect is planning a novel shape, or devising a new tensile structure, we can be pretty certain what the final quality will be – light, clean, simple; with an atmosphere fresh, open, uncluttered. And while this is a charming and delightful character for numerous occasions, a world of it – which is presumably the present ideal – suggests a decline which would carry architecture eventually to unplumbed depths of ennui."²⁴³

In his criticism of superficially formulaic functionalism, Boyd is not afraid to embrace the possibility to design 'ugly buildings', as long as they are reflective and proactive interpretations of their own specific situations. Very interestingly, when Banham similarly discusses the lethargy of late functionalism his accusations are based on a very different argument – they point to a general apathy that would supposedly prevent late modernism to proactively relate to the culture and aesthetic of machines and technology; they blame the weakening of passion and commitment for technology that would have apparently followed the path of the Modern Movement from its early to its late period:

"It was those enthusiasms that were the essential propellant that

- 221 Manfredo Tafuri, 'Introduction: The Historical Project', *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, op. cit., p. 21
- 222 In Tafuri's words: "My intention, then, has been to present, not a piece of history complete in itself, but rather an intermittent journey through a maze of tangled paths, one of the many possible 'provisional constructions' obtainable by starting with these chosen materials. The cards can be reshuffled and to them added many that were intentionally left out: the game is destined to continue." Ibid.
- 223 George Teyssot and Paul Henninger, 'One Portrait of Tafuri', *Any*, no. 25/26, 2000, op. cit., p. 6
- 224 Among other theoretical contributions, the editorial 'Continuity or Crisis?' by Ernesto Nathan Rogers in *Casabella* no. 215, April-May, 1957, op. cit. (see note no. 205 in this section of thesis), is a seminal writing in regard to the open and diffused debate that wonders whether it is necessary to establish forms of continuity with the previous traditions of the Modern Movement or to oppose and reject them through the reintroduction of historical, decorative and vernacular references. The whole issue no. 215 of *Casabella* magazine has since then become a very significant and strongly influential reference with regard to the Italian participation in the international late modernist traditions after the Second World War; some works of Italian 'neoliberty' architects are presented and reviewed in this issue, together with some theoretical essays that reconsider and re-evaluate the relevance of Art Nouveau and other pre-modernist traditions
- 225 Reyner Banham, 'The New Brutalism', *The Architectural Review*, no. 118, December 1955, pp. 355-361
- 226 As stated by Banham, "The definition of a New Brutalist building...should more properly read: 1, Memorability as an Image; 2, Clear exhibition of Structure; and 3, Valuation of Materials 'as found'." Ibid., p. 361
- 227 Ibid.
- 228 Ibid.
- 229 Reyner Banham, 'Neoliberty. The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture', *The Architectural Review*, op. cit. (see note no. 204 in this section of the thesis)
- 230 Ibid., p. 235
- 231 Ibid.
- 232 Ibid.
- 233 See notes no. 198 to no. 201, and no. 205, in this section of the thesis
- 234 Reyner Banham, *The New Brutalism*, The Architectural Press, London, 1966
- 235 Robin Boyd, 'The Sad End of New Brutalism', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 142, no. 845, July 1967, p. 11
- 236 Ibid.
- 237 Ibid.
- 238 Ibid.
- 239 This sentence, reflective of an approach that has increasingly informed the Smithsons' thought

launched the Modern Movement on the triumphant trajectory that has left the theory and design of architecture permanently and irrecoverably changed – and the exhaustion of those enthusiasms has left the International Style as appropriately erratic and unserviceable as an old car with a fast-emptying fuel tank and no filling station in sight. Every now and again the Machine Aesthetic will produce a burst of creative speed, but in general this grand old vehicle is nowadays just sputtering its way to the junkyard."²⁴⁴

The words of the English historian never mention, and are absolutely disinterested in possibly considering, that the causes of the "inadequacies" of a watered-down "routine" functionalism may come from ignoring the realities and existing situations of the project; they unhesitatingly condemn late modernism and its incapability of learning "the lessons to be learned from factories and grain elevators, from aircraft, cars and ocean liners":

"Its inadequacies were seen to lie not in the extent to which Functionalism as a theory had pushed architecture in the direction of mindless mechanization, but in the extent to which Functionalism, as practised, had failed to go anywhere near as far as a developing technology could carry it, and thus give architecture, too, the power to deliver the promises of the Machine Age. In particular, that routine Functionalism had not gone as far as the Founders of the International style had hoped in the first flush of their Machine Age enthusiasms. Many of us will remember the late Shadrack Woods demanding at a meeting in London in the late Fifties. 'Where is the imaginative sweep? Where is the vision of the power-lines going over the horizon, the enormous combine harvesters on the Russian steppes, the Futurists in their goggles and flapping scarves?' There was little enough being done in Britain at the time, or even in his native America to suggest that the primal fire of the Modern Movement was still burning as bright as it had done when Le Corbusier had proclaimed the lessons to be learned from factories and grain elevators, from aircraft, cars and ocean liners".²⁴⁵

This assertive celebration of technology further confirms the rather dogmatic positions of Banham. The English historian is somehow trapped in his highly ideological perspectives by his own pervasive incapability of negotiating with the complexities of reality – by his propensity "to cling one-sidedly to a single idea...(rather than to) engage...with what at first sight does not go together at all",²⁴⁶ as Heidegger would say.

Boyd's capability of saying 'yes' and 'no' to technology

In comparison to Banham's confident acclamations of technology, Boyd's arguments, evasive and open to embrace and absorb paradoxes, are definitely Heideggerian. Instead of emphatically praising or definitely undermining technology, Boyd tends to say " 'yes' and at the same time 'no' "²⁴⁷ to it; in grasping the paradoxical aspects that inherently characterise the equation between the terms *architecture* and *technological development*, the Melbourne architect reveals distinctive signs of "*releasement*"²⁴⁸ in regard to technology. In an article discussing hyperbolic paraboloids and similar types of architectural and engineering works informed by organic, curvilinear and distinctively anti-grid shapes, Boyd sharply highlights how the structurally and formally 'poetic' outcomes of technologically advanced buildings are paradoxically condemned to be at the same time

and work since the beginning of the 1960s, was written by Peter Smithson for *Domus* magazine on the 26th of January 1994. It is published in *Domus*, no. 759, April 1994, p. 6

- 240 Alison and Peter Smithson discuss the modifications and adjustments that occurred in their work from the 1960s onwards in a publication that is symptomatically called *The Shift*. See Alison + Peter Smithson, *The Shift*, a monographic issue of *Architectural Monographs*, no. 7, Academy Editions, London, 1982
- 241 Robin Boyd, 'The Sad End of New Brutalism', op. cit., p. 11
- 242 Ibid.
- 243 Robin Boyd, 'The Functional Neurosis', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 119, no. 710, February 1956, p. 87
- 244 Reyner Banham, 'Introduction – the machine age and after', *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The Architectural Press, London, 1982 (original ed., 1960), p. 10 – this introduction was written by Reyner Banham for the 1982 edition of this book
- 245 Ibid., p. 11
- 246 Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 53
- 247 Ibid., p. 54
- 248 Discussing "meditative thinking" as a means to engage with the inexplicable/incomprehensible and consequently with the process of "releasement toward things", through the pages of 'Memorial Address' Heidegger invites us to adopt the 'inclusive' character of this "meditative thinking" as a way to release ourselves towards technology: "Meditative thinking demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, nor to run down a one-track course of ideas. Meditative thinking demands of us that we engage ourselves with what at first sight does not go together at all. Let us give it a trial. For all of us, the arrangements, devices, and machinery of technology are to a greater or lesser extent indispensable. It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances. But suddenly and unaware we find ourselves so firmly shackled to these technical devices that we fall into bondage to them. Still we can act otherwise. We can use technical devices, and yet with proper use also keep ourselves so free of them, that we may let go of them any time. We can use technical devices as they ought to be used, and also let them alone as something which does not affect our inner and real core. We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature. But will not saying both yes and no this way to technical devices make our relation to technology ambivalent and insecure? On the contrary! Our relation to technology will become wonderfully simple and relaxed. We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them

technologically inefficient in light of their intrinsic impossibility to rely on mass-produced components:

"But even in these buildings an anomaly becomes apparent before construction is finished. This anomaly is inherent in all buildings of unusual shape, angular or curved; for what freedom the modern age has given architects with one hand it has taken away with the other. The advanced engineering techniques which make possible on the one side the excitement, the flights of fancy, the daring architectural expression, on the other side insist continually on more conformity by the architect to the standardized machined ingredients. The more energetic the structural gymnastics, the more obvious the conflict is likely to be, for only the structure has been freed. More and more accessories are becoming almost as essential as the structure – lifts, lavatories, air-conditioning equipment, glazing members and so on, not to mention sandwich panel walls – and all these normally are strictly rectilinear...The more that an irregular non-rectilinear building approaches the condition of being 'a whole thing', the less it can take one of the main advantages of being made in the middle of the twentieth century and dip into the larder of mass-produced equipment."²⁴⁹

Boyd considers technology as a means rather than an aim to be pursued at any cost – a means that occasionally can lead to a formally 'poetic' dimension, but that more often can result in appropriate outcomes obtained through the use of industrialized systems and components. Boyd is serenely aware that "the exciting shape is not, heaven help us, possible for all buildings. Architecture will have another nervous breakdown if it tries to find the common denominator of the two separate thought processes which lead to a technologist's envelope and a poet's embrace".²⁵⁰ Not trapped by the easy seductions of technology that on the other hand continuously excite Banham and many modernist architects, Boyd underlines the dangerous inclination towards self-conscious forms of 'delight' as a recurrent search of gratuitous metaphors that in a superficial and rather conventional way relate the curvilinear shapes of hyperbolic paraboloids to the action of flying:

"Architectural poetry is not practically possible for every building and must at least be limited to the poetic potential of the community. The problem is how to control the irresponsible gymnastics and to restrict the galloping new movement to genuine poetry. Firstly, the engineering of excitement must practise relevance and curb its somewhat disconcerting propensity to appear to fly no matter what the occasion. Secondly, the audience has to be trained to see the line which divides any sincere expression from the displays and advertisements, and to keep raising the line another peg. Then the engineers of excitement will lose their self-consciousness. At present many of them are inclined to the old architectural failing of seeking simultaneously commodity, firmness and delight; and delight is so elusive when hotly pursued."²⁵¹

Technology as a means to 'open-endedness'

As a means, technology can provide a sense of flexibility and potentiality – these are the qualities that make technology interesting to Boyd rather than its autonomously 'exciting' and 'self-conscious' forms. As clearly and enthusiastically realized by the Melbourne architect, flexibility and potentiality enable architectures to stay in a

alone, as things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon something higher. I would call this comportment toward technology which expresses 'yes' and at the same time 'no', by an old word, *releasement toward things*." Ibid., pp. 53, 54

249 Robin Boyd, 'Engineering of Excitement', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 124, no. 742, November 1958, pp. 305, 306

250 Ibid., p. 308

251 Ibid.

252 In 'The Age of the World Picture' Heidegger extensively discusses the modern inclination "to picture" the world as an objective representation that is always determined in relation and accordance to the man as "subject" and "relational center" of everything: "Certainly the modern age has, as a consequence of the liberation of man, introduced subjectivism and individualism. But it remains just as certain that no age before this one has produced a comparable objectivism...What is decisive is not that man frees himself to himself from previous obligations, but that the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject... However, when man becomes the primary and only real *subiectum*, that means: Man becomes that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth. Man becomes the relational center of that which is as such...What is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth...In distinction from Greek apprehending, modern representing, whose meaning the word *repraesentatio* first brings to its earliest expression, intends something quite different. Here to represent [*vor-stellen*] means to bring what is present at hand [*das Vorhandene*] before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm. Wherever this happens, man 'gets into the picture' in precedence over whatever is. But in that man puts himself into the picture in this way, he puts himself into the scene, i.e., into the open sphere of that which is generally and publicly represented. Therewith man sets himself up as the setting in which whatever is must henceforth set itself forth, must present itself [*sich...präsentieren*], i.e., be picture. Man becomes the representative [*der Repräsentant*] of that which is, in the sense of that which has the character of object...Man makes depend upon himself the way in which he must take his stand in relation to whatever is as the objective. There begins that way of being human which mans the realm of human capability as a domain given over to measuring and executing, for the purpose of gaining mastery over that which is as a whole... When, accordingly, the picture character of the world is made clear as the representedness of that which is, then in order fully to grasp the modern essence of representedness we must track out and expose the original naming power

dimension of openness and 'incompletion', inclined to accommodate further changes and modifications, either instigated by the existing context and its continuous variations or rising from different and alternative ways of using and experiencing the spaces originally designed. Potentiality and flexibility are the conditions of formally unassertive and non-peremptory projects that, either as the outcome of Boyd's own design or the object of his positive reviews, are consistently informed by a state of relativity in the name of which boundaries between interior and exterior, landscape and built-scape, and other types of dualities conventionally based on forms of reciprocal opposition tend to ambiguously weaken and blur into each other. Considered in regard to such a theoretical framework, Boyd's propensity to flexibility and potentiality reveals strong affinities, although in an unintentional and unconscious way, to Heidegger's constant call for a meditative thinking as a means to confuse the rationally constructed duality between subject and object. Boyd's inclination to a sense of openness and indeterminateness as an echo of his own disengagement from canonical modernism emblematically reflects Heidegger's critique of the exasperation of the duality *subjectivism-objectivism* in the culture of the modern age. Where mainstream modernist positions generally see/construct a world of objective entities, the Heideggerian approach of the Melbourne architect guides him to release himself to these constructions/representations; to say 'yes' and 'no' to them; to accept the exasperated objectivism of the culture of modernity which increasingly predisposes our logos to 'picture the world' and yet at the same time to intuit that this is just a conventional cognitive way, an illusorily way that in order to overcome our original anguish creates a sense of control/measurement of the world which is perversely determined by relating the world exclusively to us, indeed constructing relations in which and through which "man becomes the primary and only real *subiectum*...that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth...the relational center of that which is as such".²⁵²

The perspectives Boyd share with Heidegger make him draw his attentions to technologically advanced construction materials and techniques as a means to achieve architectures that are informed by a sense of openness and potentiality, as well as indeterminateness and reciprocal coexistence – a sense of continuity rather than separation – between all the various component spaces of each project and the related situations. Many of the projects praised throughout his writings and reviews, and certainly all his architectural and urban works, are in different ways the reflection of a research that is continuously engaged with the investigation of ways to critique the modernist conventional thinking according to which the whole is consistently considered as an entity that is composed of separate individual parts. Symptomatically, this type of reading, inclined to grasp and construct reality as an arrangement of determined individual parts, goes hand in hand with the modernist representation of the world as a 'picture' that is made up of many objects, all objectified indeed by the subjectivism of human beings and the implicit tendency that guides them to dispose the world and its spaces in accordance with their own intrinsic measures. Boyd's critical resistance to the conventionality of such a reading is conveyed by his positive and enthusiastic discussions of the dimensions of *potentiality* and *open-endedness* in architecture, as well as his propensity to design continuous and in some ways undetermined spaces, characterised by states of non-hierarchy and ambiguity in relation to dualities such as interior-exterior, built-scape-landscape and inside-outside among others. The second part of this

of the worn-out word and concept 'to represent' [*vorstellen*]: to set out before oneself and to set forth in relation to oneself. Through this, whatever is comes to a stand as object and in that way alone receives the seal of Being. That the world becomes picture is one and the same event with the event of man's becoming *subiectum* in the midst of that which is." Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 128, 129, 130, 131, 132

253 See Robin Boyd, 'Under Tension', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 134, no. 801, November 1963, and 'Germany' (a review of the German Pavilion at the 1967 Montreal International Exposition), *The Architectural Review*, vol. 142, no. 846, August 1967

254 Robin Boyd, 'Under Tension', op. cit., p. 328

255 Ibid., p. 334

thesis focuses on these topics in particular, through the analysis and discussion of some of Boyd's projects and the relationship between their spaces.

In the two final articles of his group of contributions for *The Architectural Review* magazine which revolve around the topic of tensile structures,²⁵³ Boyd proffers positive reflections on the state of *un-predeterminedness*, *potentiality* and even *visual clumsiness* of these works as outcomes of an innovative construction technology rather than being excited by the newness of the technology itself or the radical unfamiliarity of shape/form that would result from such an innovative technology. In his description of the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, inaugurated in Melbourne in 1959, Boyd underlines the level of simplicity and unintentionality that characterise the form of this architecture, at the same time suggesting that these qualities derive from a design approach that is strongly sympathetic to the existing site conditions:

"The music bowl shelter was an equally good example of 3-D tension. It lay within a fold of parkland that offered ground anchorage on three sides to a tension roof whose purpose was to shelter an orchestra stage and a few thousand people in favoured seats. Only two compression members were required...The shape was not precisely predetermined."²⁵⁴

Concluding this same article, Boyd distinctly indicates that the sense of indifference that these types of architecture generally convey in regard to any formalist intention – an impassivity for formalism that indeed pervades the approach carried on throughout their design and that ultimately makes them look unimpressive and rather 'clumsy' – can ironically be read as a fresh and essential factor for the emancipation of mainstream modernist architecture from orthodox and conventional functionalism:

"Perhaps only because they are so young and inexperienced the balloons often tend to look so old and fat. An unemotional constructivist approach to this kind of structure will frequently lead not to dullness but to a gross visual clumsiness which, seen through our conditioned eyes, can hardly be called anything but ugly. Yet in this kind of ugliness there may be one of the first really new keys to an escape from the historical vision that has been offered since the eradication of ornament."²⁵⁵

Four years later, commending the tensile structure designed by German architect Frei Otto to accommodate the German Pavilion at the 1967 Montreal International Expo, Boyd's fascination for the conditions of shapelessness, un-predeterminedness and uninventiveness of form, as well as continuity, potentiality and indivisibility of space, is clearly asserted. Praising the tent-like look and character of this architecture, therefore expressing his enthusiasm for the non-exceptionality of a form that is normally associated with an imagery of everyday and familiar references, Boyd reads the spatial qualities of Otto's project as the outcomes of a design approach that is fresh because free from the temptation of frenetic formal inventiveness, and appropriate because intelligently sympathetic to the impermanent condition that is typical of all exhibition events:

"The Otto tent looks keen, brave and potential...Around the perimeter the plastic membrane hangs as a flap. It will be rolled

up like a blind on hot days to let the breezes through... Thus the design is, literally as well as figuratively, open-ended. It could be expanded to cover the whole Expo site, if requested, without losing its integrity, unity or composure. The casualness of the mesh and membrane mixture, the tilt of the masts against the tension, and the open-endedness, all contribute to a fair-like character that is thoroughly appropriate, despite Expo's pretensions to seriousness. The authorities asked pavilion designers specifically for architecture of an unfamiliar mien. In many other pavilions they were presented with shapes much more unfamiliar than a tent. Yet these others, which are often quite frantic, still look more ordinary than an Otto tent. The obviously temporary quality is also very fitting for a show which will last only six months... When this pavilion has done its Expo job it can be dismantled, rolled up, and returned to Germany. There is something disturbing – actually aesthetically disturbing – about some other pavilions done in massive brick and concrete for only six months' life."²⁵⁶

Boyd is clearly in favour of a design that as a revisitiation of a familiar form is ultimately and paradoxically more 'extraordinary' in comparison to the 'ordinary look' – in his words, the 'ordinary franticness' – that characterises the shapes and formal resolutions of many other pavilions. In opposition to the sense of unfamiliarity that is deliberately pursued by other pavilions, Otto's tensile architecture convincingly and intelligently explores the implications that derive through the shifting of scale of a familiar object of the everyday world – the tent. Differently from the Expo's diffused inclination to produce pavilions that look 'new', 'exceptional' and 'different as unfamiliar' at a mere aesthetic level, Otto is engagingly interested in grasping the essential character of the tent as a whole series of qualities that are entrenched with its own inherent situations and conditions: impermanence, lightness, mobility, rapidity and efficiency in the construction and dismantling process. These qualities are rigorously investigated and reposed into a design that is not only appropriate for the temporariness of the Expo's event, but also ultimately 'interesting' because decisively disengaged from the tempting seduction of looking aesthetically and formally impressive. Boyd sharply recognizes this as an intrinsic and unique character of the German pavilion in comparison to the majority of the Expo's exhibition buildings and fit-outs.

Boyd and the Heideggerian notions of 'interesting' and 'meditation on what is closest'

Detecting both the sense of ordinariness that lies in architectures deliberately in pursuit of a degree of unfamiliarity/extraordinariness and the 'interesting' sense of unfamiliarity/extraordinariness that on the other hand informs Otto's design as the outcome of the revisitiation of a 'familiar/ordinary' reference, the Melbourne architect finds himself once again in the realm of Heidegger's thinking, aligned in particular to some theoretical reflections advanced by the German philosopher in regard to the meaning, and consequent modernist misunderstanding, of the term "interesting":

"Interest, *interesse*, means to be among and in the midst of things, or to be at the center of a thing and to stay with it. But today's interest accepts as valid only what is interesting. And interesting is the sort of thing that can freely be regarded as indifferent the next moment, and be displaced by something

else, which then concerns us just as little as what went before. Many people today take the view that they are doing great honor to something by finding it interesting. The truth is that such an opinion has already relegated the interesting thing to the ranks of what is indifferent and soon boring."²⁵⁷

Heidegger is adamant: modernist thinking fails to inhabit the unknown dimensions of things; it is not capable of being 'inter-esse', literally 'in between', indeed absently suspended, undetermined, "among and in the midst of things". Following its original inclination to think *being* as a presence – an inclination that has become more and more accentuated within the modern culture from the Renaissance period onwards – Western thought is unable to inhabit – in other words: *be and stay among* – the 'absence' of that which is withdrawing from us.

"We said: man still does not think, and this because what must be thought about turns away from him; by no means only because man does not sufficiently reach out and turn to what is to be thought. What must be thought about, turns away from man. It withdraws from him."²⁵⁸

Otto's German Pavilion for the Montreal Expo is indeed grasped and proposed by Boyd as an architecture that is essentially 'interesting' due to its ability to stay in a rationally unthinkable dimension and therefore open to questions rather than contracted – and defined – by clear and determined answers. Its intrinsic state of potentiality as the reflection of undefined spaces and uncompleted forms, and its propensity to abstractly evoke the quality of impermanence rather than concretely represent the idea of this condition through metaphoric or symbolic features, are testament of this building's involvement with the 'absent/invisible' dimension of what withdraws from us – in its indirect investigation of familiar qualities that are inherent to the condition of its own nature, this building is indeed able to "dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest"²⁵⁹, aware, at the same time, that "the aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity".²⁶⁰

Boyd's Heideggerian sensibility in relation to the notion of 'interesse-ness' and the related critique of the misappropriations of this notion by modernist cultures, is emblematically underlined through his reference to Mies van der Rohe's declared unconcern "to be interesting":

"Mies van der Rohe was the one old master of the century not to be caught up in some degree by the new mood. 'I don't want to be interesting', he said in 1956, 'I want to be good'."²⁶¹

Boyd detects that Mies's "universal, impersonal envelopes"²⁶² and the "taciturn, expressionless"²⁶³ mood of his architecture are a way to stay open and reflect towards the unthinkable which withdraws from us. Mies's will to be good is a way to "dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest"²⁶⁴ – to concentrate on technology through releasement to it, therefore to simultaneously say 'yes' and 'no' to it, resisting the inclination to either celebrate or criticize it in solutions that can be conventionally, and reassuringly, recognizable as respectively 'functionalist' or 'organic' architecture. Boyd acutely perceives how Mies's uninterest in being interesting and his desire to rather be good are indeed a way to continuously inhabit the Heideggerian state of 'interesse-ness', and therefore produce potential

256 Robin Boyd, 'Germany', op. cit., pp. 129, 135

257 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, op. cit., p. 5

258 Ibid., p. 8

259 Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 47; see also notes no. 54 and 202 in this section of the thesis

260 Ludwig Wittgenstein, quoted in Steven Holl, *Anchoring*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1989, p. 12

261 Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965, p. 104

262 Ibid.

263 Ibid., p. 105

264 Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 47; see also notes no. 54, 202 and 259 in this section of the thesis

architectures open to the life and variations of their inhabitants:

"He (Mies) taught and demonstrated, in effect, realism to technology, and let appropriate character take care of itself in the artefacts, icons and gewgaws with which people will inevitably surround themselves."²⁶⁵

Boyd's consistent inclination to inhabit the dimension of 'interesse-ness' – to provide answers as questions that are endlessly and indefinitely in search of unreachable answers, but that never give up questioning/wondering given that the only inherent possibility left to us is to always investigate the specific, and indeed 'closest', contingencies – is at a different level expressed in the conclusive lines of *The Puzzle of Architecture*:

"Now for the benefit of any reader who, quite understandably, is impatient enough to seek prematurely the last paragraphs to find out if, or how, the author has tried to present any resolution to the enigma, here for what it is worth is my concluding attempt to answer the central puzzle. It may be stated thus: after the physical and practical problems are solved, what is the architect trying to do? It may be answered thus: a perfect piece of architecture would solve all the functional problems with one decisive and appropriate concord of spaces. Yet there are two difficulties here. As ordinary mortals architects cannot ever know all the functional problems, and as practical men they are only rarely free to explore the range of spatial experiences. Therefore perfect architecture is impossible. But architects can aspire to it by being realistic in facing the problems they do know, by shunning irrelevancies, and by exploring the delights of defined space as far as each problem permits."²⁶⁶

Perfection is unattainable as an incomprehensible all-inclusive condition. Given the impossibility to grasp it, the only plausible and indeed logical option that is left to us is, as suggested by Boyd, to face – to pay attention to – each individual known/graspable problem. Impossible to reach, perfection is recognized by Boyd as an elusive goal, a universal dimension that is continuously desired and yet forever condemned to be missed.

The impossibility to reach and indeed comprehend this universal and all-inclusive condition is the reflection of our intrinsic way to read and determine the world as constituted by interrelated singular parts – individual beings identified as presences – in a state of reciprocal interrelation between each other. Our logos can think, see, arrange and ultimately understand things and entities by establishing relationships between them and always referring them to us as subjects of our understanding and determining; this approach generates determinations/representations that are unavoidably partial and hierarchical since things/entities are defined as interrelated singular beings that are measured and scaled in relation to us as subjects. If our logos can determine things by interrelating them, it is then impossible for it to comprehend the all-inclusive universal dimension that ultimately correlates everything together, beyond time and space separations – such condition is by nature and definition in absence of separations, and therefore cannot be determined/comprehended by a thinking that is originally drawn by logos and rationality to read the world as a combination of separate and individual parts/things/entities that are interrelated.

265 Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, op. cit., p. 170
266 Ibid., p. 184

Boyd welcomes the aspiration to an impossible/incomprehensible condition, that of a "perfect architecture",²⁶⁷ as a target that is forever missed and yet instrumental to open architects to the dimension of 'interesse-ness' which is experienced through their concentration on specific and partial problems – "the problems they do know"²⁶⁸ – in their doomed search for perfection. Boyd's invitation to aspire to the impossible, incomprehensible and therefore 'mysterious' condition of perfection by concentrating on specific problems is closely empathetic to Heidegger's encouragement to "dwell on what lies close and meditate on what is closest"²⁶⁹ through "releasement toward things and openness to the mystery"²⁷⁰ – two comportments that according to the German philosopher "belong together (and)...grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way".²⁷¹

Boyd's 'different way': releasement towards rational definiteness of things and openness to the mystery of irrational oneness

Indeed the approach that accompanies Boyd through his theoretical reflections and designed works is informed by a 'different way'. The Heideggerian sensibility of this architect – which makes him essentially alternative from the majority of other modernist and late modernist trends – on the one hand accepts the inevitability of the metaphysical and unquestionable process that makes our logos determine the world as a combination/accord of interrelated singular things/parts/beings; on the other, however, is critical of any forms of relationship between things/parts/beings that are conventionally and rationally validated by the subject-object duality or by the assumption that presence and consciousness are the only criteria for the truth. Boyd's sense of vagueness, indeterminateness and general openness, as discussed earlier in relation to his theoretical reflections, as well as the sense of potentiality and spatial continuity that characterise his architectural works, are a reflection of his critique towards relational processes that are conventionally guided by our logos to assert univocal truths – for instance: that the exterior is outside of the interior; that the things we see outside of us are objects/entities in front of us/subjects; that natural landscapes are outdoor spaces external to architectural built volumes; that upper spaces are on top of lower spaces; and so on.

Accepting and criticizing at the same time that our logos makes us read beings not only as presences but also consistently as determined univocal truths, Boyd encourages us to concentrate on particularities – specific problems, individual facts, defined theoretical issues, singular spaces – by releasing ourselves to them rather than trying to capture and grasp them, therefore resisting the assignation of causes, reasons or certain/validated/recognizable meanings as reassuring explanations of their existence in themselves and in relation to other things. Intuiting the inexplicability and incomprehensibility of the state of oneness as an all-inclusive belonging together between things, and the impossibility for our rationality to relinquish the subject-object duality as an illusorily means to measure – make sense of – the world in relation to ourselves, Boyd's invitation to concentrate on singular determined entities – to keep "facing the problems (we)... do know...by exploring the delights of *defined* space"²⁷² – embraces the relational mode that inherently guides our logos, shifting however from an idea of thinking as a gathering in search of univocal truths or canonical relational connections, to an idea of thinking to which gathering is rather a vertiginous, continuous and indeterminate referring between things – a "mirror-play"²⁷³ and reciprocal belonging

267 Ibid.; see previous quote in the text related to note no. 266 in this section of the thesis

268 Ibid.; see quote above in the text related to note no. 266 in this section of the thesis

269 Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 47; see also notes no. 54, 202, 259 and 264 in this section of the thesis

270 Ibid., p. 55; see also note no. 26 and quote in the text related to note no. 202 in this section of the thesis

271 Ibid.; see also note no. 26 in this section of the thesis

272 Refer to Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, op. cit., p. 184 (my italics); see also quotes above in the text related to notes no. 266 and 268 in this section of the thesis

273 Heidegger proposes the "mirror-play" as the essential condition of the world: "This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world." Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 179

together of things²⁷⁴ to which differences participate through their difference instead of relating to one another in forms of logical accord.

“Earth and sky, divinities and mortals – being at one with one another of their own accord – belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four. This mirroring does not portray a likeness. The mirroring, lightening each of the four, appropriates their own presencing into simple belonging to one another. Mirroring in this appropriating-lightening way, each of the four plays to each of the others. The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another... This appropriating mirror-play of the simple onefold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, we call the world. The world presences by worlding. That means: the world’s worlding cannot be explained by anything else nor can it be fathomed through anything else. This impossibility does not lie in the inability of our human thinking to explain and fathom in this way. Rather, the inexplicable and unfathomable character of the world’s worlding lies in this, that causes and grounds remain unsuitable for the world’s worlding. As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world’s nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding. The united four are already strangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another. The unity of the fourfold is the fouring. But the fouring does not come about in such a way that it encompasses the four and only afterward is added to them as that compass. Nor does the fouring exhaust itself in this, that the four, once they are there, stand side by side singly. The fouring, the unity of the four, presences as the appropriating mirror-play of the betrothed, each to the other in simple oneness. The fouring presences as the worlding of world. The mirror-play of world is the round dance of appropriating. Therefore, the round dance does not encompass the four like a hoop. The round dance is the ring that joins while it plays as mirroring. Appropriating, it lightens the four into the radiance of their simple oneness. Radiantly, the ring joins the four, everywhere open to the riddle of their presence. The gathered presence of the mirror-play of the world, joining in this way, is the ringing. In the ringing of the mirror-playing ring, the four nestle into their unifying presence, in which each one retains its own nature. So nestling, they join together, worlding, the world.”²⁷⁵

If all answers to the inexplicable all-inclusiveness of the “simple onefold of worlding”²⁷⁶ are destined, as reassuring representations and illusorily reasons of the world, to fail the comprehension of “the unfathomable character of the world’s worlding”,²⁷⁷ Boyd’s ‘different way’ in relation to architectural thinking and practice is symptomatically reflected in his suspicion of the various mainstream modernist trends as theoretical processes that aim to validate architecture by establishing accords between informative predetermined idea(l)s and final solutions. Under the name of Functionalism, Expressionism, Organicism, Surrealism, Formalism and Symbolism, just to name a few, the final architectural solutions result

- 278 In an essay called ‘Res aedificatoria. Il “classico” di Mies van der Rohe’, *Casabella*, no. 629, December 1995, pp. 3-7 (originally published in *Paradosso*, no. 9, 1994) both Mies and Mondrian are discussed by Massimo Cacciari – the German architect more in detail and extensively than the Dutch painter – as critical of a typical modernist process in the name of which the aim of the work reflects and produces the author’s intention
- 279 Mies van der Rohe is consistently discussed through the pages of *The Puzzle of Architecture*, op. cit. Mondrian is mentioned in the book *The Australian Ugliness*, when Boyd, quoting some of the artist’s words and relating them to the argument of the chapter ‘The Pursuit of Pleasingness’, emblematically refers to the sense of openness and indefiniteness that characterises the work and thought of the Dutch artist: “in the twentieth (century) a leader of the modern movement restated the most obvious objection to all golden rules: ‘Beauty is relative because men are different’, said Piet Mondrian, a painter for whom an utmost delicacy of proportioning in lines, spaces and solids constituted the very means of expression. ‘Attachment to a merely conventional conception of beauty hinders a true vision...’ ” Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, op. cit., pp. 187, 188. This same passage originally appeared in Robin Boyd, ‘The search for pleasingness’, *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 38, no. 4, April 1957, p. 196, in which the Melbourne architect credits the words quoted from the Dutch artist to the following book: Piet Mondrian, *Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art*, Wittenborn, New York, 1945, a publication collecting Mondrian’s essays in English, 1937-1943 (associated to a posthumous retrospective of Mondrian’s work at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, March-April 1945), edited by Harry Holtzman and published as part of the Documents of Modern Art series, listed under the section ‘Chronology’, in Harry Holtzman and Martin S. James (eds.), *The new art, the new life – The Collected Writings of Piet Mondrian*, G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1986, p. xxv
- 280 Massimo Cacciari, ‘Res aedificatoria. Il “classico” di Mies van der Rohe’, op. cit. (my translation); the original Italian version of this passage states: “il fine non è posto, non può essere concepito come *prodotto* dell’intenzione... verità *incondizionata* può soltanto essere intesa come verità *a-intenzionale*... formalistica è la volontà rivolta al tecnico-economico-funzionalistico” (p. 4)
- 281 Ibid. (my translation); the original Italian version of this passage states: “verità come *formale* adaequatio della cosa-prodotta alla ‘mente’ che l’ha intenzionata” (p. 4)
- 282 Ibid. (my translation); the original Italian version of this passage states: “La verità dell’opera non consiste nel risultato di una intenzionalità progettante, ma nella manifestazione... di un incondizionato *presupposto*. La verità dell’opera non è

and seek validation from the application of predetermined ideas into form – from the representation and literal translation of respectively:

- functional components (Functionalism and its typical ‘machine aesthetic’);
- inner emotional inputs/feelings (Expressionism);
- harmoniously related components, often metaphors of natural development processes/forms (Organicism);
- images of the unconscious mind, often ‘irrationally’ juxtaposed (Surrealism);
- prescribed and recognizable forms (Formalism);
- mystical ideas and symbolic images (Symbolism).

Boyd’s uninterest in representation of predetermined ideas

Boyd’s design process is not concerned to produce architectural solutions as representations of predetermined ideas. His buildings and writings are not drawn by the inclination to explain or provide certain answers; they are not interested in gaining legitimization as objective determinations in accordance with – by reflecting and corresponding to – pre-assigned hypotheses. Boyd’s solutions are not the result of a predetermined intentionality. It is not surprising that Mies van der Rohe and Piet Mondrian, both depicted by Massimo Cacciari as producers with no intentionality,²⁷⁸ are among the most consistent references of the Melbourne architect.²⁷⁹ To Boyd and his references Mies and Mondrian, “the aim is not established, it cannot be conceived as *produced* by the intention... an *unconditioned* truth can only be intended as an *un-intentional* truth... the will towards any technical-economic-functionalistic aim is formalistic”.²⁸⁰ Boyd resists conceiving “truth as a *formal adaequatio* of the produced thing to the ‘mind’ that has intended it”.²⁸¹ To him, Mies and Mondrian, “the work’s truth does not consist in the resulting of a designing intentionality, but in the manifestation... of an unconditioned *presupposed*. The work’s truth is not simply immanent to the work – it is presupposed by the work... The work’s truth... consists... in manifesting the truth that transcends it – in *recalling it*... That which is sought out is presupposed in any seeking; and seeking is anything but a tiring, slow and difficult *recalling* of that which is sought out”.²⁸²

In search of that which is already known, Boyd is inclined to the original oneness – the all-inclusiveness of things. Subliminally re-calling an incomprehensible “world’s worlding”²⁸³ and yet embracing the comprehensible accords which are represented by our rational logos as conventional explanations of the world, Boyd cannot escape producing explicable and measurable parts, and at the same time remains in the hope for, continuously deferring to, an inexplicable and intangible dimension of the whole. The final outcomes of his design approach, always in search of “something more” – a notion that, similarly to the many arguments of his entire theoretical work, is intuitively and vaguely perceivable rather than clearly determinable²⁸⁴ – are consistently suggestive rather than assertive, deferring to an inexplicable and yet intrinsically original dimension. The ultimate sense of indeterminateness that pervades both his writings and projects is at the same time always structured on components which either as theoretical postulation points or individual design resolutions become reassuring reasons in response to the request for calculation and accordance that is inevitably advanced by our logos. The incomprehensible, unclear and ungraspable dimension of both the theoretical calls disseminated

- 274 The notion of ‘the belonging together of things’ is not only advanced by Heidegger in his essay ‘The Thing’ (originally conceived as the text for a conference delivered in 1950), but also later resumed and reinvestigated in his work ‘Art and Space’ (initially prepared as the text for a conference delivered in 1964 to discuss an exhibition of sculptures by Bernard Heiliger). In this latter work, discussing topic related to art and space, and criticizing conventional hierarchical forms of duality which are typically determined in the name of the modern-scientific-technological idea that “place is... located in a pre-given space”, Heidegger states: “Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things in their belonging together. Gathering (*Versammeln*) comes to play in the place in the sense of the releasing sheltering of things in their region. And the region? The older form of the word runs ‘that-which-regions’ (*die Gegnet*). It names the free expanse. Through it the openness is urged to let each thing merge in its resting in itself. This means at the same time: preserving, i.e. the gathering of things in their belonging together. The question comes up: Are places first and only the resultant issue of making-room? Or does making-room take its special character from the reign of gathering places? If this proves right, then we would have to search for the special character of clearing-away in the grounding of locality, and we would have to meditate on locality as the interplay of places. We would have then to take heed that and how this play receives its reference to the belonging together of things from the region’s free expanse. We would have to learn to recognize that things themselves are places and do not merely belong to a place. In this case, we would be obliged for a long time to come to accept an estranging state of affairs: Place is not located in a pre-given space, after the manner of physical-technological space. The latter unfolds itself only through the reigning of places of a region.” Martin Heidegger, ‘Art and Space’, in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, op. cit., p. 123; see also note no. 6 in this section of thesis, in which part of this passage is already quoted
- 275 Martin Heidegger, ‘The Thing’, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., pp. 179, 180
- 276 Ibid., p. 180
- 277 Ibid.

throughout his writings and the spatial all-inclusive oneness/continuity that is always 'hoped for'²⁸⁵ by and through his projects, is at the same time accompanied by comprehensible and explicable accords resulting from our individual meditations, from our "dwelling on what lies close".²⁸⁶ Their 'presence', either as intelligible theoretical hypotheses (in his writings) or visible separate spaces (in his projects), inform, and coexist with, the vagueness of the unreachable oneness that is indeed destined to ever stay in a state of potentiality – in the '(h)openness' to be grasped.

Heidegger's wonderings perfectly address Boyd's sense of indeterminateness:

"But space – does it remain the same? Is space itself not that space which received its first determination from Galileo and Newton? Space – is it that homogeneous expanse, not distinguished at any of its possible places, equivalent toward each direction, but not perceptible with the senses? Space – is it that which, since that time (Newton), challenges modern man increasingly and ever more obstinately to its utter control?...Yet, can the physically-technologically projected space, however it may be determined henceforth, be held as the sole genuine space?"²⁸⁷

Suspicious of the tendency, increasingly emphasized by the various postmedieval modern cultures, towards a world that is consistently defined as if it was under the control of human beings and by them represented in accordance to themselves as subjects, Boyd's projects are suggestive of an incomprehensible and uncontrollable dimension of space as an originally undifferentiated and continuous "homogeneous expanse...equivalent toward each direction";²⁸⁸ yet his critique of the "physically-technologically projected space"²⁸⁹ as continuously represented by modernity does embrace the equally original condition that ineluctably makes our thinking perceive phenomena as objects/representations in space that are external to us,²⁹⁰ and, as such, comprehended through our logos as interrelated to one another. Consistently hoping for and suggestive of a continuity/oneness of space, Boyd's projects are at the same time inescapably comprised of separate individual parts and spaces.

As we'll see in the following section of this thesis, more specifically focused on the analysis of some projects, a consistent sense of spatial continuity and undifferentiation between things is hoped for and evoked through the presence of components that, although critical and determine them as parts of a whole, cannot however escape to be individual parts. In light of this, their essential, and truly radical contribution, lies in the unlimited opening of wonderings and destabilized conceptions in regard to the conventionally reassuring assumptions that make human beings perceive and think the world as if it was made up of things and spaces.

Boyd's projects call for an incomprehensible continuity and homogeneity of space, for an inexplicable and unmeasurable sense of belonging together of things, through a calling that although ineluctably destined to be depending on forms of spatial separation or individuality of components, does however at the same time question these inerasable metaphysical conceptions/perceptions of

the world through the weakening of any comprehensible canonical reasons, any explicable conventional assumptions, that validate them. The sense of wondering inherent in this questioning destabilizes the canonical way of perceiving the world as a combination of wholes made up of parts. The parts of Boyd's projects, which are condemned to be comprehended and represented as parts by both our intrinsic perceptive modes and logical thinking, always defer to a further incomprehensible dimension – the oneness of space and things. The destabilization of canonical truths and conventional assumptions is effectively possible through an unlimited sense of wondering, through an endless deferring towards ultimate truths, hence through a constant sense of vagueness and indeterminateness.

Boyd's parts – as individual spaces, volumes and components of his projects – enquire into these existential conditions by absorbing their *part-ness*. Accepting to be unavoidably perceived and represented as parts, they question at the same time the many conventional forms of hierarchy that are normally established, and uncritically assumed, between the parts of a project. In this way, relational situations between parts which are conventionally informed by a sense of duality and differentiation/separation, become less certain and definitive in regard to their presupposed sense of distinctiveness. Inevitably comprehended by our logos as interrelated individual parts, at the same time they instigate wondering in regard to this apparent relational state.

Boyd's projects consistently question the state of separation and difference between parts. They wonder about the appropriateness of 'and' as a relational conjunctive term between spaces/entities/parts that are conventionally read as apparently individual, different and separate – a few recurrent examples of questioned and weakened cases of duality are proposed in the following list:

- house and landscape;
- interior and exterior;
- front façade and back façade;
- structural and infrastructural elements;
- servicing and serviced spaces;
- indoor volumes and outdoor voids;
- daytime and night-time areas;
- living rooms and bedrooms;
- kitchen/dining and laundry areas;
- 'verticality' of façades and 'horizontality' of roofs;
- carport and pedestrian portico areas;
- frontyard and backyard;
- deck area and roof-top;
- fences and walls;
- up and down spaces;
- warm and cold areas;
- indoor artificial and outdoor natural environments.

Informed by parts that are non-hierarchically related, hence

semplicemente immanente all'opera, ma l'opera la presuppone...La verità dell'opera... consiste...nel manifestare (*aletheuên*) la verità che la trascende – nel *ricordarla* (*anámnesis*)... il cercato è presupposto in ogni cercare. E il cercare non significa che un faticoso, lento, difficile *ricordare* il cercato" (p. 4)

283 Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 180; see also texts and quotes above related to notes no. 275, 276 and 277 of this section of the thesis

284 As already mentioned earlier (see notes no. 90, 91 and 92 of this section of the thesis), Boyd discusses this notion in the conclusive pages of his introductory essay to the book *Living in Australia*; Robin Boyd, 'Living and Architecture', *Living in Australia*, op. cit., pp. 15, 16

285 The Heideggerian dimension/condition of 'hope' has been discussed earlier in this essay; see text related to note no. 116, and Cacciari's quoted passages from 'Eupalinos or Architecture' referred to Heidegger's essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' in note no. 116 of this section of the thesis

286 Heidegger's encouragement to "dwell on what lies close" has been extensively discussed earlier in this essay: see notes no. 54, 202, 259, 264 and 269 of this section of the thesis

287 Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space', in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, op. cit., p. 121

288 Ibid.

289 Ibid.

290 See quote related to note no. 127 in this section of the thesis

reciprocally co-belonging together and therefore virtually conjugated by the term 'or' rather than 'and', Boyd's projects affirm the intrinsically rational perceptive act that ineluctably makes us read and think spaces in their own individuality as distinctive parts of a whole, and yet at the same time they question this very same rational assumption through spatial resolutions that disconcert the sense of hierarchy and distinctiveness which normally characterise typical forms of duality and separation between parts:

- flyscreens instead of glazed windows as 'separations' – but also means of continuity – between outside and inside;
- outdoor spaces as 'outdoor rooms' in their being effectively informed by analogous dimensions and proportions of indoor rooms;
- roofs extended to be façades and to consistently cover deck-areas and/or carports;
- outdoor landscapes and vegetated grounds brought 'inside', defiant of all forms of separation that conventionally confine them 'outside' of enclosed volumes;
- outdoor balconies as continuous spatial extensions, in scale and character, of indoor rooms;
- living-rooms as bedrooms, and corridors/circulation spaces as additional areas for study, children's play and other extemporaneous activities;
- garages/carports as entry halls;
- internalized outdoor courtyards as circulation crossings and additional enclosed/external living spaces;
- frontyards as backyards and vice-versa;
- trees' canopies as sheltering elements and existing 'natural awnings';
- undercroft spaces as additional landscape, carport or spill-out areas for extra amenities;
- rooms 'un-divided' by light and permeable furnishing/partitions, as loosely individualized parts of the same continuous whole space.

These and many others of Boyd's design resolutions are essentially characterised by a dimension of all-inclusiveness, in which the parts are reciprocally belonging together, perceivable and objectively determinable as individual elements and yet incomprehensibly *con-fused* in the "simple onefold of worlding".²⁹¹

Boyd's sustainable 'con-fusion' of spaces

The sense of 'confusion', the 'poetic vagueness' that characterises Boyd's entire work as ambivalently informed by both the hope for an incomprehensible/illogical dimension of all-inclusiveness between entities and the realization of a comprehensible/logical dimension of relativeness that makes us perceive entities as correlated individualities, is not only an essentially relevant way to investigate the existential condition of human beings and the consequent implications regarding the notions of space and place in architecture, but also a quality that enables this Melbourne architect to intrinsically produce works which are truly sustainable and efficient in regard to energy and material consumption. The 'con-fusion' of his architectural spaces, their sense of reciprocal co-belongingness, their capability to accommodate many different activities at once or in disparate moments of the building's everyday life, the condensation of various programs in adaptable, flexible and all-encompassing spaces, the opportunistic integration of natural and landscape resources

292 In Boyd's words: "From the moving sands of the centre to the deep snow of the southern Alps almost the full range of the world's climates are to be found in Australia. But few people have built homes in these climatic extremes. However, the range between the southern capitals and tropical northern towns has been sufficient to produce two entirely different geographic types. One was the southern villa, bottled up, introverted, its thick walls storing the comfort of mild weather through occasional hot or cold spells. The other was the northern bungalow, light, open, elevated, an encircling verandah its principal living space." Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, op. cit., p. 211

293 Boyd's general support for the process of 'deviation' as a reflection of his 'transverse' and somehow 'marginal' positions in relation to mainstream modernist architecture, is discussed earlier in this essay – see in particular his statement quoted above in the text, related to note no. 201 in this section of the thesis

294 Boyd observes: "A few years of living, after 1945, in a house where the children and the children's friends were never really out of earshot, convinced many parents that open planning had its limitations. Some began to wonder if this first move to free the standard plan of its rigid little compartments – this combination of formal and informal spaces – should have been the last move instead. A new grouping of rooms was sometimes suggested. This put the parents' bedroom with the living-room and segregated a self-contained bed and play section for the children. At a Modern Home Exhibition in Melbourne in 1949, final year students of architecture at the University of Melbourne exhibited ten model houses. Eight of the plans were based on a division of the house into parents' and children's sections, each with their own living, sleeping and bathing facilities. The entrance section and kitchen were shared... Beyond observing the essential condition that servants' wings were to be separate, nineteenth-century architects had had few theories on 'zoning', as the twentieth century described the process of grouping different activities in a plan. Automatically in most cases they had differentiated and separated in some way the day and night activities. Thus, bedrooms and bathrooms were upstairs, and sitting-rooms, dining-rooms and kitchens were downstairs in two-storey houses, while in the larger, rambling single-storey plans the bedrooms took a separate wing. The same division was made more self-consciously and obviously in the twentieth century. Living, dining and cooking were grouped, beds and bath were grouped – the two sections meeting at their service ends. L-shape, U-shape, T-shape and rectangular plans all followed this principle. The new idea of the architectural students, apparent also in a few recent houses and projects of architects' houses, provided segregation of age groups, not of activities. This was a different zoning theory

(breeze for cross-ventilation; water for cooling; trees and vegetation for shading; sunlight and other natural elements as consistently instrumental to architecture) inside and outside of built volumes which are constantly unobtrusive and appropriately compact rather than excessively large, generate works that are spatially efficient and yet generous in their restraint, as well as in touch – much earlier and much more relevantly than many 'sustainable' projects produced since Boyd's death – with the land, landscapes and intrinsic natural resources of the Australian environment.

Boyd's built and theoretical works are consistently engaged with these issues. Discussions in favour of appropriateness of response towards the existing environment, but also integration of activities, elimination of barriers and other related topics do symptomatically recur through the entire spectrum of the built and written outcomes of his ongoing research. Since his early book *Australia's Home*, Boyd positively encourages his readers to consider the regional idioms conveyed by different Australian houses as an immediate translation of their response to specific environmental and climatic local conditions rather than the expression of predetermined aesthetic intentions.²⁹² Still in this same early book, Boyd also praises some alternative investigations towards integration of domestic spaces; taking a distance, in fact 'deviating',²⁹³ from the rigidity of both the sense of order/hierarchy of 19th century planning and the following modernist prescriptive manifestos for open planning at any cost, he warmly supports speculative projects which, not surprisingly analogous to his own works, result enriched of unprecedented spatial layouts that allow activities to unconventionally coexist in, and share, same spaces.²⁹⁴ Later in his career, in a contribution for a book that was published in the same year of his death, Boyd once again praises the notions of continuity, openness and reciprocal co-belongingness of spaces and activities. Applied on this occasion to discussions related to urban planning and residential design, in particular to topics related to social and spatial integration, his observations reiterate concepts that have been consistently supported through his writings and projects:

"The needs are now fairly well and fairly generally recognised, at least among those who are professionally concerned with housing. The first and most important one is to break down the barriers: the barriers between dwelling types which indirectly create barriers between different social classes. The second is to end the cotton-wool protection of the residential zones, the arbitrary isolation which forbids entrance to anything not looking like another brick veneer villa."²⁹⁵

Boyd's directness/improvisation/unintentionality/immediateness

In his essay at the conclusion of *Living in Australia*, a book that effectively represents Boyd's ultimate – first and last – theoretical self-reflective study on his own work, David Saunders pertinently describes the approach of the Melbourne architect as uninterested in systematic rules, formulaic processes or any other means to achieve predetermined intentions:

"it is not characteristic of Boyd's work to have recognisable forms being repeated... The memorable image is not usually the point about a Boyd design... There is no dominant Boyd style, but there is a discernible consistency of approach, which leans on the view that each occasion will be in some way unique, and likely to produce a fresh result".²⁹⁶

291 Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', op. cit., p. 180; see also text related to notes no. 275 and 276 in this section of the thesis

- of considerable significance. Houses designed on this principle could have little in common with those of any other period.” Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home*, op. cit., pp. 166, 167
- 295 Robin Boyd, 'The Neighbourhood', in Ian McKay, Robin Boyd, Hugh Stretton, John Mant, *Living and Partly Living*, Thomas Nelson (Australia), Melbourne, 1971, p. 39
- 296 David Saunders, 'Afterword', in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., pp. 147, 148
- 297 Saunders observes: "Site character in many other cases has been a prime influence." Ibid., p. 147
- 298 As observed by Boyd, "Realism in architecture means dealing with humans as they are, and with their activities as they are, but not with their shallow visual tastes: with their habits but not their beliefs." Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, op. cit., p. 170
- 299 Robin Boyd, 'Living and Architecture', in *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 16
- 300 In Boyd's words, "architecture is building conceived from an idea or vision of good living...Therefore it is necessary to investigate the techniques by which the vision of living is converted into the physical reality of a building...The vision...is translated into reality by qualities of surface, space, structure and... spirit". Ibid., pp. 15, 16
- 301 According to David Saunders, "directness" is a quintessential character of Boyd's approach: "(through) directness...functional problems are solved with inventive structure"; David Saunders, 'Afterword', in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 148
- 302 "Improvisation", described by Saunders as a true reflection of the typical Australian character, is one more essential quality that is accredited to Boyd: "Improvisation, which in early times, and still in outback places, is the outcome of necessity, but which finds in the Australian ethos a continuing preference." Ibid., p. 152
- 303 Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 55; see also note no. 26 and quote in the text related to note no. 271. in this section of the thesis. Heidegger's general call for a cognitive approach as an act of releasement towards anything that is inevitable to us is in this essay more specifically referred to the topic of technology
- 304 As seen before through Cacciari, "The work's truth...consists...in manifesting the truth that transcends it – in recalling it...That which is sought out is presupposed in any seeking; and seeking is anything but a tiring, slow and difficult *recalling* of that which is sought out". Massimo Cacciari, 'Res aedificatoria. Il "classico" di Mies van der Rohe', op. cit., p. 4 (my translation); see also quote in the text related to note no. 282 in this section of the thesis
- 305 Specifically referring to ways for overcoming technology, but also generally in regard to the overcoming of any metaphysical principles which according to Heidegger's entire

Through his unconditional embracement of the site²⁹⁷ and blind trust into the 'uniqueness' of the occasion and situation that comes with each specific project, Boyd resists theoretical preconceptions as possible design inputs. Releasing himself to the 'essential' conditions of each project – site and clients' habits (rather than beliefs)²⁹⁸ as unavoidable pre-given data, thus factors that illogically and unintentionally exist before and beyond any process of determination by the architect – Boyd opens himself to the uncontrollable, the incomprehensible, the unforeseeable. The techniques of design – "surface, space, structure and...spirit"²⁹⁹ – mentioned by Boyd as instruments to inform "the vision"³⁰⁰ are nothing but reassuring conventional attributes of *dia-logical* relationships through which our rationality comes to terms with the realities of the world as determined and comprehended in its own individual entities. His sense of "directness"³⁰¹ and "improvisation"³⁰² are on the other hand the means to stay hopeful and open towards the incomprehensible *oneness of the world's worlding*. Improvisation, from the Latin *improvisus*, a direct adaptation of *in-provisus* as 'not/un-foreseen', is a term that perfectly describes the condition of unintentionality through which Boyd, constantly released to say 'yes' and 'no' to the inevitable logos that represents the world as the according of multiple individual entities, at the same time releases himself to the mystery of the recollection of the incomprehensible original oneness/all-inclusiveness of the world's worlding.

As we know, "releasement toward things and openness to the mystery belong together. They grant us the possibility of dwelling in the world in a totally different way."³⁰³ Boyd's different way – truly different and peripheral in relation to mainstream modernism – resides in his openness to embrace at once logic and non-logic, rationality and irrationality, comprehensible representations of individual entities and incomprehensible representations of oneness/all-inclusiveness; both dimensions that are inevitably intrinsic to us. Through his own sense of improvisation as unintentionality, Boyd is open to the mystery of that which is incomprehensible to our logos, yet he intuitively realizes that what is incomprehensible to our logos is already, since ever, with us – hence, as such, it would involve anything but a difficult *re-calling* rather than an easy and reassuring *calling* for the new.³⁰⁴ Through his own sense of unintentionality and immediateness Boyd is open towards the inexplicable oneness/all-inclusiveness of space, without being conditioned by the inevitable logos and its inevitable representation of the world as a combination of many individual spaces. Applying some of Heidegger's words to the Melbourne architect's approach, we may say that "releasement toward things and openness to the mystery...promise...a new ground and foundation upon which...(Boyd) can stand and endure in the world...without being imperiled by it",³⁰⁵ that is: without being overpowered by the conventional/logical process of representation that disposes human beings to merely represent the world as a whole of many individual spatial entities.

Through the directness and improvisation of his approach, Boyd unconditionally *de-volves* himself to the specificity of each occasion – he literally de-turns/turns over (the original Latin term *de-volvere* means *de-turn, turn over*) from any possible "designing intentionality",³⁰⁶ releasing himself from preconceived ideas and therefore, at the same time, to the unavoidable and intrinsically unique conditions of each project, thus making it impossible for his

- philosophy are inevitable and not erasable, the German philosopher writes: "Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery... promise us a new ground and foundation upon which we can stand and endure in the world of technology without being imperiled by it". Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 55
- 306 Massimo Cacciari, 'Res aedificatoria. Il "classico" di Mies van der Rohe', op. cit., p. 4; see quote in the text related to note no. 282 in this section of the thesis
- 307 David Saunders, 'Afterword', in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 147; see quote in the text related to note n. 296 in this section of the thesis
- 308 This is the English translation of the original German term *Neue Sachlichkeit* that is recurrently used to refer to the functionalist aesthetic which informs the architecture of many public housing projects designed in Germany from the end of the First World War to the early 1930s in close collaboration with the policy of trade unions and social democratic cooperatives
- 309 As already discussed above in the text (and in the related note no. 78) of this section of the thesis, some avant-garde and functionalist positions became entrapped by their own ideologies, falling victim to the reiteration of recognizable and predictable aesthetic styles which ironically started occurring in a conventional repetitive way following their condemnation of bourgeois types of social, cultural and aesthetic values
- 310 As poignantly observed by Italian literature critic and theoretician Carla Benedetti, "nell'arte moderna, si sa, vige l'imperativo a differenziarsi...Quando a guidare il giudizio è il valore dell'originalità, si ha sempre, come contraltare, la paura di essere giudicati 'antiquati'." "As we know, the imperative demand of modern art is to be different...When the public opinion is guided by the value of originality, then the counter-reaction is to be afraid of being considered 'antiquated'." Carla Benedetti, *Pasolini contro Calvino*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1998, pp. 74, 81 (my translation)
- 311 As observed by Heidegger, "there are...two kinds of thinking, each justified and needed in its own way: calculative thinking and meditative thinking". Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 46. Heidegger's definition of "meditative thinking" has already been referred to and discussed earlier in this essay – see text related to note no. 54, and texts comprised in notes no. 54 and 202 in this section of the thesis
- 312 Heidegger has consistently discussed modern science and technology as overpowering criteria to humans and their inclination to represent themselves as subjects/relational centres of an objectified world – in one of his most significant passages, from the text written in 1955 in honour of the German composer Conrad Kreutzer, he writes: "in July of this

architecture "to have recognisable forms being repeated".³⁰⁷

It is this dimension of unintentionality, it is his lack of concern with the production of architectural solutions as representations of predetermined ideas, that places Boyd beyond all established currents of mainstream modernism; even beyond the most digressive avant-garde movements which, in their attempt to 'rebel' against the conformity of established – thus conventional – cultural and aesthetic values imparted by dominant European bourgeoisies (see, among others: Constructivism; Futurism; Dadaism; Expressionism; New Objectivity³⁰⁸ and New Brutalism, these last two as respectively early and late shifts of Functionalism) fall victims of their own intrinsic polemical ideologies, ironically condemned to the conformity of recognizable 'styles of avant-gardism' in the aesthetic and theoretical representation of their rebellious critique.³⁰⁹

Resisting modernism's pervasive demand to create an innovative and original architecture,³¹⁰ therefore an architecture that is clearly identifiable with an innovative and original style, even better if recognizable as an 'original signature', Boyd is not afraid to be unclear, elusive, ambiguous and never definitive in both his writings and design works – he is not concerned that his arguments remain inconclusive, or that his architecture is without recognizable forms, every time different as differently conditioned by the pre-given data of each site and situation.

Through the absorption of the pre-given data Boyd can resist intentionality – he can marginalize the calculative thinking that so pervasively informs mainstream modernism and constantly subjugates it towards the creation of the new. Boyd's approach is strongly and substantially permeated by a "meditative thinking" as a reaction towards the inescapable "calculative" disposition that, intrinsically embedded in human rationality,³¹¹ has been however significantly amplified by western modernity and its emphatic belief in scientific and technological progress.³¹²

Boyd's poetic state of 'nearness'

Boyd's thinking is truly 'poetic' because capable of taking a distance from the determination of the world as an approach uniquely guided by the modernist calculative/scientific inclination that disposes humans-as-subjects to objectify the world. In empathy with Heidegger's philosophy, Boyd realizes that "the relation between the ego and the object, the often mentioned subject-object relation, which...(the world of science) took to be most general, is apparently only an historical variation of the relation of man to the thing, so far as things can become objects..."³¹³ This subject-object relation is inevitably conditioned by the logos and its inclination to rational – logical, indeed – comprehension; Boyd is aware of this, and yet he is equally aware that at the same time an illogical dimension keeps us released to, in hope for "the prior, of which we really can not think...because the nature of thinking begins there".³¹⁴ Therefore, any attempt to represent and determine *the prior as oneness/all-inclusiveness of space* is condemned to reach nothing more than the nearness of this unthinkable, inexplicable, incomprehensible, dimension.

year at Lake Constance, eighteen Nobel Prize winners stated in a proclamation: 'Science [and that is modern natural science] is a road to a happier human life.' What is the sense of this statement? Does it spring from reflection? Does it ever ponder on the meaning of the atomic age? No! For if we rest content with this statement of science, we remain as far as possible from a reflective insight into our age. Why? Because we forget to ponder. Because we forget to ask: What is the ground that enabled modern technology to discover and set free new energies in nature? This is due to a revolution in leading concepts which has been going on for the past several centuries, and by which man is placed in a different world. This radical revolution in outlook has come about in modern philosophy. From this arises a completely new relation of man to the world and his place in it. The world now appears as an object open to the attacks of calculative thought, attacks that nothing is believed able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry. This relation of man to the world as such, in principle a technical one, developed in the seventeenth century first and only in Europe." Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 49-50

313 Martin Heidegger, 'Conversation on a country path about thinking', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., pp. 77, 78

314 Ibid., p. 83

315 Ibid., pp. 89, 90

316 Ibid., p. 89

317 Refer again, as earlier referred to in note no. 87 of this section of the thesis, to Nietzsche and his polemic observations in regard to the limited type of truth which is achieved by humans every time they discover/define a new word, condemning it to stay "petrified" with the new assigned meaning as a conventional tool for a logical and rational type of knowledge; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982, quoted in Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, op. cit., p. 7

318 Martin Heidegger, "Poetically Man Dwells..." in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 226; this same passage is already quoted in the initial pages of this essay, related to note no. 4 of this section of the thesis

"Scholar: ...'moving-into-nearness.' The word could rather, so it seems to me now, be the name for our walk today along this country path.

Teacher: Which guided us deep into the night...

Scientist: ...that gleams ever more splendidly...

Scholar: ...and overwhelms the stars...

Teacher: ...because it nears their distances in the heavens...

Scientist: ...at least for the naïve observer, although not for the exact scientist.

Teacher: Ever to the child in man, night neighbors the stars.

Scholar: She binds together without seam or edge or thread.

Scientist: She neighbors; because she works only with nearness."³¹⁵

Boyd's poetic approach is disclosed by his inclination to accept the unavoidability of logos and simultaneously stay *naïvely/unintentionally* released to the incomprehensible oneness/all-inclusiveness of space by means of which everything reciprocally co-belongs together in absence of relational/measurable accords – like the stars that by the night are reciprocally *neared one to another* "without seam or edge or thread".³¹⁶ Boyd's poetic thinking reverberates in his propensity to come near to the incomprehensible oneness, therefore in his disposition to suggest this same dimension through hints that cannot avoid being logical and comprehensible in their attempt to reach/describe the illogical and the incomprehensible. Thinking about the inexplicable/incomprehensible leads us to the nearness of it, a position in which the inexplicable/incomprehensible remains as such, although represented in explicable/comprehensible images which are condemned to be conventional – conventionally perpetuating their own assigned meaning³¹⁷ – by their own comprehensibility. That of the nearness, a condition strongly empathetic with the notion of an unfulfilled potentiality that is in many and different ways embraced by Boyd, is a poetic state. The conditions of unclearness, vagueness, weakness, ambivalence, irresoluteness, elusiveness, ambiguity, indefiniteness, confusion, openness, releasement that have been discussed as quintessential qualities of the approach of this architect are all viscerally related to this state.

"Poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar. The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien. By such sights the god surprises us. In this strangeness he proclaims his unflinching nearness."³¹⁸

The nearness is the place of the 'strange' coexistence – the 'surprising' con-fusion – of logos and intuition, of the comprehensible and the incomprehensible. Through this condition we stay *surprised*, continuously *released*, continuously *con-fused* as co-belonging with the world, unintentionally wondering about the measures that are constantly determined to control the world.

"This is why the poet must ask: 'Is there a measure on earth?' And he must reply: 'There is none.' Why? Because what we signify when we say 'on the earth' exists only insofar as man dwells

319 Ibid., pp. 226, 227, 228

320 Heidegger's notion of anguish as intrinsically related to our existential condition has been already discussed and associated to Boyd's approach earlier in this essay (see texts related to, and included in, note no. 45 in this section of the thesis). Reiterating concepts that have been introduced above in this essay, and further describing them through additional words from Heidegger's text: "Angst 'does not know' what it is about which it is anxious... What oppresses us is not this or that, nor is it everything objectively present together as a sum, but the *possibility* of things at hand in general, that is, the world itself. When *Angst* has quieted down, in our everyday way of talking we are accustomed to say 'it was really nothing'. This way of talking, indeed, gets at *what* it was ontically. Everyday discourse aims at taking care of things at hand and talking about them. That about which *Angst* is anxious is none of the innerworldly things at hand. But this 'none of the things at hand', which is all that everyday, circumspect discourse understands, is not a total nothing. The nothing of handiness is based on the primordial 'something', on the *world*. The world, however, ontologically belongs essentially to the being of Da-sein as being-in-the-world. So, if what *Angst* is about exposes nothing, that is, the world as such, this means that *that about which Angst is anxious is being-in-the-world itself*...As attunement, being anxious is a way of being-in-the-world; that about which we have *Angst* is thrown being-in-the-world"; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., pp. 174, 175, 178. Heidegger's notion of *Angst* can be not only indirectly associated to Kierkegaard's notion of 'despair', in particular within the context of the theoretical framework of this thesis (on Kierkegaard's notion of 'despair' see texts related to, and included in, notes no. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 of this section of the thesis; on the relationship between Kierkegaard and Heidegger see in particular note no. 23), but also to many more philosophical positions which developed from – and are located in the trajectory of – Heidegger's positions; among them, a recent assertion by British philosopher Mark Rowland symptomatically states that "we cannot understand the significance of our own lives and, for precisely that reason, we find it so difficult to be happy". Mark Rowland, *The Philosopher and the Wolf*, Granta, London, 2009 (original ed., 2008), p. 217

321 "Then thinking would be coming-into-the-nearness of distance." Martin Heidegger, 'Conversation on a country path about thinking', in *Discourse on Thinking*, op. cit., p. 68; part of this sentence is already quoted above in this essay (see text related to note no. 27 in this section of the thesis)

322 Martin Heidegger, 'Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)', in *Early Greek Thinking*, op. cit., p. 76

323 As observed by literature and philosophy

on the earth and in his dwelling lets the earth be as earth. But dwelling occurs only when poetry comes to pass and is present, and indeed in the way whose nature we now have some idea of, as taking a measure for all measuring. This measure-taking is itself an authentic measure-taking, no mere gauging with ready-made measuring rods for the making of maps. Nor is poetry building in the sense of raising and fitting buildings. But poetry, as the authentic gauging of the dimension of dwelling, is the primal form of building. Poetry first of all admits man's dwelling into its very nature, its presencing being. Poetry is the original admission of dwelling...Presumably we dwell altogether unpoetically...For dwelling can be unpoetic only because it is in essence poetic... Thus it might be that our unpoetic dwelling, its incapacity to take the measure, derives from a curious excess of frantic measuring and calculating."³¹⁹

Boyd, peripheral to mainstream modernism, is not overly drawn by the calculative inclination that disposes humans to objectively determine the world through measures that are always referred to themselves as determining subjects. Through his quintessential sense of indefiniteness Boyd resists the modernist tendency to control the world by means of 'frantic measuring' – a process of objectification that has continuously informed western cultures and their attempts to emphatically counteract the original existential anguish that inherently pervades human beings in their incapability to rationally explain the reasons of their *being-in-the-world*.³²⁰ Boyd's poetic approach resides in his capability to accept and absorb the calculative thinking and its frantic measuring as a reflection of our inevitable rational logos, and yet, at the same time, to stay open to the incomprehensible oneness of the world's worlding. His thinking, capable of "coming-into-the-nearness of distance"³²¹ and therefore to reach a dimension that is only partially and incompletely comprehensible, is truly poetic in realizing that "it is more salutary for thinking to wander into the strange than to establish itself in the obvious".³²²

Poetry is inclined to 'wander into the strange'. Differently from the state of prose, poetry lays out terms in a way that is logically and rationally 'non-accorded'; it discloses them as reciprocally co-belonging together; it con-fuses them in absence of immediately recognizable forms of a dialectical articulation; it is disposed to hint at and defer to further – not explicitly or necessarily graspable – meanings/dimensions rather than being drawn towards the production of clear and conventionally intelligible expressions;³²³ it does come into the precarious condition of the nearness as a "ventured...balance"³²⁴ between the comprehensible and the incomprehensible. From this position of nearness, poetic thinking is capable of including at once both the comprehensible and the incomprehensible as both participating in the oneness of the Open, "boundlessly flowing into one another and thus acting toward one another".³²⁵ The poetic dimension of the nearness coincides with a state that is always 'ventured' and potential – rather than safe and determined – as informed by a dynamic and never solved balance between the comprehensibility of the obvious/graspable and the incomprehensibility of the strange/ungraspable.

The poetic dimension of Boyd resides in the con-fusion of logos and intuition that characterises both his theoretical arguments and architectural outcomes – they are always potential, never definitely concluded, constantly near to and yet far from a determined final form, continuously 'strange' and surprising in their application of

theoretician David Halliburton, "To Heidegger the poem is a call (*Ruf*), a term that no longer designates, as in *Being and Time*, a mode of discourse but a more interwoven – and more ambiguous – process." David Halliburton, *Poetic Thinking. An Approach to Heidegger*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981, p. 186

324 "The poem thinks of the Being of beings, Nature, as the venture. Every being is ventured in a venture. As ventured, it now lies in the balance. The balance is the way in which Being ever and again weighs beings, that is, keeps them in the motion of weighing." Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 134

325 Referring to Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke as an author informed by one of the ultimate and most essential 'poetic' approaches in his ability to embrace the Open, Heidegger writes: "In a letter of January 6, 1923...Rilke writes: '...like the moon, so life surely has a side that is constantly turned away from us, and that is not its opposite but its completion to perfection, to plenitude, to the real, whole, and full sphere and globe of being.'...The globe of Being of which he (Rilke) speaks here, that is, the globe of all beings as a whole, is the Open, as the pure forces serried, boundlessly flowing into one another and thus acting toward one another". Ibid., p. 124

326 Martin Heidegger, " "...Poetically Man Dwells..." ", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 226; these words are already quoted above in this essay (see texts related to notes no. 4 and 318 of this section of the thesis)

327 This notion, proposed by Boyd as a quality inherently produced by any thoughtful architectural design, is discussed above in this essay; see texts related to notes no. 90, 91, 92, 93, 94 and 284 in this section of the thesis

328 In Heidegger's words: "Self-assertive man, whether or not he knows and wills it as an individual, is the functionary of technology. Not only does he face the Open from outside it; he even...by objectifying the world...by this parting, opposes himself to the Open. This parting is not a parting *from*, it is a parting *against*." Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 116

329 Peter McIntyre has praised Boyd's "quickness"; Neil Clerehan has commended Boyd's "politeness"; Daryl Jackson has positively described Boyd's capability of "putting down and raising up" as a typical approach that consistently accompanied his way of criticizing and discussing architecture and other aspects related to design and culture in general – these remarks were publicly expressed in the context of *Robin Boyd taught me the value of...*, presentations by Peter McIntyre, Neil Clerehan, David Yencken, Mary Featherston, Daryl Jackson, Graeme Gunn, Norman Day, Karl Fender, an event part of the National Architecture Week, Robin Boyd Foundation, 290 Walsh Street, South Yarra, Melbourne, 28 October 2009

references from the specificity of everyday situations as indeed "visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar".³²⁶ Unfamiliar and familiar at the same time, Boyd's writings and projects are poetically *confused* in their undefinable and unresolved balance between 'the alien' and 'the familiar'; through the same terms that have been used in the heading of the paragraph at the beginning of this essay, Boyd's work can indeed be described as 'open to the alien' and yet 'close to the familiar'. The second part of this thesis, devoted to the analysis of some of Boyd's design work, will illustrate and discuss in particular the undefinable sense of 'unfamiliar familiarity' that characterises his projects. Consistently pervaded by a perceptible and yet inexplicable 'something more',³²⁷ and engaged with the dimension of familiarity – familiar materials, constructive solutions, technological details and spatial situations – in an unfamiliar and unexpected way, Boyd's projects are constantly surprising; they instigate to continuous wonderings by referring to 'the alien', incomprehensible, oneness of space through subtle evoking hints rather than metaphorical or symbolic elements.

'Unsolved balance' and 'continuous nearness' are both poetic dimensions embraced by Boyd and intrinsically intertwined with his *meditative* thinking; his consistent releasement to the wonderings provoked by this type of thinking is a way for critically and constructively resisting the over-presence of the *calculative* thinking that is inevitably triggered by logos and rationality. His peripheral, unorthodox, 'offstream' modernist approach enables his research to enjoy the unsolvable con-fusion between rationality and irrationality, between logos and intuition, between the ungraspable and indeterminable oneness of the world's worlding and the graspable and determinable measures that conventionally accord subjects and objects in the world. Peripheral to orthodox modernism and its related uncritical belief in technology, Boyd ventures his research into the unsolvable wondering that on the one hand questions the Oneness/Openness of the world's worlding and yet, on the other, resists solving it as a mere objectified/determined entity. Different from the overt calculative thinking of orthodox modernism as a derivation of modernity, Boyd opens himself to the con-fused wonderings of meditative thinking. In a weak and hesitant – not certainly "self-assertive"³²⁸ – way, Boyd releases himself to the world's worlding, aware to be rationally destined to question it as an 'object', and yet at the same time opening himself to resist the objectification process through his continuous and indefinite wondering.

His non-assertive character, which keeps him continuously open to the coexistence of the inexplicability of 'world-as-oneness' and the explicability of 'world-as-object', is intriguingly confirmed by some comments that have been recently expressed in regard to Boyd by some of the architects and peers who had the opportunity to closely collaborate with him. Melbourne architects Peter McIntyre, Neil Clerehan and Daryl Jackson, invited to discuss the influence Boyd has had upon them, have referred to their mentor by respectively describing him as quintessentially characterised by the qualities of "quickness" and "politeness", as well as an inclination "to put down" and yet "raise up" at the same time.³²⁹ These types of approach are indicative of Boyd's nature and theoretical positions. The 'politeness' of his general behaviour and the 'ambivalence' that informs his tendency to simultaneously put 'up' and 'down' in his critiques and discussions unequivocally imply a state of an unsolvable

330 John Brack, 1920-1999, was an Australian painter born and based in Melbourne. He was also a member of the Antipodeans group, which is discussed earlier in this essay; see texts related to, and included in, notes no. 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 138 and 139 in this section of the thesis

331 Kazuo Shinohara, 1925-2006, was a Japanese architect who also taught at the Tokyo Institute of Technology

332 Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, George Braziller, New York, 1968. In this book Boyd refers to this project calling it 'House with an underground room' (p. 81)

333 See, among others, Strizic's photograph that is published in Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., pp. 62, 63; the same image is reproduced in this thesis, p. 241, bottom left

334 AFL stands for Australian Football League; Collingwood (named after an inner suburb of Melbourne) is one of the teams based in Melbourne that are part of this league

335 This work has been symptomatically described by art historian and critic Sasha Grishin as characterised by a sense of flatness: "His (Brack's) three football players, their heads pressed close to the picture plane – one in profile, one in three-quarter view and the other face on – nervously survey each other without confronting the beholder. Their flat, patterned faces with rigidly set expressions are treated in flat planes of colour that have much in common with the plain black and white of their Collingwood Club football jumpers." Sasha Grishin, *The Art of John Brack*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990, volume 1, p. 39; a reproduction of this painting is visible in the same book *The Art of John Brack*, op. cit., volume 2, p. 87

336 Refer to the "parting *against*" "the Open" that Heidegger sees as a reflection of rational "self-assertive" thinking: "Self-assertive man... is the functionary of technology. Not only does he face the Open from outside it; he even turns his back upon the 'pure draft' by objectifying the world...The man of the age of technology, by this parting, opposes himself to the Open. This parting is not a parting *from*, it is a parting *against*". Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 116; part of this passage is already quoted above, in note no. 328 of this section of the thesis

'in-betweenness', a dimension of indefiniteness with no defined margins that is also intrinsically related to the state of 'evenness', and ultimately 'oneness', that is hoped for and yet never definitely achieved through extreme 'quickness' in thinking as a way to annul distances in time and space.

Boyd, Brack and Shinohara

The strange, surprising and ever potential outcomes of Boyd's theoretical and architectural works, ambiguously poetic in their always coming near and deferring to an ungraspable something else, symptomatically inform analogous works by other architects and artists to whom Boyd expresses a deep level of empathy and support. Two references are here discussed to conclude and further confirm the arguments of this essay; two figures, involved with two different fields from two different regions of the world, are here proposed as seminal references pertinent to the Melbourne architect, both expressing clear reverberations and empathetic positions in relation to his approach and theoretical framework. Not surprisingly Boyd was in different ways directly involved with the thought and work of both of them – the Australian artist John Brack,³³⁰ and the Japanese architect Kazuo Shinohara.³³¹

The following lines discuss two works – one from each of these two figures – not only as emblematic of their theoretical approach, but also and more importantly as characterised by qualities and attributes that are closely analogous to those of the Melbourne architect. From two different periods and relatively apart from one another, these two works – the painting *Three of the Players* produced by Brack in 1953 and purchased by Boyd in the same year, and Shinohara's 'House with an undergraduate room' completed in 1967 and published one year later in Boyd's book *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*³³² – are separated by 13 years. Coinciding with earlier and later phases of Boyd's life and career – 13 years are a significant time span in the context of his short and unexpectedly truncated life – these two references are here considered seminal examples that although from different times, chronologically almost at the opposite ends of his professional career – Brack's painting was purchased when Boyd was still living in his first house in Camberwell; and Shinohara's project was published and discussed three years before his premature death – can symptomatically encapsulate Boyd's consistency of approach through their reciprocal analogies.

Brack's painting, included in some of the photographs taken by Mark Strizic to document Boyd's own second house in Melbourne's inner suburb of South Yarra,³³³ combines at once the presence of recognizable, objective, determined, thus measurable figures – the heads and faces of three players from Collingwood's AFL team³³⁴ – with the undeterminable, thus unmeasurable blankness of a background that lacks a recognizable sense and dimension of spatial depth. The painting con-fuses together the 'comprehensible' physical proportions of the players' heads with the 'incomprehensible' dimension of their blank – physically absent – background, 'flattening'³³⁵ indeed the graspable/recognizable figures onto an ungraspable sense of oneness/all-inclusiveness of space. The three comprehensible figures are rationally represented as parts *against*³³⁶ their background – parts opposed to an objectified Open – and yet, at the same time, as irrationally co-belonging together – inseparably

337 Sasha Grishin, *The Art of John Brack*, op. cit., volume 1, p. 39

338 Ibid.

339 In regard to the painting *Still life with artificial leg*, 1963, as part of a series executed between 1963 and 1968, Sasha Grishin writes: "In the centre of the dusty shop window showcase stands a single artificial leg, while through an open panel in the back wall the shopkeeper peers out from the gloom. The painting is unnerving, not only because an artificial leg, so lovingly and carefully painted, hardly seems an appropriate subject for a work of art, but because of the observer's gradual realization of also being observed, so that the painting becomes a highly ambiguous space." Ibid., p. 87; an image of this work is reproduced in the same book *The Art of John Brack*, op. cit., volume 2, p. 122. In regard to the painting *Inside and outside*, 1972, as part of another series of similar works produced in the early 1970s, art critic Deborah Clark writes: "In the painting *Inside and outside* 1972, the artist's reflection fills most of a shop window through which – with the audience – he views a display of culinary equipment. His reflection is repeated many times in the shiny surfaces of the kitchen appliances which act as a series of tiny distorting mirrors, reducing the figure to a series of Kafka-esque insects which we only belatedly realise are images of the artist-onlooker. The large reflection in the window is semi-transparent, a shadow, and grossly distorted. His/our identity is fractured, contradictory and uncertain." Deborah Clark, *John Brack: inside and outside*, catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, 27 February – 14 June 1999, no number pages (this passage is in the 5th page of the catalogue, starting the counting from the cover page). More recently, in an essay symptomatically called 'Observations on the observer and the observed', Melbourne art gallerist Robert Lindsay further discusses Brack's involvement with the existential notions, and conditions, of "anxiety", "alienation" and "ambiguity" among others: "Brack shared the twentieth-century theoretical zeitgeist of anxiety and cultural alienation...Drawn from the rituals and routines of daily life, his subjects were selected for their inherent visual ambiguities and, as images, they project the anxiety and alienation of the modern world...Moreover, his frequent use of mirrors and reflections, the use of postcards as a means of appropriating art images into his work, the precarious sense of balance within his compositions and, above all, his consistent use of a painted inner pictorial frame at the edge of the canvas as a way of consciously declaring the traits of the medium, are all hallmarks of postmodernism...Brack's gamesmanship with ambiguity and the distance he maintains between the observer and the observed is indicative of the philosophical divide between illusion and reality. From his earliest works, he reveals himself as a master of the game". Robert Lindsay, 'Observations on the observer and the observed', in Kirsty Grant (ed.), *John*

con-fused – with the oneness of space, according to which everything is ungraspably one and all-included. Through the representation of the 'familiar' (the recognizable and measurable figurative players' heads) and their co-belonging with 'the alien' (the unrecognizable and unmeasurable openness of the blank background) this painting reaches a poetic dimension of nearness – a dimension from which the ungraspable is evoked/hinted and yet never comprehended; a dimension that is here emblematically expressed by a surprising and strange level of coexistence between the representation of both these conditions. The "slightly over-emphasized...appearance"³³⁷ of the three figures, together with the "ironic, even at times satirical tone"³³⁸ of this but also Brack's overall work in general, are symptomatic reflections of an approach towards reality that is uncertain and sceptical/suspicious of conventional truths.

The sense of ambiguity that characterises Brack's representation of reality in all his work – to which Boyd constantly relates through strong support and analogical sensibilities – is perceivable at many levels: from the series of paintings dealing with shop-windows as the means of illogical accords and con-fused reflections between seer-subjects and seen-objects,³³⁹ to the consistent dimension of unmeasurable flatness that paradoxically informs Brack's overall figurative works with a sense of ungraspable abstraction and anomalously quirk familiarity, to some significant theoretical discussions in praise of works that investigate the coexistence of elements in a state of inseparability of space. Among the latter, a crucial study describes the peer and personal friend Fred Williams as an innovative artist who understands – and attempts to represent – the illusoriness of the sense of measure and control that is conventionally and rationally exercised by human beings over the world. Through a comparison between some landscape paintings produced by Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale, and Fred Williams,³⁴⁰ Brack observes that the two former "both retained the receding space of Western painting with its limitations on the idea of infinite distance, or continuity beyond the frame. Williams has abandoned this spatial convention... Ground and sky are *intermingled* and *nothing is terminated*. Trees have become signs in an apparently random scatter which *paraphrases the sprawl and yet holds the composition within a unified structure*".³⁴¹ In Williams's work, continues Brack specifically referring to a painting called *Upwey Landscape* (1965), "ground and sky are sharply delineated...the infinity is preserved by the fact that the skyline is a ruled line, avoiding the slightest suggestion of irregularity which might indicate a reference point, a particular place. Actually there is no receding space at all; the bottom of the painting is not foreground nor the skyline horizon; the ground is in fact a plan upon which trees, in profile, are sprinkled like confetti".³⁴²

Brack, similarly to Boyd, investigates, in his own and other referential works, the coexistence of states of comprehension and incomprehension. His descriptions and interpretative readings convey states of con-fusion between 'the presence' of objectively determined recognizable elements – the "sharply delineated"³⁴³ representations of ground, sky, trees – and the hope for 'the absence' of an unrecognizable, because ungraspable, dimension of oneness – "the infinity...preserved...(without) reference point, (or) a particular place... not foreground nor...horizon".³⁴⁴

Brack, catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 137, 139, 142

340 Nolan, Russell and Williams are three of the best-known Australian artists. Sydney Nolan, 1917-1992, originally from Melbourne, later moved to London, where he died; Russell Drysdale, 1912-1981, was born in England and at the age of 11 he moved with his family to Australia, where he lived and worked for the rest of his life; Fred Williams, 1927-1982, was born and based in Melbourne, where he died prematurely from lung cancer

341 John Brack, *Four Contemporary Australian Landscape Painters*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1968, pp. 30, 31 (my italics)

342 Ibid., p. 31

343 Ibid.

344 Ibid.

345 See captions related to this domestic project by Shinohara, in Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, op. cit., p. 81

346 Ibid., p. 79

347 These four terms are listed, among others, as synonyms of "weird", *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, op. cit.

348 This term is listed as one more synonym of "weird", *ibid.* Interestingly, this specific case of synonymy (weird = other-worldly) suggests that a dimension that is from 'another world' – that is, beyond the objective world as rationally represented by humans/subjects – is 'weird'

349 Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, op. cit., p. 79

350 Ibid.

An analogous sense of coexistence between rationality and irrationality is expressed by the spatial and architectural resolutions of an early project by Kazuo Shinohara, which is described by Boyd as a "house with an underground room",³⁴⁵ and discussed, in parallel with some other reflections related to the design approach and theoretical positions of this Japanese architect, through these following words:

"At first sight the whole house seems to be no more than a slightly irregular room...of about 50 square meters with a shed roof overhead and a low bathroom and kitchen partitioned off along the high side. A plain pine ladder resting against the partition gives access to a platform over the bathroom, where the owners may sleep if they wish. The walls are painted vivid red and black and the floor is compacted earth from which sprout, like mushrooms, beautiful, if unresilient laminated timber chairs and a dining table, all designed by the architect. Earth, he explains, is the theme of this building. In one corner of the room a stair drops down into the ground...It leads to the main bedroom, which is not a cellar beneath the exposed house but a separate, underground extension of it beneath the garden which can be glimpsed from the main upper room. The result is weirdly beautiful, a deliberate reaction against pragmatic Functionalism and Rationalism and Metabolism. Shinohara believes it is the responsibility of the architect to protect and encourage human emotional activity in the face of industrial materialism. He also wants to escape from the rut, from all stereotypes, both old and new. Within a framework of respect for materials and spatial-structural purity, he frankly seeks 'dynamic illogicality'.³⁴⁶

Symptomatically, the incomprehensible state of 'dynamic illogicality' described by Boyd is not suggested as the result of any deliberately irrational creative process, nor any possible revolutionary avant-garde gesture; it is rather the outcome of a spatial dimension in which all elements – furniture components, individual spaces, architectural volumes – are simple and direct, immediately recognizable in their familiarity of form and architectural language, and yet contributors to the 'weird' beauty of the space – in other words, to the "unconventional...unorthodox...quirky... mysterious",³⁴⁷ thus incomprehensible/unrecognizable/ungraspable, sense of spatial indivisibility and reciprocal co-belongingness of parts that inform this house. After all the 'weird beauty' of this house lies in its being at the same time conventionally separated in two distinctive parts – two individual boxes, as strikingly expressed in the Section drawing – and yet characterised by an unmeasurable sense of continuity of space – the bathroom is the only closed off volume in the entire house, behind a low 'partition wall' that as such does not really partition the space. Boyd is drawn by the instigation to a continuous state of wondering that this project literally emits through its 'weird' – indeed "other-worldly"³⁴⁸ – dimension and its intrinsic inclination to embrace rationality and irrationality at once. Not surprisingly the Melbourne architect feels a strong sense of sympathy for the work and approach of this Japanese peer, inclined to go beyond "all stereotypes, both old and new",³⁴⁹ and to shift from the sense of determination that characterises the established systems of truths that are codified by mainstream modernist movements such as "Functionalism and Rationalism and Metabolism".³⁵⁰

The poetic dimension of 'nearness' expressed by Boyd, Shinohara and all other references examined in this essay as empathetic to both Heidegger's philosophy and Boyd's approach, defers to an

ungraspable something else, releasing rational thinking towards irrational states of indefiniteness; encouraging wondering and wandering into the strange and the surprising, to use Heideggerian terms. Accompanied by his sense of ambivalence and potentiality, Boyd is placed in a different dimension, in an alternative position, from which he participates in modernism in a critical and transversal way. His approach is never trapped by formulaic processes in pursuit of illusorily forms of correspondence between idea and form. From this point of view, the sense of potentiality and 'con-fusion' that make his spatial and formal definitions with "no dominant... style",³⁵¹ are substantially different from, and gently critical of, the sense of certainty that many of his contemporary peers repose into representational and creative processes which are mainly guided by rationality and logic – thinking of some of them, the following are pertinent examples among others: Roy Grounds's forms as translations of geometrical references; Harry Seidler's abstract shapes as an homage to Modern Art;³⁵² Peter Muller's organicist metaphors; Sydney Ancher's pristine Functionalist compositions; Peter McIntyre's heroic interpretations of Structural Expressionism; Frederick Romberg's formal solutions as obvious declinations of the European Expressionism that he brought with him to Australia.³⁵³

Robin Boyd is beyond these and other modernist positions. His theoretical and design approach accepts rationality and irrationality, objective representation of the world and oneness of the 'world's worlding', comprehensible sense of determination and incomprehensible hope for the indeterminate. His meditative thinking embraces at once the dimensions of rational definiteness and irrational oneness.

The following section – part two, including the documentation of some selected projects – investigates these themes and attempts to illustrate and visualize them in relation to the spatial resolutions that inform his architectural, landscape and infrastructural works.

351 David Saunders, 'Afterword', Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 148; a more extensive quote from Saunders, including these terms, is discussed above in this essay, referred to note no. 296 in this section of the thesis

352 Architectural historian Philip Drew symptomatically describes the façade of Seidler's Blues Point Tower in Sydney as "a syncopated composition of solids and voids, a salute to Josef Albers' 'The City' (1928) composition"; Philip Drew, '1945-1976 The Migration of an Idea', in Kenneth Frampton, Philip Drew, *Harry Seidler. Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 1992, p. 25. Also, "the bright colours of the mural wall" which in the same book are described in relation to the Rose Seidler House in Turramurra as painted by Seidler himself (p. 39), do emblematically reflect Seidler's "connections with...New York Minimalism in art" (p. 30) – among others, the minimalist compositions of Piet Mondrian, a consistent reference to the Austrian-born architect based in Sydney

353 All these architects belong to the same modernist generation of Robin Boyd: Roy Grounds, 1905-1981, lived and worked in Melbourne; Harry Seidler, 1923-2006, was an Austrian-born architect who migrated first in the US and Canada, and later in Sydney, Australia, where he lived and worked since 1948; Peter Muller, 1927-, was born in Adelaide and after his studies moved to Sydney where he is currently living and working; Peter McIntyre, 1927-, was born in Melbourne, where he is currently living and working; Frederick Romberg, 1913-1992, was a German architect who migrated to Melbourne, Australia, in 1938, where he worked and lived since, also spending a considerable part of his life (from 1965 to 1975) in Newcastle, NSW, as the foundation Professor of Architecture at the University of Newcastle

Part 2

Introduction

Selection of projects representative of Boyd's overall work

The projects documented in this section are a selection of Boyd's entire work. As examples of different types and scales, and accommodating different activities – from domestic (single houses and multi-storey apartment buildings) to institutional (university colleges), commercial (a shopping mall, and a shop annexed to a house), hospitality (a motor inn) and public/cultural/entertainment (two exhibition installations, a museum/visitor centre, and a public fountain) – this group of works has been selected as an appropriate display of the variegated range of work and manifold activity that was undertaken by Boyd through his professional practice and related theoretical research.¹

The extensive number of domestic architecture in this book – equivalent to the 70% of the works included here – is at the same time symptomatically reflective of the most recurrent type of commission – private residential buildings, usually in the form of single houses – that Boyd received in his career. Despite the attempt, at the time of his unexpected death, to gain more public commissions or at least larger domestic projects, Boyd did not certainly disdain his continuous involvement with the design of the single house type; this was in fact positively embraced and consistently explored as a means to redefine the urban conditions of Australia through the densification of the built fabric and the investigation of spatial continuity between the architectural and natural environments.

In the early stages of the studies related to this thesis, approximately 50 projects were analyzed and researched; ultimately it was decided to select and include the following 36 as a group of works that is not only well representative of Boyd's different range of work, but also consisting of examples that are considered in general relevant and seminal by Boyd himself and architectural historians and critics who have engaged with the work and ideas of this architect.² Another reason for selecting this group of works is that the majority of them are accessible, and located in the metropolitan context of Melbourne and surrounding areas; this latter factor was considered particularly important, since the analysis of the relationship between each building and the existing urban and natural contexts of both its immediate and more extensive surroundings could be investigated, tested and ultimately understood in more depth due to the familiarity of the author with such geographical and urban conditions.

- 1 It is not the aim of this thesis to comprehensively document the entire work of Boyd; this would entail a totally different type of research in regard to both theoretical framework and field of investigation. A publication inclusive of all projects designed by Boyd in the form of a reasoned catalogue is still missing; some of the existing bibliographic background has however previously attempted to list the entire work of this architect in a comprehensive way, although not through a consistently systematic cataloguing, nor through the re-documentation of the archive material – see among others: Harriet Edquist (ed.), *Robin Boyd*, a monographic issue of *Transition*, no. 38, 1992. As a further reference to a comprehensive form of cataloguing related to Boyd's residential works, I would like here to mention the ongoing research by Melbourne architect Tony Lee, the director of the Robin Boyd Foundation (290 Walsh Street, South Yarra, Melbourne), who is currently in the process of collecting various historical and archive material towards a comprehensive catalogue of all Boyd's residential work
- 2 25 of the 36 projects documented in this section are symptomatically included – provided with extensive illustrations and descriptions, except for a couple which are mentioned in a brief and less detailed way – in the book *Living in Australia* (Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970), which was effectively produced and considered by Boyd as the most relevant and indicative 'portfolio' of his work; in addition to this, the large majority of the projects documented in this thesis have also been published in architectural books and magazines, although normally as individual works, in different times and occasions

The re-documentation process: methodology and graphic style

All projects are here documented in their original situation since one of the essential intents of the investigation process was to test the theoretical framework and its related enquiries against the spatial conditions of the architectural and landscape design as originally conceived and envisaged by Boyd. The projects have been entirely re-drawn from archive and bibliographic sources, and surveyed through visits undertaken in the last few years – all the works have been visited except for the demolished Snowden Gardens Fountain, the two dismantled installations for the Australian Pavilion at Montreal Expo '67 and 'The First 200 Years' exhibition in Sydney, and the unbuilt proposals for the Carnich Towers and Flinders Vaults. It is left to the photographs and their combination of original and more recent shots – the proportion between them varies from project to project – to show changes, additions, modifications that may have occurred throughout the years. The potentiality and flexibility of the projects, in particular their capability of acquiring further unpredicted connotations through the growing, ageing and gradual transformation – by densification and addition of elements – of both the designed and natural landscapes, has also been investigated and documented by representing the current conditions – trees, vegetation and other components of the gardens, open and surrounding natural areas in general – and their integration with the original state of the time of the design completion.

The types of drawings – site maps, plans, sections, elevations, axonometric and 3-D views – and their laconic graphic style, intend to test the spatial definitions, planning layout and volumetric combinations of Boyd's projects against the theoretical framework discussed in the initial part of the book. In particular, the diagrammatic nature and reduced expression of these line drawings – their inclination to resist over-expression – are applied as a graphic device to document the various elements of the project – interior, exterior, architectural, infrastructural and landscape spaces – as equal parts of the whole, in absence of any distinctive sense of hierarchy between them. This graphic approach, abstracting the project into its most essential traits, has been tested as an appropriate medium to reveal the sense of spatial continuity that at different levels interrelates the individual parts into a whole.

The re-documentation process as a means to test the theoretical framework

Accompanied by individual texts that are descriptive and theoretical at the same time, the projects are here discussed, and accordingly represented for the first time, as examples of spatial continuity, characterised by an intimate and mutual degree of interrelation between their constitutive parts, between their architectural and landscape spaces, as well as between the characters of their specific site and those of the surrounding urban and natural environments. From this point of view – indeed a crucial point of view in regard to the theoretical framework of this thesis – these drawings are innovative and different from those that were originally produced from the 1940s to the early 1970s, and since then exposed to the public through architectural publications and exhibitions.

Despite Boyd's strong support for integration between the different

- 3 In one of his many reflections in regard to integration between disciplines and professions related to architectural and urban design, Boyd observes: "I want to try to describe to you the state of creativity in building, town planning, urban redevelopment, and so on – those intensely important social activities which shape the entire background of our lives. These activities often take the form of separate specialised disciplines and separate professions, but they are intermeshed and interdependent. A town-planner cannot conceive a city without architecture, and an architect's interests continually burst beyond the confines of the land he is building on, to take in the neighbours, the street, the city, the region. The spirit of architecture and the spirit of the city enjoy a mutual sympathy. For instance, in a period when architecture is thriving, one finds invariably that the city as a whole is doing well: roads are adequate, traffic is flowing freely, open space is available, street trees are flourishing, parks are blooming, advertising signs are orderly". Robin Boyd, *Artificial Australia, The Boyer Lectures 1967*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1968, p. 32

- 4 In one of his writings in support of native vegetation as a presence that is essentially instrumental to the architectural and urban conditions of the Australian built environment, Boyd condemns that "in our newer suburbs on the city's outer eastern ring Australian trees are being destroyed as rapidly as the ground is subdivided, far more rapidly than the new houses are being built. Great gums are toppling every day on the edges of the forests. Land is laid bare, to wait months, perhaps years, for the new houses and the few cautious deciduous trees which will be permitted in the new gardens. Why this destruction? Why should new houses be built without natural shade? Why should we be ashamed of our own native trees?...It is surely high time that we all began to appreciate the natural qualities of our own country. We cannot keep fighting Australian characteristics for ever". Robin Boyd, 'The Vanishing Gumtree: Have you ever tried to find one in the suburbs?', *The Age*, 5 April 1950

- 5 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit.

fields and operative scales of architectural, landscape, urban and even territorial design,³ and despite his passionate advocacy for reciprocal interaction between the built environment and native vegetation,⁴ his projects have never been represented as a reflection of these theoretical positions. The types of drawings, normally mere plans and sections, that have been constantly showed in historical books and magazines up to now, similarly to the ones that were even edited by Boyd himself for and published in *Living in Australia*⁵ – arguably his 'manifesto book' as the only publication that groups together projects selected by the architect and related writings purposely produced by him in the form of both short descriptions and longer essays – are exclusively focussed on the formal and spatial solutions of the building, with no consideration of the existing site and the surrounding context. Somehow pervaded by the same level of concision and introversion that is typical of an ideographic sign, the drawings so far documented in all existing publications, both from the time of their production and in subsequent, more recent reviews of Boyd's work, traditionally float in the white of the page in an aphoristic way; merely communicating the internal sense of spatial continuity, they fail to convey the further levels of correlation that indivisibly link architecture, landscape, urban context and natural environment, in the name of that dimension of spatial continuum which quintessentially informs Boyd's theoretical approach and the related design outcomes.

Furthermore, the projects here are represented for the first time in a comprehensive way, through the extensive and diverse types of drawings described above as means to document not only the original conditions of the architectural and landscape solutions but also their various degrees of relationship with their surrounding context. This level of comprehensiveness is not present in the archived documents – although comprehensive in regard to the architectural and technological solutions of the building/s, the original drawings very rarely engage with the documentation of the surrounding open spaces. Also, Boyd's projects have never been publicly showed with this level of comprehensiveness – as already stated in previous passages of this thesis, his work has been so far consistently published in bits and pieces and generally through scattered papers and articles, at the most summarized in chronological lists, but never really described and illustrated through more comprehensive types of analysis and investigation.

The comprehensiveness that informs the re-documentation of the 36 projects included in this section is the outcome of a process that was considered essential in order to test the designed work of this architect – in particular the ones included here as representative of Boyd's overall work – against the theoretical framework of this thesis. Through the level of comprehensiveness that guides the investigative process, these projects could be understood – indeed 'comprehended' – and arguably discussed as informed by the state of spatial 'con-fusion' that is more articulately described in the following passages of this introduction. In its turn this process of comprehensive redrawing became an important research tool that helped to develop and find further implications of the initial theoretical assumptions.

Projects of 'con-fused' spaces, for an inexplicable state of oneness

All projects, documented through site plans, plans and sections that are consistently comprised of built components (the building/s) and

- 6 Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space' (original ed., *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969) in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 123
- 7 The character of Boyd's grids and modular systems is strongly in empathy with the sense of irrationality that according to architectural historian and theoretician Robin Evans informs the theoretical research of Enlightenment architect and teacher Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand (1760-1834), in particular the speculative projects and architectural schemes published in his treatise *Précis des leçons d'architecture* (1819) which are constantly discussed, in a rather simplistic way, as outcomes of a rational/scientific/mathematical approach; as observed by Evans, "Durand's grids and his orthographic projections have exactly the opposite tendency to those of the École Polytechnique mathematicians... Nothing could be less mathematical in spirit... If Durand's methods are to be described as scientific, rational, mathematical, geometrical, or even methodical, we should recognize that they are degenerately so. And if we are prone to see in these methods a devaluation of art, we ought to acknowledge that they are also a devaluation of science and mathematics". Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 2000 (original ed., 1995), p. 327
- 8 In regard to the association between the terms and related meanings of 'logos' and 'interrelation/relationship' between entities, Massimo Cacciari observes that "Logos implica il rapporto, la relazione: tra soggetto e oggetto, tra uno e molti. Implica perciò un calcolo. Esclude ogni immediatezza rivelativa". "Logos implies a connection, a relationship: between subject and object, between one and many. It therefore implies a calculation. It excludes any revelatory immediacy". Massimo Cacciari, *L'Arcipelago*, Adelphi, Milano, 1997, p. 18 (my translation), already quoted in note no. 13 of the main essay in the previous section of the thesis
- 9 Consistently discussed in this thesis as closely in tune with Heidegger's philosophical positions, Boyd's projects are here also proposed as inclined to sense that "the inexplicable and unfathomable character of the world's worlding lies in this, that causes and grounds remain unsuitable for the world's worlding. As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world's nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simplicity of the simple onefold of worlding". Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 180; this text is already quoted, in a more extensive way, as related to note no. 275 of the main essay in the previous section of the thesis
- 10 Robin Boyd, *Design in Australia with Robin Boyd*, television program, ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), 1964

their surrounding open spaces (in the form of either designed or existing natural landscapes), disclose the irreconcilability of their two different coexisting states: while on the one hand they are legible as rational representations of parts which are accorded in relation to each other and to the whole in a logical way, at the same time they also appear as illogical/irrational 'con-fusions' of parts, wondering on an inexplicable and unmeasurable sense of spatial oneness. This sense of 'con-fusion', in empathy with Heidegger's call for "the belonging together of things",⁶ informs the projects in many ways and through various design solutions: from their deferring to indeterminable dimensions through the means of relentless and potentially infinite modular grids,⁷ to states of continuity of space released by tenuous and impalpable partitions, to conditions of indivisibility – visual and physical – between indoor and outdoor spaces, to a consistent level of integration – an inextricable interconnection – between landscape and architectural elements, to the sense of flexibility and interchangeability of use that inform many of the projects' areas, to the pervasive degree of ambiguity that in projects for exhibition installations weakens the conventional forms of dualism between 'contents' and 'containers'.

Although consisting of elements that are rationally perceivable as individual objective entities 'logically interrelated'⁸ between each other, at the same time these projects essentially call for, and participate in, an indivisible dimension of spatial continuum. Consistently inclined to integration between architecture and landscape, as well as drawn beyond their architectural boundaries by their urban and territorial breadth, they intuitively reflect on, rather than rationally explain,⁹ the sense of spatial and conceptual 'con-fusion' that essentially, inexplicably, informs the dimension of spatial continuity between 'built volumes' and 'unbuilt voids', 'architectural objects' and 'empty spaces', 'inside' and 'outside', 'foreground' and 'background', 'here' and 'there', 'up' and 'down', and all other forms of spatial duality which are conceived as such merely in rational terms.

Not surprisingly Boyd discusses the condition of indivisibility between architectural interiors and exteriors through a comparison with the sense of inseparability that characterizes the inside and outside of a tumbler,¹⁰ the same object that is symptomatically mentioned by Heidegger to speculate on the inexplicable – physically indeterminable – dimension of spatial continuity between entities:

"To empty a glass means: To gather the glass, as that which can contain something, into its having been freed."¹¹

The indivisible oneness – 'con-fusion' indeed – between the 'empty interiority' and the 'volumetric exteriority' of the glass discloses the sense of illusoriness – an illusory sense of certainty – that is sought by our rational propensity to determine terms and concepts such as 'volume' and 'embodied truth'. As observed by Heidegger,

"What is named by the word 'volume', the meaning of which is only as old as modern technological natural science, would have to lose its name...And what would become of the emptiness of space? Often enough it appears to be a deficiency. Emptiness is held then to be a failure to fill up a cavity or gap. Yet presumably the emptiness is closely allied to the special character of place, and therefore no failure, but a bringing-forth. Again, language can give us a hint. In the verb 'to empty' (*leeren*) the word 'collecting' (*Lesen*), taken in

- 11 Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space', in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, op. cit., p. 124
- 12 Ibid., pp. 123, 124
- 13 The term 'feature', instead than, say, 'symbol' or 'form', is here deliberately used as reminiscent of Boyd's consistent critique of 'featurism' in architecture; a specific discussion of this topic is found in his book *The Australian Ugliness*, F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1960
- 14 In Boyd's words, "numbers of architects anthropomorphize buildings outrageously, virtually applying a human morality to the bricks, steel and concrete. In more sentimental days a century ago, they spoke of buildings as an extension of God's work, a continuation of the life force flowing out through the mason's hand into the building stone". Robin Boyd, *Artificial Australia, The Boyer Lectures 1967*, op. cit., p. 19
- 15 In Heidegger's words, "modern representing... means to bring what is present at hand...before oneself as something standing over against, to relate it to oneself, to the one representing it, and to force it back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm. Wherever this happens, man 'gets into the picture' in precedence over whatever is...What is decisive is that man himself expressly takes up this position as one constituted by himself, that he intentionally maintains it as that taken up by himself, and that he makes it secure as the solid footing for a possible development of humanity...The interweaving of these two events, which for the modern age is decisive – that the world is transformed into picture and man into *subiectum* – throws light at the same time on the grounding event of modern history, an event that at first glance seems almost absurd. Namely, the more extensively and the more effectually the world stands at man's disposal as conquered, and the more objectively the object appears, all the more subjectively, i.e., the more importunately, does the *subiectum* rise up, and all the more impetuously, too, do observation of and teaching about the world change into a doctrine of man, into anthropology. It is no wonder that humanism first arises where the world becomes picture...Humanism, therefore, in the more strict historiographical sense, is nothing but a moral-aesthetic anthropology. The name 'anthropology' as used here does not mean just some investigation of man by a natural science...It designates that philosophical interpretation of man which explains and evaluates whatever is, in its entirety, from the standpoint of man and in relation to man". Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977, pp. 131, 132, 133; more passages from the same pages of this essay by Heidegger are also quoted in note no. 252 of the main essay in the previous section of the thesis
- 16 Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, op. cit., p. 180

the original sense of the gathering which reigns in place, is spoken. To empty a glass means: To gather the glass, as that which can contain something, into its having been freed. To empty the collected fruit in a basket means: To prepare for them this place. Emptiness is not nothing. It is also no deficiency. In sculptural embodiment, emptiness plays in the manner of a seeking-projecting instituting of places...Sculpture: the embodiment of the truth of Being in its work of instituting places. Even a cautious insight into the special character of this art causes one to suspect that truth, as unconcealment of Being, is not necessarily dependent on embodiment."¹²

Boyd's projects are Heideggerianly released towards solutions that are not necessarily visually graspable, nor physically tangible. They are involved with the speculation of spatial – rather than exclusively formal – outcomes, thus disposed to wonder on the unmeasurable state of spatial continuity, opening questions rather than offering answers, suggesting by hints rather than asserting through recognizable 'features'.¹³

One more degree of affinity between the Melbourne architect and the German philosopher is detectable in the criticism that is similarly expressed by both, although from different perspectives, towards the process of representation that throughout the culture of modernity has increasingly developed as a way to objectivise forms or ideas that are constantly related to, and therefore comprehended by, our human subjectivity. In parallel and analogously with Boyd's condemnation of anthropomorphism as a means to produce architectures that reassure us because recognizable through their "human morality",¹⁴ Heidegger highlights the sense of illusory consolation that is implied in the modern propensity to picture/determine the world as an object that is unavoidably framed as such by our prearranged dimension of subjectivity.¹⁵

Although rationally readable as interrelationships between parts, volumes, interiors and exteriors areas, Boyd's projects never intend to be individual objects in the landscape. They resist the simplistic process that in search of reassuring levels of recognizability – a recognizability that is always and exclusively determined as related to our human characters and dimensions – literally translates predetermined ideas into metaphoric representations, or anthropomorphized forms. Although unavoidably counteracted by the sense of objectivity that is instigated by our rational predisposition to determine objects always related to us as subjects, these projects are also at the same time released to the inexplicable oneness of the world, to incalculable dimensions of spatial continuum, to the ungraspable "world's worlding".¹⁶

The abstraction and somehow indeterminateness of these drawings, the lack of frames around them, the reticence of their graphic expression and the use of a consistent and hardly differentiated line weight to reveal the sense of 'con-fusion' between different parts, between interiors and exteriors, between landscape and architectural spaces, between different and yet similar areas for inhabitation, is arguably an appropriate way to intimately grasp the approach that guides Boyd throughout his theoretical research and architectural practice. The conditions of these projects – their spatial continuity and

state of co-belongingness throughout their architectural, landscape and infrastructural parts, the mutual integration of their different and yet interrelated functional areas, the sense of non-hierarchy that characterises the spatial indistinctness between their parts – are evoked by drawings which are unassertive in character, 'weak' and 'hesitant' in graphic expression, open to spatial 'con-fusion', released towards an ungraspable sense of spatial oneness.

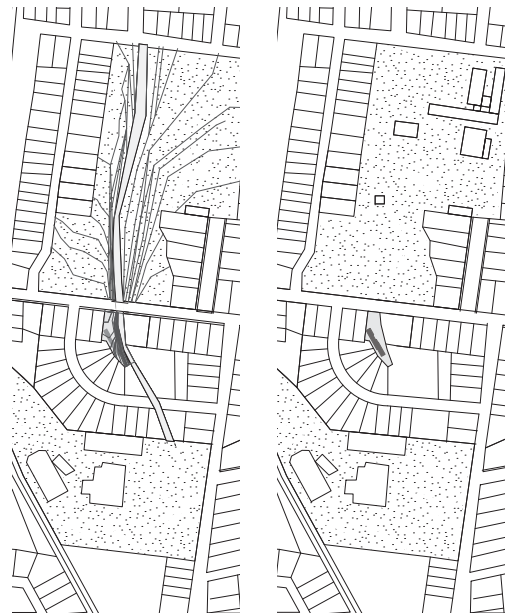
Projects

Boyd House 1 1947	87
King House 1951 – 1952	99
Gillison House 1952	111
Manning Clark House 1952	123
Finlay House 1952 – 1953	135
Wood House + Shop 1952 – 1954	147
Fenner House 1953 – 1954	159
Bridgefords House 1954	171
Richardson House 1954	183
Holford House 1956	195
Haughton James House 1956	207
Southgate Fountain 1957 – 1960	219
Boyd House 2 1958	231
Lloyd House 1959	243
Clemson House 1959 – 1960	255
Domain Park Flats 1960 – 1962	267
Handfield House 1960	279
Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar 1961 – 1963	291
Tower Hill Natural History Centre 1961 – 1970	303
Wright House 1962	315
John Batman Motor Inn 1962	327
Arnold House 1963 – 1964	339
Baker House 1964 – 1966 + Baker 'Dower' House 1966 – 1968	351
McCaughy Court 1965 – 1968	369
Menzies College 1965 – 1970	381
Australian Pavilion at Montreal Expo '67 1966 – 1967	393
Lawrence House + Flats 1966 – 1968	405
Farfor Holiday Houses 1966 – 1968	417
Milne House 1966 – 1970	429
McClune House 1967 – 1968	443
Featherston House 1967 – 1969	455
'The First 200 Years' Exhibition 1968	467
Carnich Towers 1969 – 1971	475
Hegarty House 1969 – 1972	483
Flinders Vaults 1971 – 1972	495

Boyd House I
1947



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria

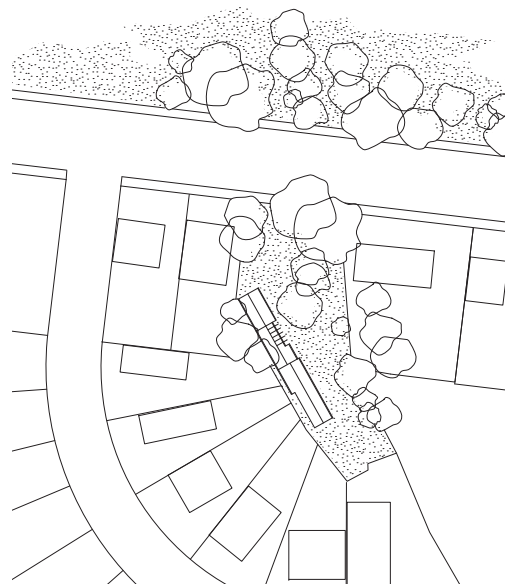


1:10 000

The first house that Boyd designed for his family is located in the suburb of Camberwell, just over 10 kilometres east from Melbourne's city, on the west side of a wedge of land that has been 'left over' from the subdivision of some larger parkland which was originally incised by a creek. As a result of this subdivision, the block of this house is confined behind the back of some adjacent blocks which converge towards it from a curving road on the south-west side. The house is 'squeezed' between the back fences of these adjacent blocks and a gully that cuts through the east boundary of the site as the remaining natural bed of the creek that used to run from the parkland on the north, across the main road. Further distanced from the west edge of the gully to elude possible structural problems related to land erosion, and complying with the municipal set-back regulations that determine the required minimal distance from the neighbouring properties, both the footprint of this house and its placement within the block are a direct response to the challenging existing conditions of the site. The outcome is a long and narrow building that is less than four metres wide along its entire length, with a "plan that is roughly the same as that of a railway train".¹

Initially designed for a family of three (Robin, his wife Patricia, and their elder daughter), the house was enlarged a few years later (1951) with the addition of some new volumes to accommodate the expansion of the family (two more children were born while Robin and his family were living here, before eventually relocating in the late 1950s to a house in the suburb of South Yarra²). The new volumes were added to both the south and north ends, and the original pergola/carport was partially enclosed and transformed into a study/hall space to link the living/dining area to both the sitting-room and guest-room with shower that are accommodated in the north rectangular volume. The east half of the original pergola/carport was retained as a veranda to screen the study's glazing and service the entry area. The new volume added to the south end extends the night-time area from two to three bedrooms – one of them is accommodated in a narrow space that is equipped with a dressing bay defined by two wardrobes at one end, and a Venetian blind at the other to provide a permeable separation from the living/dining area.

This early work clearly reveals some of the essential conditions that accompany Boyd throughout his research and design approach; for instance, a sense of potentiality and flexibility goes hand in hand with the dimensions of indefiniteness, permeability and indivisibility that tend to 'con-fuse' all its various moments into a continuum.³ The ungraspable notion of spatial continuity investigated in Boyd's entire work is anticipated here in many interesting ways: from a number of undescriptive rooms able to provide variable types of occupations (the study/hall, the loft-like space including sitting room and guest area, the bedroom next to the living room transformable into an additional day-time area when "by day the bed slides under the cupboard division to the dressing bay"⁴), to the many impalpable separations by means of furniture elements rather than partition walls or doors (the see-through shelving to mediate the two different levels of the entry and the lower living room, the two wardrobes to delimit the dressing room, the cupboard between the sitting room and the guest area in the north volume and the suspended fireplace that



1:2000

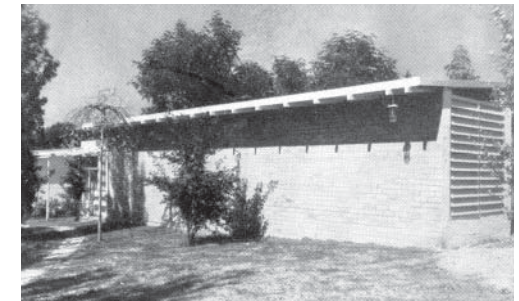
freely floats in this same space, the curtain between the sitting room and the hall/study), to the lack of 'servicing' areas (all linking corridor areas are also spaces for domestic occupation, and symptomatically the circulation between the kitchen, laundry and bathroom does not have an end point, but rather traces a continuous loop between these areas and the adjacent flexible bedroom).

The informality of this house is indicative of Boyd's resistance to the notions of 'creation', 'invention' and 'innovation' that are promoted through the sense of predetermination of mainstream modernist approaches. The informality of the flexible and rather undetermined spaces, which spatially leak into each other, released from any sense of compositional hierarchy, is mirrored by the informality of the footprint and look of the building, both generated – rather than 'created' – by merely responding to the existing site conditions. The inclination of the bedrooms' windows, far from being a gratuitous invention, is the means of a more intimate correlation with the existing vegetated gully that lies below; it projects the building towards the natural environment of its site, seeking an ungraspable and yet essential state of indissoluble co-belongingness between architecture and landscape.

Sadly the house is now in poor condition (not documented here) following the demolition of many of its interiors and some major transformations, including the construction of a bulky two storey building that has been added to the south end, inappropriately unsympathetic to the site characters and the existing house.



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954

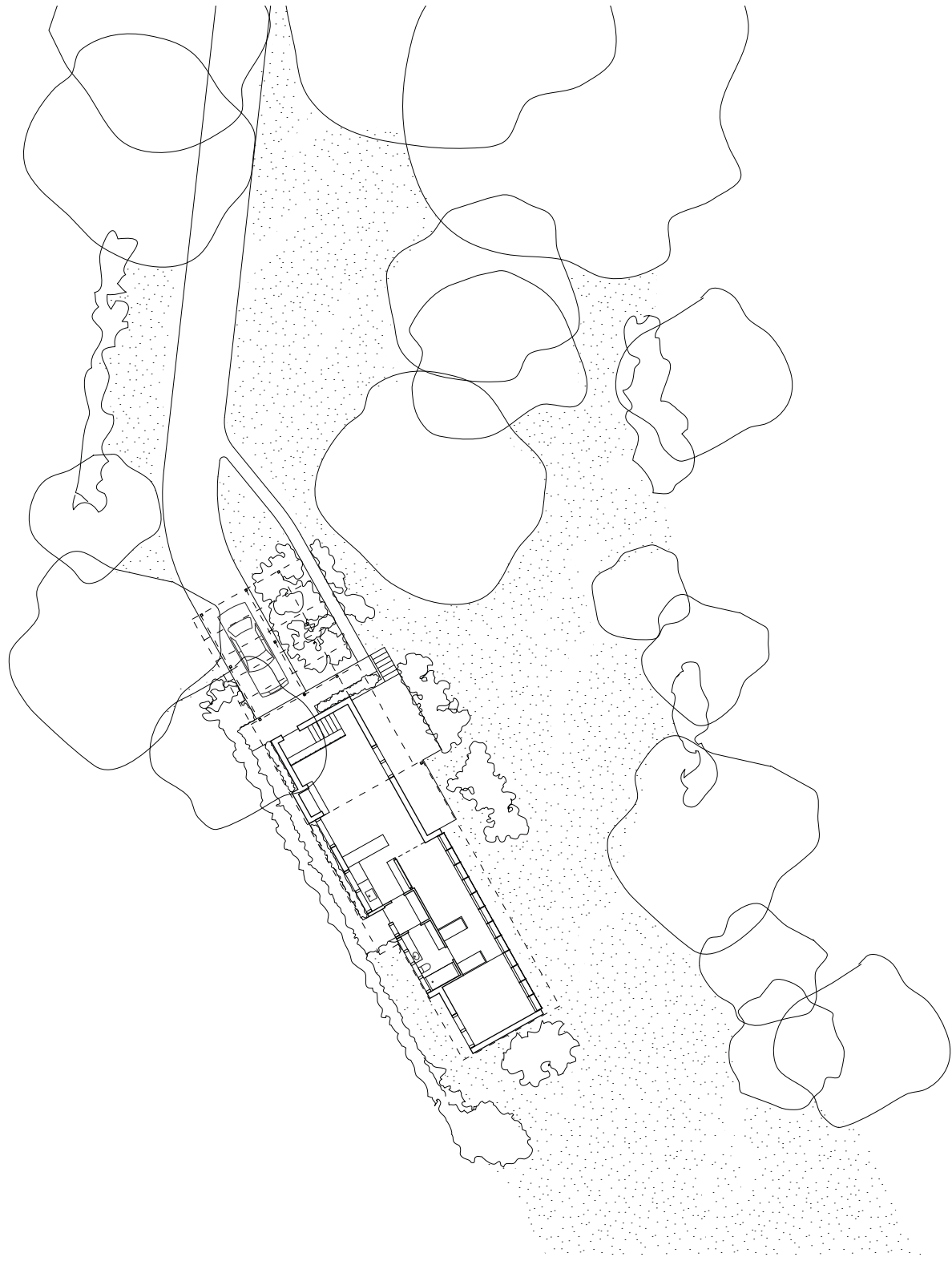


Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Mark Strizic

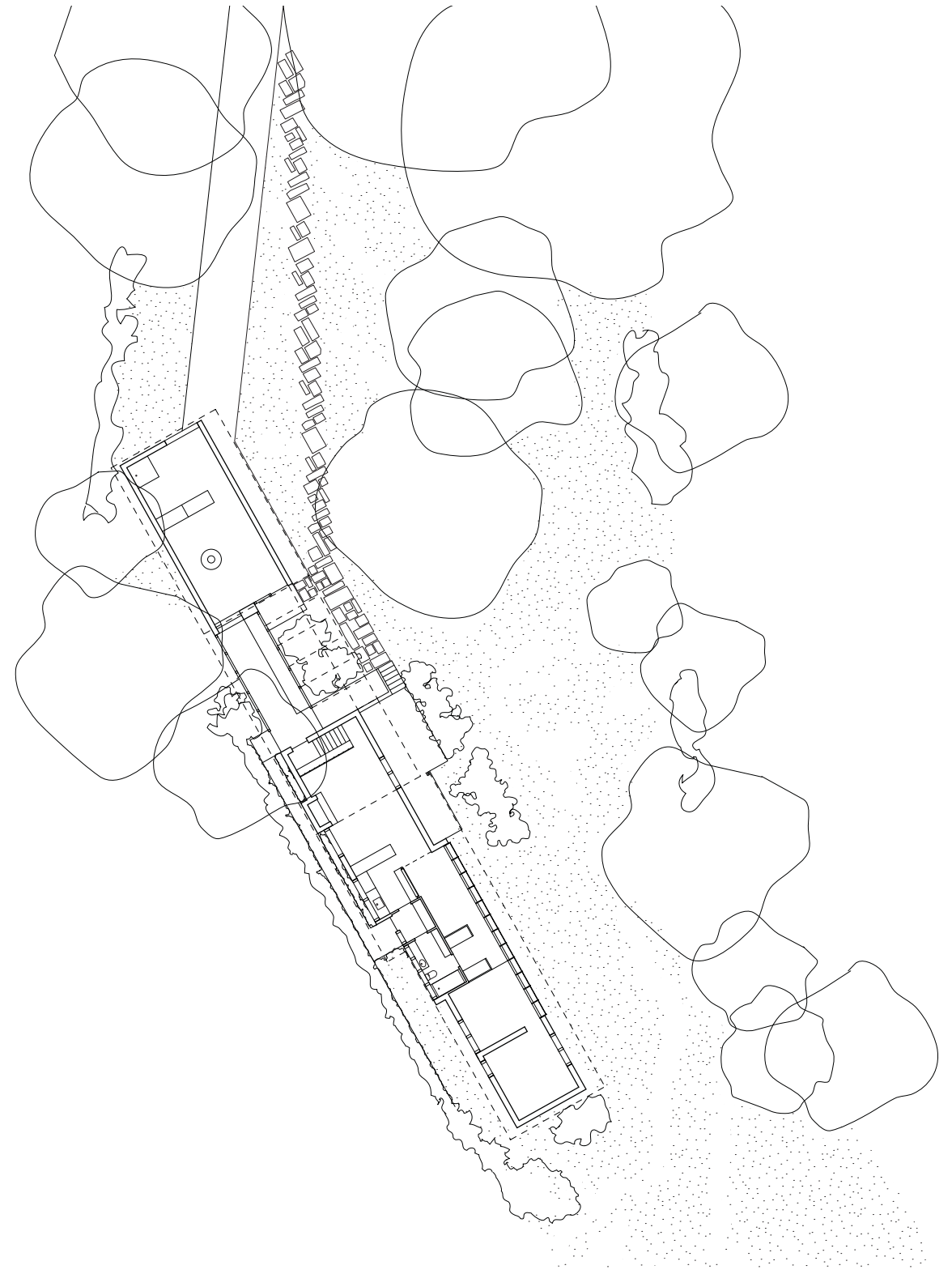
1 'House at Camberwell', *Architecture and Arts*, no. 13, August 1954, p. 29
 2 See Boyd House 2 in this thesis, pp. 231-241
 3 These and other conditions are fully discussed throughout this thesis
 4 'House near Melbourne', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 108, no. 647, November 1950, p. 316



1947

1:300

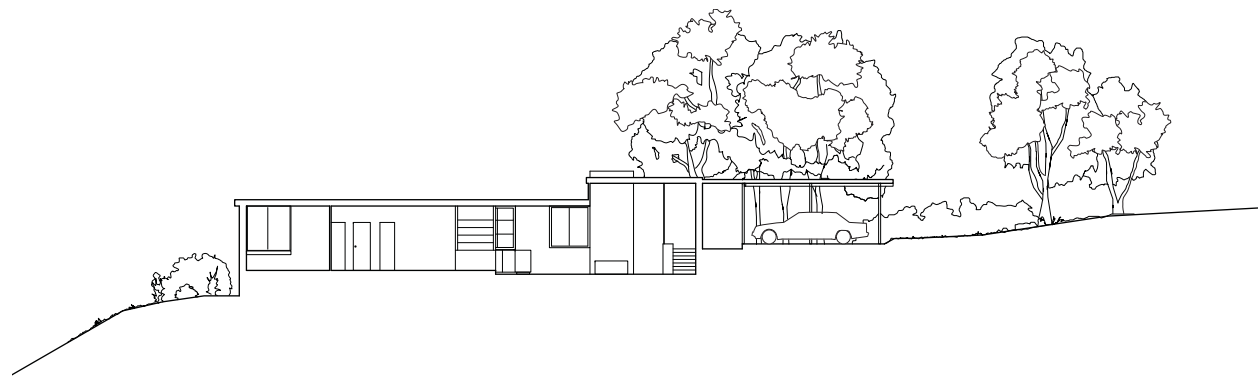
90



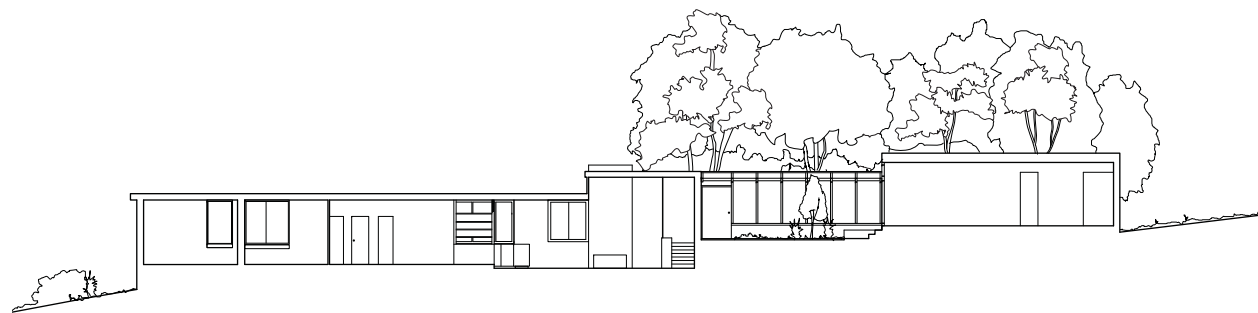
1951

1:300

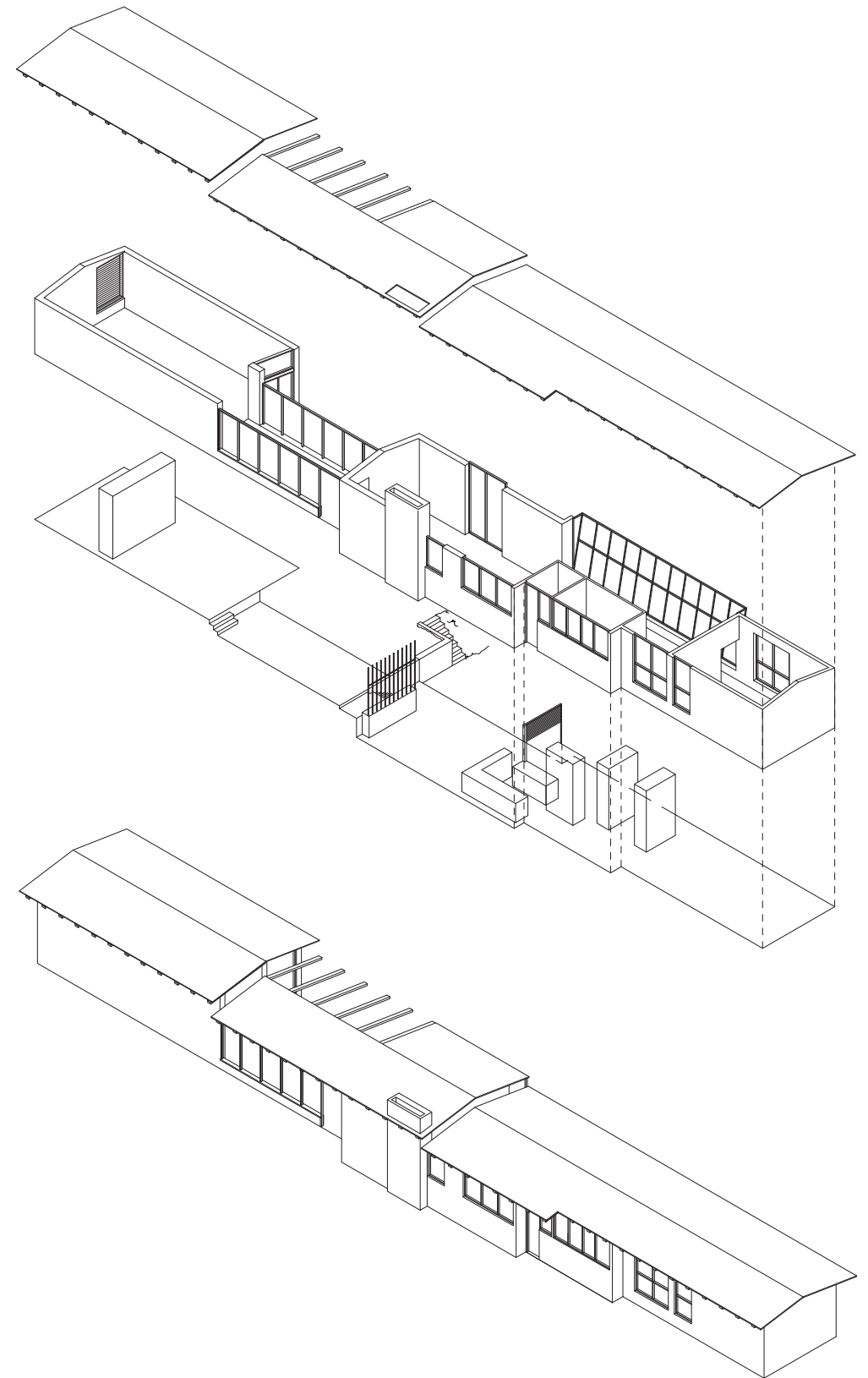
91

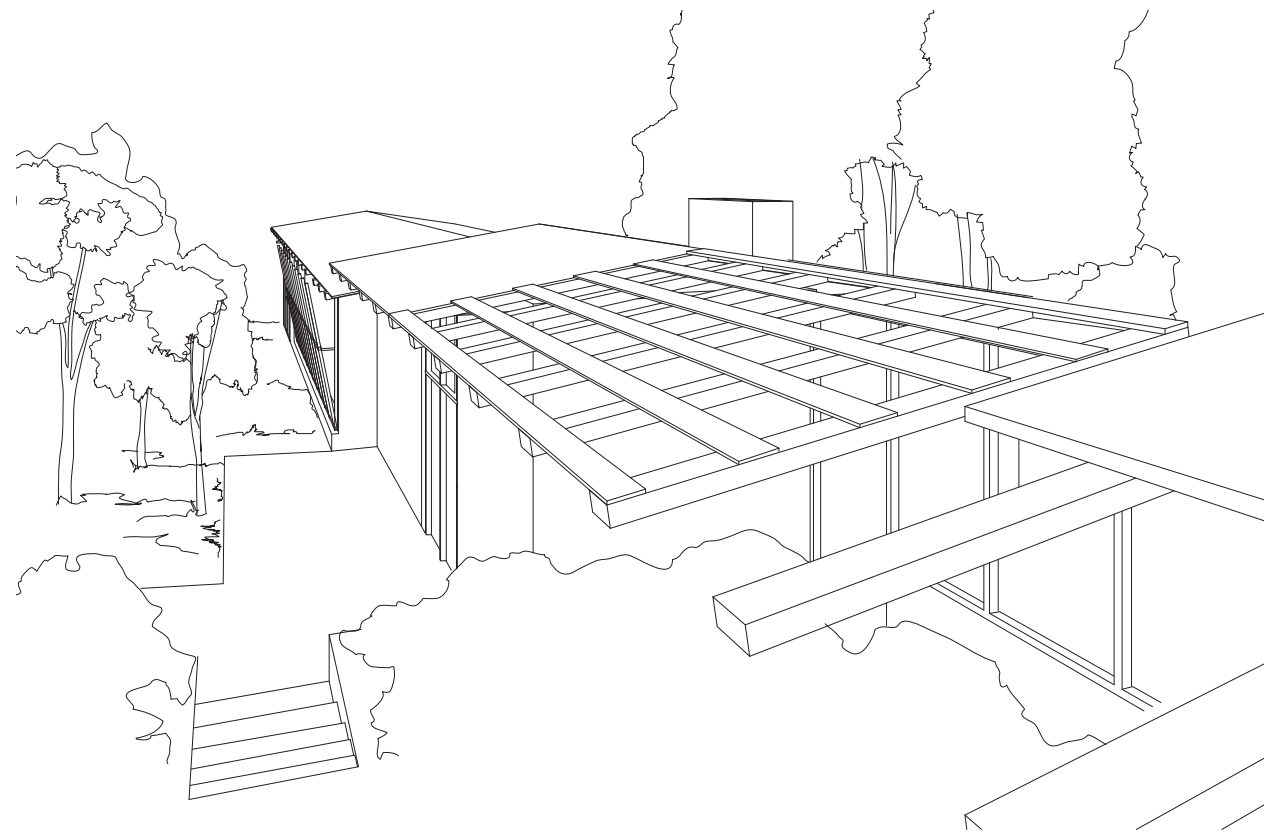
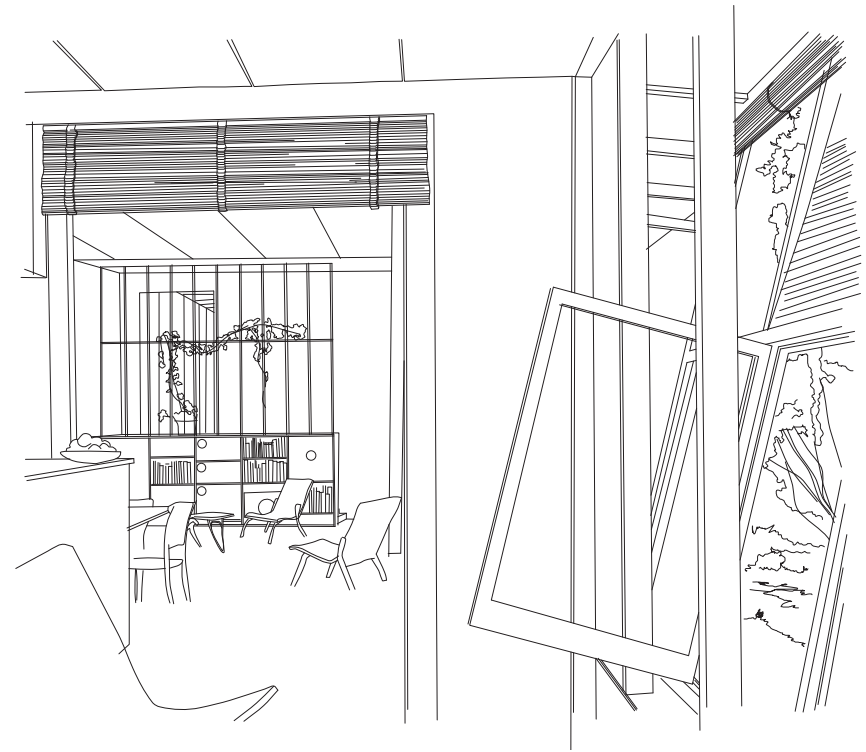
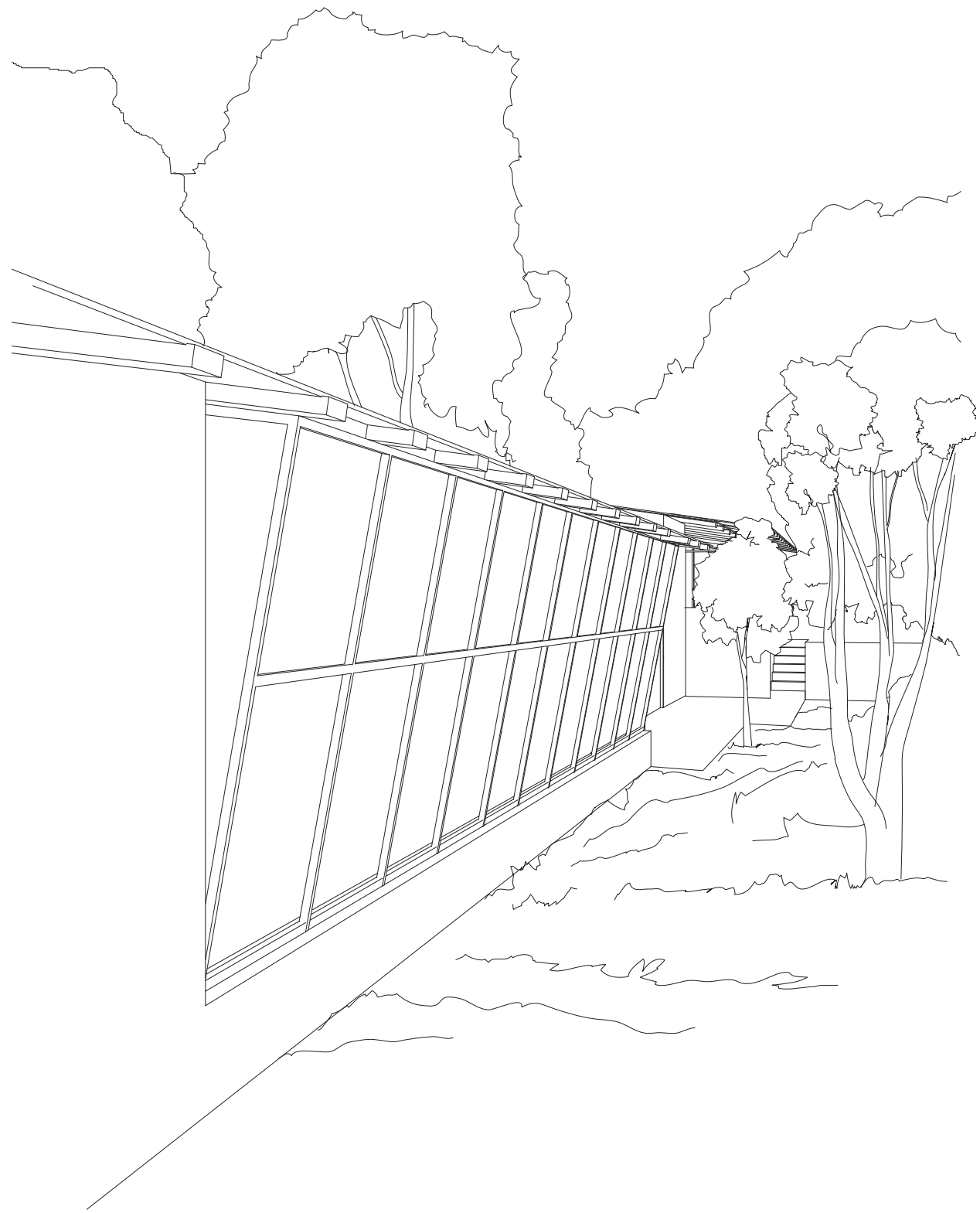


1:300



1:300







Mark Strizic



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



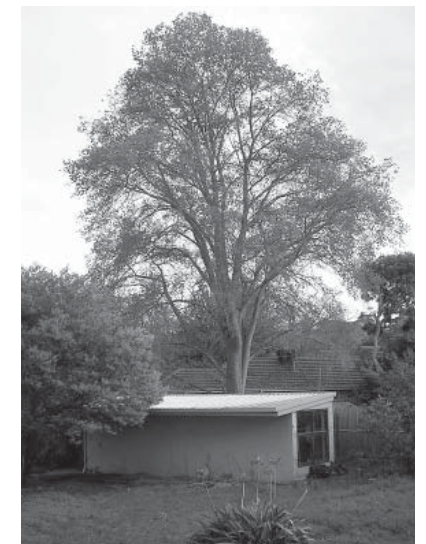
The Architectural Review, Vol. 108, no. 647, November 1950



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Mauro Baracco

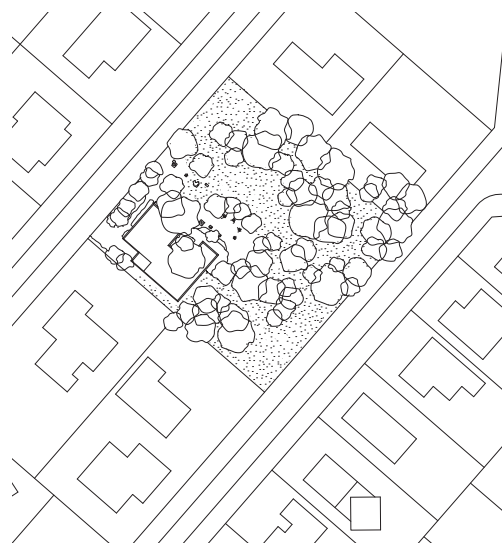
King House
1951 – 1952



Giulio Lazzaro



1:10 000



1:2000

Located in the Melbourne outer suburb of Warrandyte, approximately 25 kilometres from the city, this house is placed on a four block property that slopes down a hill along the south-west/north-east axis. The decision to site the building in a corner – the west quadrant on the top of the slope and adjacent to the street – not only reflects the desire to keep the rest of the property available for possible future subdivisions – subdivisions that never took place, enabling the vacant blocks to become densely vegetated throughout the years – but also responds to the presence of a group of existing established trees in that part of the block by integrating them with the architecture as canopies to shade some of the house's openings and the outdoor relational courtyard space that is comprised between the two sides of the U-shaped plan.

This project is the result of a close collaboration between the architect and the two artists – sculptor Inge and husband printmaker Grahame King – who have been living and working in this house since the early 1950s,¹ themselves managing the construction in different stages,² often changing the functions that were originally assigned to the domestic spaces by Boyd's project, and continuously enriching the house through their occupation, filling it with things and artworks. It is symptomatic that the Kings briefly considered commissioning Harry Seidler to design the house, but instead opted for Boyd, convinced that he would be the best architect to provide a project that could flexibly absorb change and variations, differently from the highly controlled solutions that would have probably been produced by the mainstream modernist approach of the Sydney based architect.³ This house – a one-room volume expandable over time – perfectly reflects Boyd's ability to produce spaces in a state of potential, generated from a design approach that could be described, in words applied by the Smithsons to their work, as inclined to pay "a lot of attention to offering places which would then be used by the occupier in a different way".⁴

Indebted to some of Boyd's early influences from Japan, this project also reveals indirect but strong affinities with the house that American designers Ray and Charles Eames conceived for themselves in Santa Monica, Los Angeles. For instance, the flat and light presence of the window framing all over the façade, the separation between the house and the studio spaces by means of an outdoor court that is similar in shape and scale to the indoor rooms, and a reciprocal inseparable relationship between the built volumes and the site's natural environment, are all characteristic of both the Melbourne and Santa Monica houses. Furthermore, the dissemination of "pretty things" throughout the indoor and outdoor worlds of the King House, including objects collected throughout the years and many of both Inge's and Grahame's artworks, draws a close association with the sense of richness of the Californian reference.⁵

The originally built wing is a continuous space that includes the entry between a study and an open kitchen area, dining and living spaces, a long and narrow bedroom behind a low partition, a bathroom, toilet and laundry. The volumes that have been successively added accommodate two studios facing the outdoor court – the smaller for Inge; the larger, at the south-east end, for Grahame – with an additional toilet, a music/guest

room and a storage space at the back. One room beneath the house (Inge's workshop), dug out of the subfloor space by the two artists while living there, closely embraces the existing hilly site by carving it into a cave-like interior; the living-room that sits immediately above on a raised floor, revealed in the change of level that informs the fenestration of the north-east façade, projects the occupants even more decidedly from its lifted floor into the canopies of the trees in the garden, diminishing the boundaries between outside and inside. The garden, inhabited by the sculptures as an extension 'in the bush' of the various studio spaces, is similarly paradigmatic of the sense of non-hierarchy and continuity between the interior and exterior – built and natural – worlds of this house. Symptomatically, the court, an 'outdoor room' of the house that also links to Grahame's studio through the open, is an 'emptiness that brings forth and gathers' the things of this place – nature and architecture, outside and inside, sculptures and trees – 'in their belonging together'.⁶

- 1 Grahame King, born in 1915, died on the 11th October 2008; Inge King still lives in this house
- 2 North-west wing, 1950-1952; outdoor court, related back room and adjacent south-west pergolas, 1955-1956; south-east wing and infilling of south-west pergola at the back into a room, 1960-1962. See diagrams of construction stages, chronologically ordered from top to bottom, p. 104 (these diagrams are oriented with the south side on top)
- 3 From a conversation between Inge and Grahame King and Giulio Lazzaro (research assistant involved in the production of this thesis), King House, April 2005
- 4 Further on, in the same interview, Peter Smithson says: "we tried...to give the arts of occupation a place. In America occupation is organised by the architects: Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, for instance, do everything. They even choose the pictures! I think that is wrong, that this should be the role of the occupier. The architect should stop at a point, but make an offering which makes occupation possible". Fouad Samara, 'An interview with Peter Smithson' (23 June 1994), in Helena Webster (ed.), *Modernism Without Rhetoric: Essays on the work of Alison and Peter Smithson*, Academy Editions, London, 1997, p. 174. Strong analogies between Boyd's and the Smithsons' propensity to design spaces capable of absorbing change and modification are recurrently discussed in this thesis; the King House, similar in its sense of open-endedness to the work of the Smithsons, is considerably different from the outcomes of a typical American modernist approach, indeed paradigmatic of firms such as Skidmore, Owings and Merrill and Harry Seidler (who studied and worked in the United States before moving to Sydney) among many others
- 5 As stated by the Smithsons, "it is not surprising that it is the Eames who have made it respectable to like pretty things. This seems extraordinary, but in our old world pretty things are usually equated with social irresponsibility". Alison and Peter Smithsons, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, Artemis, London, 1994, p. 74. Among the extensive bibliography regarding the Eames House and the work of the Eames, see John Neuhart, Marilyn Neuhart, Ray Eames, *Eames design*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1989, in which the house of this couple of American designers is described in this way: "Despite its sparseness and economy, it provides a subtle richness of pattern, color, and texture, and a sense of unity of nature which have successfully withstood the test of the time." (p. 112)
- 6 As observed by Heidegger, "Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things in their belonging together...emptiness is closely allied to the special character of place, and therefore no failure, but a bringing-forth". Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space', (original ed., *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969) in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 123



Giulio Lazzaro



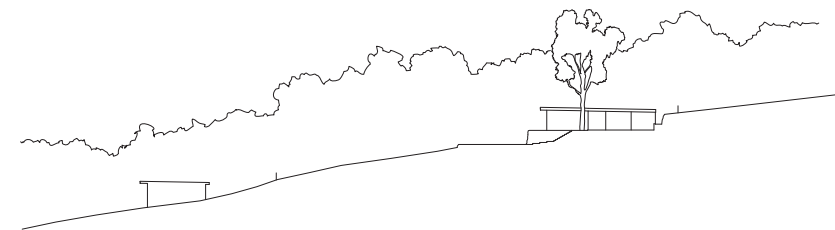
Giulio Lazzaro



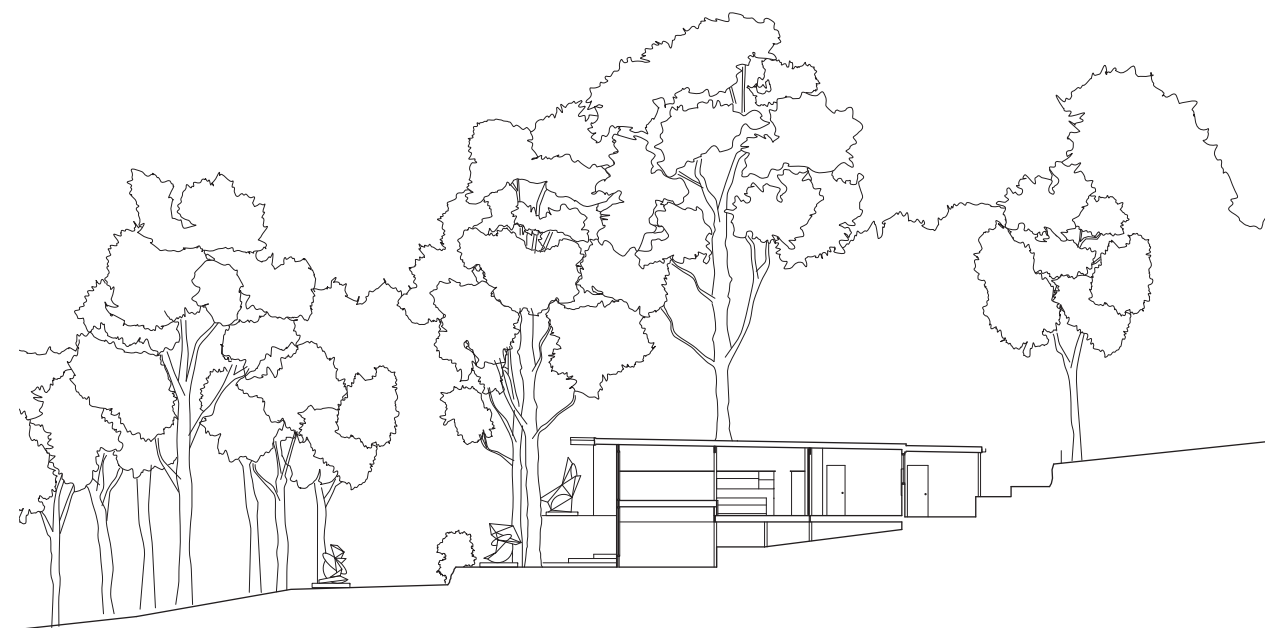
Giulio Lazzaro



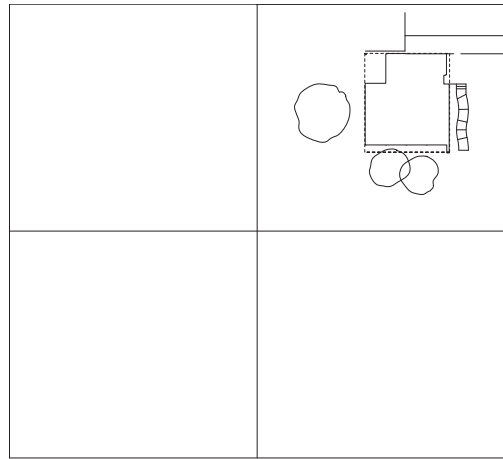
1:300



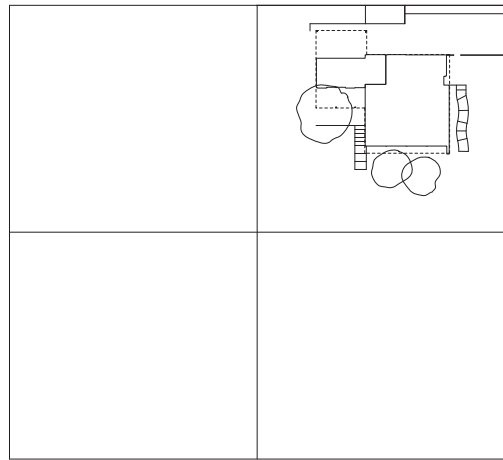
1:1000



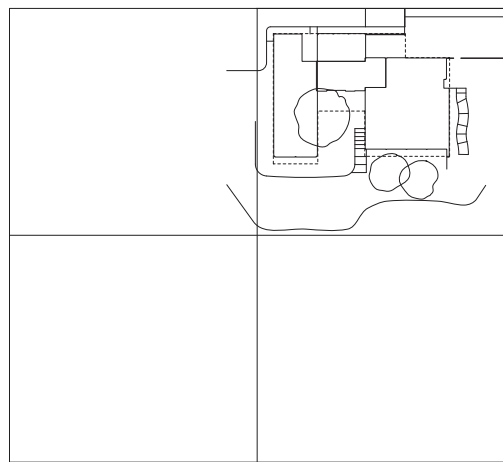
1:300



1950-51

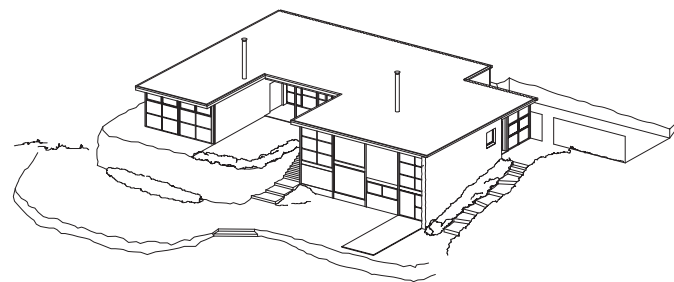
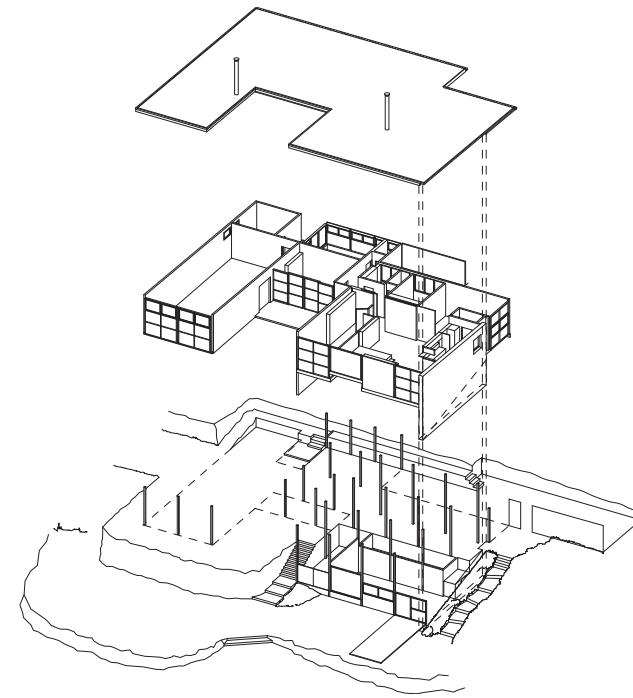
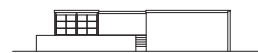


1955-56

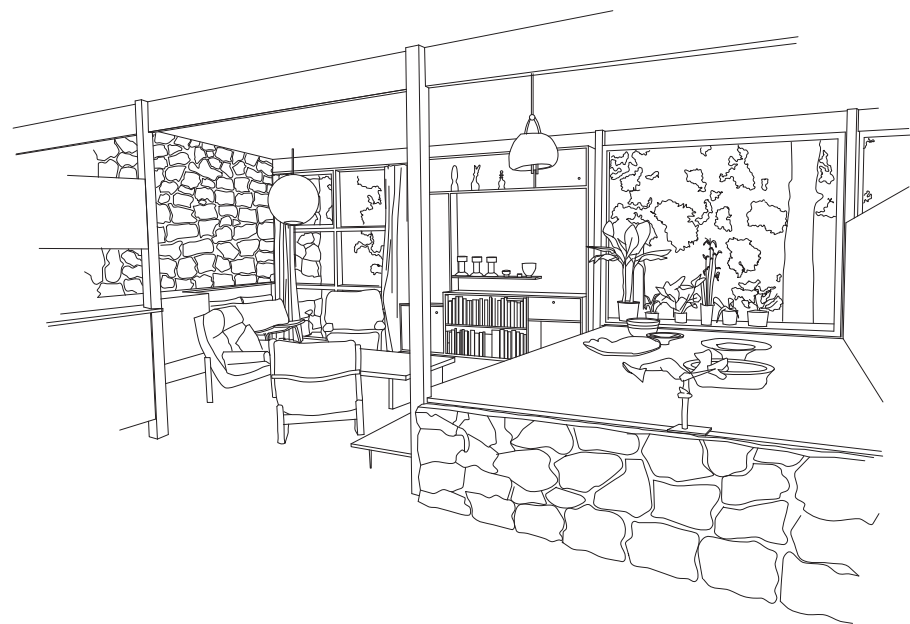
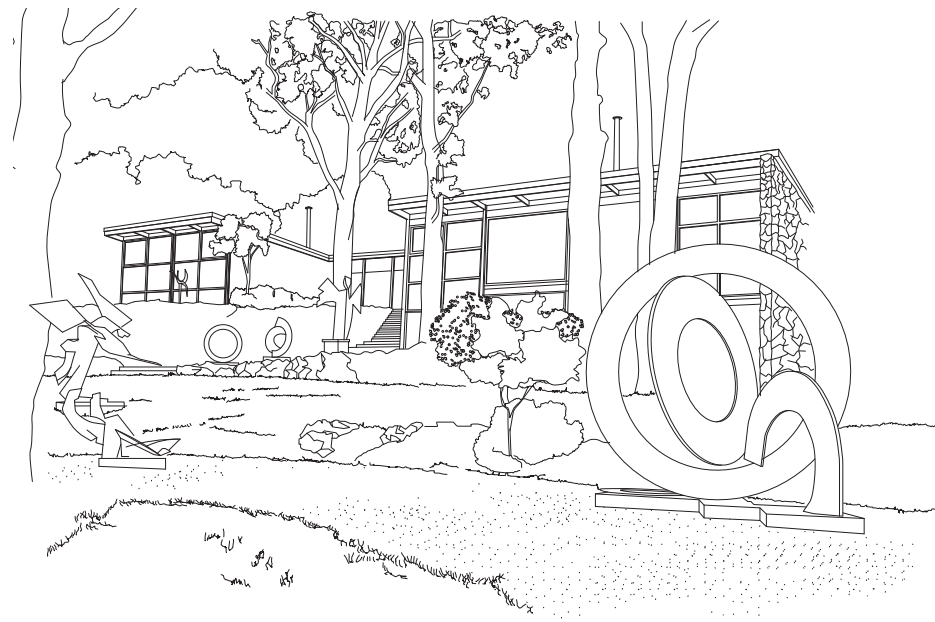


1960-62

104



105





Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro



Giulio Lazzaro

Gillison House
1952



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

This house, originally designed for Australian journalist and writer Douglas Gillison and his family, was considered big for its time. It is located in the Melbourne suburb of Balwyn, approximately 12 kilometres east of the city. It is placed within a corner block, detached from the streets along its north and east sides by a garden with trees, shrubs and low plantings. The trees, high and dense, provide the house with shade and protect it from the street. A physical fence has never been built; the trees are effectively a thick natural band that marks the edge between the garden and the footpath in a more informal – less constructed – way, relating to the public park and gardens that extend towards east from across the road. A physical fence runs parallel to the back façade along the south boundary, separating the house from the neighbours' block. On the west side, at the point where the road starts bending, a driveway to the carport on the south-west corner of the building defines the west boundary of the block.

The rectangular footprint of the house does not generate a rectangular parallelepiped volume; the two rooms located on the east half of the first floor, perceived in the building's silhouette as individual elements that arise from the horizontality of the roof, pop up and hover onto the rest of the volume. These two rooms – an additional living space upstairs for the younger members of the family, and the personal study of Douglas Gillison – are separated by a void which incises the long north façade and interrupts its continuity, making space for the entry area at the ground floor and a suspended outdoor bridge above it, which connects the purposely detached study to the rest of the house. The remaining spaces at the ground level include day-time areas in the east half and night-time rooms in the west half. The latter comprise one large and three single bedrooms, in addition to a bathroom, toilet and a corridor that links the carport to the interior spaces; the former comprise an entry hall, living room, dining area and kitchen which are all distributed around a partition wall and the staircase.

The whole façade wrapping around the house is based on square modules. Some of them are totally open and transparent, enabling a reciprocal dialogue between indoor and outdoor spaces through the glazing of floor-to-ceiling windows reinforced by diagonal framing; others, in contrast, are close and impermeable, almost blank, marked by horizontal slit windows. The north sides of the two living rooms and all bedrooms, together with the east edge of the dining area, are overtly released towards the garden, which provides a successful buffer, in scale and density of vegetation, to the surrounding streets. The short sides and back of the house, together with the study, are differently informed by a strong sense of impenetrability. Isolated and 'secluded' from the rest of the family's activities, the study is characterised by an introverted, monastic aura, allowing the view "through just one slit window at the eye level of a writer at the desk behind it".¹

The entry void cutting through the façade is a hinge; it is a connector between the outdoor and indoor spaces, but also the preparation to an area – the entry hall – that well distributes and separates the different parts of the project – night-time wing, day-time rooms, and additional spaces upstairs – without physically compartmentalizing them. The void pierced by the bridge, the



1:2000

outcome of two modules left unbuilt, is a negative space that although physically unbounded and unmeasurable, is determined by the modularity of the grid that informs this house and its façade in particular. Hugging each other with no sense of hierarchy, the built and empty modules of this house – the carport can be included in the latter category – are conventionally readable as elements of a system – individual repetitive components of a grid – and yet suggest a sense of spatial continuum that is beyond rational comprehension.

Some later modifications – the enclosing of the void and inclusion of the study within the house's volume, and the addition of a room to the back of the living space on the top floor – prevent the full enjoyment of the paradoxical explorations of spatial continuity that Boyd proposes in this and other works; however the changes do confirm the sense of potential that inherently informs this project and the flexibility of its grid.



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954

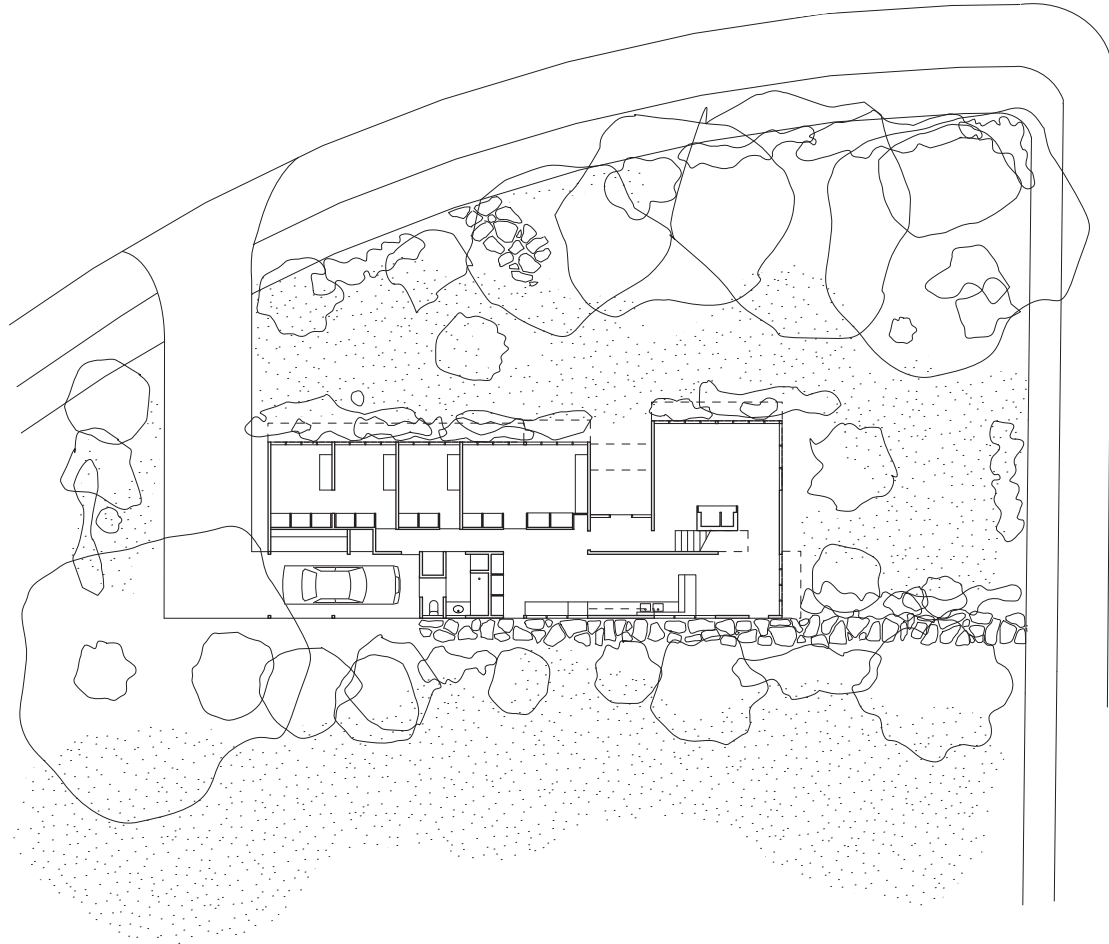
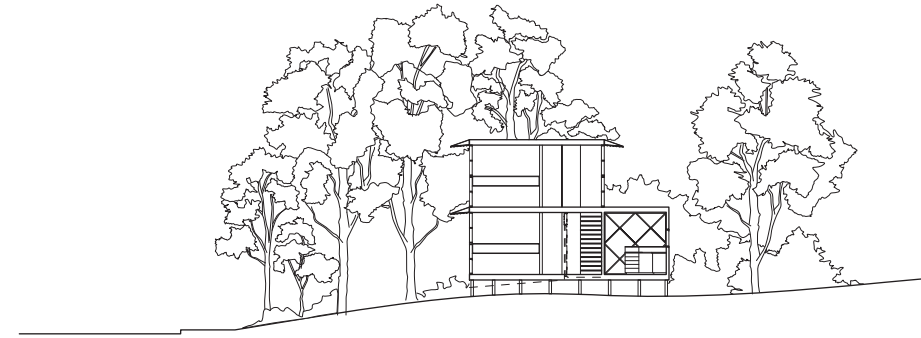
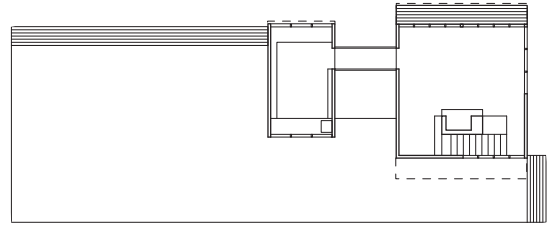


Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 24

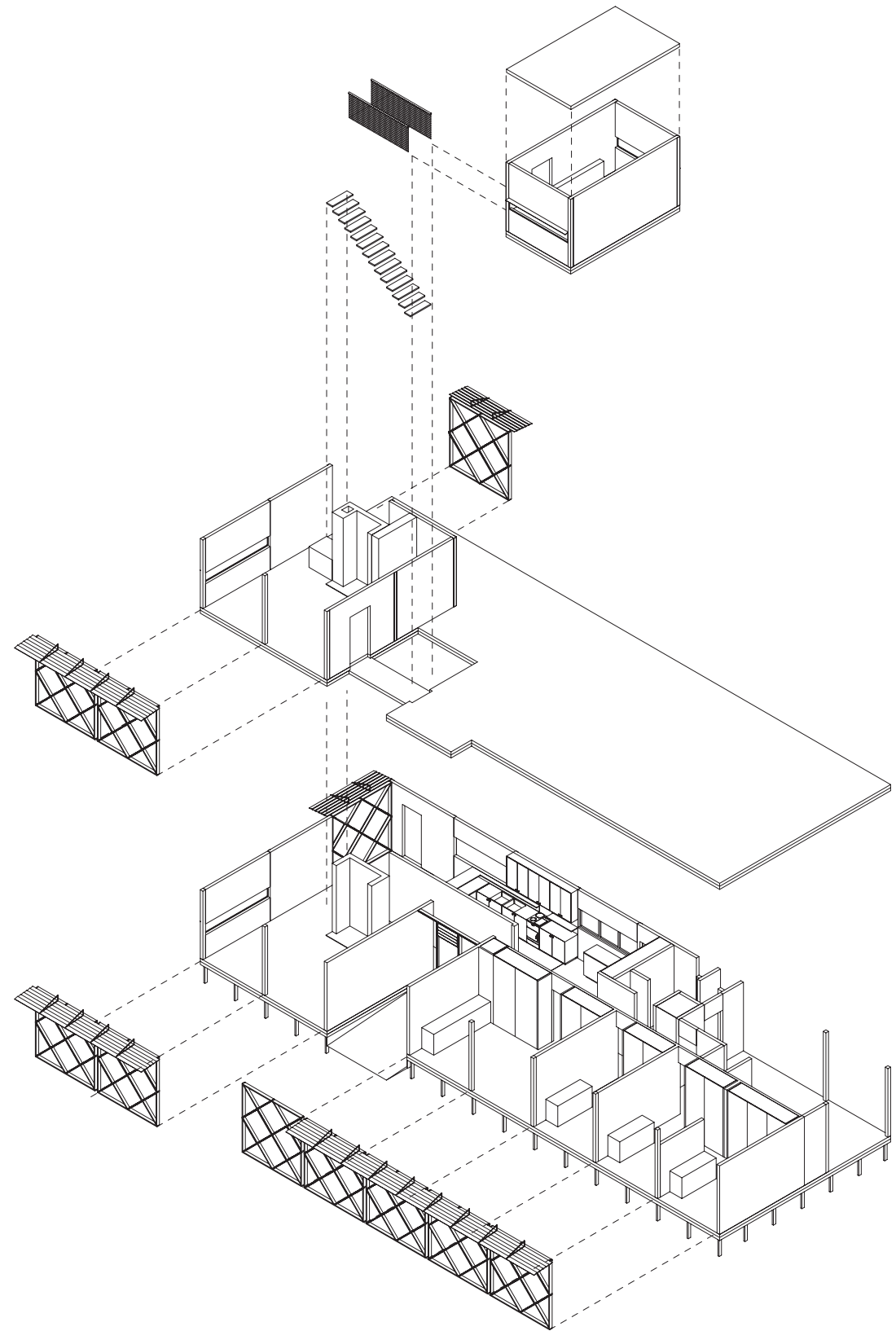
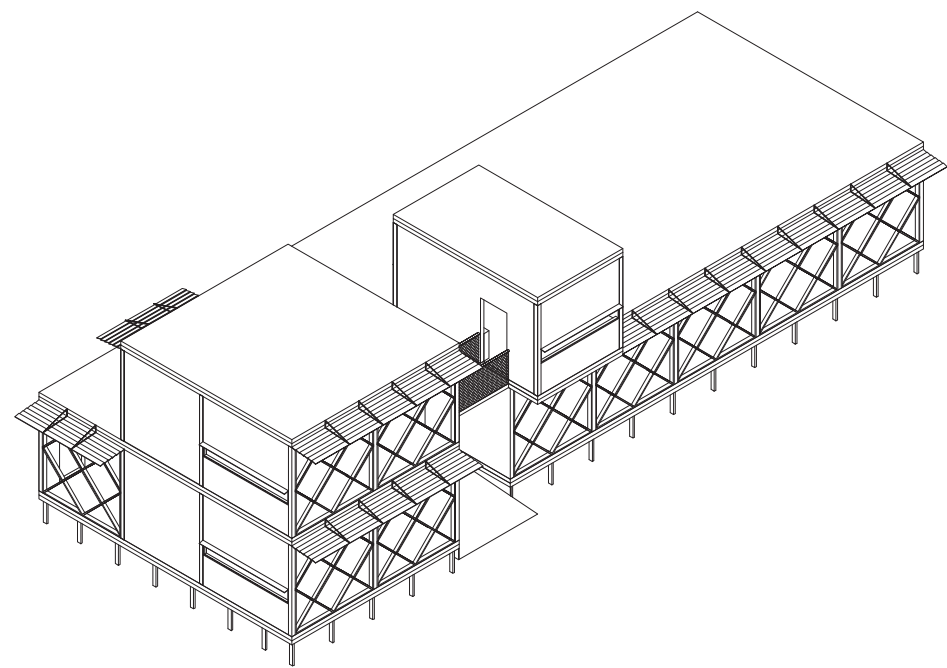


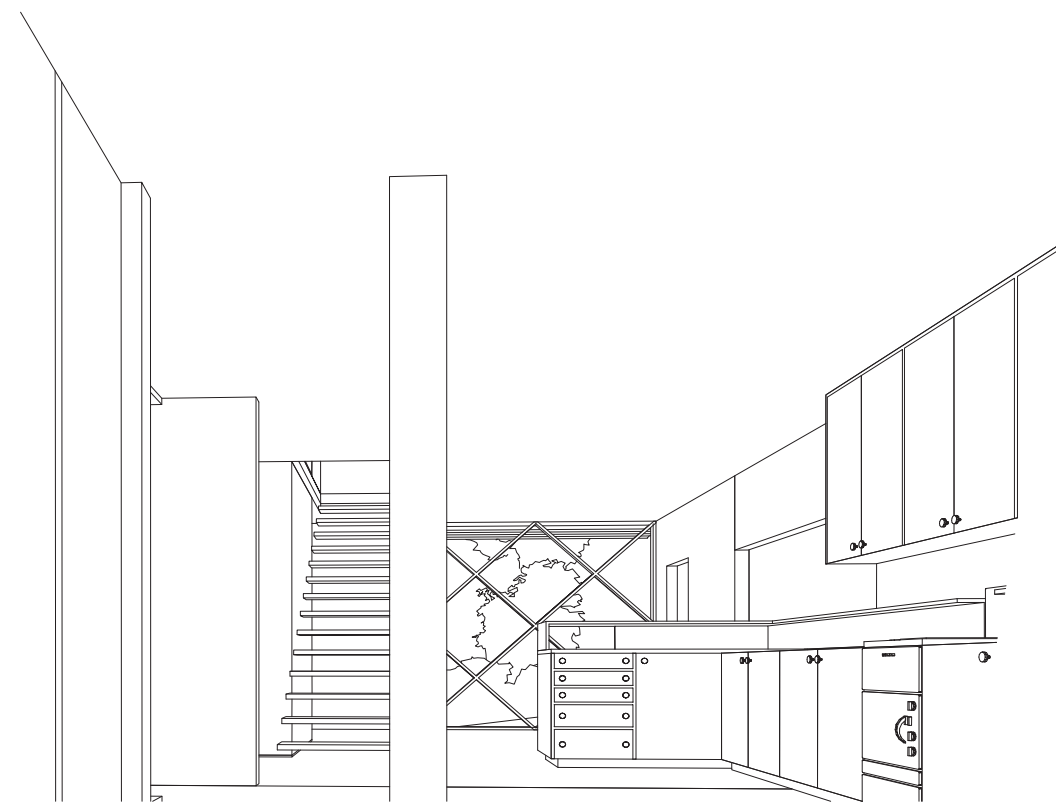
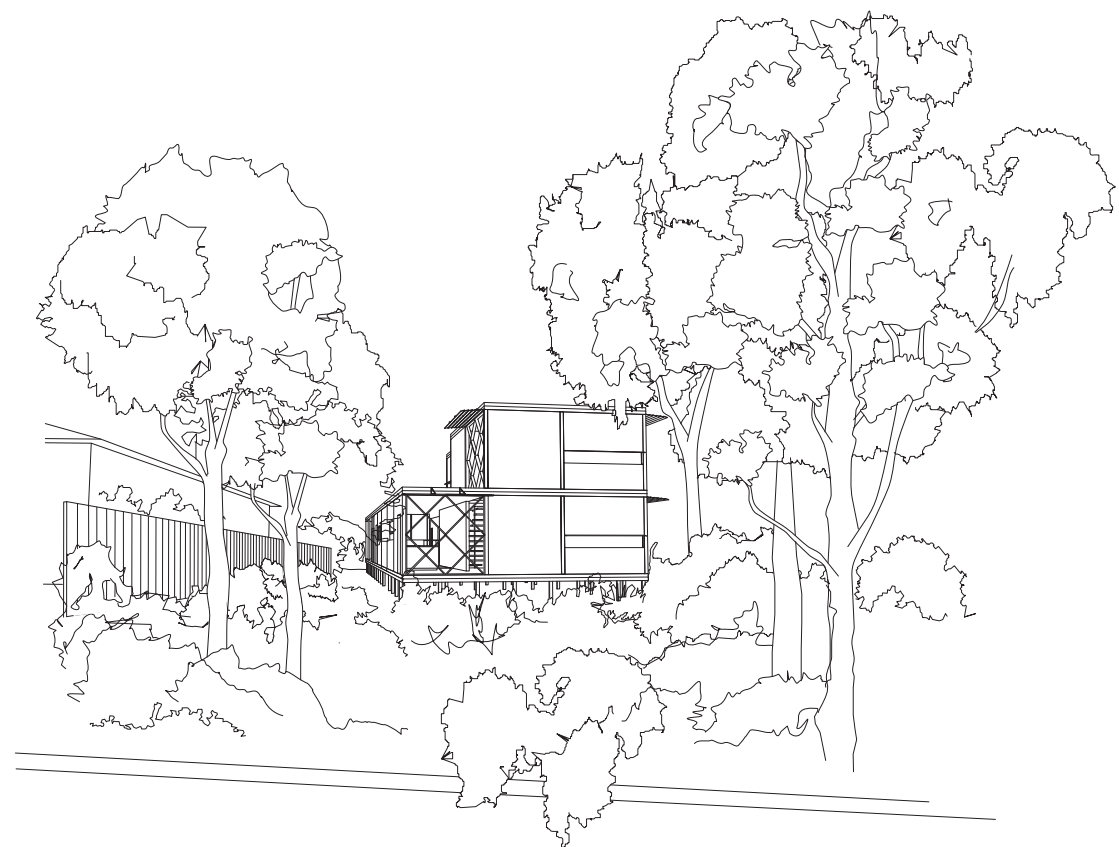
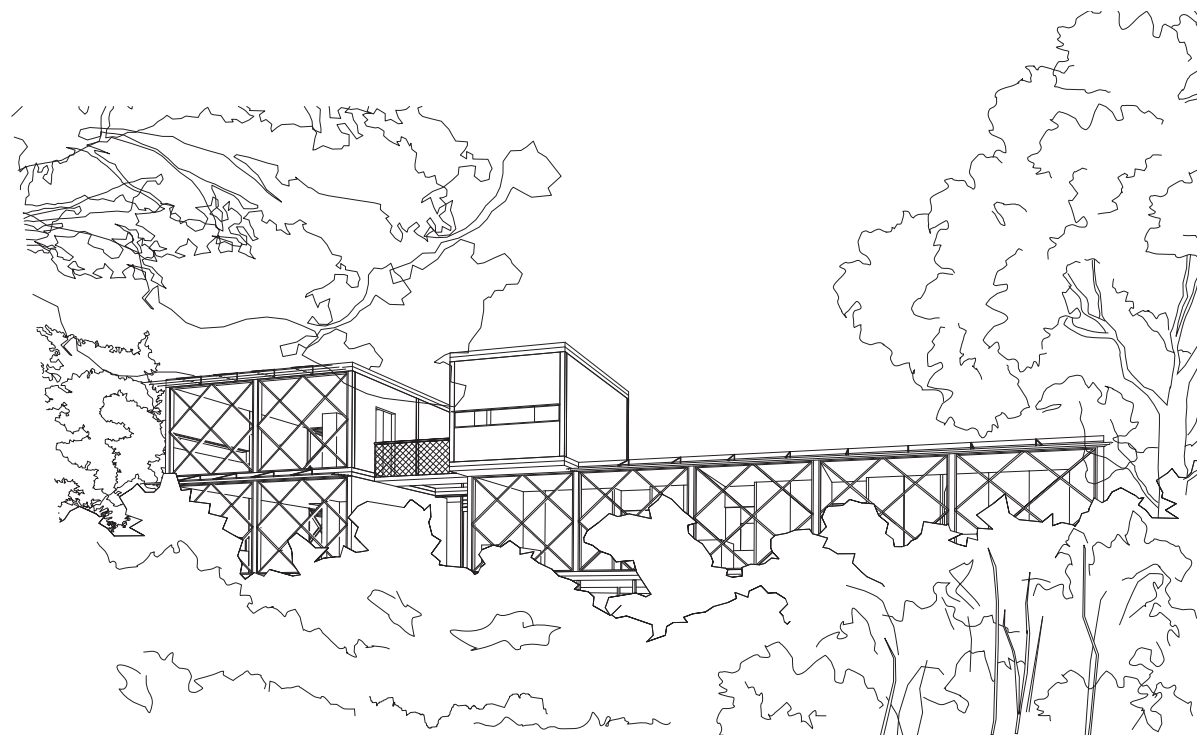
1:300

114

1:300

115







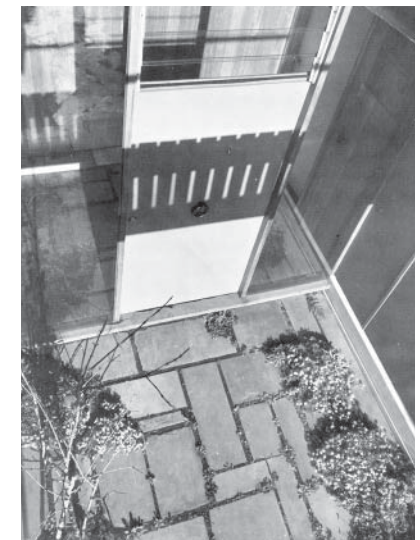
Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954

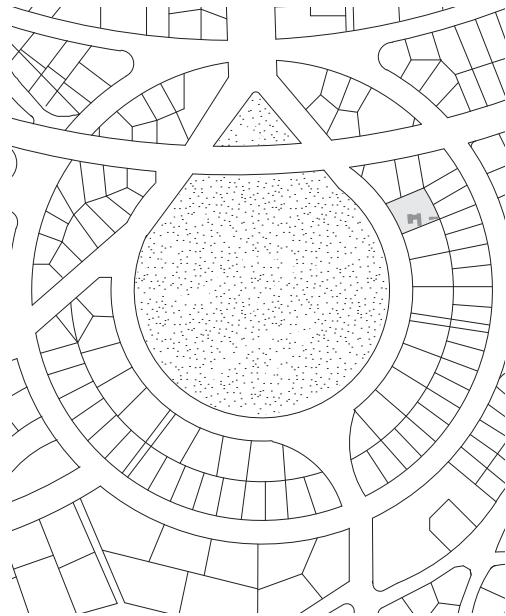


Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954

Manning Clark House
1952



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000



1:2000

This house, located in Canberra in the suburb of Forrest, approximately 4 kilometres south of the core of the city's central district, was designed for Australian historian Manning Clark, his wife Dymphna and their six children (five boys and one girl) – they were only four when the Clarks moved in, and for reasons relating to their age difference “it was rare for the whole family to live for extended periods together” in this building.¹ The block, two-thirds of an acre, is located on the edge of public parkland bounded by Tasmania Circle. The latter, in conjunction with the surrounding outer Arthur Circle and together with other circular nodal points, is a key figure from the urban plan for Canberra that was designed in 1911, and further defined in the following years, by American architects Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin.

Located on the high side of a block that slopes gently down towards north, the house is serviced by a driveway which runs along the south boundary and leads to a detached volume originally used as a garage but later transformed into a flat. This has been inhabited in various ways from quick visitor stays to longer tenancies undertaken by research assistants and collaborators involved with the research of both Manning, Professor of History at the Australian National University, and Dymphna, a lecturer in German and distinguished scholar at the same university.² The carport extending from the house's roof is a related outcome of the garage conversion; it is more easily reachable in comparison to the awkward manoeuvring that was originally required with driving into the original garage. A chook shed and a smaller wood-store shed are adjacent to the cottage – on the north side of this line of small buildings there is a vegetable garden. Further west, an outdoor zone is formally laid out in front of the main building as a negative space of it. Another garden beyond this area, shaded by birch and fruit trees, was the field of many everyday events – from cricket and football games³ (often extending across the street to the parkland bounded by Tasmania Circle) to the gardening and seed propagation undertaken by Dymphna, a passionate environmentalist – but also a background and surplus space for the Clarks' social gatherings, including book launches and dinners with friends and colleagues.

The entry, shaded by a densely vegetated pergola of ornamental grape on top of an introductory courtyard, leads to a fully glazed volume, a vestibulum/gallery space that ushers to the different interior parts of the house, and at the same time integrates the surrounding indoor and outdoor spaces. Avoiding expressive architectural features on both its sides, and relying instead on the mass and density of foliage that characterises the south pergola and the presence of plants in the raised north courtyard, the extremely contracted space of this entry hall is essentially informed by the desire to dematerialize the physical limits between enclosed and open space. The sense of spatial contraction experienced in this glazed filamentous volume, together with the consistent presence of green and plants which climb over the trellises onto the house's façade, is symptomatic of a design approach that, constantly investigated throughout Boyd's work, is critical of the rational conventions that make us normally perceive separations and hierarchies between inside and outside, foreground and background, architecture and landscape.

Three different zones pivot around this entry space: the day-time areas on the east side, including a kitchen, dining room and living room; the night-time areas on the west side, including one main and three smaller bedrooms on the west side, a bathroom and a toilet; and Manning Clark's own personal study, sitting on the top of the entry volume to which it is connected by a steep ladder and from which it cantilevers towards both south and north. The monastic feeling of the interior with white-painted bagged brick walls contributes to the undifferentiated feeling that pervades this house. Unified in look by this white undecorative finishing, the interior rooms can be used beyond their specifically assigned function – the fact they are all provided with bookshelves is indicative of the possibility to rest and work at the same time. It is not surprising that when the children moved away, Dymphna could use one of the bedrooms – the one in the south-west corner – as a working space, and that some other rooms are currently being used as offices and, occasionally, entertainment and function spaces related to the activities of the scholarly and cultural organisation that is presently accommodated in the house.

The house, concealed from the street, is open instead behind the fence to absorb the surrounding landscape: the floor-to-ceiling windows of the living room and entry space draw the garden inside; the window of Manning Clark's study, through a view that is further 'directed' by an awning added later⁴ with a rather telescopic air, projects this building towards the urban landscape of Canberra and its surrounding natural environment. The new Parliament House's flag-mast, completed in 1988, three years before Manning Clark's death, is part of a panoramic silhouette that also includes Mount Ainslie and Black Mountain, respectively located on the east and west sides of this spire. In step with the Griffins and their vision of a city in a continuous dialogue with the surrounding natural landscape,⁵ Boyd seeks a state of symbiotic 'con-fusion' between the built elements of this house and the natural presences that are around and beyond it.

- 1 See Roslyn Russell, 'Manning Clark House: a personal recollection', in Trevor Creighton, Peter Freeman, Roslyn Russell, *Manning Clark House: Reflections*, Manning Clark House, Forrest, ACT, 2002, p. 23
- 2 Dymphna was involved with the editing, proof reading and research activities of her husband
- 3 Manning Clark was a good cricket player and a passionate supporter of AFL (Australian Football League) games – as observed by Roslyn Russell, "Manning maintained a lifetime devotion to Carlton Football Club"; Roslyn Russell, 'Manning Clark House: a personal recollection', in Trevor Creighton, Peter Freeman, Roslyn Russell, *Manning Clark House: Reflections*, op. cit., p. 13
- 4 Conservation architect and planner Peter Freeman observes that "about four years after moving into the house, Dymphna wrote to Boyd to explain that the north-facing rooms allowed too much winter sun into those rooms, and particularly into Manning's attic study. In response, Boyd designed some cantilevered awning shades to the northern windows, which remain to this day"; Peter Freeman, 'Manning Clark House: an architect's view', in Trevor Creighton, Peter Freeman, Roslyn Russell, *Manning Clark House: Reflections*, op. cit., p. 38
- 5 See in particular the plans and perspective views drawn by Marion Mahony Griffin in 1911, currently held by the Australian National Archives



Mauro Baracco



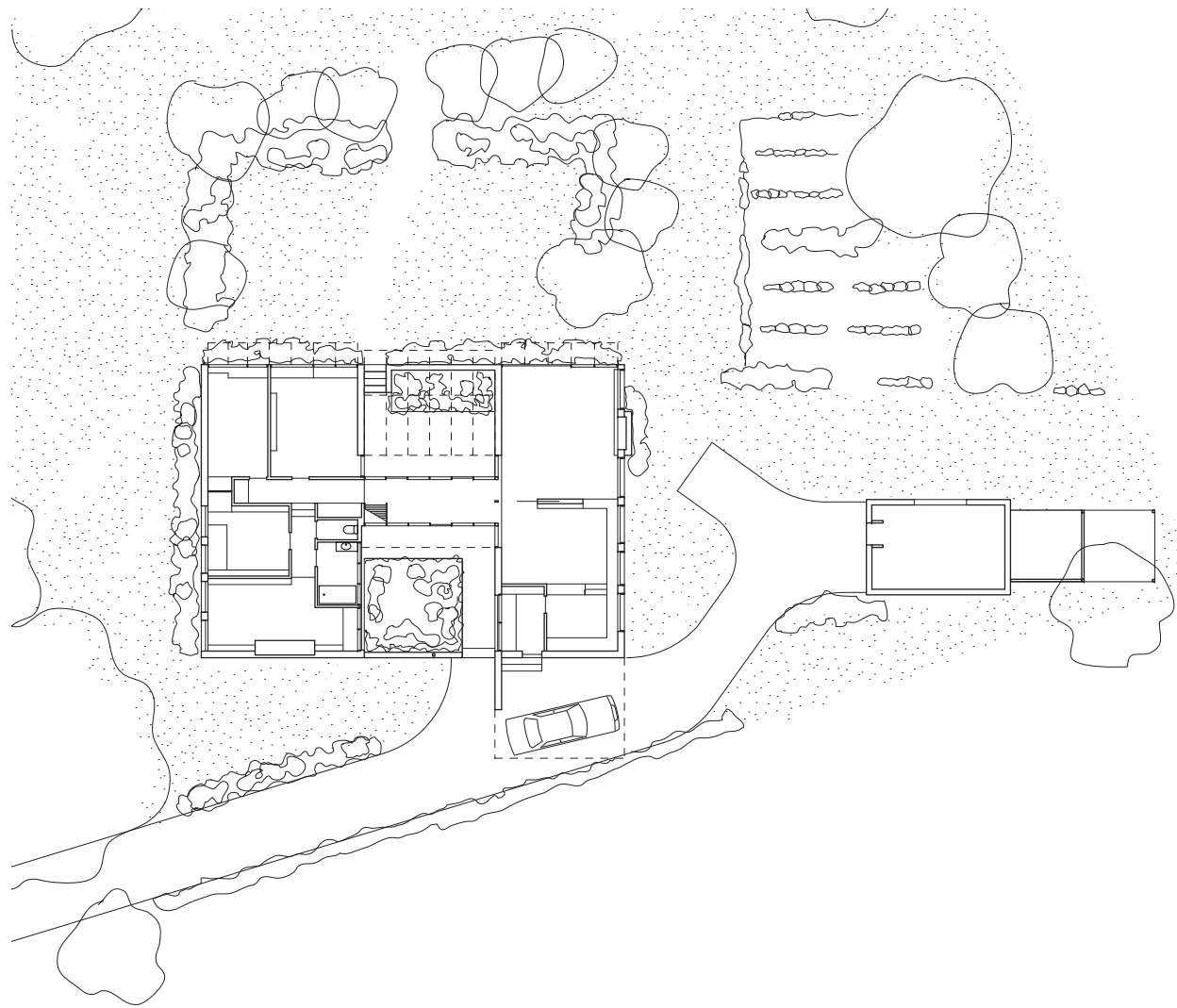
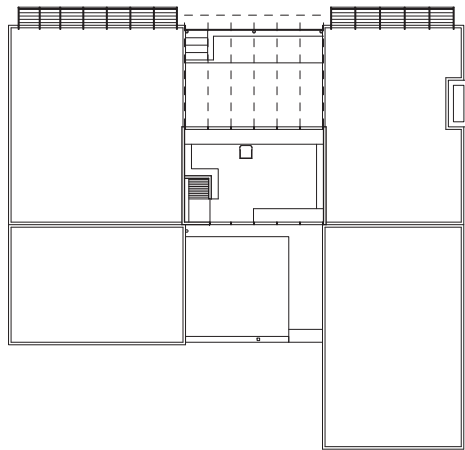
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



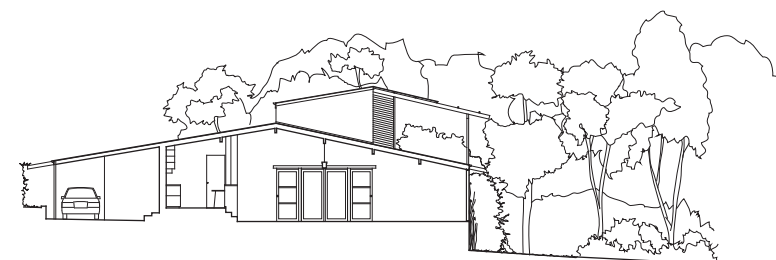
Mauro Baracco



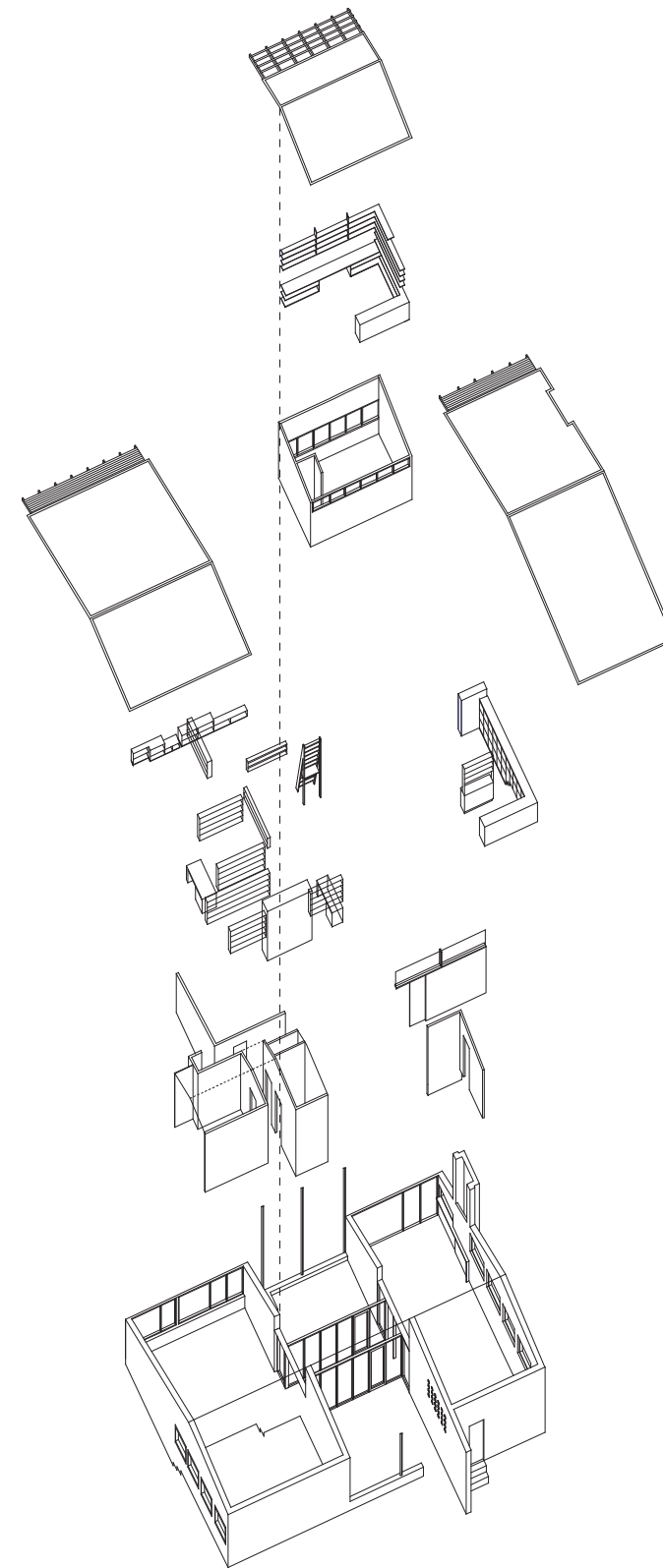
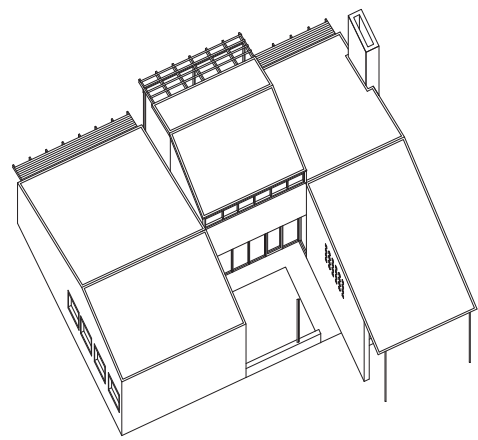
1:300

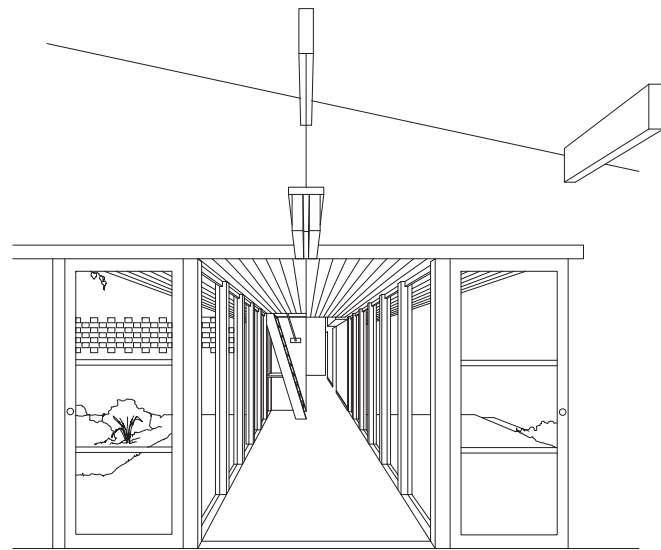
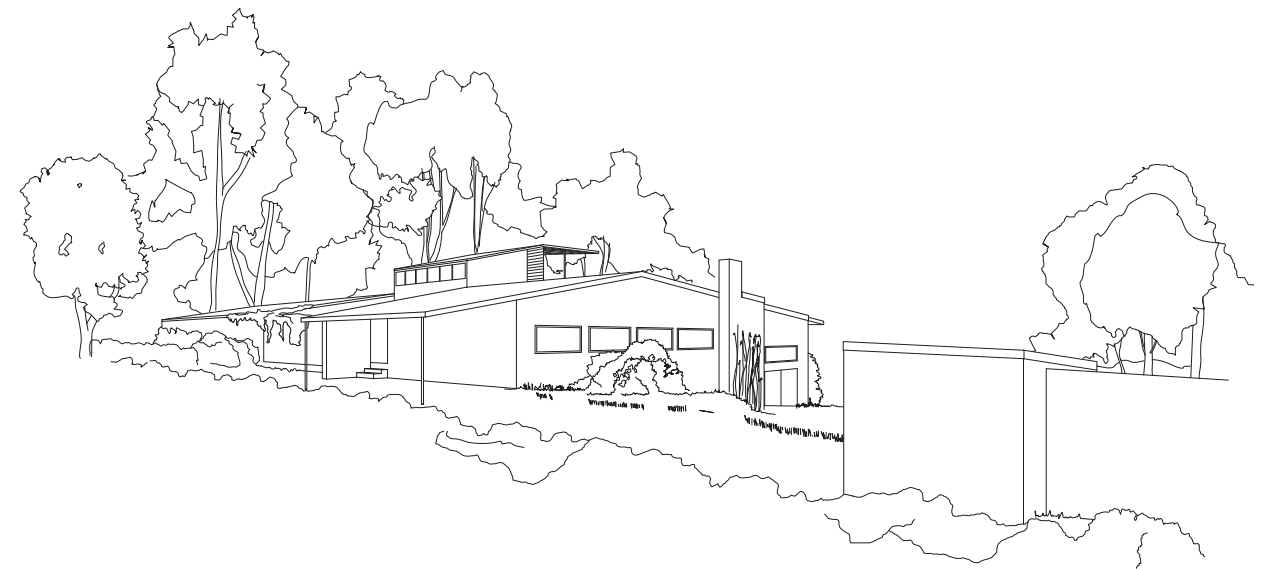
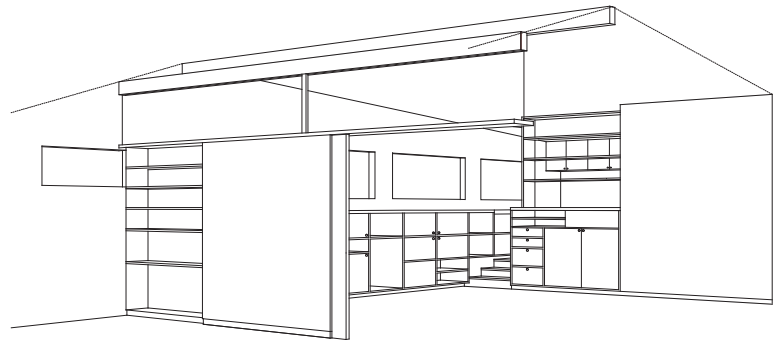


1:1000



1:300







Mauro Baracco



Trevor Creighton (*Manning Clark House: Reflections*, 2002)



Amanda Moore



Amanda Moore



Amanda Moore



Amanda Moore



Amanda Moore



Amanda Moore



Trevor Creighton (*Manning Clark House: Reflections*, 2002)



Trevor Creighton (*Manning Clark House: Reflections*, 2002)



Amanda Moore

Finlay House
1952 – 1953



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

This small house, originally designed for single owner Keith Finlay, is located in Melbourne's outer suburb of Warrandyte, along Kangaroo Ground Road, approximately 30 kilometres north-east from the city. Similar to other domestic projects designed by Boyd in this area, this house is surrounded by native vegetation, and occupies a corner of a large block – a gully that slopes further down towards south-west. The density of the existing vegetation along the back façade shelters the building, reinforcing its character of 'isolated pavilion' in the bush. This project surprisingly survived the fierce bushfire that in 1962 destroyed many buildings in this area, including the first Wright House originally built in the early 1950s and later replaced by another house, two hundred meters further up across the road, both designed by Boyd.¹

The square shape plan, of approximately 10 x 10 m., is subdivided – virtually more than physically – into sixteen smaller squares (of approx. 2.50 x 2.50 m. each). The partitions, running along the perimeters of some of these square modules, the columns, either concealed within the partitions or free, and the roof supports above them, are the linear elements that trace this grid. The simplicity of this idea generates a plan layout as a combination of modules, each of them dimensioned in such a way to guarantee appropriate spaces for inhabitation and circulation in every possible solution – from the restrained one-module configuration applied to a couple of areas to larger combinations. The 2.50 x 2.50 m. basic module is indeed extremely efficient, allowing the creation of spaces that suitably address the functional needs of each different area: a 5.00 x 5.00 m. living area; a 2.50 x 7.50 m. bedroom, including the wardrobe/utility area; a 2.50 x 2.50 m. kitchen area; a 2.50 x 2.50 m. service area accommodating both bathroom and a separated laundry; a 2.50 x 10.00 m. indoor/outdoor area accommodating a covered fly-screened porch/veranda; a 2.50 x 7.50 m. external covered carport area.

This tartan-like layout is informed by a strong sense of potentiality. The feeling is that the house could easily expand in future, if necessary, through the addition of further square modules that, identical in dimension and similar in character to the current sixteen ones (nine indoor, three outdoor and four indoor/outdoor), may accommodate different functions without compromising the original layout rules. At another level, the sense of potentiality is expressed by the flexibility that informs the various possible combinations that determine the use of the spaces – the four-module square living area is effectively larger when combined with the kitchen 'corner' in its immediate unseparated proximity; furthermore, this same living area doubles up in dimension when considered in conjunction with the extra living and sitting area provided by the four-module rectangular shape of the fly-screened covered porch; alternatively, the latter, implementing its own intrinsic quality of ambiguous semi-enclosed indoor/outdoor space, can also occasionally provide extra bedroom area for 'sleepovers in the open' during hot summer nights.

The potentiality of this house can be indirectly related to architectural references which are analogous in character and design approach. Chronologically and compositionally this project sits in between the ideas of an 'open plan around a core' and an 'open plan based on modular repetition'; Mies van der Rohe's 1945-50 Farnsworth House is a significant modernist example of the former idea, while Yoshinobu Ashihara's 1963 studios at Musashino Art University – a project discussed by Boyd² – and many other works of both Metabolist and Radical traditions are pertinent late-modernist examples of the latter.



1:2000

This house is essentially, in form and spirit, a tent – a tent in the bush that, like all good tents and camping grounds, is respectful of the natural environment that harbours it, lightly sitting in its natural landscape. This house is indeed small, self-contained and extremely efficient in providing many interchangeable types of inhabitation within its own compact shape and volume. It is unobtrusive, yet it does not try to disappear or be mimetic with the landscape. It accepts nature and yet is "visibly anti-natural".³ The stained green concrete slab floor of the indoor spaces and the stone paving of the fly-screened porch are emblematic examples of this approach; they both play with nature – the former through colour, the latter through matter – confirming at the same time their own grain of artificiality.

The full embracement of the surrounding landscape and its horizons is made possible by big sliding glass doors that open from the living and bedroom areas to the fly-screened porch. The expanse of the south-west external landscape, consisting of shrubs, trees and clearings between them, absorbs the relatively small dimension of the indoor domestic environment, releasing it from the tightness of its volumes and virtually allowing them to decompress into the large outdoor space beyond the flyscreen.

Like all good tents, this house is characterised by simple formal and technical solutions that straightforwardly and efficiently rely on the combination of modular and serial constructive elements. The fly-screened area in front of the indoor volumes and the W-shape roof with two dips directly leading into the rain-water tanks placed at the back of the house, are two design outcomes characterised, both at a formal and functional level, by the same language that is typically expressed by tents and analogous light and impermanent architectural infrastructure. A further degree of similarity with the tent-type is traceable in the open plan of this house and therefore in its capacity to flexibly accommodate various combinations of different functional areas, relying on light and rather invisible forms of separations. Symptomatically all the three main internal doors – the two separating the porch from the house and the door between the living/kitchen area and the bedroom – are sliding, not swinging, therefore un-invasively out from the space while opening or closing.

Significant changes, not documented in this book, have occurred over time, including extensive additions to the north-west side and the enclosing of the porch through the replacement of the original flyscreen with glass panels. Although these modifications are not particularly in tune with Boyd's light and minimal approach, it is intriguing to notice that the original 10 x 10 m. footprint shape is still readable in its entirety – it accommodates an open space in which entry, living, dining and kitchen areas are all reciprocally integrated in a spatial configuration that is larger than the original, as both the fly-screened porch and the carport have been enclosed, and the bedroom area has been relocated, together with more new bedrooms, into the added volumes.

The sense of openness and lightness of this tent-like house has ineluctably survived; it has been modified but certainly not erased.

- 1 See Wright House in this thesis, pp. 315-325
- 2 Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, George Braziller, New York, 1968, pp. 82-89
- 3 Conrad Hamann, Chris Hamann, 'Anger and the New Order: some aspects of Robin Boyd's career', *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, September/December 1981, p. 30



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



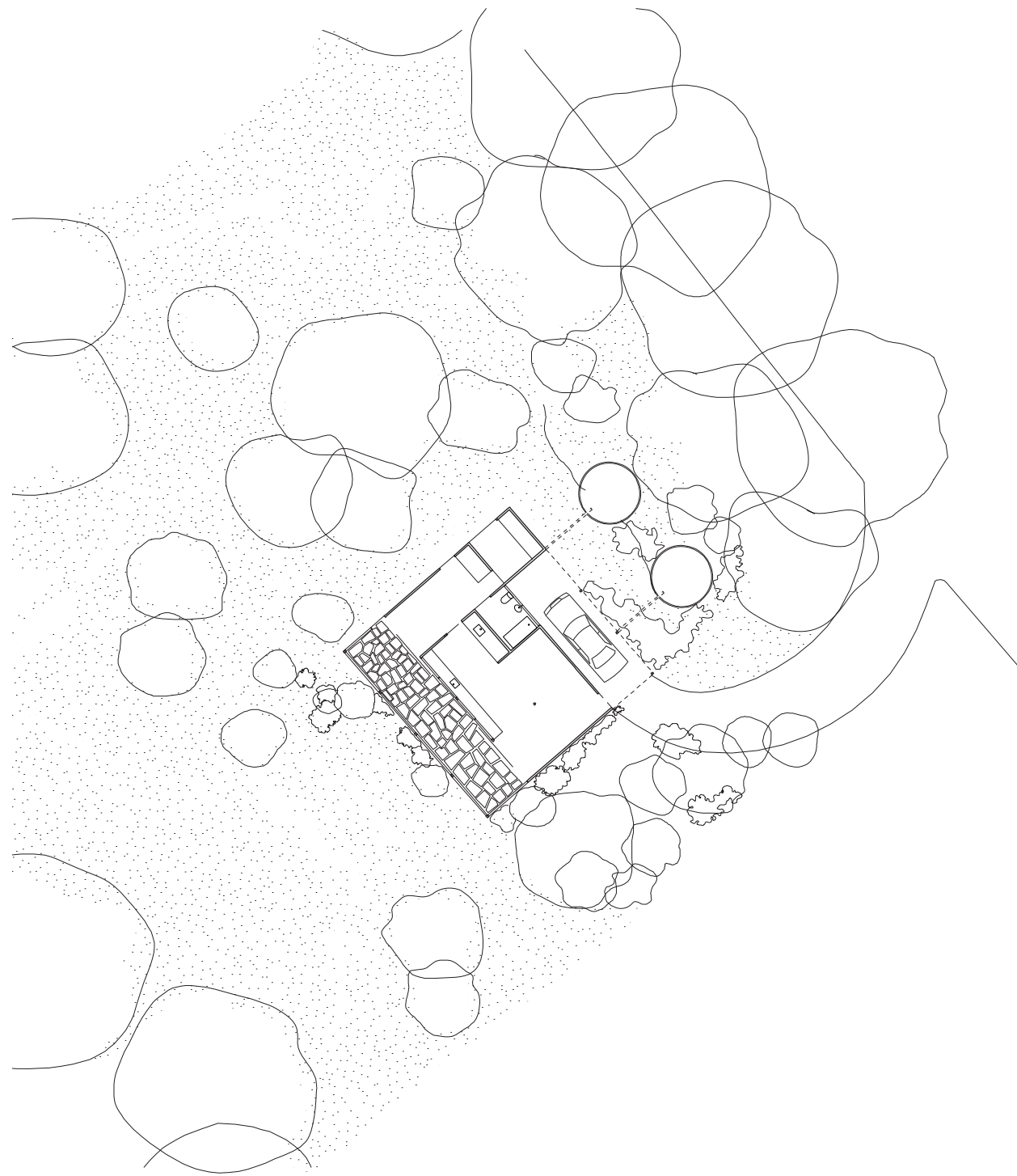
Mark Strizic



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



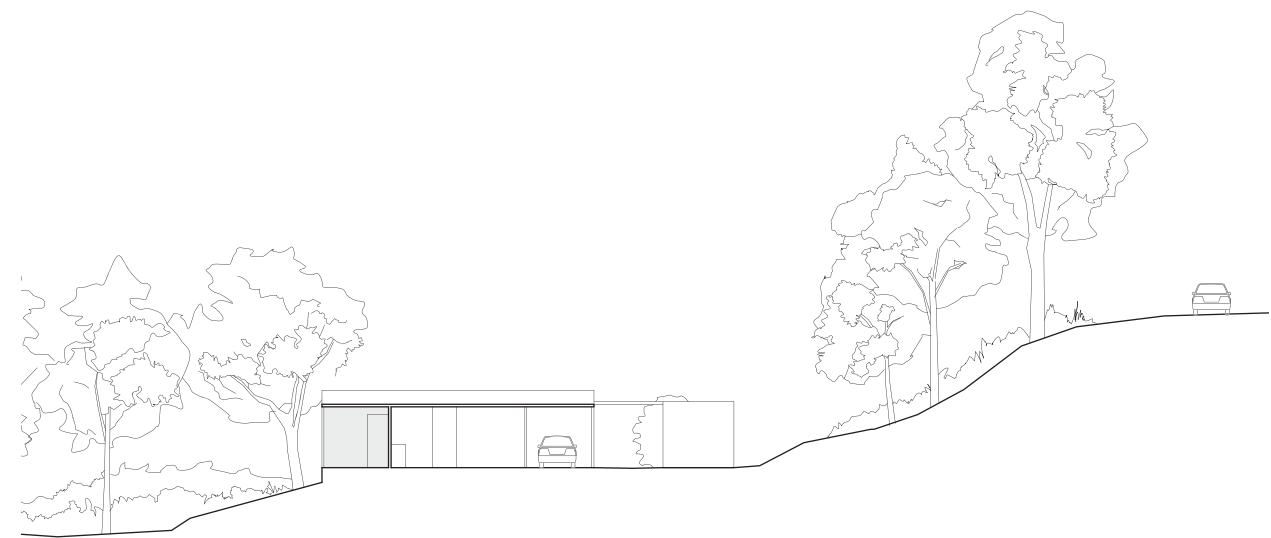
Mauro Baracco



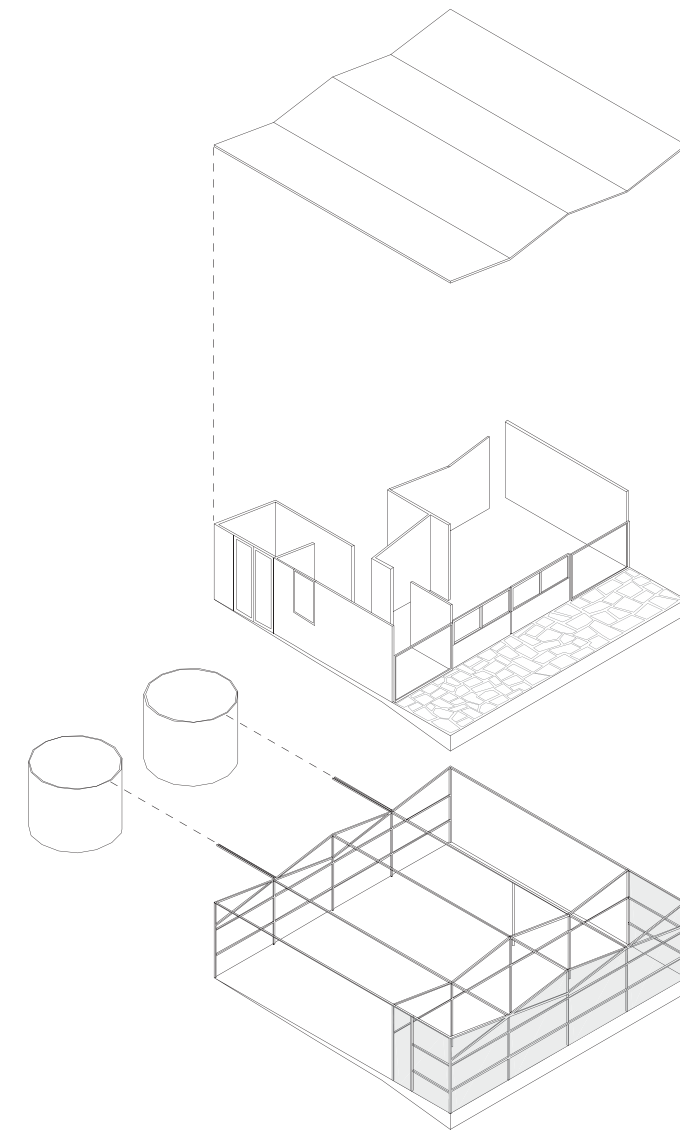
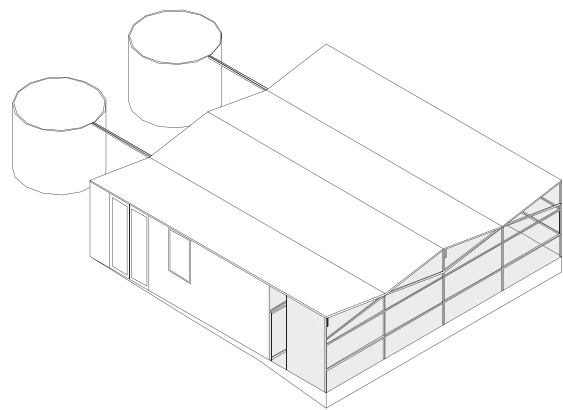
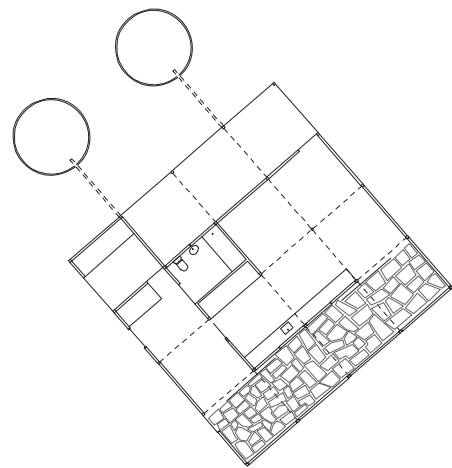
1:300

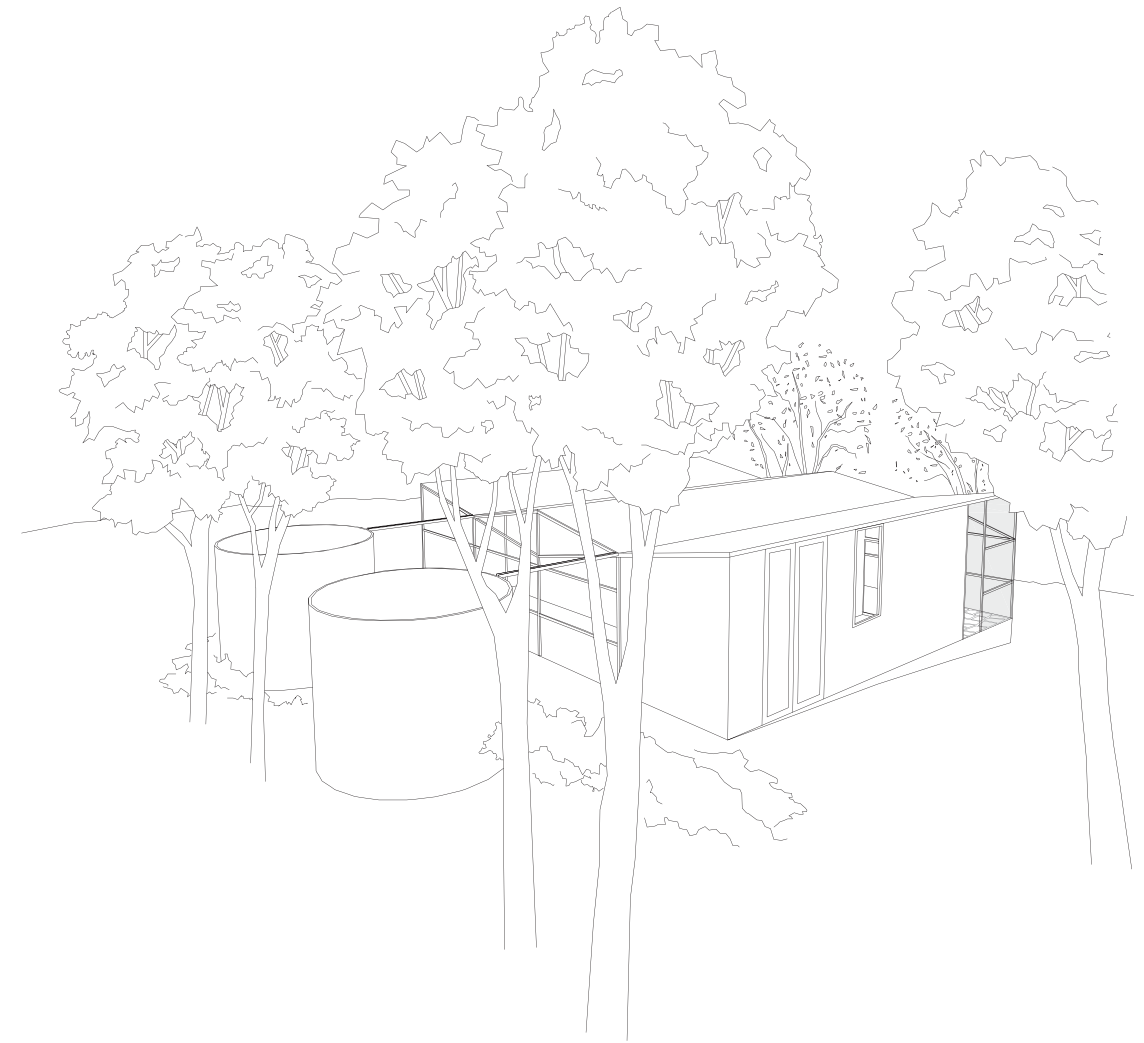
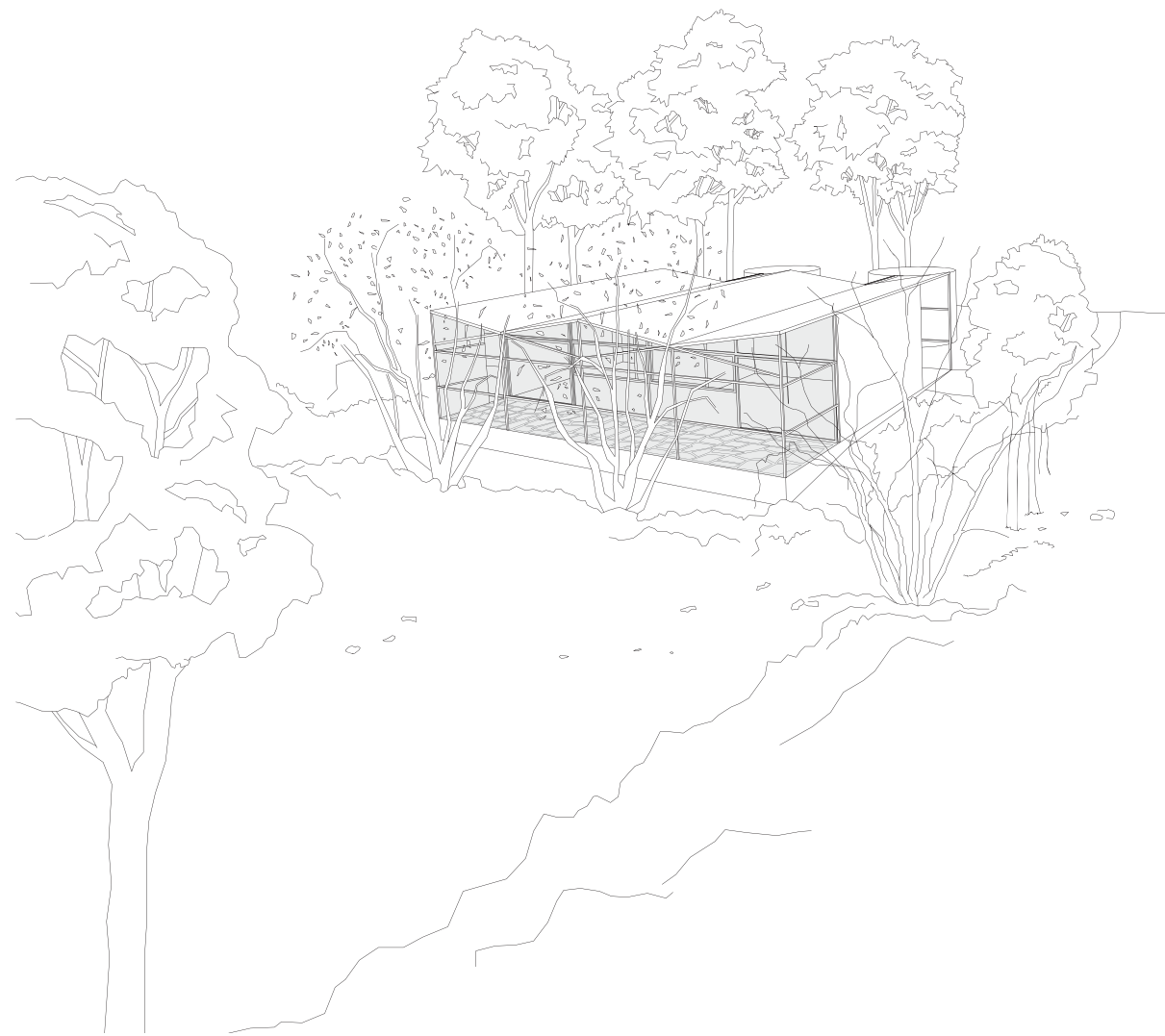


1:1000



1:300







Aaron Pocock



Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Aaron Pocock

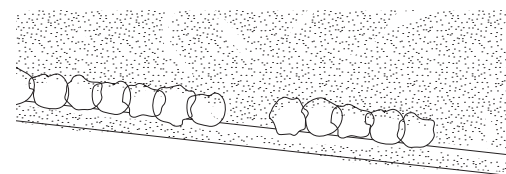
Wood House + Shop
1952 – 1954



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



1:10 000



1:2000

This house and shop, originally designed for the same owner, Mr. W. Wood, from whom they still currently retain their name, are located in Jordanville, an area within the Melbourne suburb of Ashwood, approximately 15 kilometres south-east from the city.

The two buildings occupy a corner block. Originally this block was raised from the street level in a more accentuated way and the edge, close to the road along its east and north sides, was supported by a retaining wall. Subsequently the corner has been extended reclaiming part of the road, changing from its original curvilinear shape into a ninety degree angle¹ – however, this has not changed its character which has always been left open and unbuilt. As a green relational space between the two buildings, and a buffer area from the roads, this open corner is the place that immediately communicates the commercial use to the heavy traffic of High Street along the north side – the original single rectangular sign with the writing ‘Supermaket’ has been replaced by a number of advertisements which are currently casually scattered and legible through the vegetation.

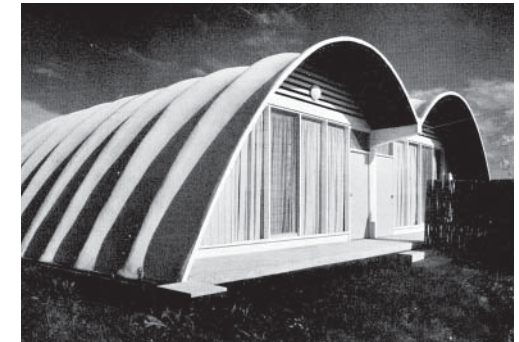
The house and the shop are interrelated by a shared open space as a sheltering and private area behind them which is in contrast to the sense of exposure that informs the front corner. The more private zones of both the house and the shop – the two bedrooms of the former, and a storage section at the back of the supermarket area in the latter – are directly related to this enclosed outdoor space. The fronts and entries of both buildings are located along the streets’ footpaths: the house is set back by a front garden, to which the north half of the entire volume – a long open space including the entry, kitchen, dining and living areas – is immediately released; the shop is connected to the street by a cantilevering triangular glazed canopy; this has been later removed and replaced by an arched volume, unrelated to Boyd’s design, rather heavy and clumsy in its attempt to match the shape of the building. The front and back façades of both the house and shop are fully glazed: the former through a series of modular openings in timber frame, including doors and windows that run from the floor to a false ceiling level; the latter through large glass panels along the street front, and smaller framed panes of glass at the rear.

A radical proposal for its time, this project seeks to be noticed at a ‘monumental’ scale, in keeping with its commercial function, through utilizing a low cost technology. In Boyd’s words, “the vaulted structures” of this project are the result of a “concrete-forming process called Ctesiphon (after the town in Iraq where a giant brick hall of similar parabolic shape was built in the sixth century)...it was...a primitive and very economical way to build shell concrete. A series of timber arches was erected, canvas was drawn over them and then three inches of concrete, with some reinforcement, was laid on top. The timber arches were later removed and reused on the next building”.²

Experimental in the readaptation of an old construction technology to late modernist uses, this work is symptomatic of the Melbourne architectural tradition of the 1950s, described by Boyd as “a movement consolidated by the weight of a generation of pioneers

behind it...(with) the essential ingredients of the Melbourne school: a great structural-functional idea carried out with an enforced austerity and a voluntarily cavalier technique”.³

The use of the white colour all over the architecture is indicative of Boyd’s reluctance to assign gratuitous over-expressive features to the project. Fully aware that the expressive character is present in the undulation of the profile that is instrumental to the erection and related vaulted shape of these buildings, Boyd sophisticatedly reflects on the ambiguity associated to their form. Familiarly recognisable in the qualities that formally and technologically are intrinsic of their construction technique, these two buildings are also at the same time surprisingly unfamiliar – as white ghosts evocative of ancient forms, but also hints of industrial suburban sheds, they make us wonder in regard to their character, programs and relationship with the surrounding context.



Mark Strizic

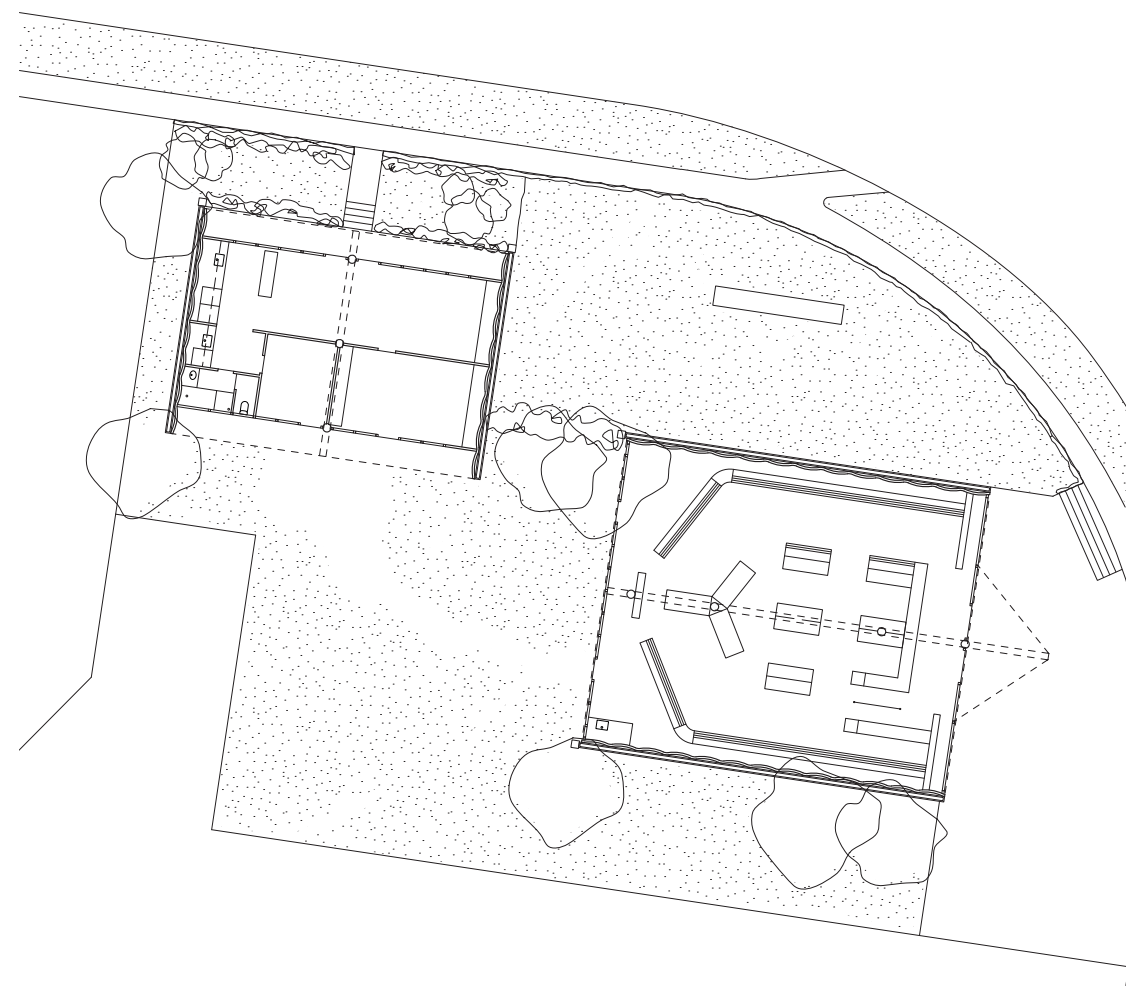


Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



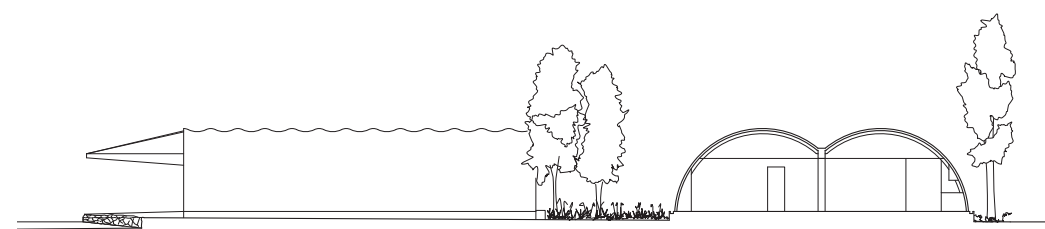
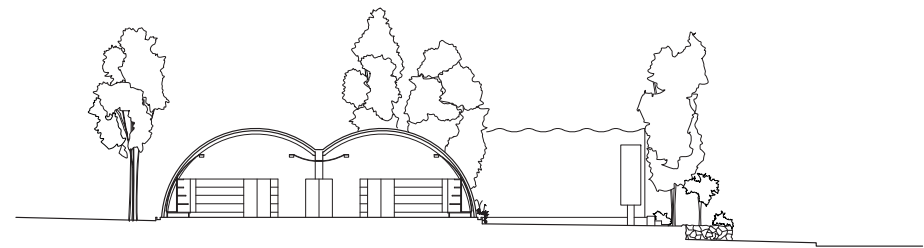
Mauro Baracco

- 1 The context plan (p. 148, top) documents the original street layout; the site plan (p. 148, bottom) shows the current street layout with the extended landscape on the corner
- 2 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 101
- 3 Robin Boyd, ‘The state of Australian architecture’, *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 56, no. 3, June 1967, p. 459



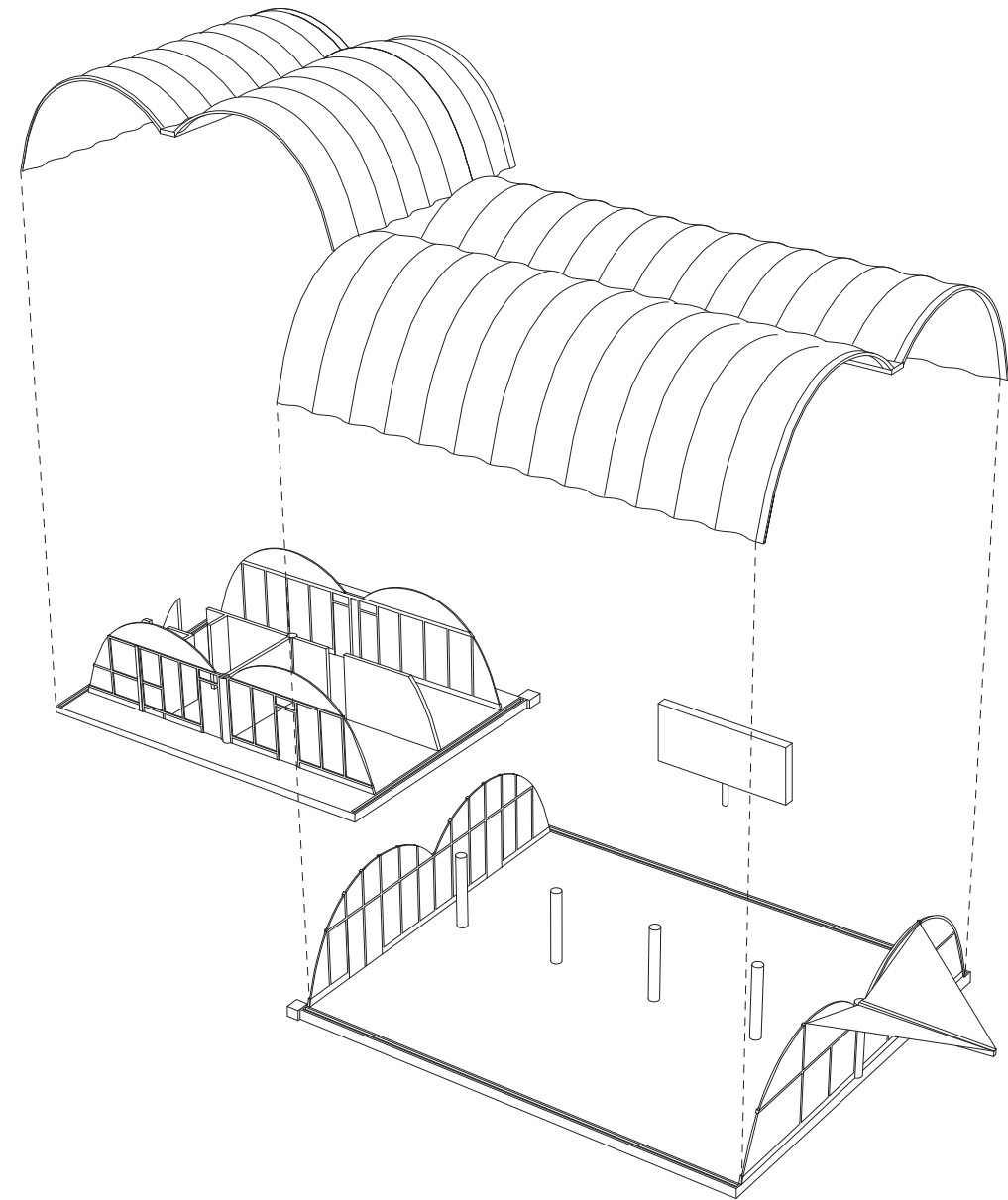
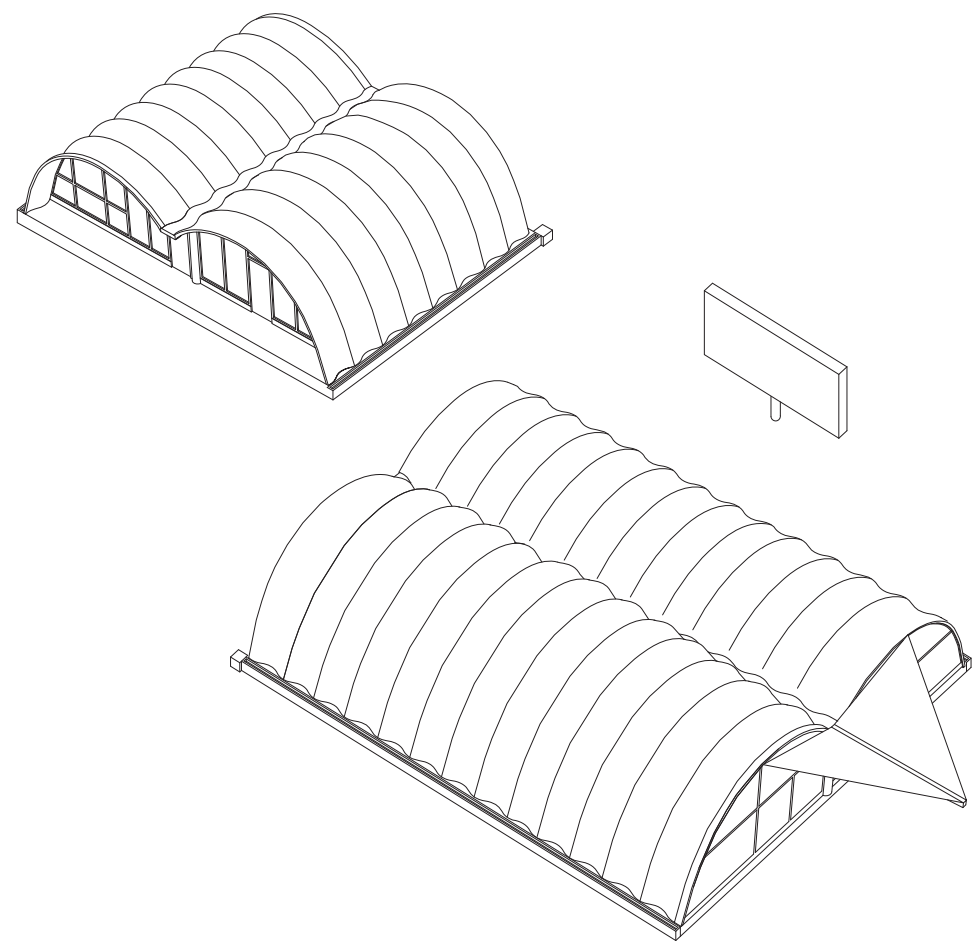
1:300

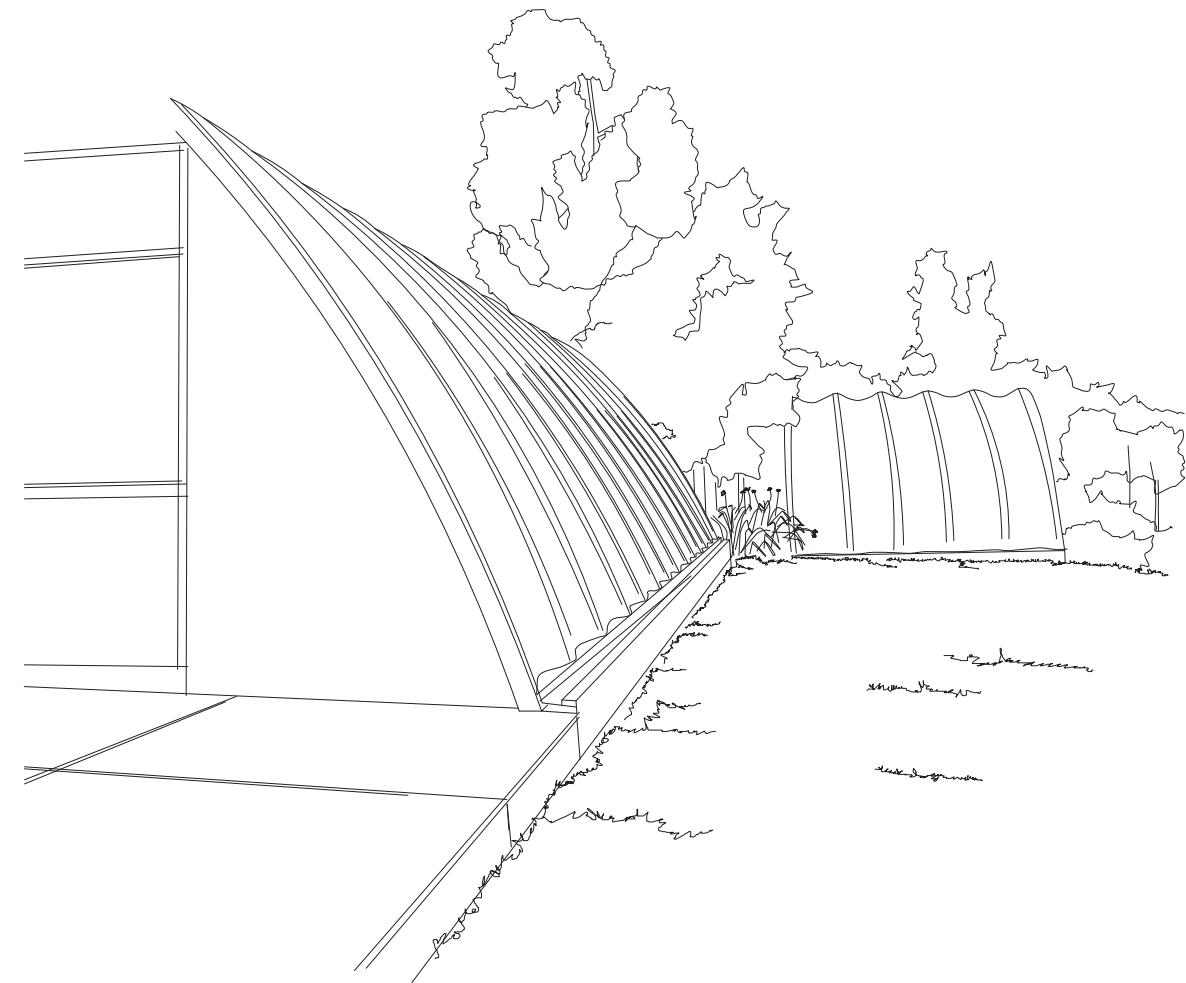
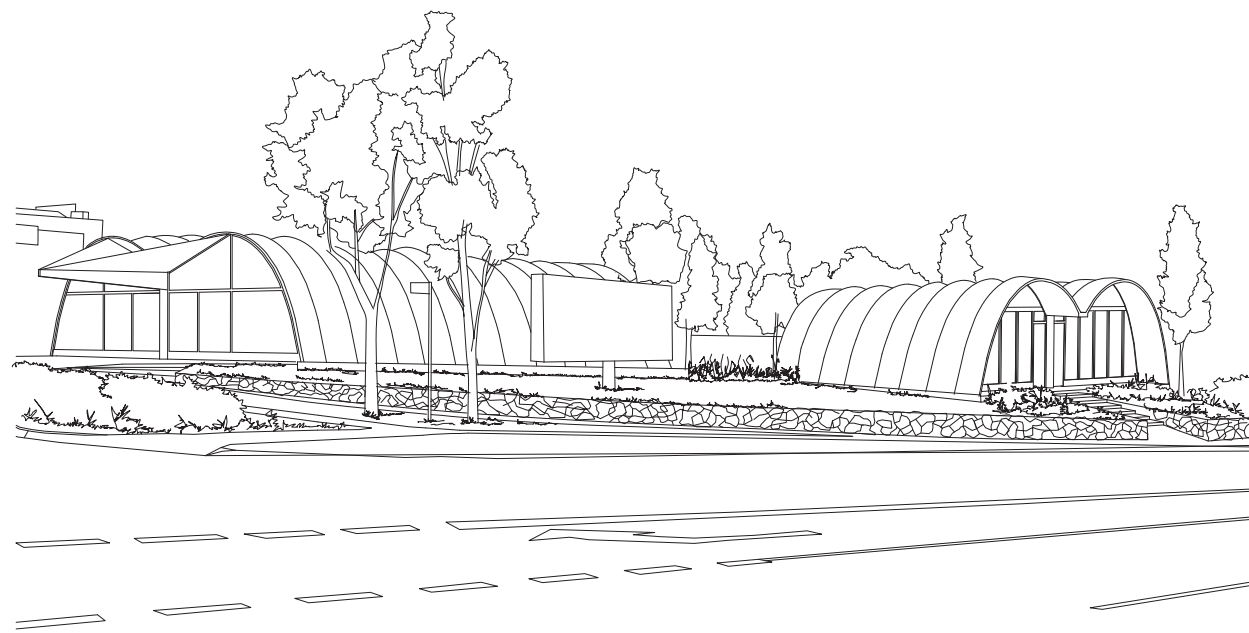
150



1:300

151







Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



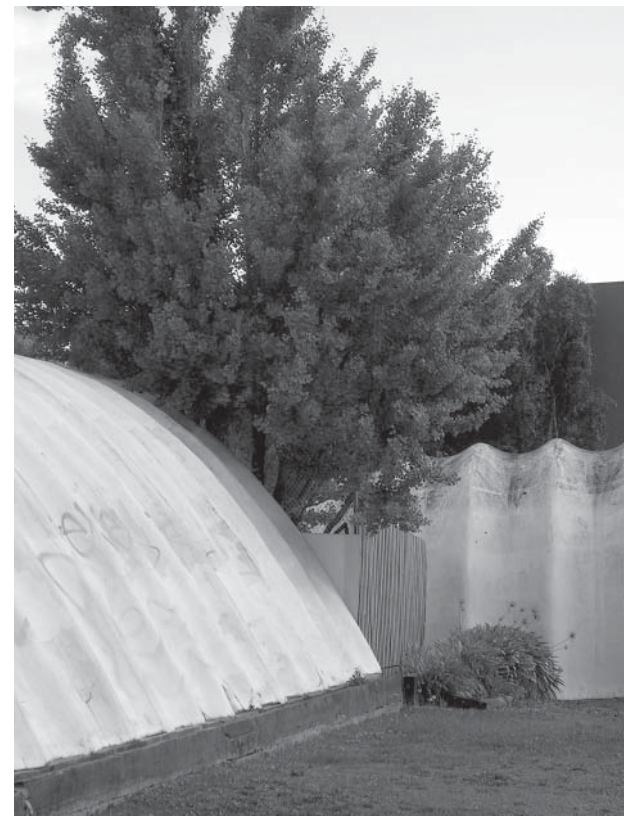
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

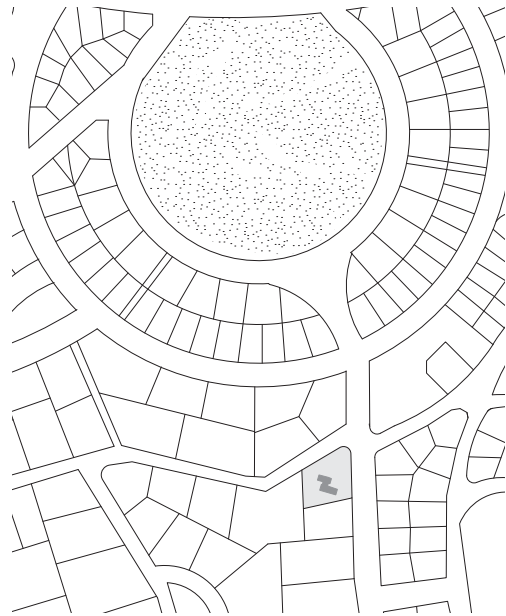


Mauro Baracco

Fenner House
1953 – 1954



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000

Located in Canberra, in the suburb of Red Hill, approximately 5 kilometres south of the city's central district, this house was designed for Australian microbiologist Frank Fenner, his medical scientist wife Bobbie Roberts and their daughter. Placed diagonally within a generous corner block, the house is set back from the streets. A driveway from Monaro Crescent, the road along the east side, leads to a garage that is included in the building's footprint as a large room internally connected to the rest of the domestic spaces.

Conceived and built in the same years as the Manning Clark House located half a kilometre further north,¹ this project is similarly informed by a plan layout consisting of an entry space as an interconnecting element between two other blocks on the north and south sides in which are respectively accommodated the day-time and night-time areas. Differently from the house for the Australian historian and his family, the footprint of this building reveals a more distinctive sense of contraction/expansion between its three connected parts. In the former house the two external courts immediately adjacent to the entry volume are incorporated with the rest of the building through overhanging pergolas that run in continuity with the external perimeter of the house. Here, instead, the clear tripartition of the building into rather individual volumes tends to more decidedly 'fragment' the house, contributing to a sense of spatial contraction and expansion that is experienced while circulating throughout volumes of various scales and with differing ways of relating to their immediate outsides. Moreover, the transparency of the entry hall adds a further layer of complexity and ambiguity in enabling the occupants to feel released/expanded towards the outside and yet at the same time contracted within the smaller dimensions that define both the width and height of this area in comparison to the other rooms of the house.

This relational and interconnecting volume is twice permeable. Together with the physical permeability associated with the need to filter the circulation between different parts, a visual type of permeability raises unsolvable wonderings about the plausibility of determining boundaries between outside and inside, nature and architecture. The total transparency and yet physical materiality of this volume makes it an 'absent presence' that impossibly calls for invisibility and dematerialization, a 'void' instrumental to experience the two main volumes of the house as 'pavilions in the park'. The informality of their floating in the garden, with no alignment with the surrounding roads, property boundaries or any other existing reference, as artificial lumps inclined to be 'interspersed' with the surrounding trees and vegetation, parts of a continuum between nature and architecture that goes virtually forever, beyond the deliberately unfenced limits of the block, is strongly symptomatic of Boyd's constant propensity towards undeterminable dimensions of spatial indivisibility.

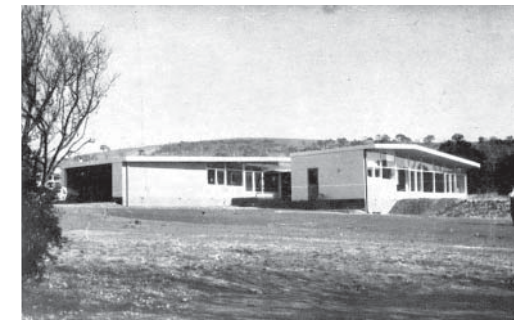
Architecture and natural landscape symbiotically interchange and react to each other, sharing and finalizing their own qualities in an environment that benefits from their reciprocal combination by staying free of redundant and superfluous elements. The natural presence of the garden, significantly representative of a

'garden-city' such as Canberra, is embraced through the extensive glazing that marks the north edge of the day-time wing; at the same time, the shading of this north façade – and its visual protection from the street as well – is provided by a dense copious edge along the outdoor terrace, a vegetated screen that is unfamiliar and surprising in scale and yet deeply sympathetic to the 'green' character that essentially pervades the history and tradition of the Australian capital city. Additional shading is offered by the eaves that elegantly – through a straightforwardness that aims for efficiency rather than a minimalism of aesthetic implications – widen their overhanging to the roof's ridge in the north façades of both the day-time and night-time wings.

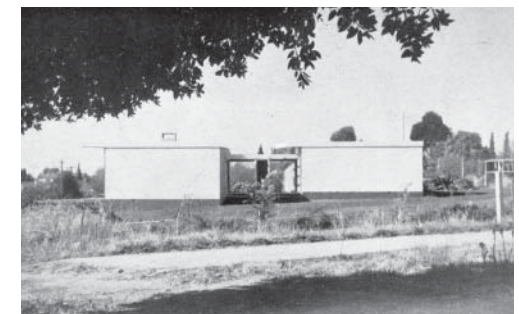
The 'weak' separations inside the day-time volume, dividing and yet connecting the living, dining, kitchen and utility areas by means of furniture components, low benches and a few sliding doors instead than fixed partitions, are emblematic of the sense of spatial continuity investigated in this project. Although the three bedrooms, study, bathroom and toilet/shower area in the south block are more distinctly – and necessarily – separated by swinging doors and partition walls, it is the playroom space in front of them – a distributing hall capable of becoming 'something more' through the generosity of its scale and the flexibility and informality of its nature – that guarantees spatial continuity, allowing for visual and physical interrelations not only between the bedrooms but also with the rest of the house and outdoor landscape.

A sympathetic addition to the west of the bedroom wing in 1982² has not undermined this house's capacity to discreetly be an intrinsic part of its open landscape; the sense of reciprocal co-belongingness between architecture and nature that emanates from this project has increased with the growing of the garden and the consolidation of the natural vegetation.

1 See Manning Clark House in this thesis, pp. 123-133
 2 Following the death of his wife Bobbie in 1995, Frank Fenner (1914 - 2010) moved into the new addition, leaving the original house to his daughter and her family. Further descriptions of the addition and the original house can be found in Andrew Metcalf, *Canberra Architecture*, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2003, p. 103



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



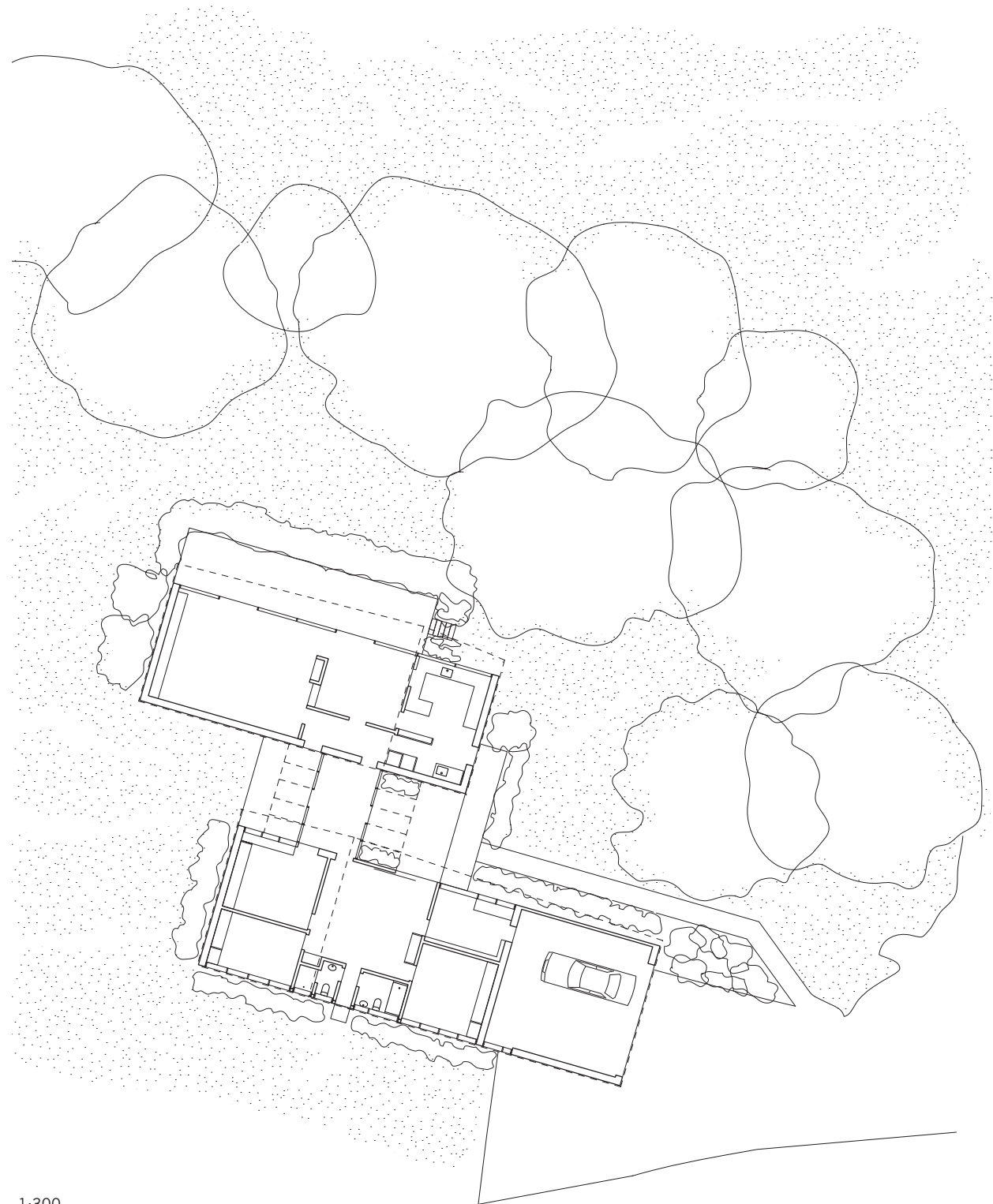
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

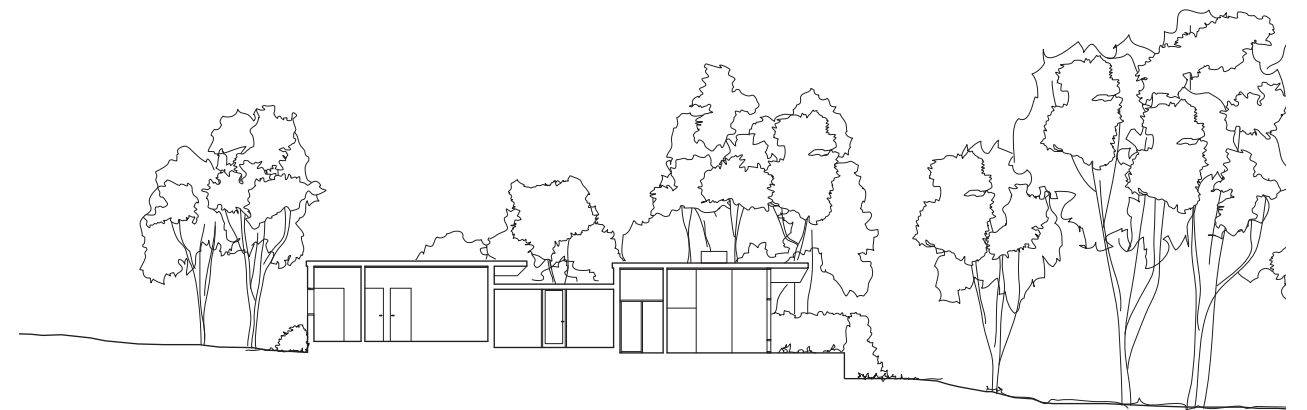


1:2000

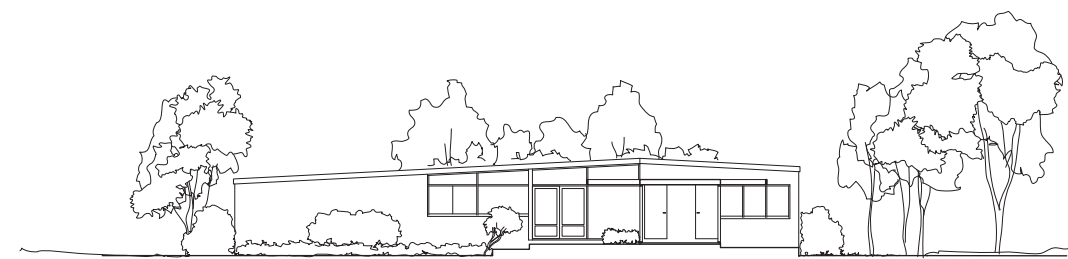


1:300

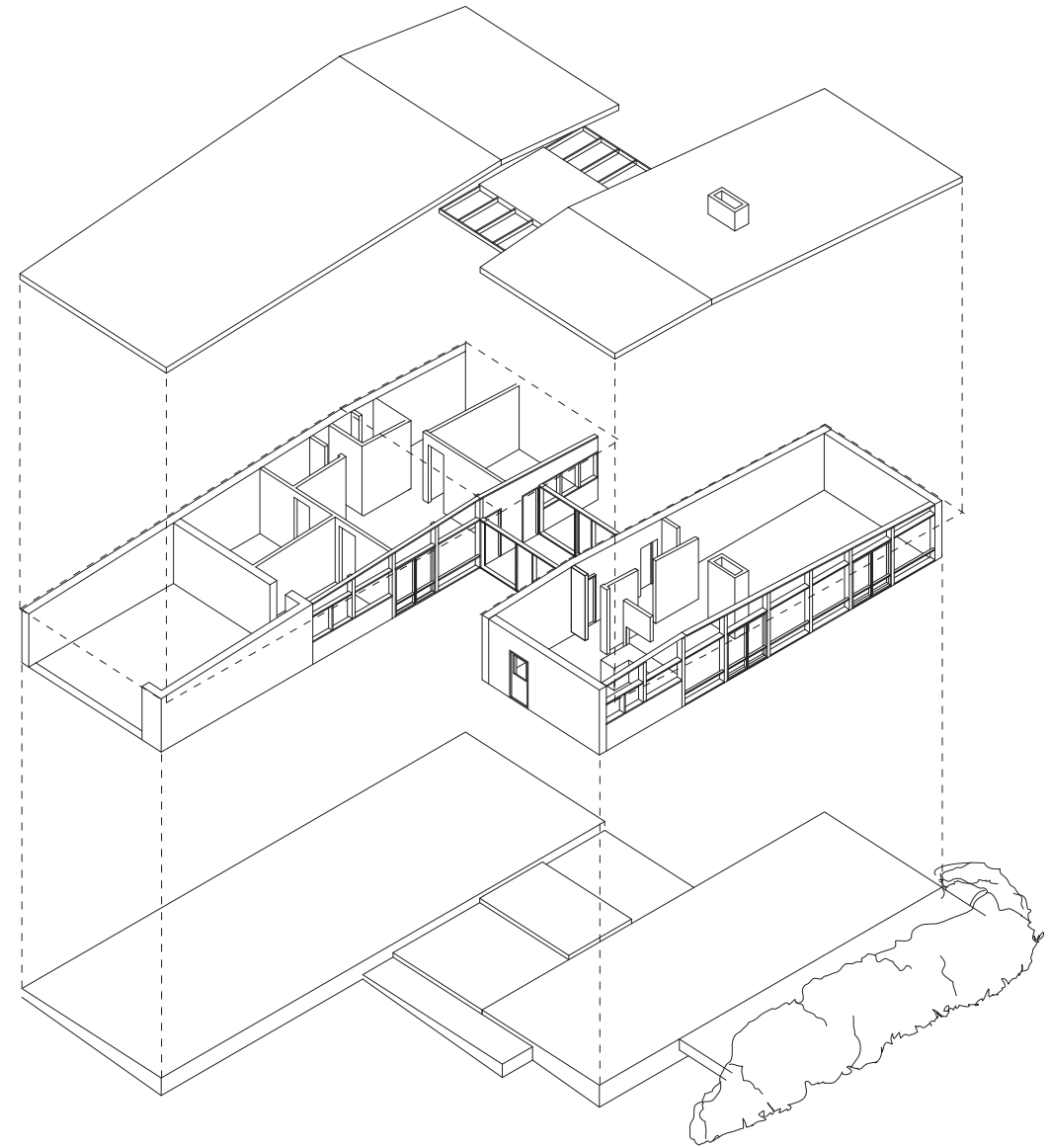
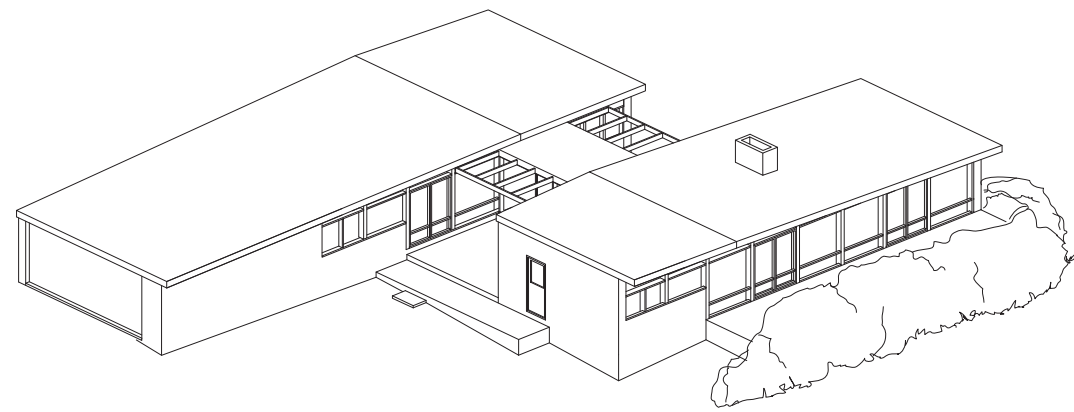
162

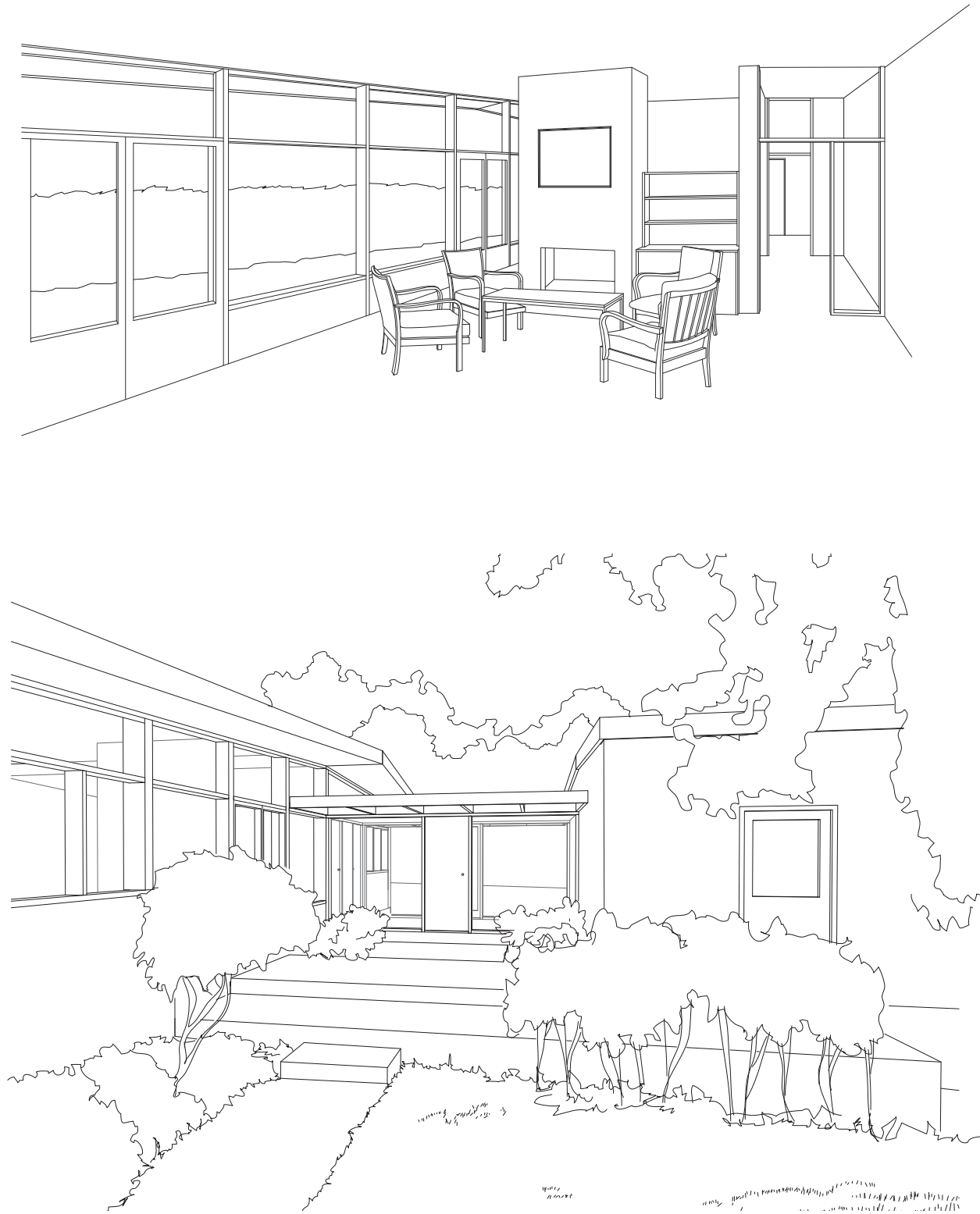
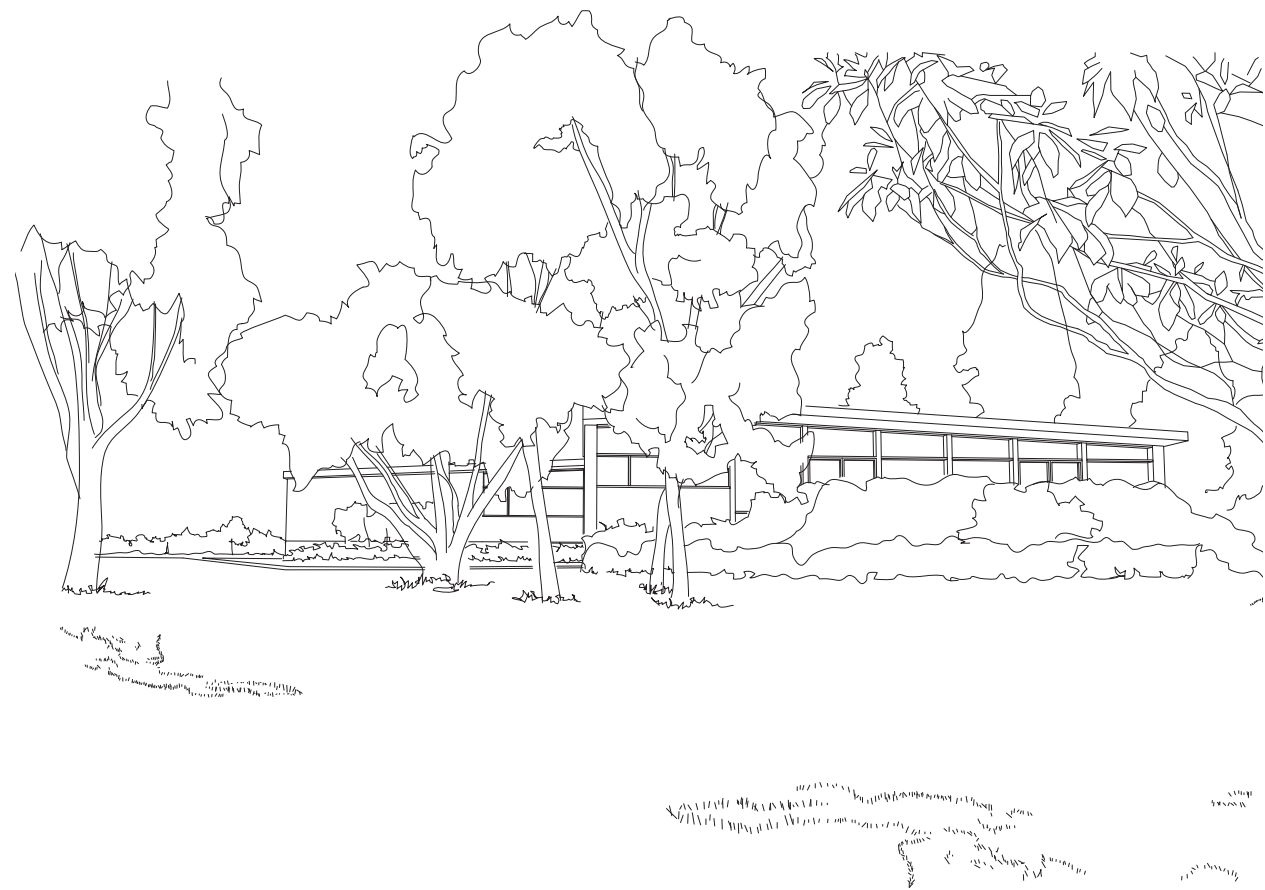


1:300



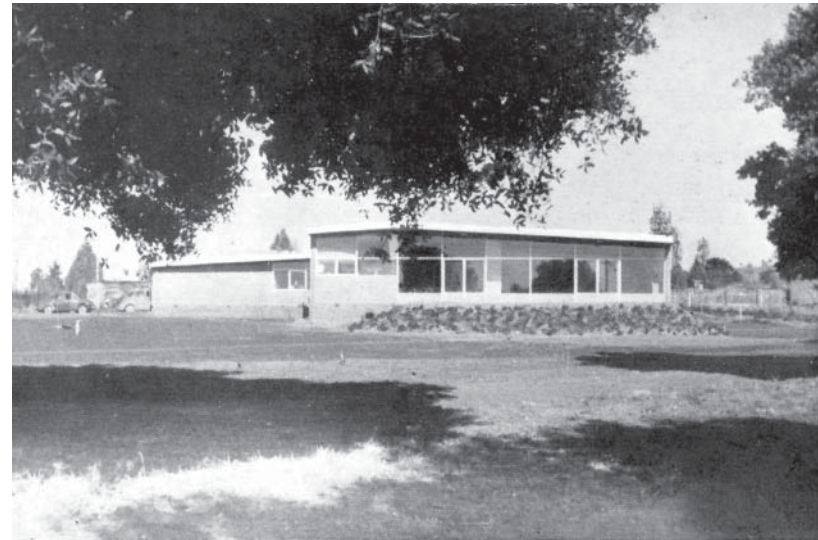
163







Ken Ng



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Mauro Baracco



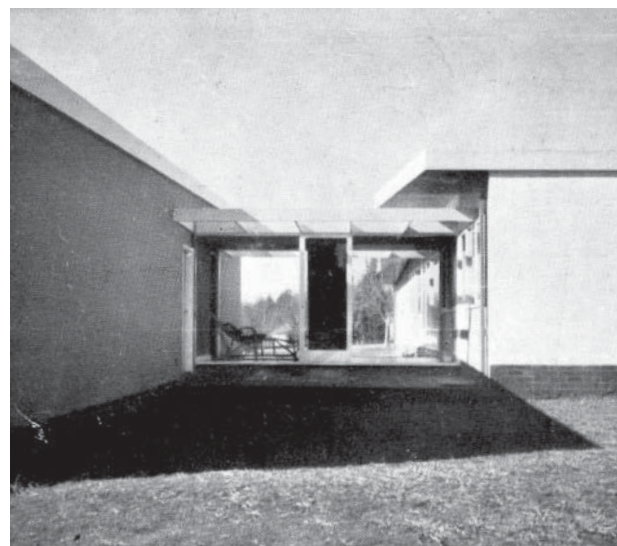
Ken Ng



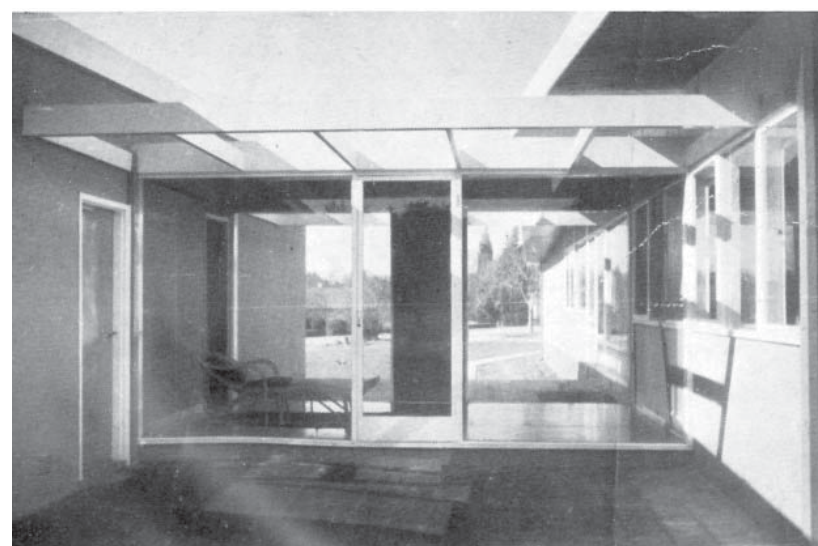
Ken Ng



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Ken Ng

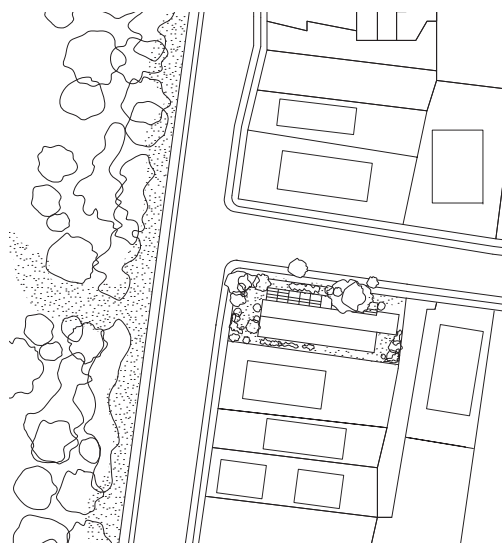
Bridgefords House
1954



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



1:10 000



1:2000

This house is in the outer suburb of Black Rock, approximately 20 kilometres south of Melbourne's city. It occupies a corner block located along the west edge of Black Rock's urban fabric, within the built band that stretches along the coastline and lies immediately adjacent to it. A road, parallel to the west boundary of the block, separates the house from the spectacular environment of its surroundings, including the vegetated cliffs that slope down to Half Moon Bay's beach, the jetty and related infrastructures of the local Yacht and Life Saving Clubs. In addition the heritage presence of the H.M.V.S. Cerberus battleship, which was originally launched in 1868, has been resting in 3 metres of water approximately 300 metres off the coast since being scuttled to form a breakwater in 1926. Despite these highly scenic site conditions, the house resists the obvious call for a view and, differently from many other residential buildings along this coastline, avoids raising and imposing its volumes, choosing instead to be discretely hidden within its own allotment.

Concealed from the side street behind a brick wall/fence as a solid background to a pergola of beams and louvres that extends the sloping timber structure of its two pitched roof, this house "is planned for self-contained views".¹ Relating to its private landscape rather than to the natural environment beyond its boundaries, the interiors of this house are openly exposed to the outdoor areas shaded by the pergola along the north side; they overlook the various elements of this space – planting strips, a pond, some areas paved in slates, some others in brick – through single fixed panes of plate glass. The sense of spatial continuity between the kitchen, dining and living areas, all reciprocally linked to each other by means of permeable and see-through shelving partitions, also informs the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces, which is emblematically reinforced by the physical 'extension' of the dining table – it is not a reflection on the window glass! – from inside to outside, and vice-versa. The sense of non-hierarchy between outdoor and indoor spaces is not only the result of tangible architectural solutions – doors that directly connect each of the bedrooms to the outdoor area; all bedrooms provided with large windows with sills as desks from which to enjoy a visual relationship with the garden; floor-to ceiling glazing in the living area to enhance a full sense of transparency – but also a reflection of the proportions of the outdoor zones which are similar in footprint to those of the indoor rooms and therefore enable the experience of the external space as if it was somehow a combination of 'outdoor rooms'. Not surprisingly the graphic layout of the plan of this house is informed by a distinctively diagrammatic character, in which the separations between indoor and outdoor spaces are not immediately apparent.²

More outdoor areas are located around the house – a front garden on the west end buffers the building from the relatively busy road; a carport on the east end defines the boundary with the neighbouring block; a square green area on the south-east corner, outside the two bathroom/toilet areas and the laundry, provides space for service activities; a long and narrow vegetated strip runs beside the south boundary of the path that leads to the entry. Located approximately halfway through the block, the entry opens to a hall that functions as a circulation hinge, servicing the day-time area, the night-time rooms and the outdoor space. A

second hall/sun room located further east in the night-time area similarly provides interchange of circulation between the three bedrooms, the two bathroom/toilet spaces (one with a shower, the other with a bathtub), the laundry area (directly connected to the bathroom/toilet with the bathtub) and the outdoor space.

The functional flexibility of the front room, a large and not particularly designated space left in a state of potentiality for various different occupations, is symptomatic of the spirit of 'con-fusion' that correlates the spaces of this house. Used as a winter storage area for original owner Bill Bridgeford's sailing boat (which could be wheeled in and out through the sliding glass windows and fence panels along the street side), it was also a playroom for the family's daughter; later, after the Bridgefords sold the house, it became a loft/study room for the new owner's daughter, who was so strongly influenced by this and the other spaces of the house that she was inspired to become an architect.

The sense of indeterminacy of this room goes hand in hand with the unimposing character of the entire house. Resisting the mainstream modernist demand of the 'view' as a reflection of the rational inclination to objectify and grasp the world by framing it, this house embraces its surrounding natural landscape without visually possessing it. After all to a sailor like Bill Bridgeford it might have seemed more important to feel part of the bay and the vegetation through its breezes, sounds and smells rather than by viewing these natural elements with the eyes – an approach closely empathetic with Boyd's inclination towards a non hierarchical and inclusive correlation of architecture, landscape and infrastructure.



Mauro Baracco



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria

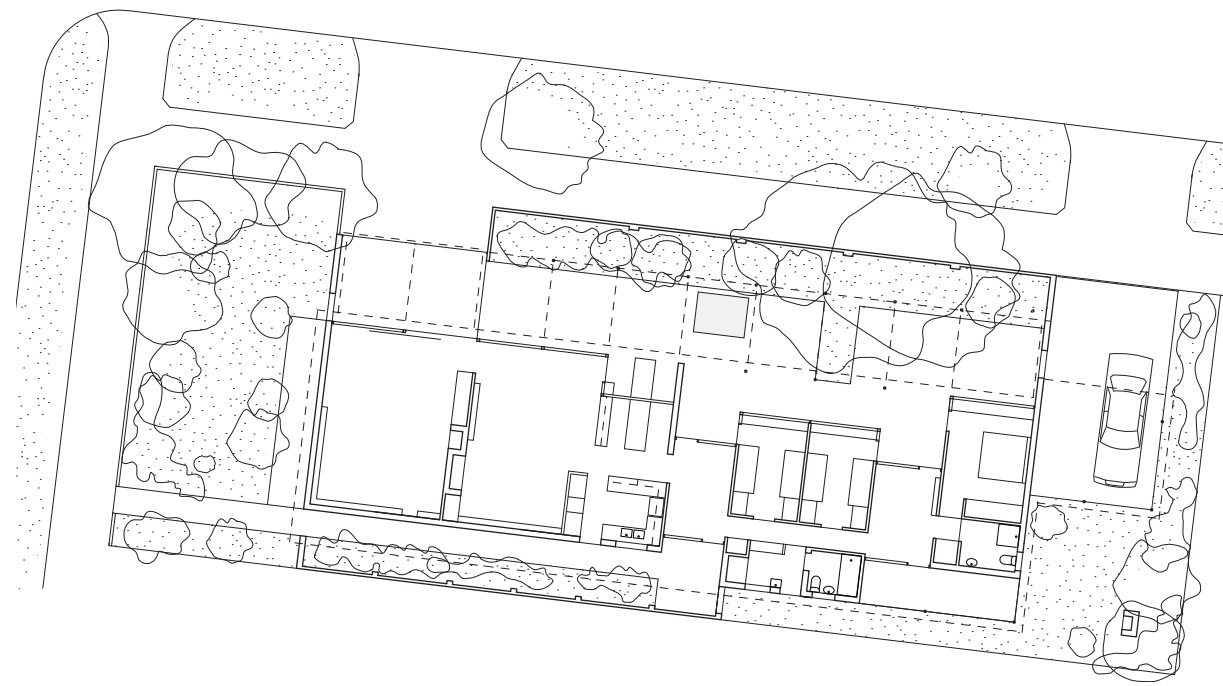


Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



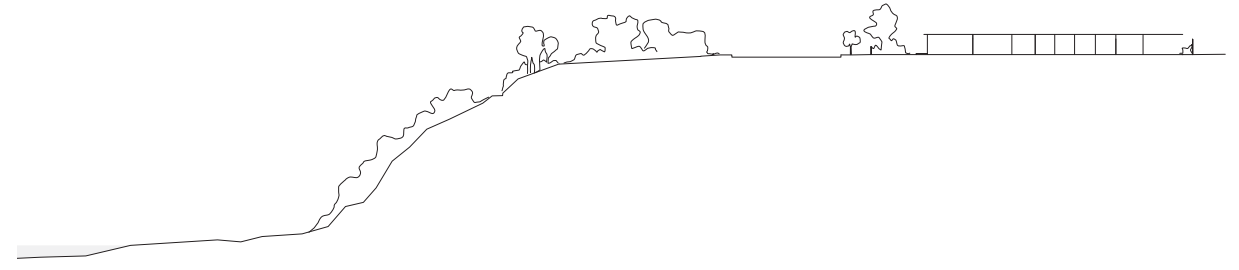
Mauro Baracco

- 1 'House on the Beach Road, Black Rock', *Architecture and Arts*, no. 13, August 1954, p. 26
- 2 A caption next to the plan of this house, from a review published soon after the completion of the house, states that: "garden and house blend in this plan"; Peter Lyell, 'Walled-in for peace and space', *Woman's Day and Home*, 4 April 1955, p. 51

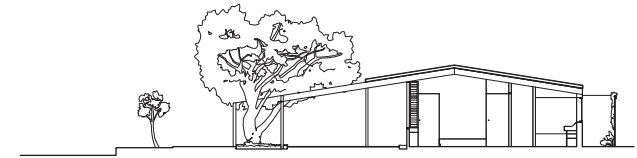


1:300

174

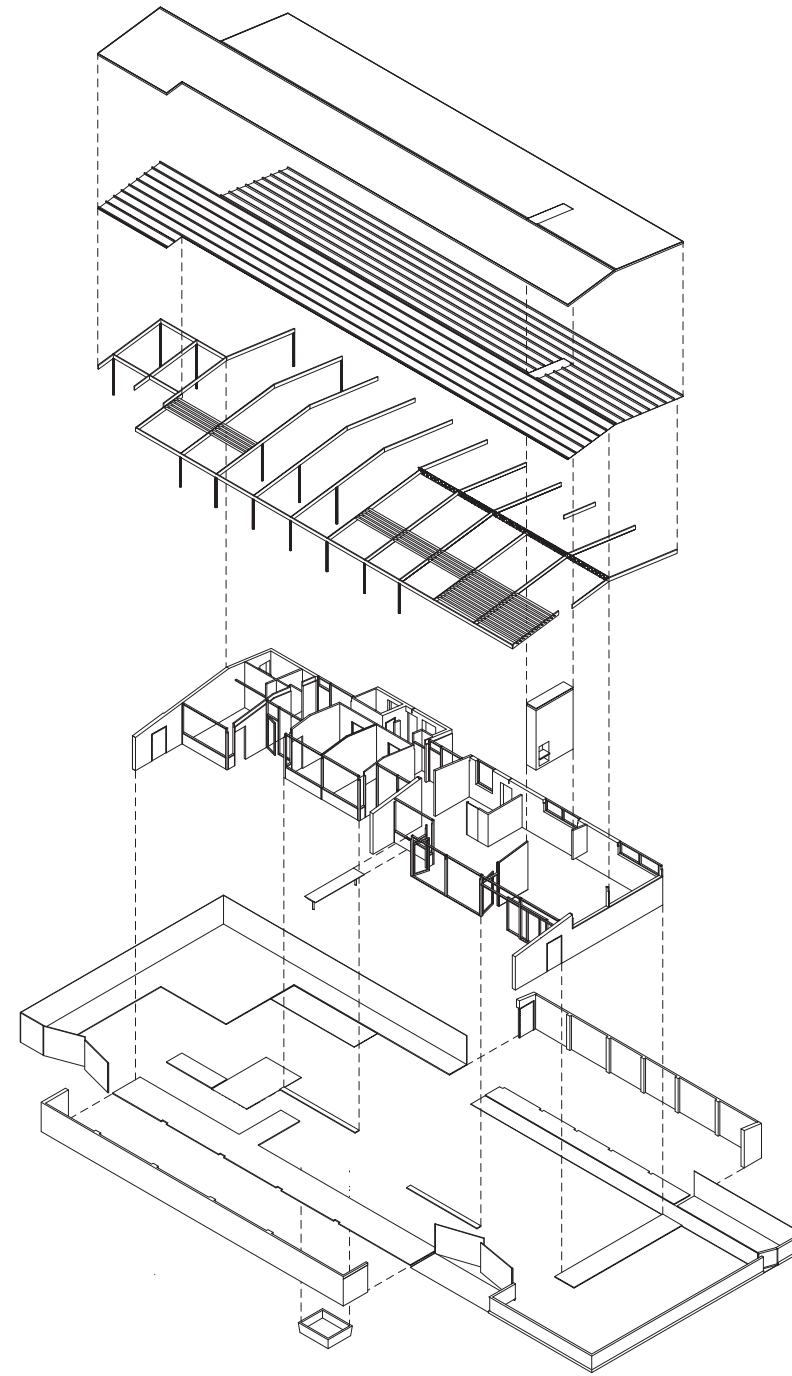
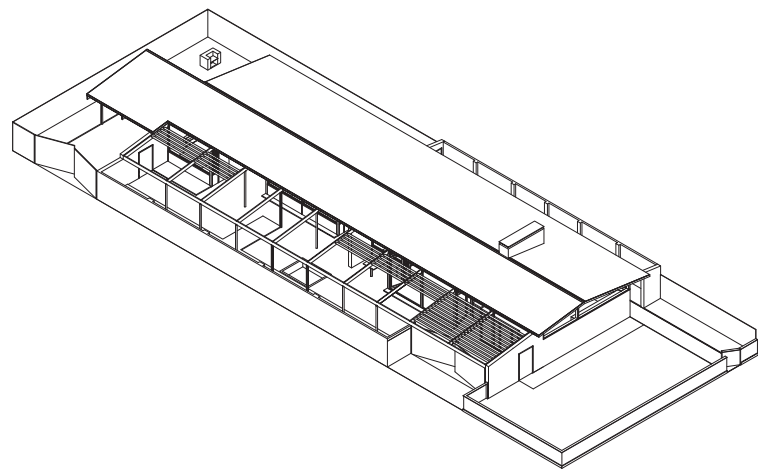
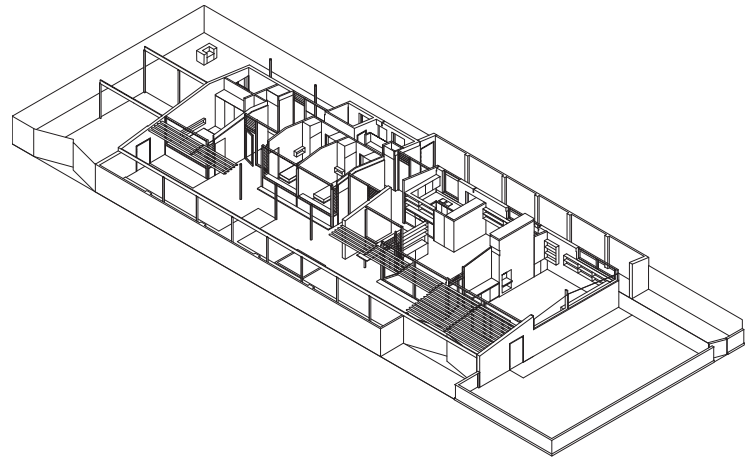


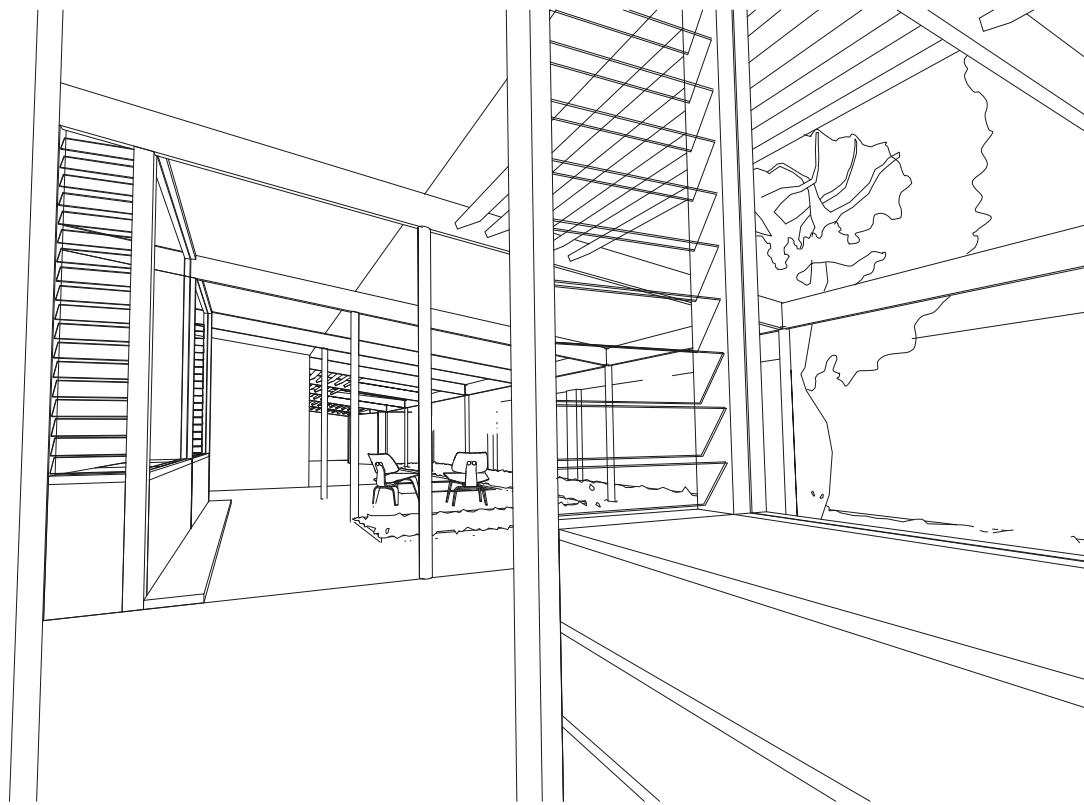
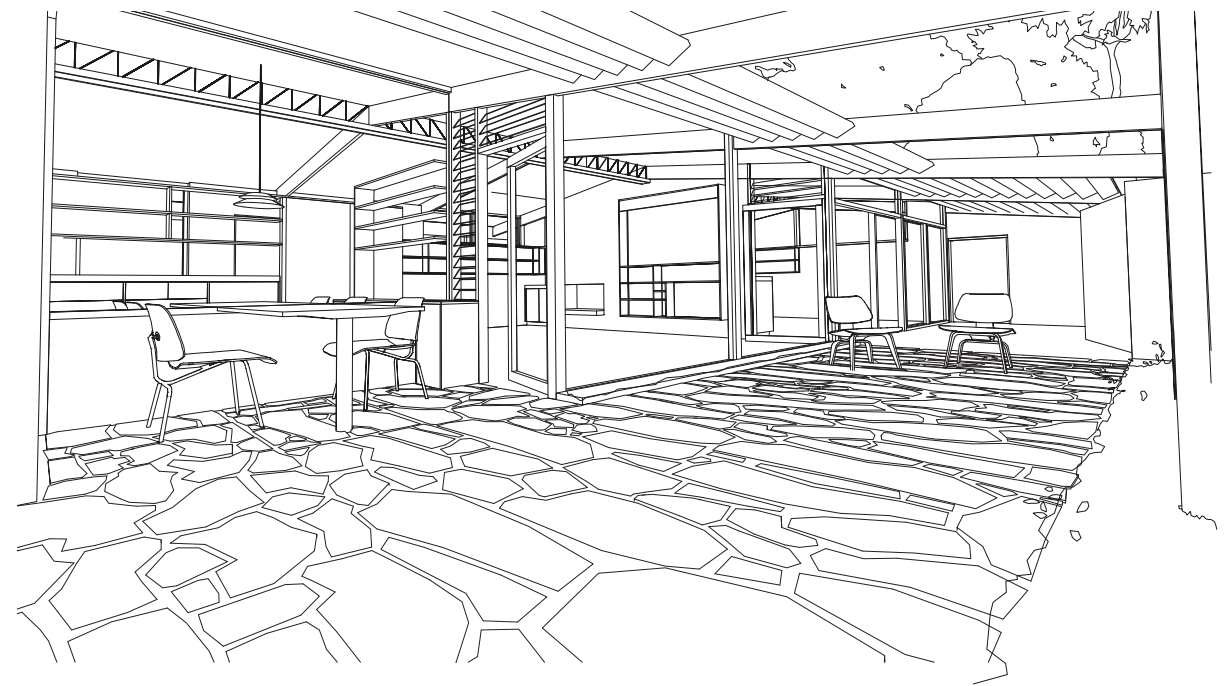
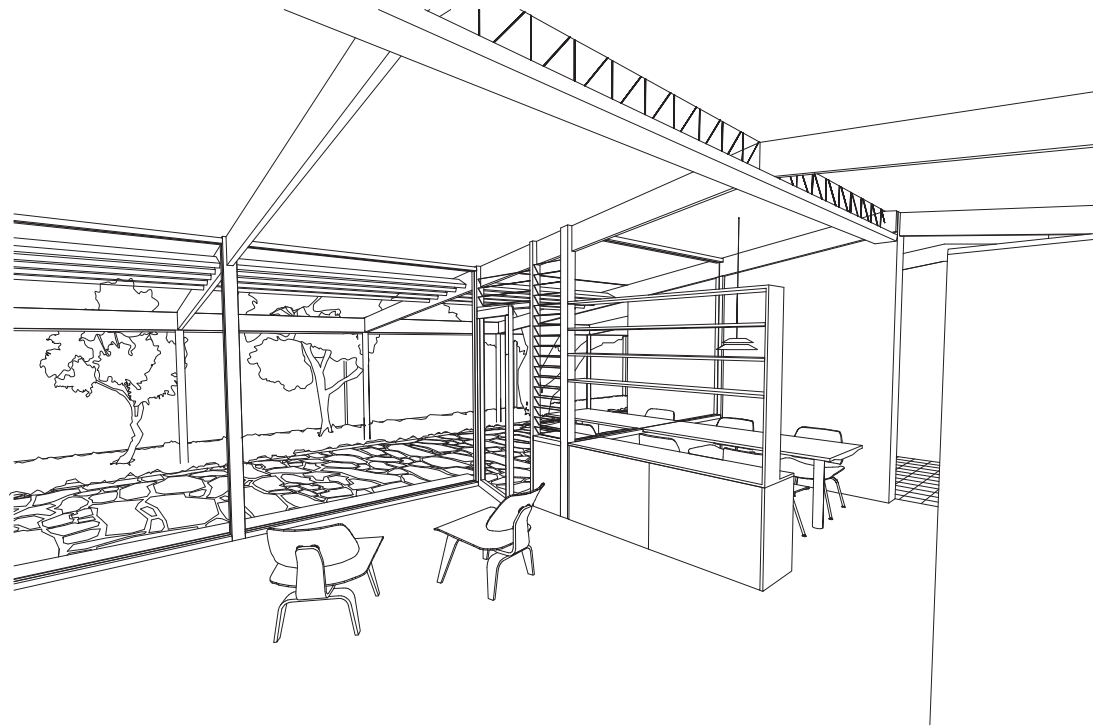
1:1000



1:300

175







Mauro Baracco



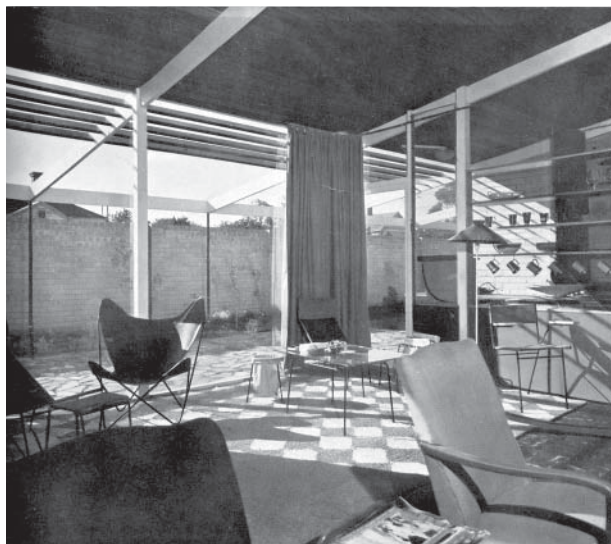
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Richardson House
1954



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



1:10 000



1:2000

The Richardson House is located in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak, approximately 6 kilometres south-east from the city. The unusual shape and size of the block that incorporates the house, distinctively irregular and smaller in comparison to the majority of the properties in the same urban block and the surrounding fabric, implicitly reveals the anomalous character of the site and the consequential degree of difficulty that initially informed the design project. Located at the end of a cul-de-sac and squeezed between the street and the four surrounding blocks, this 'quasi-triangular' urban leftover fragment is part of a subdivision of an old garden. It is characterised by the presence of large existing trees and traversed by a dry creek bed.

The response to the prohibition, imposed by government authorities, to occupy the ground area incised by the dry creek bed and keep it clear for constant maintenance, produced an intriguing similarly 'quasi-triangular' figure – a wedge-shaped plan that allows the building to lightly and freely flow in the wedge-shaped block, detached from the boundaries, inserted among the trees and suspended over the easement. The one-storey house is effectively a bridge – a volume in the air that hangs from two steel webbed arched beams spanning between two couples of concrete bases which are placed on the opposite banks of the creek bed. The distance between the bases on the north east bank is shorter than the gap between the bases located on the south west side; as a consequence of this the twin arched trusses are slightly unparallel, allowing the house to gradually widen out from one end to the other. The result is a plan layout consisting of two halves – a living and family room occupies the smaller one, revolving around a free standing fireplace and also including the entry area past the front door; the other half accommodates two bedrooms (one of which provided with an ensuite), a large dressing/flexible room between them, a bathroom, a kitchen and dining areas. These two latter are spatially related to the living and family areas; all together they form a continuous – rather long and narrow – open space that extends from end to end, effectively conveying the visually linear perception that is normally associated with bridging experiences.

A couple of connective points tie this 'bridge-house' to the ground: a stepped back entry links the kitchen with an outdoor pedestrian pathway that runs towards the street, and a suspended deck spans from the outdoor garden to the southeast façade, hitting it at approximately halfway in correspondence of the front door – this deck further enhances the bridging spirit that so pervasively characterises this project, stretching as well the steep garden of this site up until the front door. This south portion of the garden is cut in two by a sloping driveway that bends in proximity to the entry deck in order to insert itself between two existing trees and from here dive further down to reach a low and compressed open car space accommodated in the house's undercroft.

This negative space, gained through the process of bridging, is a clear reflection of Boyd's capability to positively react to projects' difficulties. In this and other projects this Melbourne architect not only brilliantly absorbs the problem – here, the prohibition to occupy a portion of the ground level – and overcomes it into the main concept – here, a house as a bridge – but also combines more functions into one single gesture, opportunistically devoting the undercroft space delivered by the bridging strategy to be used

as a carport and outdoor utility area. The formal and structural outcome of this project is a contextual direct response to the existing site conditions and its intrinsic restrictions rather than an aphoristic ideological celebration of technology – the two metallic beams are the consequence of the impossibility to 'ground' the building.

A strong engagement with the existing landscape and the consequent building's emergence from the shady sunk gully are further benefits which are indirectly associated with the bridging approach. Thanks to its suspended condition, the house is entirely surrounded by the green presence of the existing leafy trees. It lightly floats in the air, as a delicate suspended infrastructural presence in dialogue with nature. Screened from the houses nearby by the landscape rather than by curtains or blinds, therefore unreservedly open to the visual and physical experience of the surrounding nature, this house also takes advantage of its detachment from the ground by lying at a level that enables it to be definitely more exposed to the sunlight and directly connected to the surrounding streetscape.

Subsequently connected to a newer building in the adjacent block at the west end, the spaces of this house are currently primarily used for day-time activities.



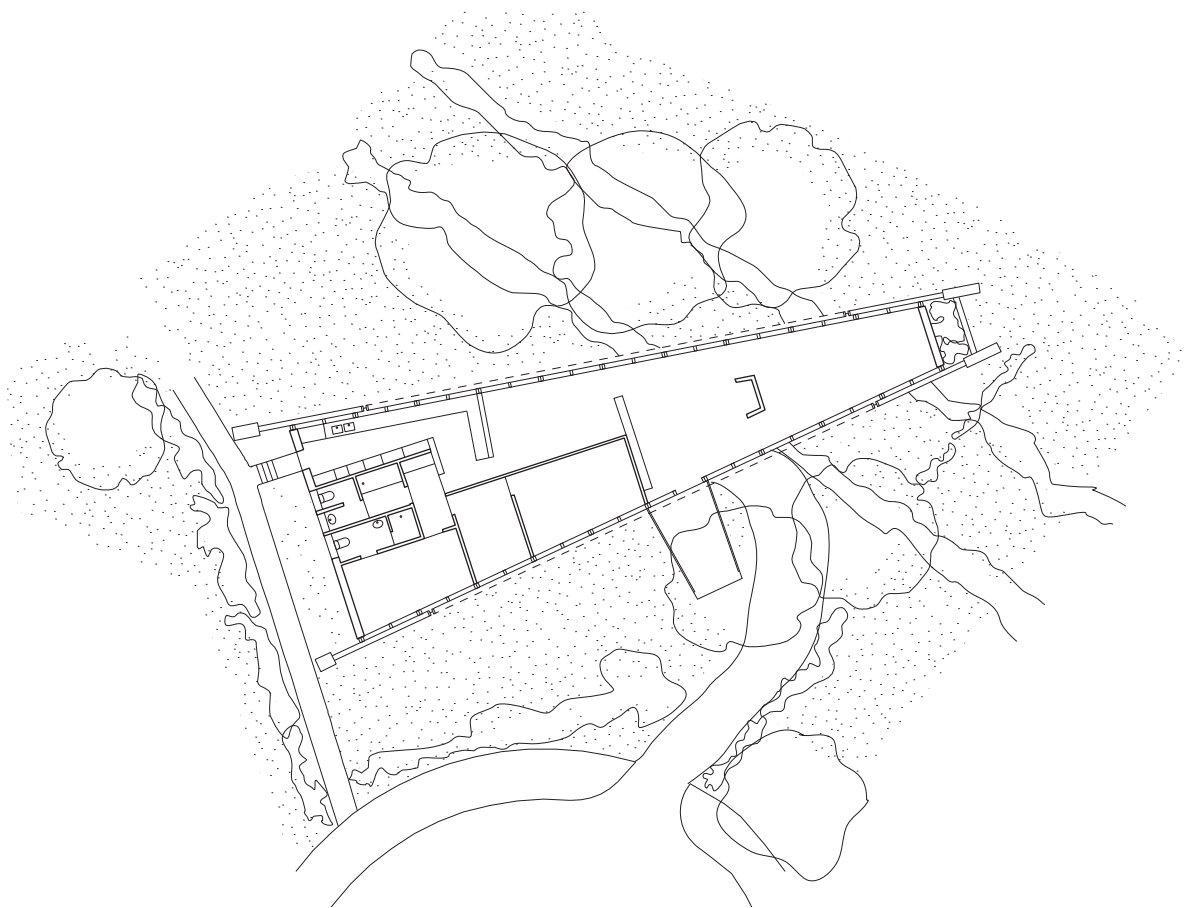
Wolfgang Sievers, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



Mark Strizic

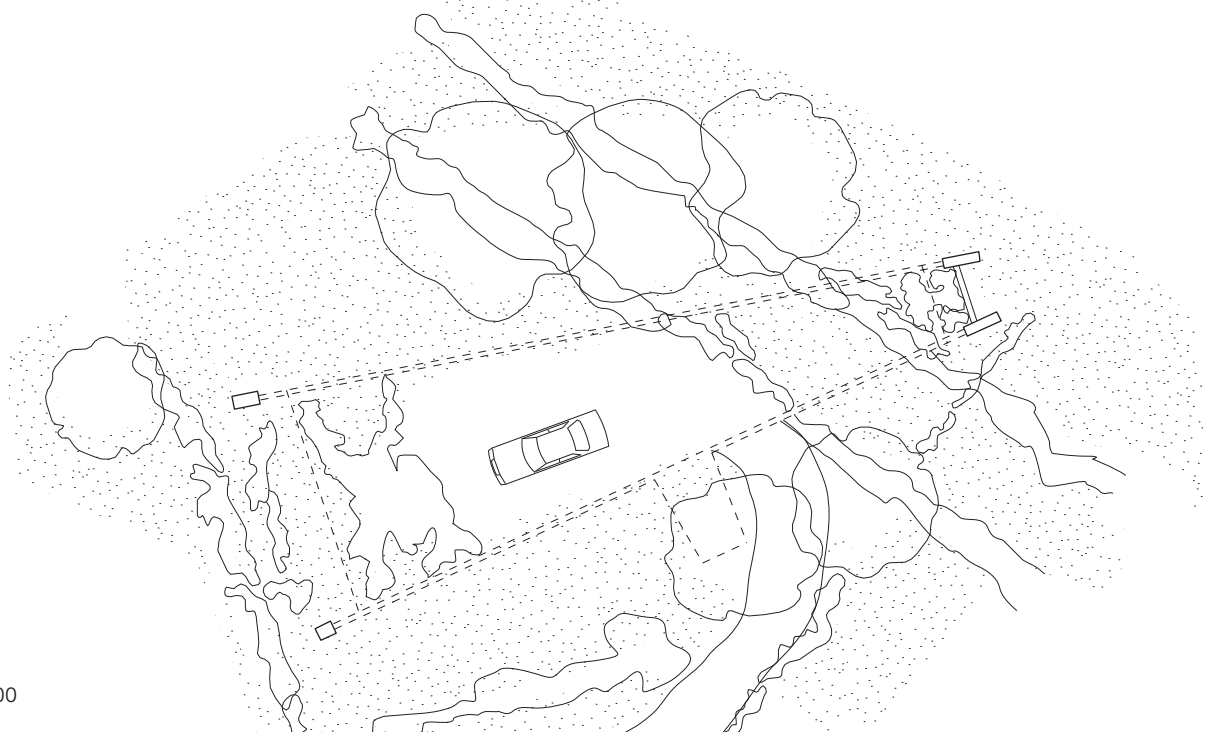


Mauro Baracco

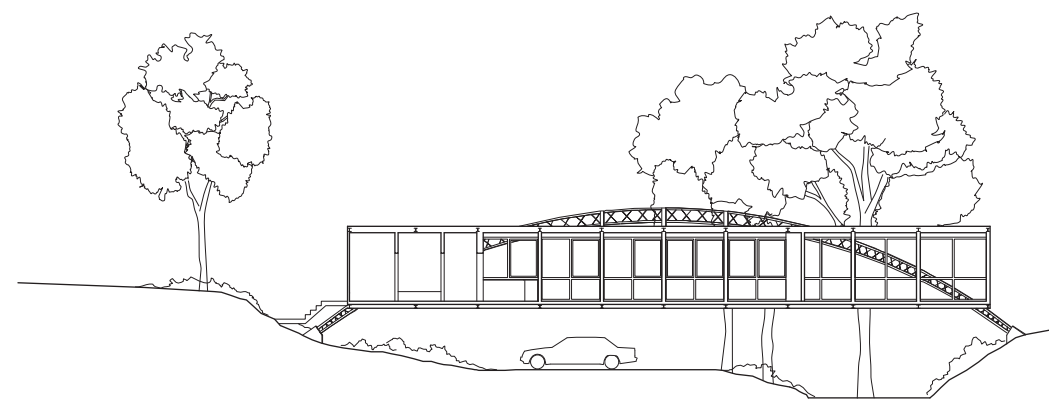


1:300

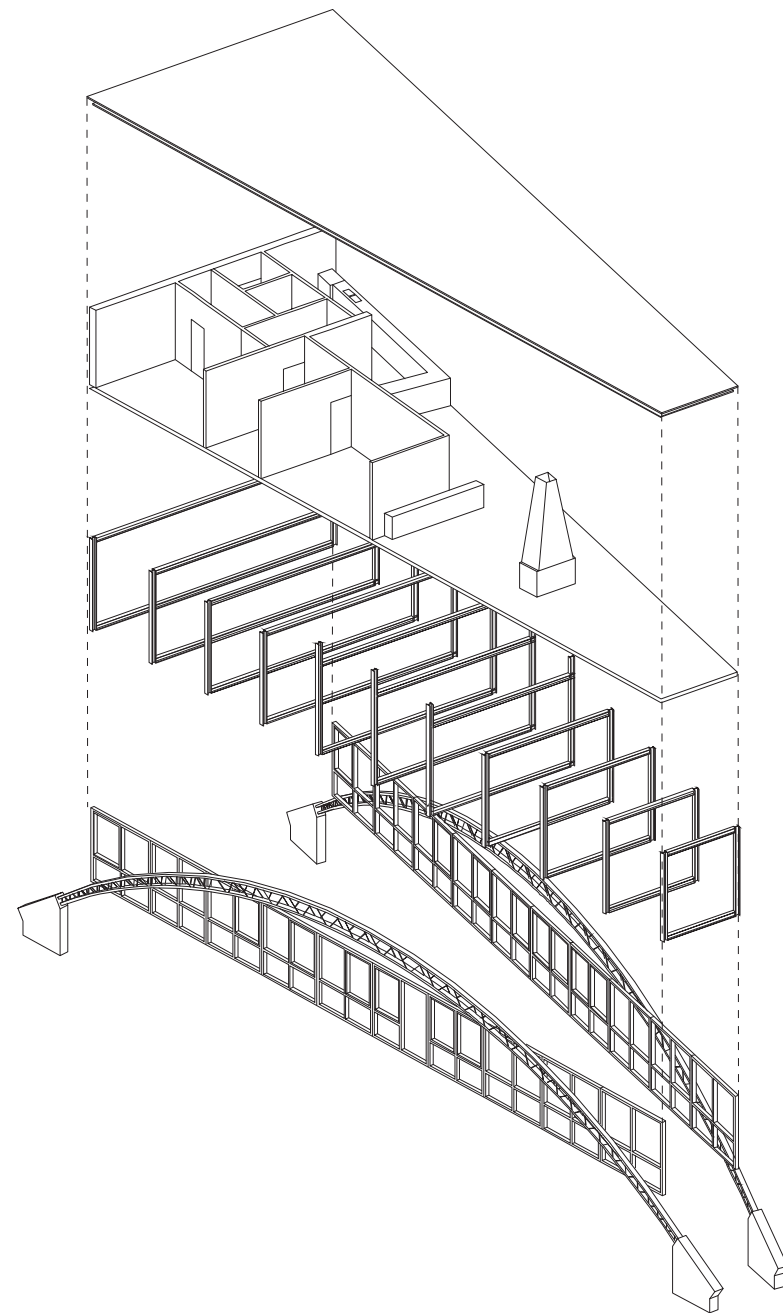
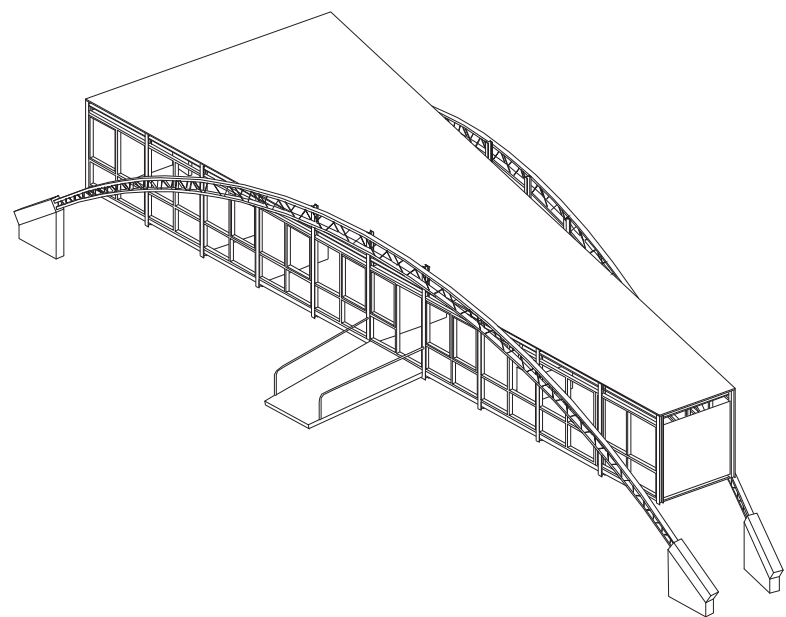
186

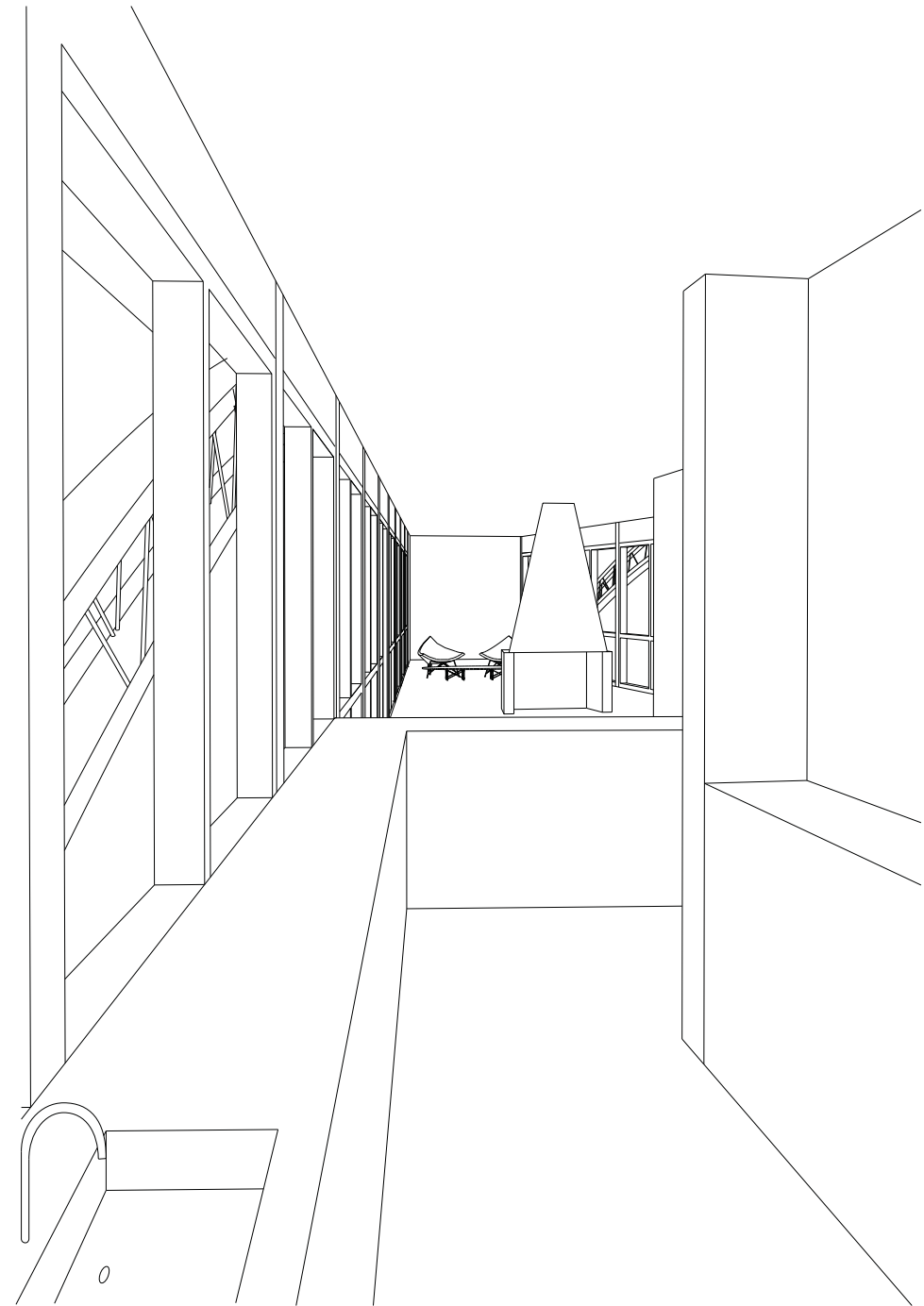
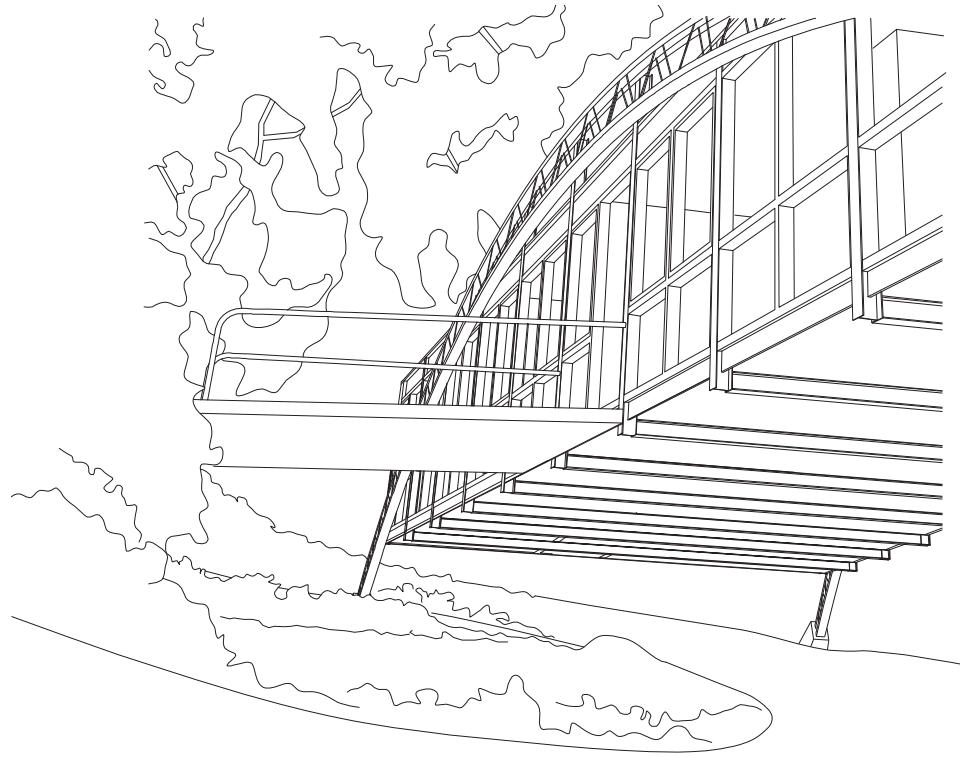


1:300



187







Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Architecture and Arts, no. 28, December 1955

Holford House
1956



Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)



1:10 000

The Holford House is located in the Melbourne suburb of Ivanhoe, approximately 12 kilometres north-east from the city. It is situated along the north edge of an extensive green reserve that includes parklands and golf courses spread out in patches among bends of the Yarra River. The property block slopes down from the north-east to the south-west boundary – the former is defined by a street, the latter by a green reserve.

The house, a quadrangle of three wings and one external wall enclosing a courtyard, addresses this urban situation by treating the front along the street as an introverted façade with clerestory windows on the top edge, and conversely releasing the volume at the back to the parkland by means of full height windows. The different residential zones are allocated in empathy with this process of gradual uncovering: the night-time areas in the north wing, sufficiently removed from the street but also aside from the internal circulation; toilet, laundry and kitchen in the transitional east wing; dining and living areas open to the parkland from the south wing. A carport, detached from and yet linked to the street, is spatially carved within the north-west angle of the building – this void, effectively a volumetric module that has been left open in the structural layout, leads the way to the entry located in the south-west corner of the internal courtyard. This carport has been later enclosed and transformed into an additional room – as a result of this, a new carport has been built closer to the street and the entry path to the house now lies along the west side of the external wall, which has been perforated to allow an opening in correspondence of the west short end of the courtyard.

A continuous roof, sloping down from the side aligned with the street to the one facing the parkland, is raised over the top of the building's volumes, revealing the timber posts and beams of its structural network. As observed by Boyd, this device, similarly adopted in some other works, not only enables "freedom in planning while economically providing larger areas of covered exterior living space",¹ but also "shades the rooms like a raised parasol, allowing a free passage of air across the insulated tops of the boxes containing the rooms...substantially reducing interior temperatures in summer".² The roof loses its cladding when it flies over the internal courtyard, exposing the beams as hovering lines across the resulting rectangular hole.

Open to the sky, the courtyard, in some ways a reinterpretation of an ancient Roman atrium, becomes a threshold area between the carport/'vestibulum' and the entry door/'ianua'. It is an outdoor 'room', an additional space for inhabitation with the canopy of a tree as a shading and sheltering 'ceiling' presence, and low vegetation and concrete pavers as 'floor'. Surrounded on three sides by glazed façades of floor-to-ceiling windows in timber frames, the courtyard allows some of the internal spaces – the living/dining room, the kitchen, the L-shaped distributing hallway, and the largest of the three bedrooms – to virtually expand outside and be reciprocally interrelated by the visual dematerialization of their boundaries. The living/dining room, relatively narrow and low, is openly unveiled along its long sides, so as to be projected towards the outdoor worlds outside: the expanse of the parkland including the Ivanhoe public golf course, and the more secluded



1:2000

internal courtyard. Although physically enclosed, this room is however pervaded by a sense of unbounded spatiality – its compressed interior leaks outside, releasing and effectively dilating its tightness within the indivisible spatial continuum that links together the surrounding environment of this house with its indoor and outdoor elements.

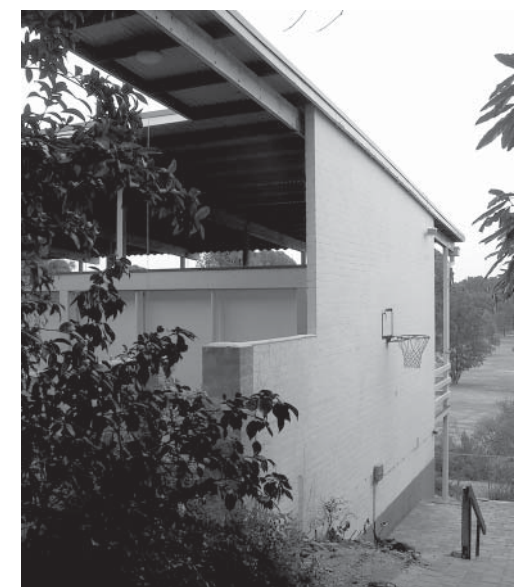
The existing golf course and parkland beyond is a given condition, an urban gift to the site of this project. Boyd takes great advantage of this, opportunistically drawing it to the house and using it as an asset that is fully embraced and vividly brought in through the transparency of three of the four façades parallel to the green reserve, and the free flowing space under the roof. The lack of a high fence along the boundary to the parkland, with the presence, instead, of low green edges and other plantings, is symptomatic of a condition that benefits from the existing slope as a natural element that is capable of unobtrusively defining a protective buffer space. Through its steepness and predisposition to be planted, this sloping ground offers a gentle sense of defence, without interrupting the continuity between architecture and landscape that characterises this project and its intrinsic situation.



Mauro Baracco

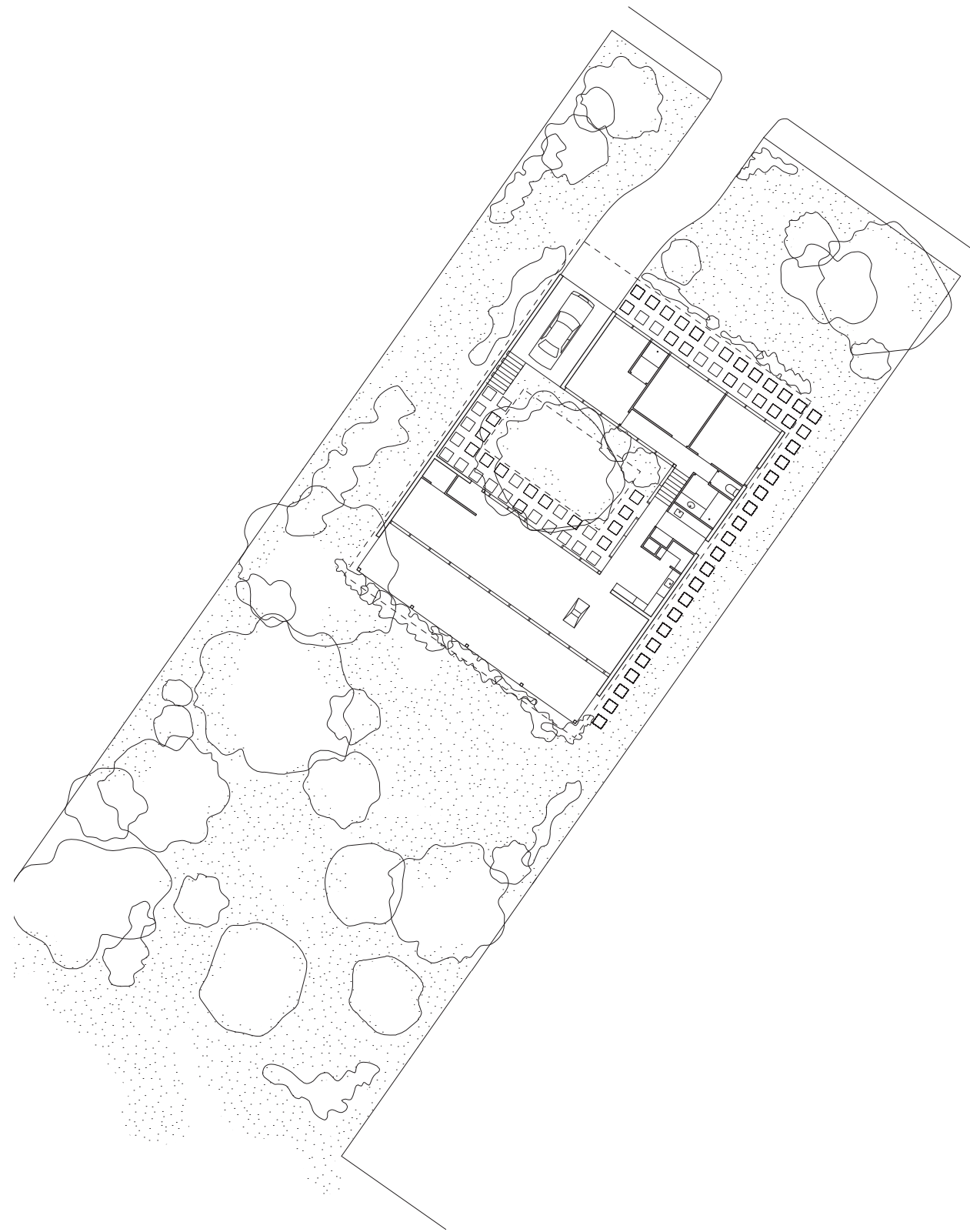


Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)

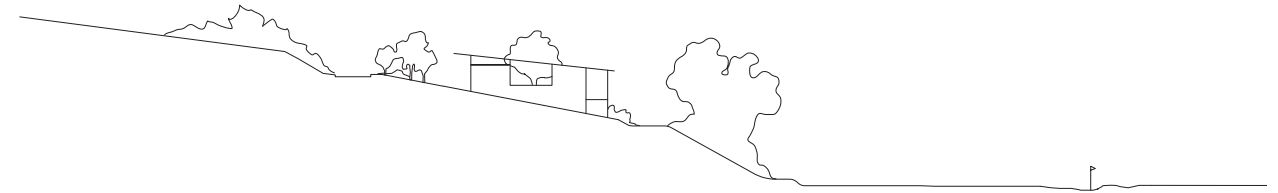


Mauro Baracco

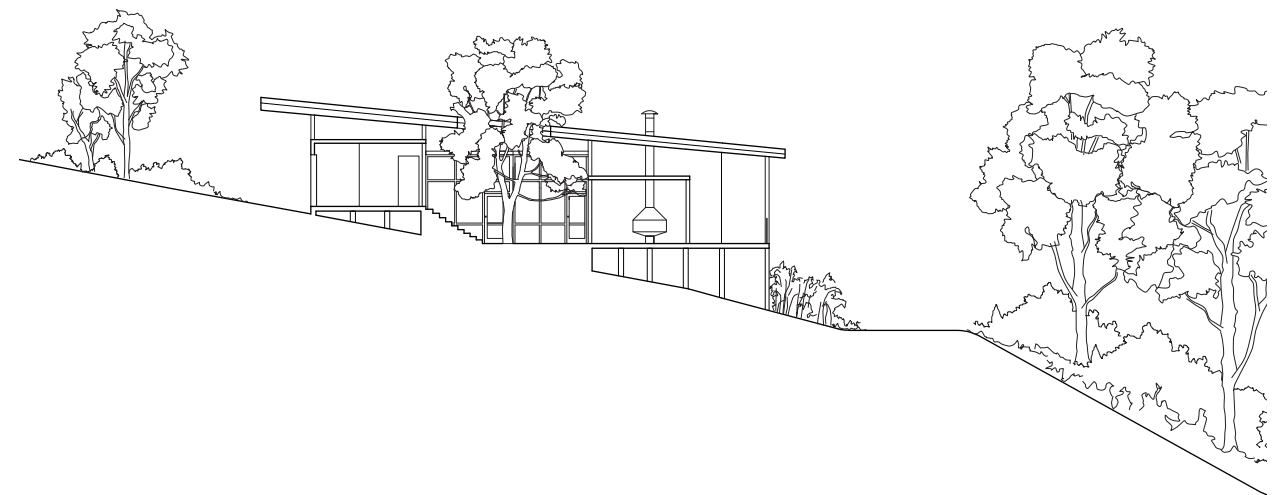
1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 13
2 Ibid.



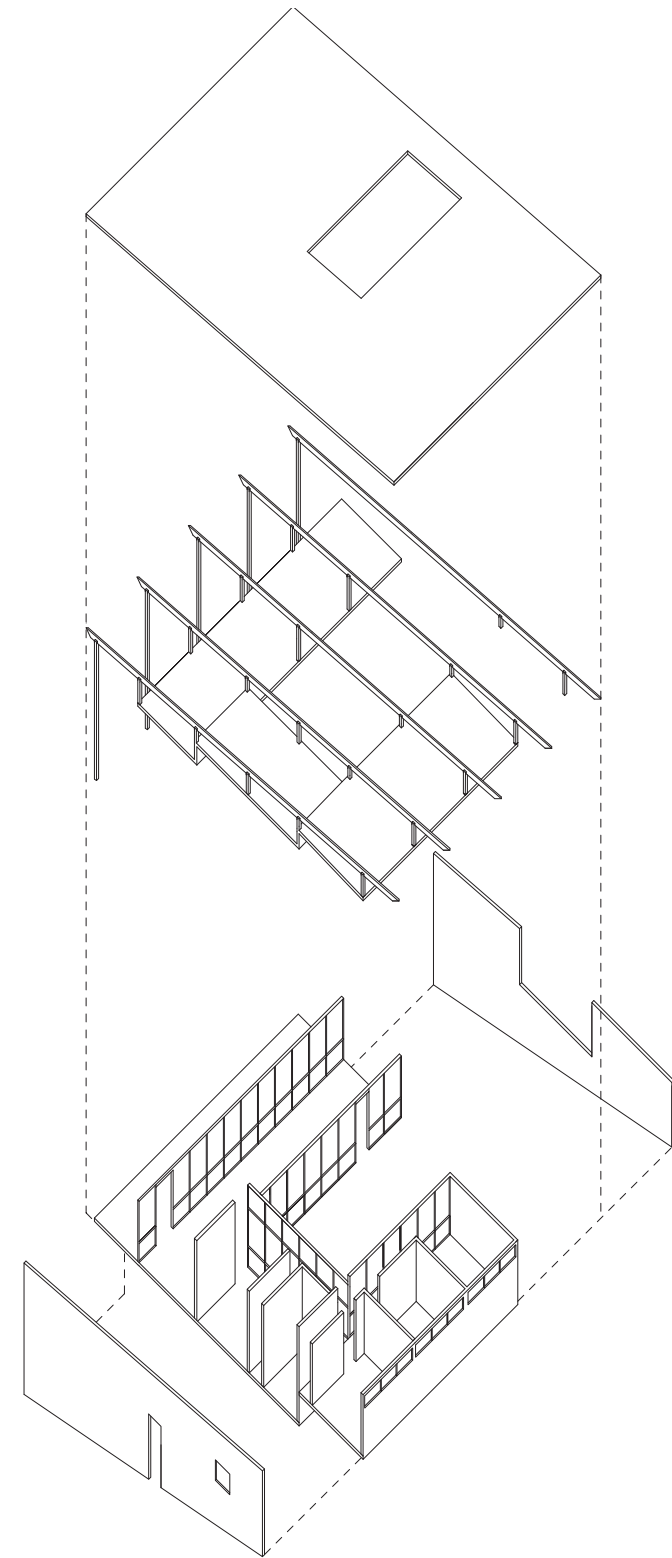
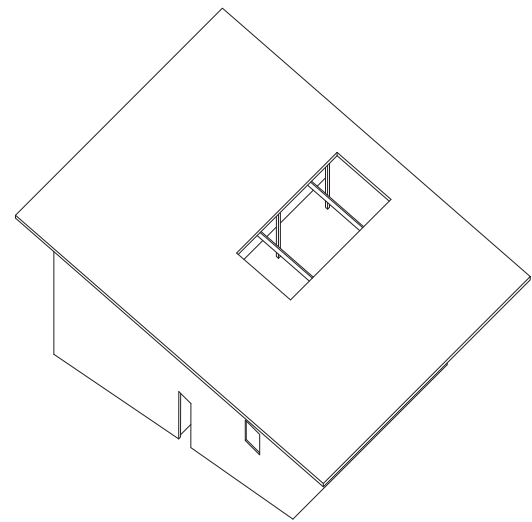
1:300

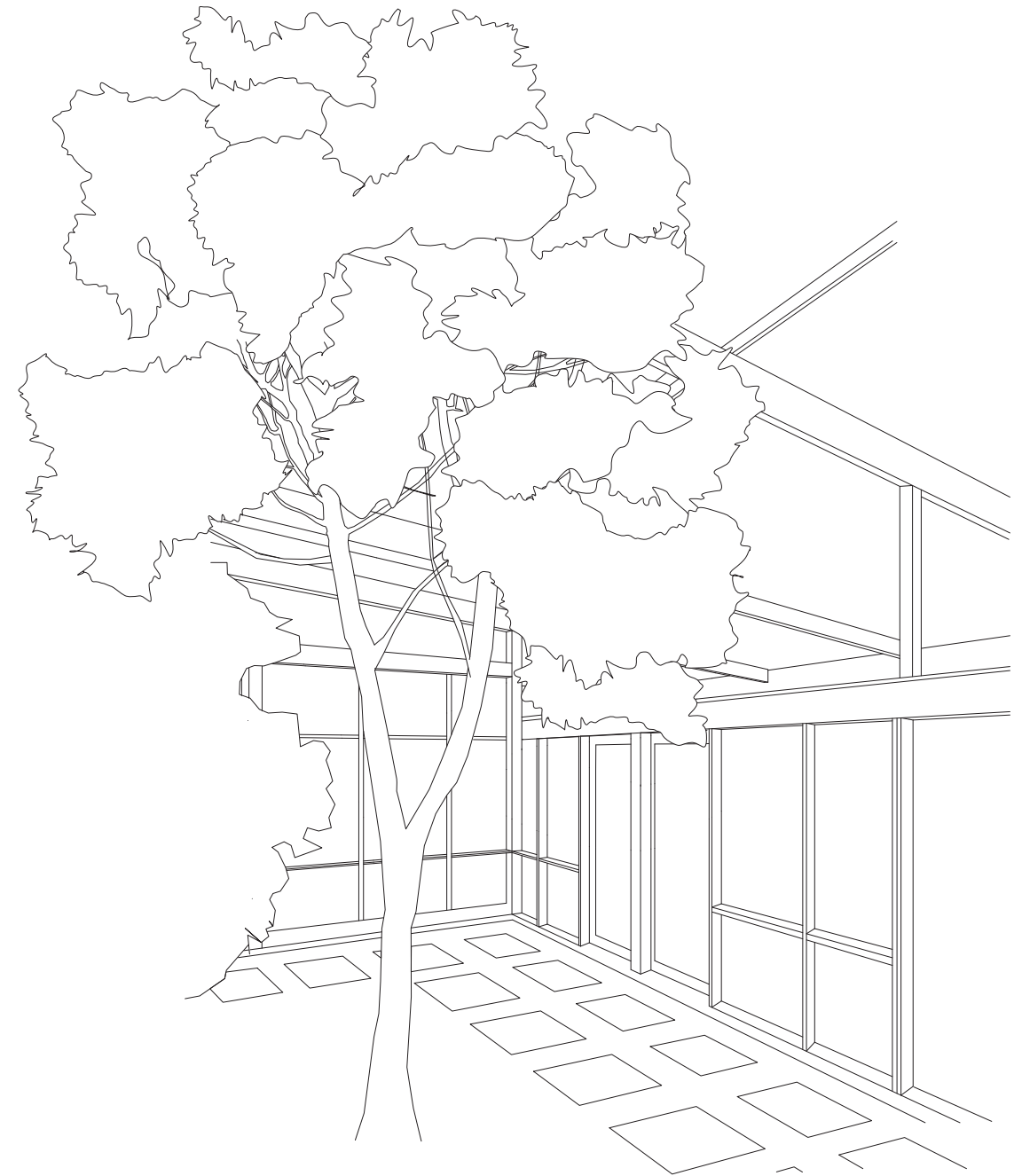
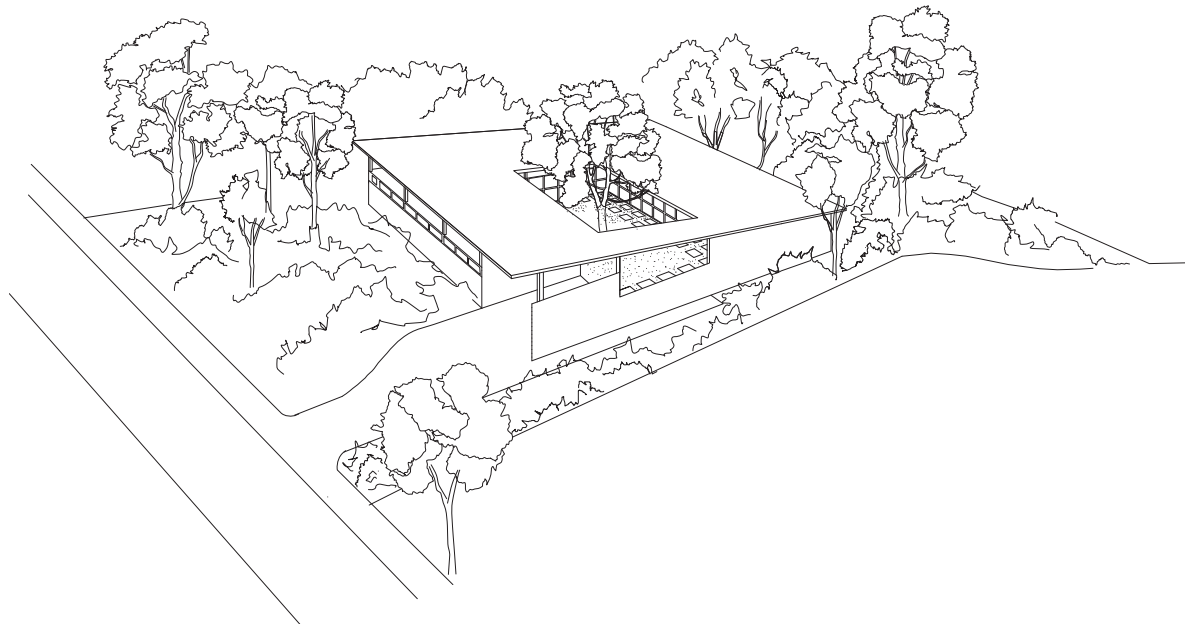


1:1000



1:300







Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)



Mauro Baracco



Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)



Ben Baird



Mauro Baracco

Houghton James House
1956



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000

The Houghton James House is in Melbourne's inner suburb of Kew, approximately 5 kilometres from the city.

The block is located on a steep slope on the east side of the Yarra River – it precipitously descends from east to west, meeting the river at its lower end. It is occupied by existing dense vegetation that in this part of Kew is particularly thick along the left bank of the Yarra. On the other side of the river, large parklands expand towards the north-west, including a golf course in the immediate proximity of the river edge.

The house is literally embedded within this situation, as an artificial presence that physically stems from the existing conditions of the natural landscape. The lower of its two volumes is cut into the bank, effectively keeping hold of the sloping ground – an almond-shaped retaining volume inserted within the existing ground, enclosed by earth all around except for one side. The northwest edge is open to the river and the parklands beyond it in the form of a continuous curved glass, the outline of which follows the existing contour line.

In contrast to the shape and outline of this sunken space, the upper floor is a quadrangular rectangular volume placed on top of the former. Its northwest corner slightly cantilevers above the glass wall below, and the east end accommodates a carport (added a few years later) and pathway to the main entry, both of them located under the stretching of a flat roof.

The superimposition of these volumes generates an outdoor space that on the upper level lies immediately in front of the north façade of the rectangular volume. Located on the roof that covers the north half of the lower almond-shaped volume, this outdoor space is a grassed garden, the manicured character of which counteracts the existing undomesticated vegetation along the bank. Faced by a continuous glass wall that also includes the main entry of the house, and visually projected towards the bank through a cantilevering slab demarcated by a balustrade, this balcony/deck/garden space is informed by a sense of internal extroversion which is symptomatic of the entire project.

The house is strongly introverted towards the external streetscape and yet openly released towards the bank's vegetation and the river; the façade along the street is almost entirely blank, except for the clerestory windows on the top edge for light and ventilation to the spaces inside. The main entry is located on the opposite side, at the 'back', around the corner from the carport which acts as a 'humble' introduction to the house. Contrary to this restrained demeanour, the concealed and more private inside world of the house opens itself in the direction of the bank through the total transparency of the continuous glass walls that delimitate the building on both levels towards north and north-west.

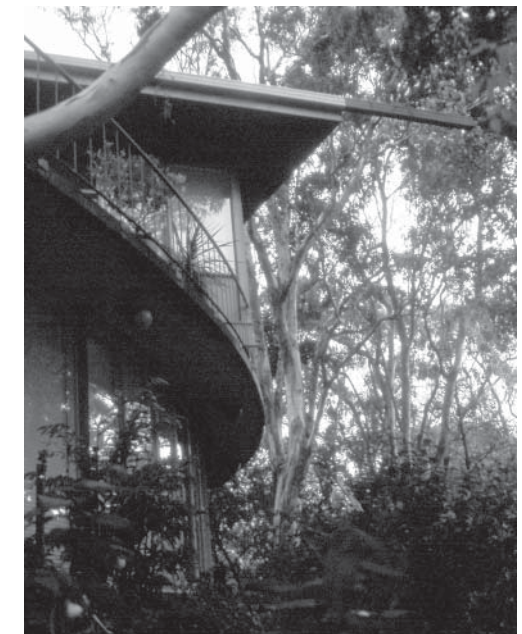
The interior space is quite modest in size, tailored on the needs of Boyd's friend 'Jimmy' Houghton James and his partner Wilga. The volume on the top floor accommodates the entry area, one main

bedroom with ensuite (including a bath and basin), one small bathroom/toilet, and a study/guest bedroom with a shower space; the one on the lower floor accommodates an open-plan living and dining space, a kitchen area with free-standing cupboard and bench, some utility rooms for storage and laundry tucked in between the retaining wall and an extra curved partition that swings in plan from the fireplace and gradually opens up towards the kitchen corner. These two volumes are connected, literally pinned together, by a large 'monumental' free suspended stair that descends through a circular stair-well, whose generous dimension is also cunningly instrumental in bringing north sunlight down to the semi-sunken and definitely more 'cavernous' space below. In 1967, after the original owners left and sold the house, the house was enlarged at the upper level – the carport and some extra volume were added along the east end, transforming the original open space of the study/guest bedroom into two rooms.

The existing trees of the bank have informed the design of the project at many levels. As suggested by Peter Brew, they have partially determined the position of the house;¹ in addition to this, they have been embraced and 'taken inside' through the opening of the floor-to-ceiling glass walls and the protruding of the upper garden/deck/balcony space towards the bank. Furthermore, the charming unconventional crudity of a vertical ladder that externally connects the two levels at the north top point of the project is certainly informed by the same level of straightforwardness that characterises ropes, ladders and other similar unobtrusive devices as basic circulation links for cubby and tree houses. In approaching this project and the way it relates to the existing natural landscape Boyd was certainly similarly guided by an inclination towards minimal interventions. After all an addition proposed a few years later for the roof of this house is pervasively informed by this type of minimalism – a minimalism by means rather minimalism of form. This proposal, never built but documented here as an essential part of the whole project, was offering the opportunity to climb even higher, effectively using the roof on top of the carport as a further deck serviced by a ladder – an additional platform in the air, a new layer for external inhabitation, a space further up in the sky that allows to more closely be among the trees and more intensely feel the breeze from the river.



Rodney Eggleston

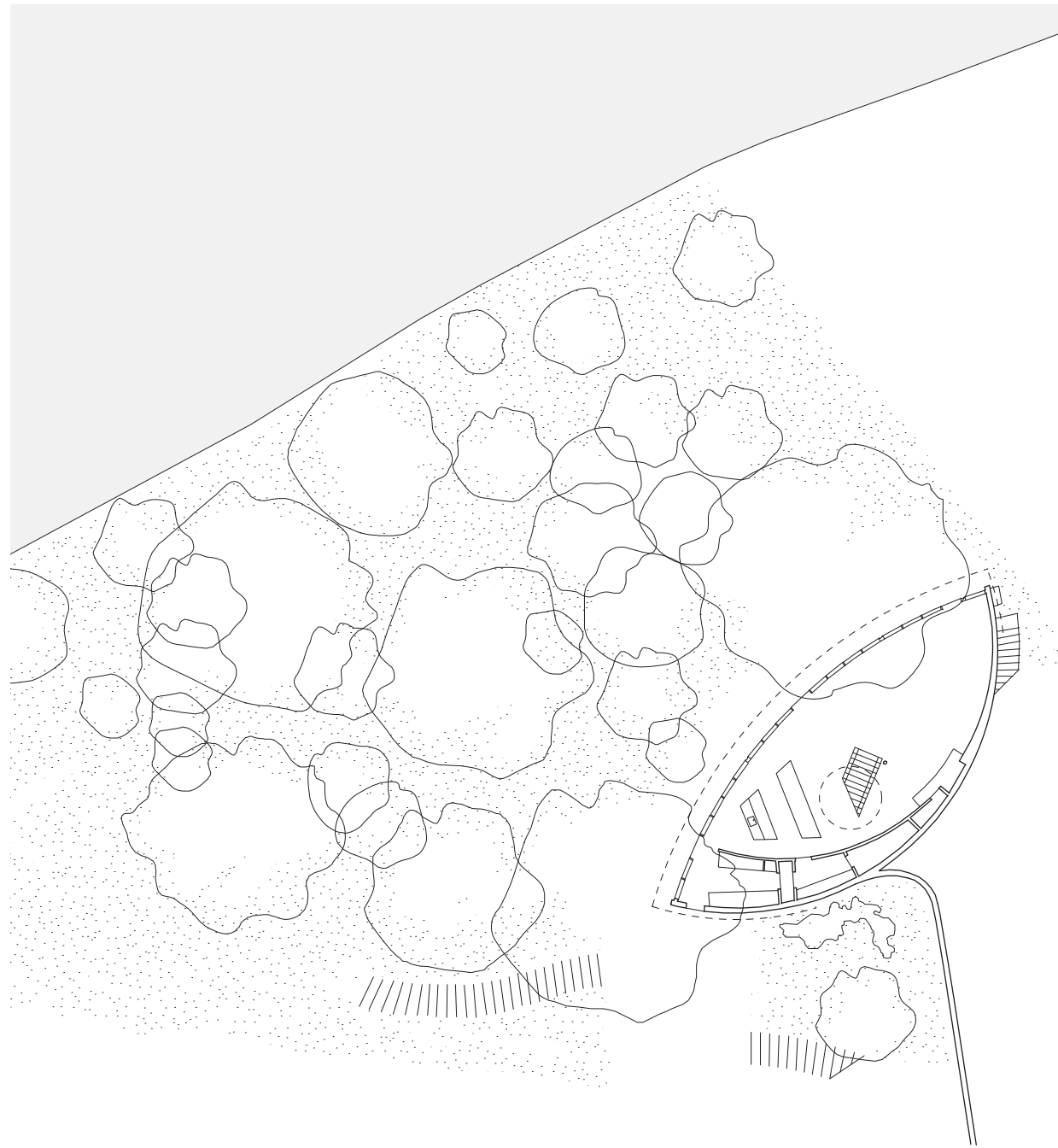


Mauro Baracco



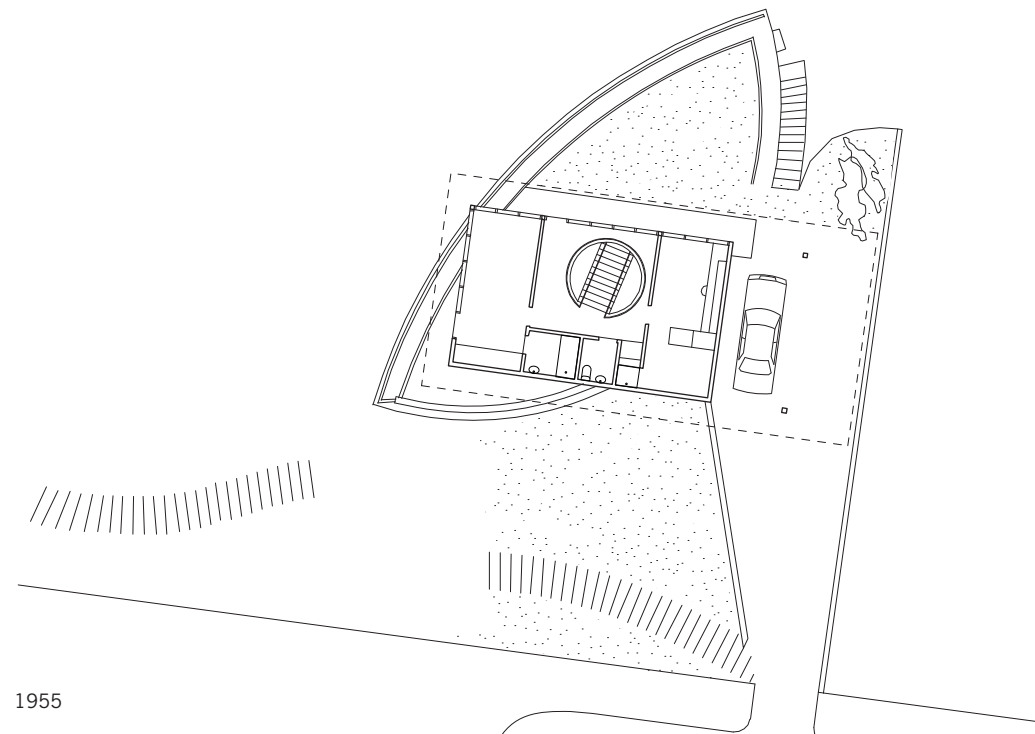
1:2000

¹ See Peter Brew's description of this project in Guy Allenby (ed.), 'The Iris House then and now', *Architectural Review Australia*, no. 60, Winter 1997, p. 83

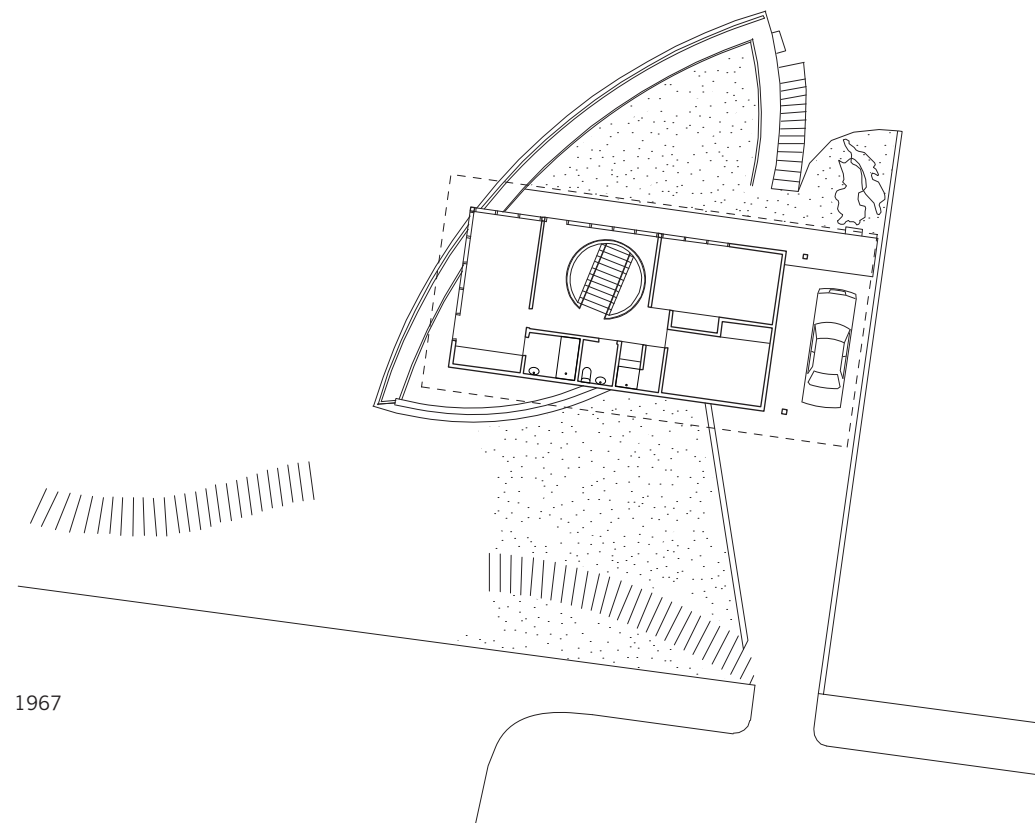


1:300

210



1955



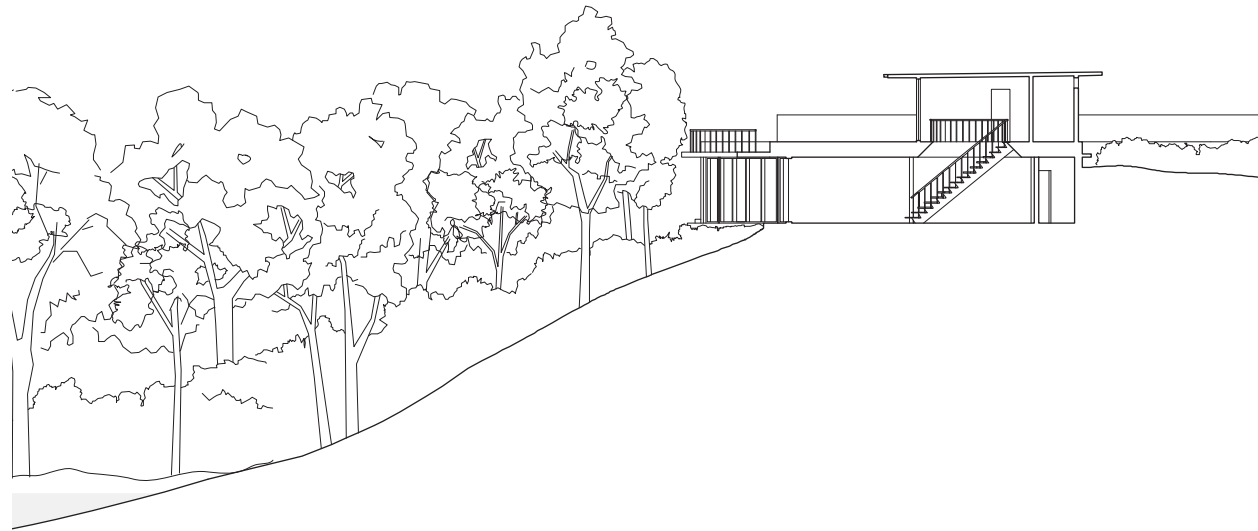
1967

1:300

211

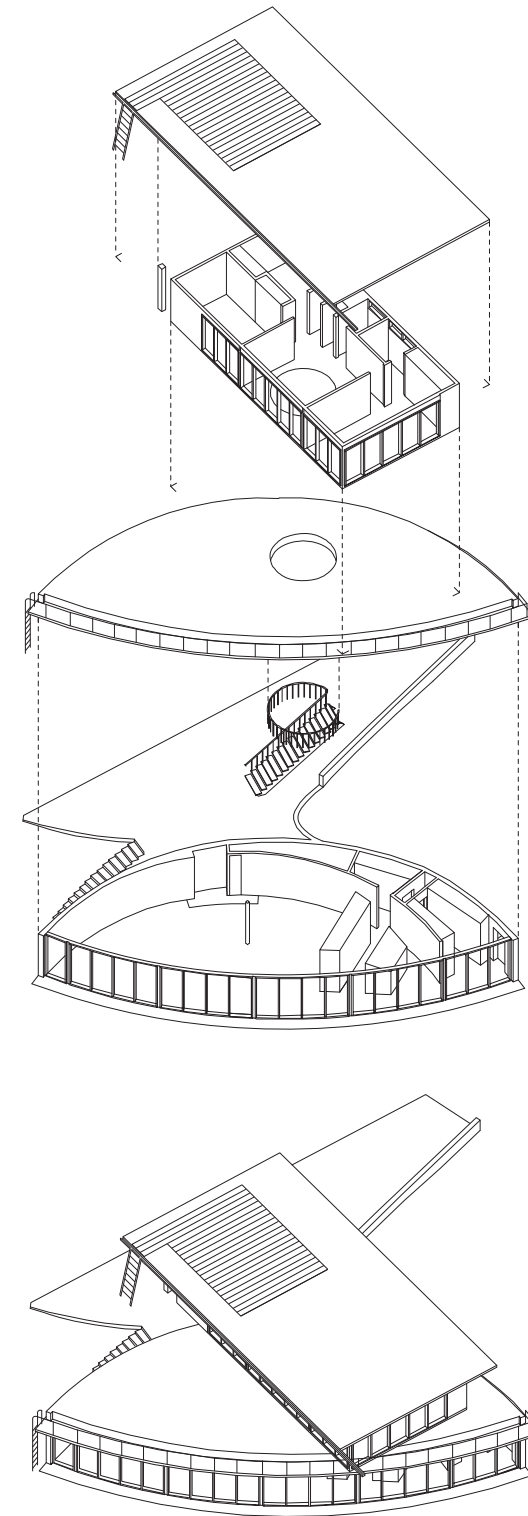


1:1000

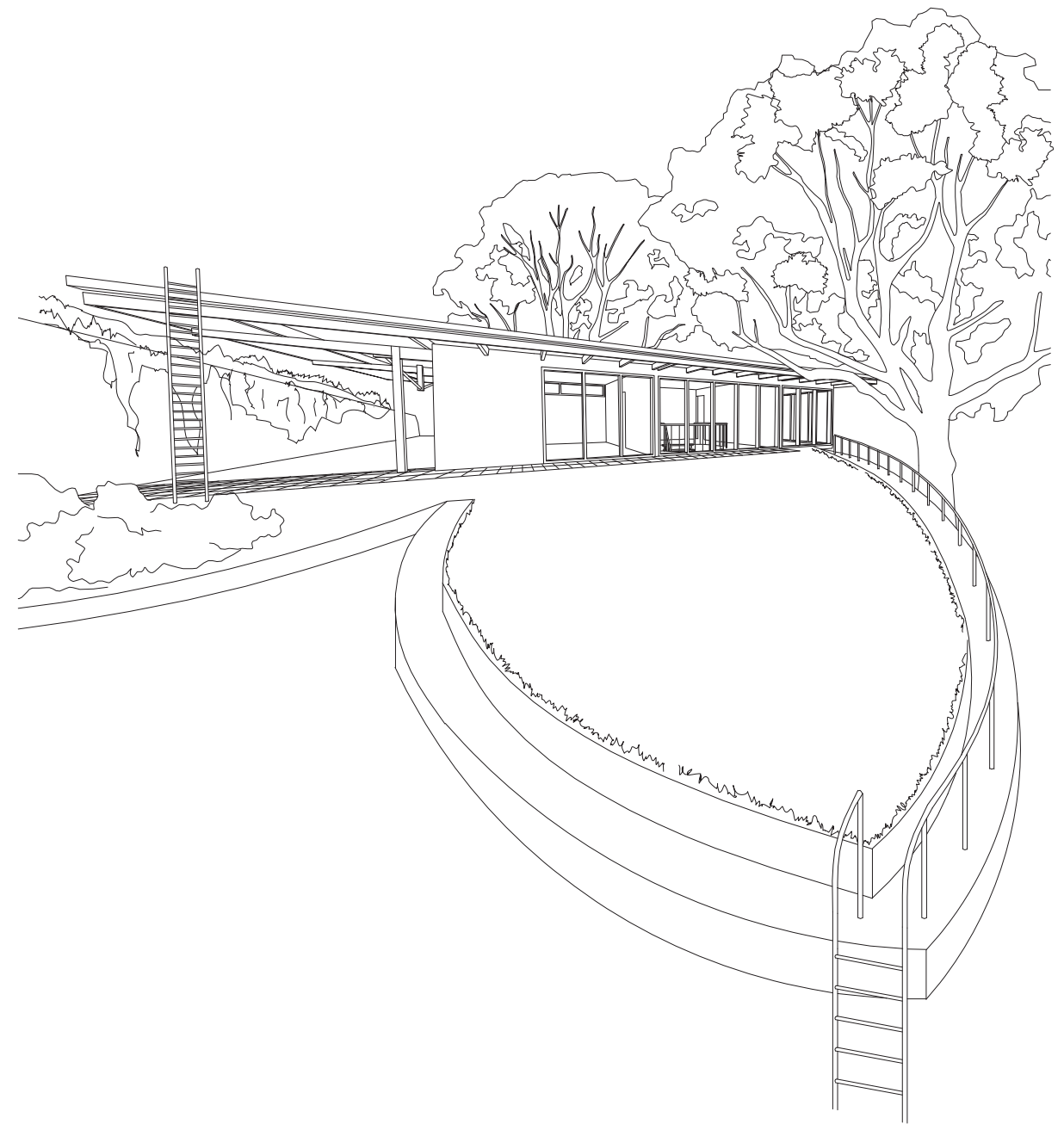
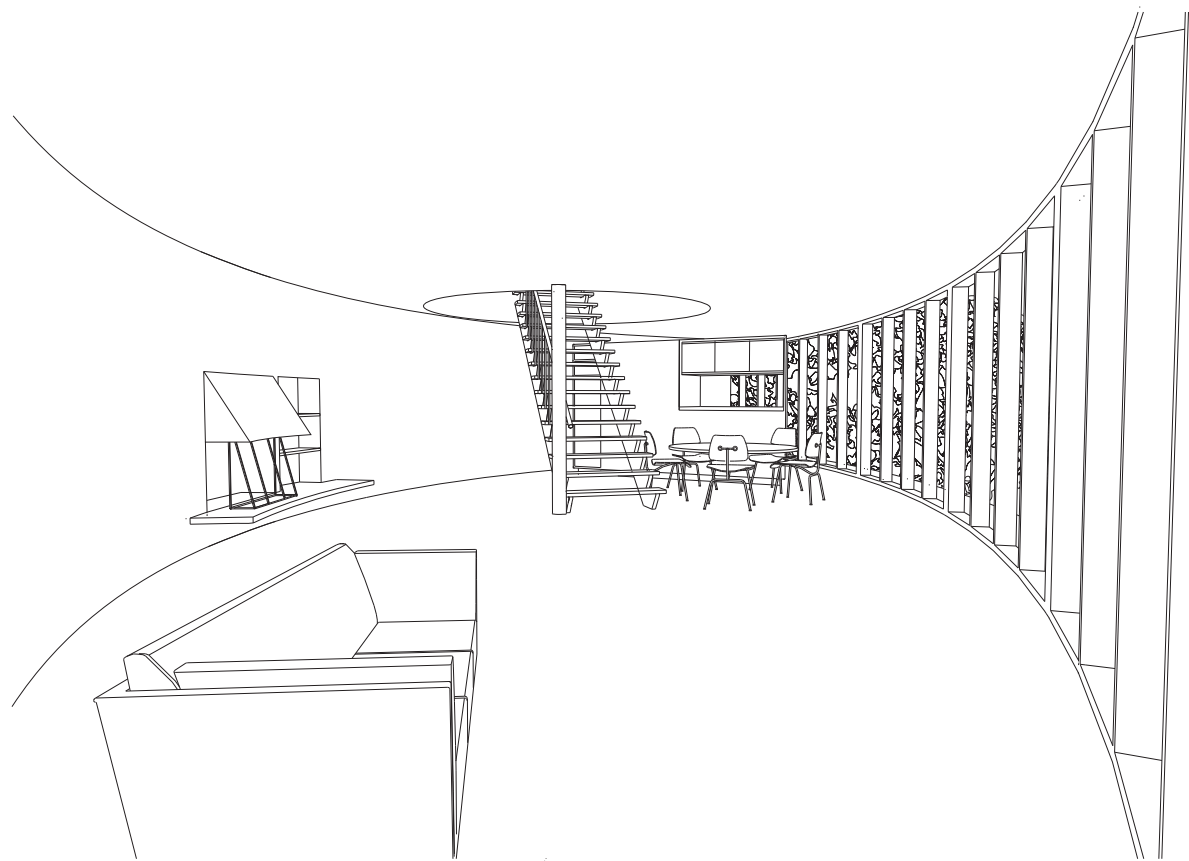


1:300

212



213





Trevor Mein (*Architectural Review Australia*, no. 60, Winter 1997)



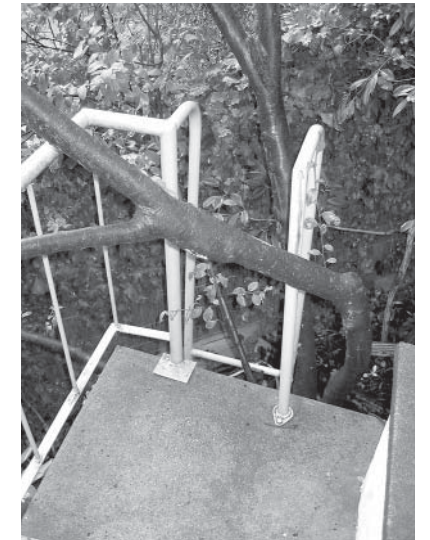
Rodney Eggleston



Rodney Eggleston



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



Rodney Eggleston



Rodney Eggleston



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Rodney Eggleston



Trevor Mein (*Architectural Review Australia*, no. 60, Winter 1997)



Rodney Eggleston

Southgate Fountain
1957 – 1960



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

Located on the southern edge of Melbourne's city, at one end of Princes Bridge, Southgate Fountain was completed in early 1960. It was demolished in the early 1970s, to clear the area for the construction of the Melbourne Concert Hall, which was eventually completed in 1982 as part of the Victorian Arts Centre designed by Roy Grounds, which also includes the National Gallery of Victoria and the Theatres Building with the Spire.

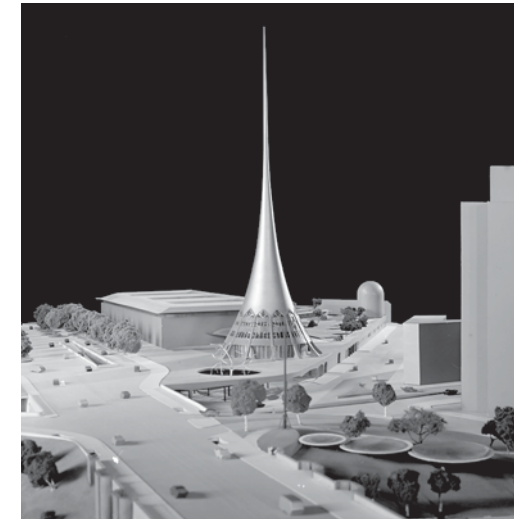
The cylindrical volume and form of the Melbourne Concert Hall (now known as Hamer Hall) intriguingly evokes the circular shape of the three fountain's dishes, somehow embracing and retaining the spirit of the latter in the mark of the circle as the diagrammatic expression of a hinge between different urban components. Originally sited in the triangular green area formerly known as Snowden Gardens, the fountain was effectively an interconnecting presence between the various different parts – St. Kilda Road axis, Yarra River, Princes Bridge, parkland nearby, industrial buildings – of an urban precinct that at that time was in the process of being significantly transformed from industrial use and storage to mixed programs, including business, retail and cultural activities, café-restaurants, public spaces and promenades along the river. Symptomatically, the current cylindrical Hall retains the same hinging character, providing multilevel and multidirectional interconnection between various types of circulation.

However, the circles and eye-shaped top plaza of the fountain were more prominent in plan than in reality; visually experienced by passers-by as a fine and discreet silhouette of horizontal lines, they marked and revealed the existing sloping of the ground through a profile of gradually lowering horizontal layers in the act of overhanging upon each other. This thin sign – this delicate horizontal line broken in parts that increase exponentially in diameter while sliding rhythmically away from the top edge of the gardens (respectively 9, 13.5, and 18 meters) – refers to the nearby presence of the Yarra River through a correspondence based on horizontality as the intrinsic and most natural status of water. In this way the emphasized delineation of horizontality expressed by the profile of the three artificial circles of water is a manifestation of the reappropriation and accentuation of the natural horizontality that is visually revealed by the flowing of the water in the river down below.

A further link to water and its effects on the natural – as well as local – environment is here registered by the use of "sizable river-worn pebbles from central Victoria"¹ which roughen the concrete finishing of the three big bowls. The supporting structure of cantilevering steel pipes keeps the dishes free along their circular edge, detached – although technically stemming – from the ground. Embraced by the continuous space all around them, in which the bowls' undercroft is an inseparable moment of the whole space of the gardens, river, and surrounding urban areas, the three dishes become ethereal platforms, lightened by the condensation of their weight, presence and materiality into lines that restrainedly engage the existing horizons of the surrounding landscape.

Air, together with water, is the other strong reference and element of this project. The mast at the south end of the top plaza, in the corner slipped into the gardens and marked by a continuous seating exposed to the fountain and river beyond, was provided with a windvane and an anemometer to constantly register the speed and intensity of the wind. In normal and relatively windless conditions the water was sprayed from the top and used to flow through the three bowls according to four different and continuously changing movements: from a gentle and gradual cascading to a more vigorous curtain of sprays and jets often capable of being shot directly into the lowest and largest bowl. The anemometer, however, when detecting strong wind, used to automatically restrain the pumps and control valves, decreasing therefore the intensity and volume of the water curtain in order to protect the passers-by and surrounding roads and pathways from the risk of being drenched.

Informed by simplicity of both form and thought the Southgate fountain was an exquisite example of restraint and richness of expression at the same time. Its own discretion in presence and fresh candidness in referring to the elements of the everyday natural world enhance its own potentiality, endlessly opening to continuous subtle variations due to the unpredictability of the beautiful simplicity of the event: a play of water in the air defined by the wind.



Mark Strizic

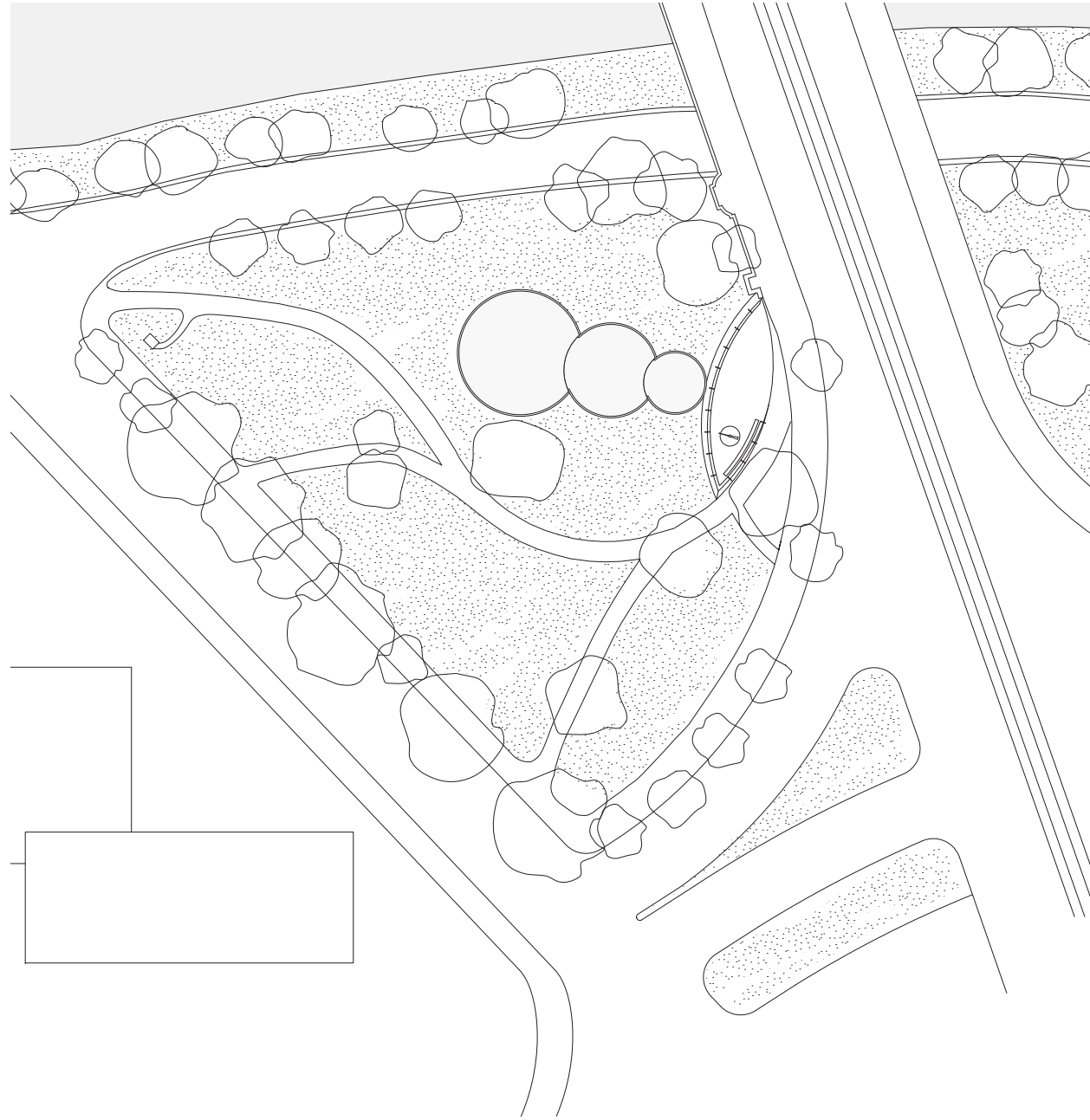


Mark Strizic



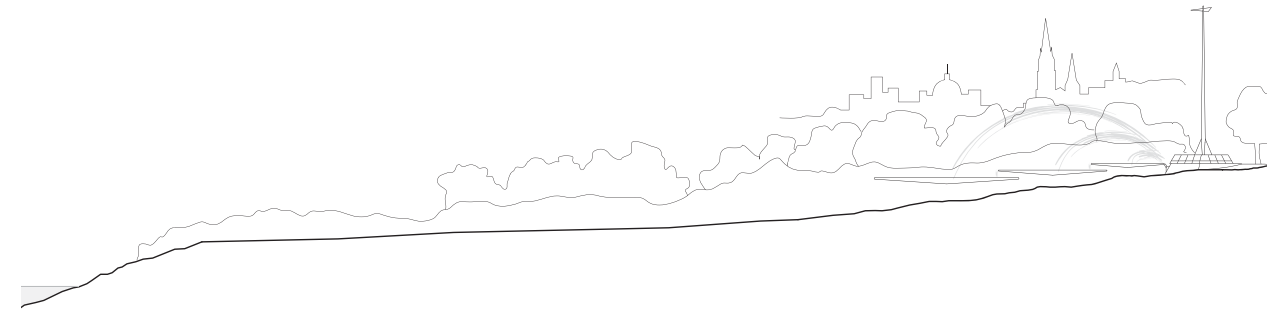
Mark Strizic

1 'The Southgate Fountain', *Architecture and Arts*, August 1960, p. 41

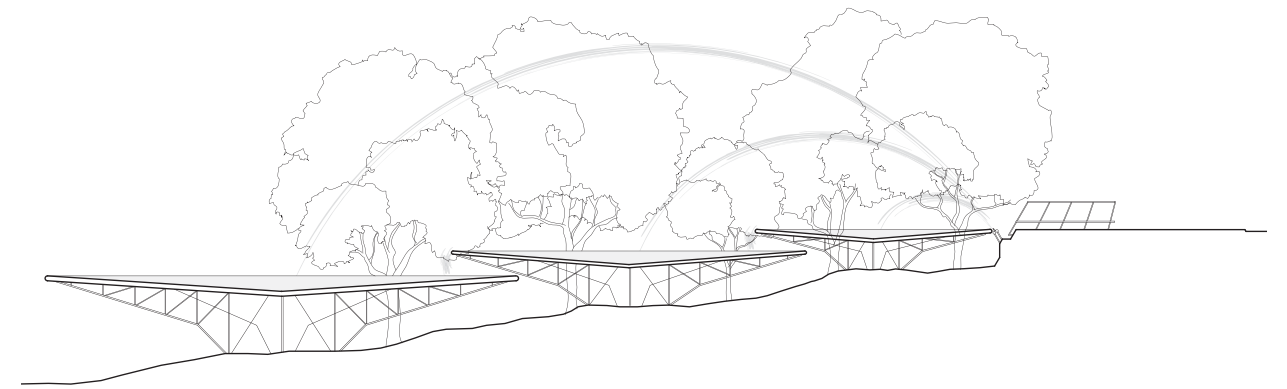


1:1000

222

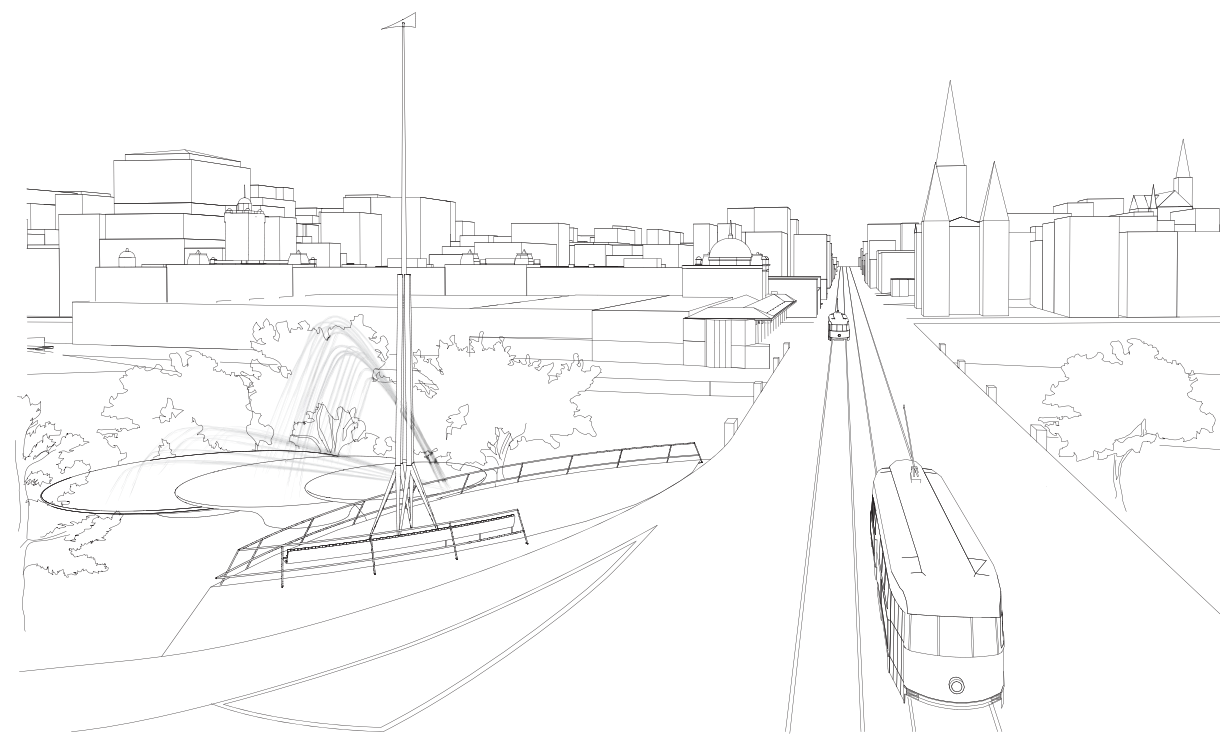
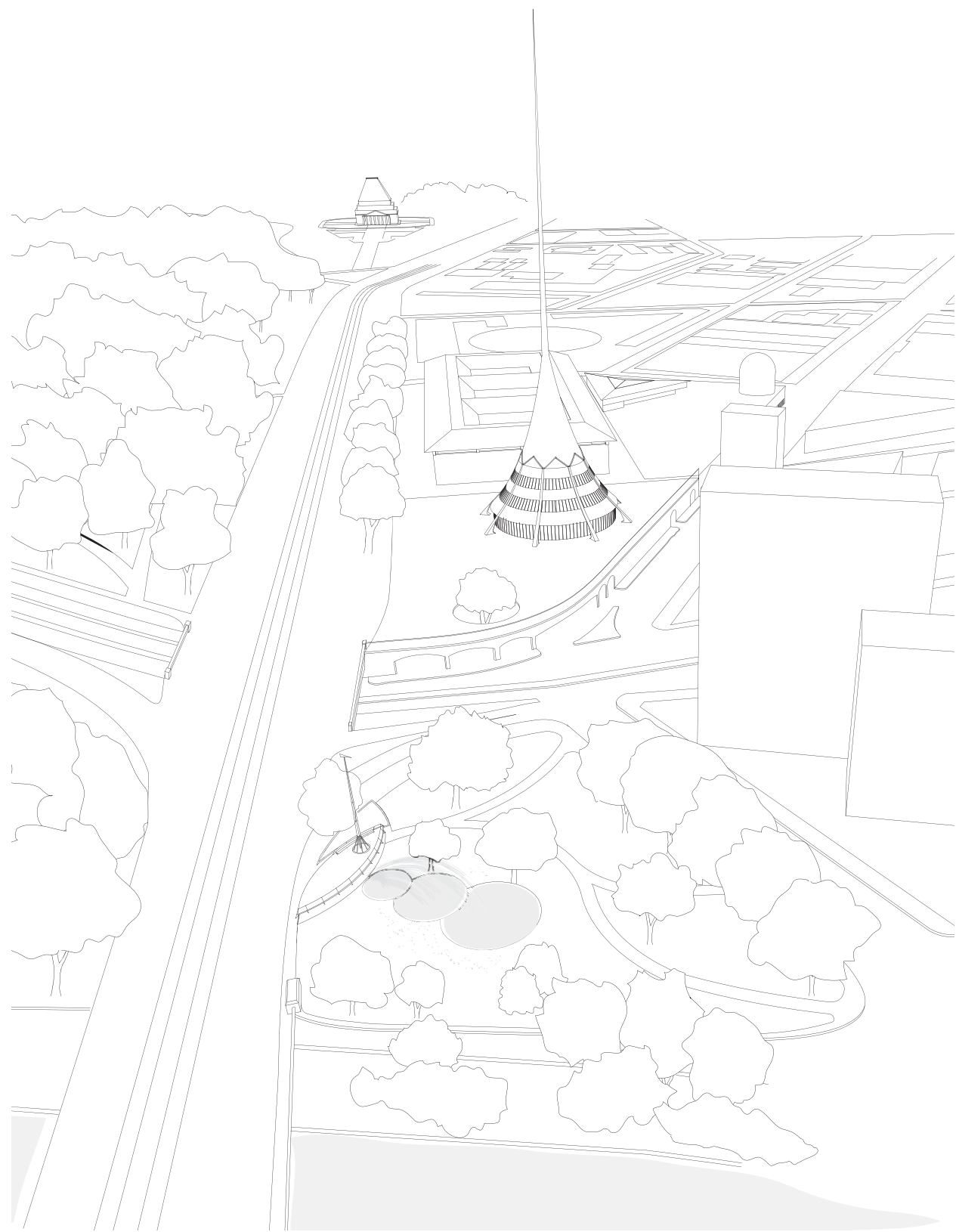


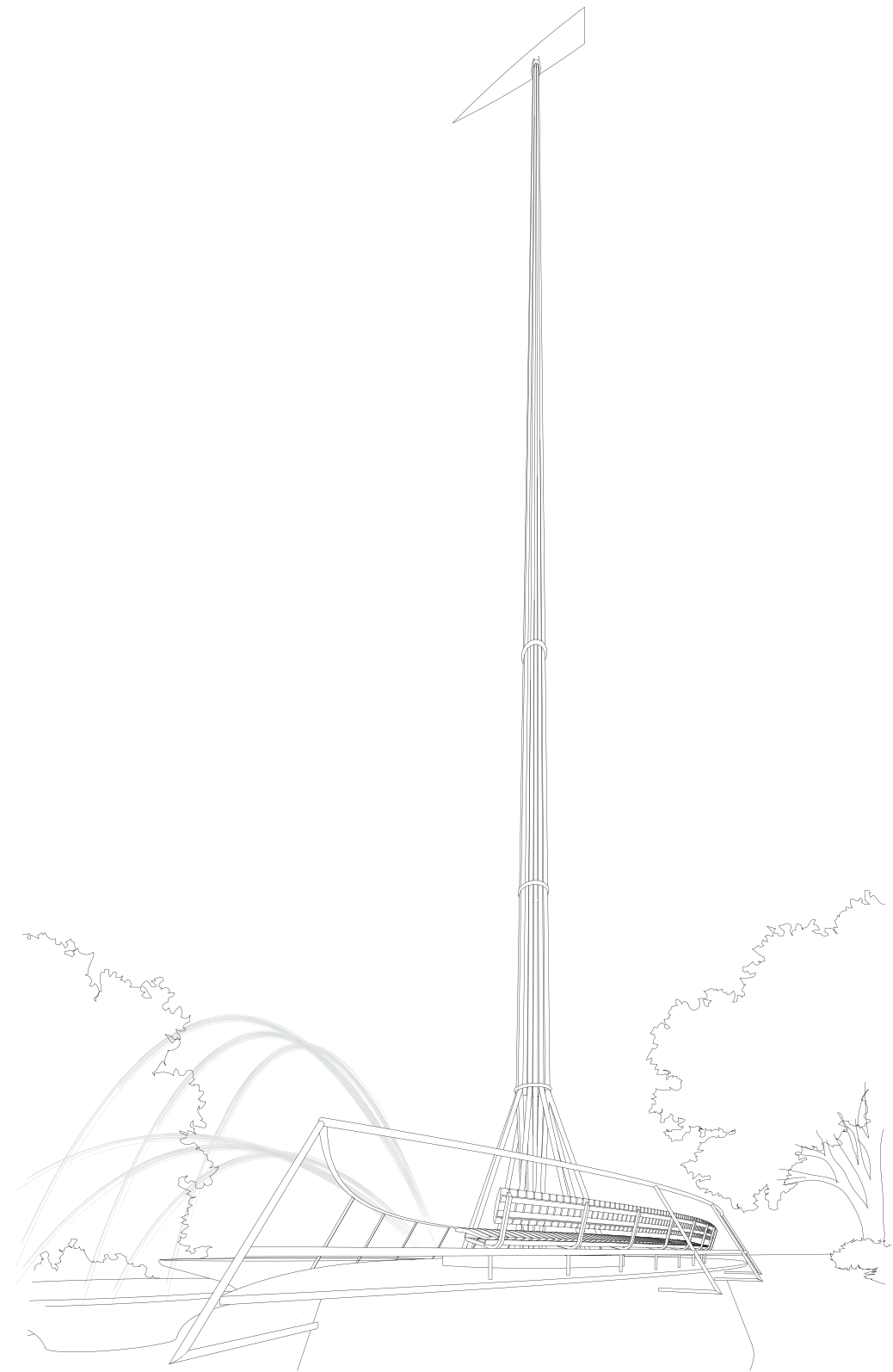
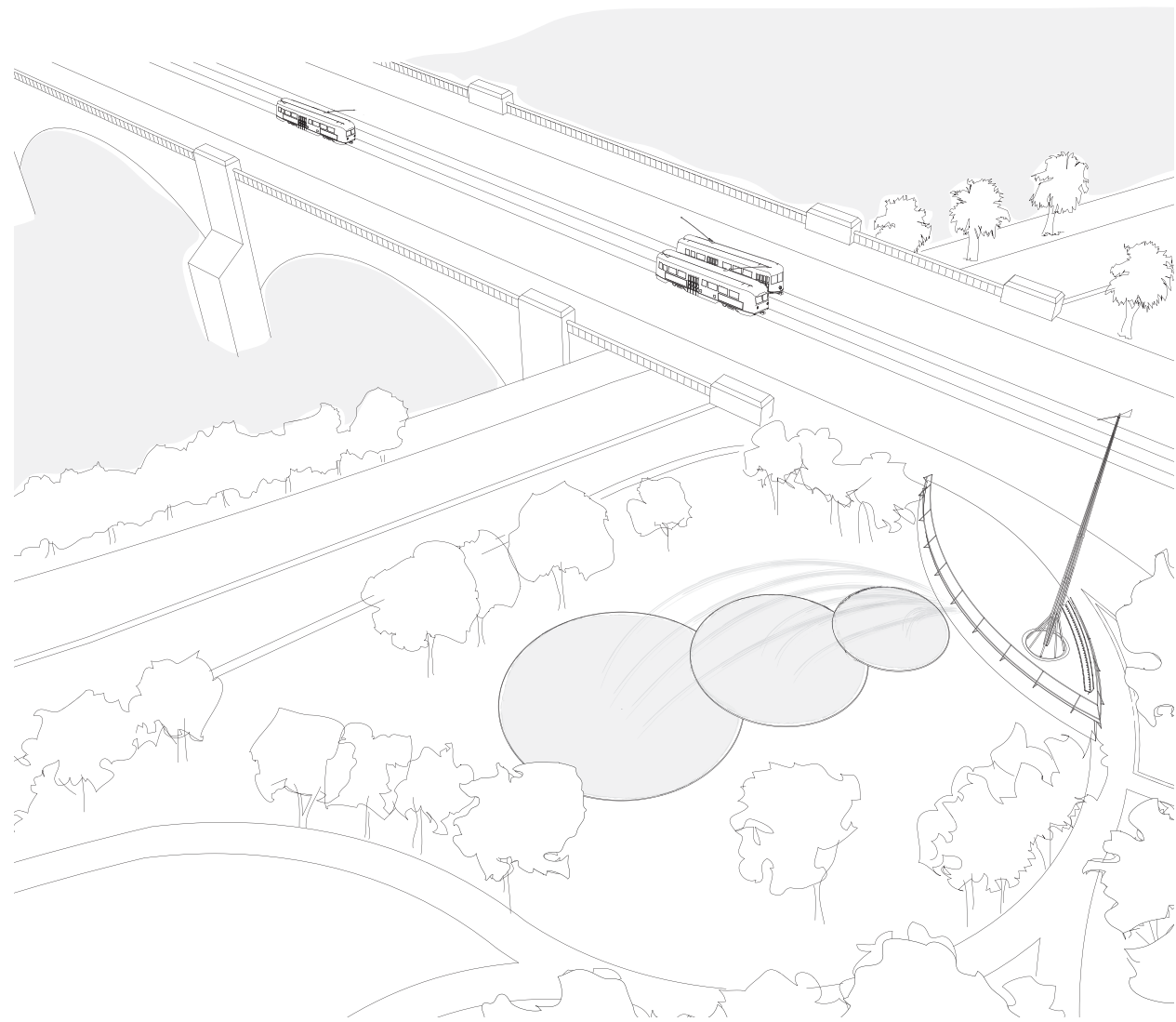
1:1000



1:300

223







Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic

Boyd House II
1958



Peter Wille, State Library of Victoria



1:10 000

The second house that Boyd designed for his family is located in the inner Melbourne suburb of South Yarra, approximately 3 kilometres from the city, within a congested and densely built up urban fabric. As a response to this situation, the house is informed by an introverted character – two separate volumes are pushed almost to the edge of the east and west boundaries of the block, creating an internal courtyard that is sheltered from the adjacent north and south neighbouring blocks by two tall glass walls partially comprised of opaque and obscuring panels.

The one-storey volume at the back is for the three children; the two-storey volume at the front accommodates the entry, the living and kitchen areas and the parents' bed-sitting room. Both the conventional mentality that considers space as if it was comprised of individual and separate parts, and the related typical architectural approach that distinctively organizes space in 'up' and 'down' or 'outside' and 'inside' are here convincingly resisted and revised. The indivisibility of space is disclosed by the 'light' and somehow 'temporary' floating presence of the parents' bed-sitting room's platform – it doesn't run from wall to wall, therefore provides an uninterrupted state of continuity between ground and first floor; nor does it stop where it intercepts the glass façade that overlooks the courtyard, protruding in the air in the form of a cantilevering balcony.

The sense of spatial indivisibility, expressed by both the floating character of this platform and the elimination of partition walls in the two-storey volume on the west end of the block, is further confirmed by the presence of a continuous sloping roof that flies over the whole house including its internal courtyard. Reducing itself to a configuration of filiform cables across the central open void and four suspended eaves (two are narrower and run along the top edge of the external north and south glass walls), the roof acts as a covering blanket – a containing armature that comprehensively absorbs, but also allows, the taking place of all the various residential spaces and events. This comprehensive roof, this continual layer, symptomatically echoes the sense of spatial uninterruptedness which is the direct result of Boyd's pervasive unconcern for spatial separation in regard to this and many other of his projects – describing this house, Boyd himself observes that "the whole space enclosed here is one, and in it conventional segregations are neither necessary nor desirable".¹

As a fine and minimal 'infrastructural' presence, the roof demarcates the top edge of the house in a light and concise way, somehow reducing its own form to "almost nothing"² – to a merely essential rim line that emblematically resembles, in section, the shapeless profile of a tent-like membrane structure. At another level, the sharp reduction of the roofline is informed by a strong sense of firmness and straightforwardness. It is a direct and somehow 'undesigned' response to the essential site and situation of this project – it is a simple and unobtrusive shelter that effectively veils and demarcates the narrow sloping area of the block, providing a central opening that allows for natural light and visual enjoyment, from the parents' bed-sitting room's platform, of the hills along the profile of the far-east horizon.

The straightforwardness of this solution is in tune with the sense of directness that characterises the approach of some early pioneer



1:2000

colonial architecture in response to both specific site and situation. In his book *Victorian Modern*³ and in further writings Boyd expresses admiration for this sense of immediacy as a honest and upfront, somehow 'intuitive' and 'instinctive' way of addressing the problems and conditions of the project. It is not surprising that both the profile of the roof and the 'brutalist' demeanour of the ceiling of this house reveal a close similarity to the shape and character of the roofs that typically inform many examples of colonial Australian residential architecture – in particular, some formal reverberations of the profile of the roof above the veranda added in the first decades of the 19th century to the east side of the historically significant 1793 Elizabeth Farm house in Parramatta,⁴ are very strong. Reinterpreting the simplicity and straightforwardness of form that allows this and other pioneer verandas to effectively provide the house with spaces for both circulation and shelter, Boyd somehow expresses an analogous sense of immediacy, which is indeed conveyed in the project for his family's house by the resolute yet light profile of the roof layer as the simplest and most direct way to cover the house and visually provide it with a sense of spatial continuity.

Indirectly related to this character of spatial continuity, the sense of correlation and dialogue between existing landscape conditions and architectural solutions further confirm Boyd's capability to absorb the contingencies of each specific situation and opportunistically take advantage of them. As a result of this an existing mature pine tree along the street is effectively used in this project as a shelter for the entry area and a screen against the western sun, and the natural stepping down of the site is embraced and transformed, on the east side's end, into an open covered space for parking and storage. Furthermore, the decision to raise the entry to the upper floor brilliantly releases the frontyard not only from circulation but also from the expectancy, typically and conventionally assigned to this type of space, to act as an 'entry area'. A flight of steps bridges over this frontyard, automatically transforming it into a private area – effectively a 'service yard' – in close relation to both the kitchen and the laundry, yet at the same time maintaining the buffer zone between house and street.

As anticipated by Boyd, "vines will eventually grow along the cables above the courtyard".⁵ This vision, although never fulfilled, symptomatically underlines the architect's consistent inclination towards continuity of space, correlation of parts and coexistence of architecture and landscape.

- 1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 64
- 2 Manfredo Tafuri refers to "the *beinahe nichts*, the 'almost nothing'" as a term that is related by American architect Philip Johnson to Mies van der Rohe's work; Manfredo Tafuri, Francesco Dal Co, *Modern Architecture*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1979 (original ed., *Architettura Contemporanea*, 1976), p. 336
- 3 Robin Boyd, *Victorian Modern: One hundred and eleven years of modern architecture in Victoria*, Australia, Architectural Students' Society of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, Melbourne, 1947
- 4 See J. M. Freeland, 'Elizabeth Farm New South Wales', in *Historic Homesteads of Australia*, Australian Council of National Trust, Cassell Australia Limited, Melbourne, 1969, pp. 1-7
- 5 'House in South Yarra, Victoria', *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts*, no. 86, December 1960, p. 32



Mauro Baracco



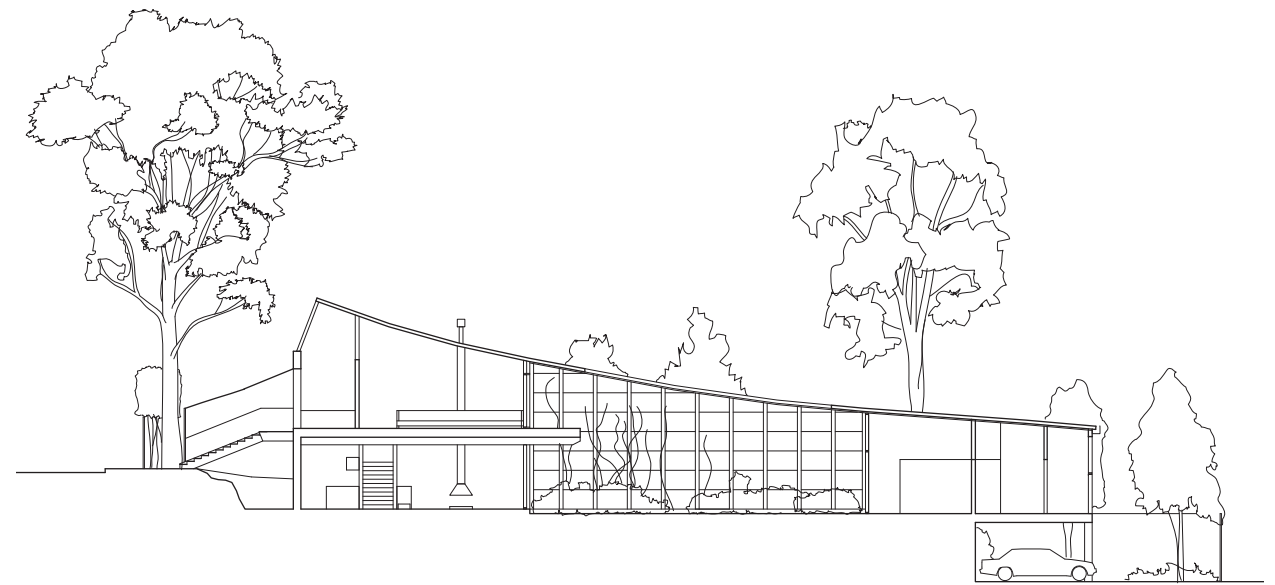
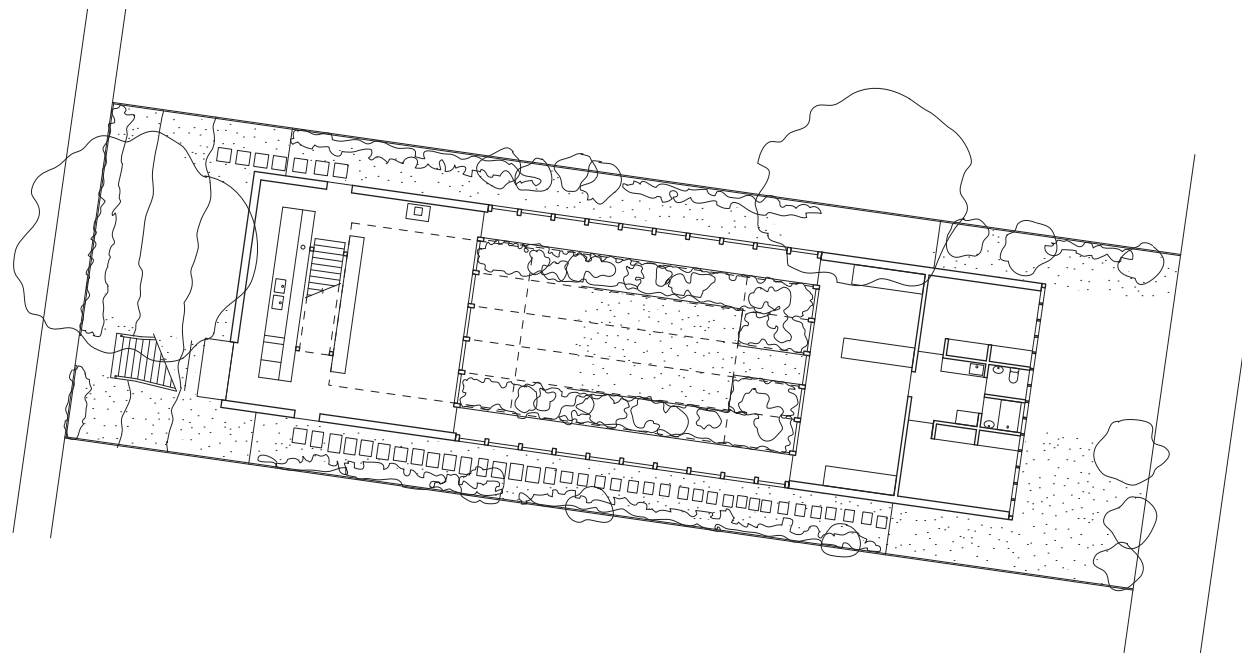
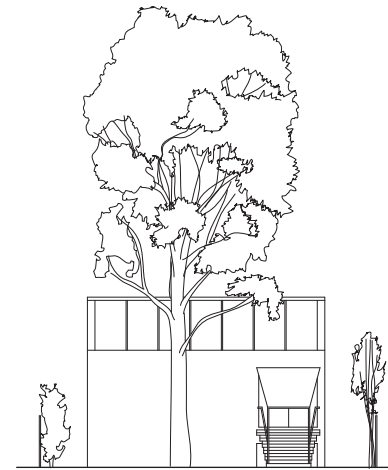
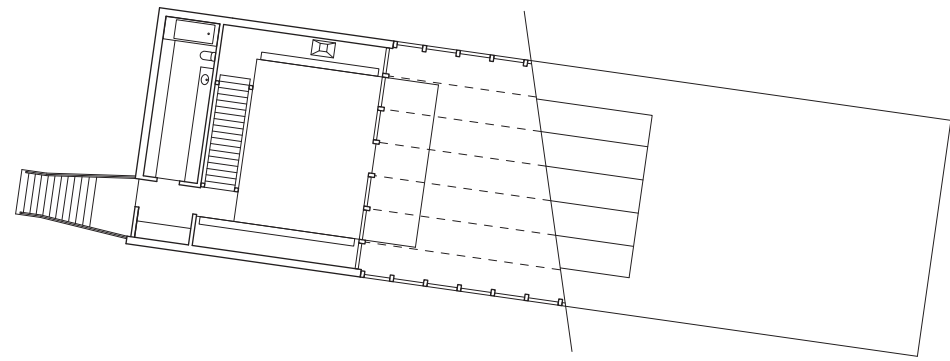
Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco

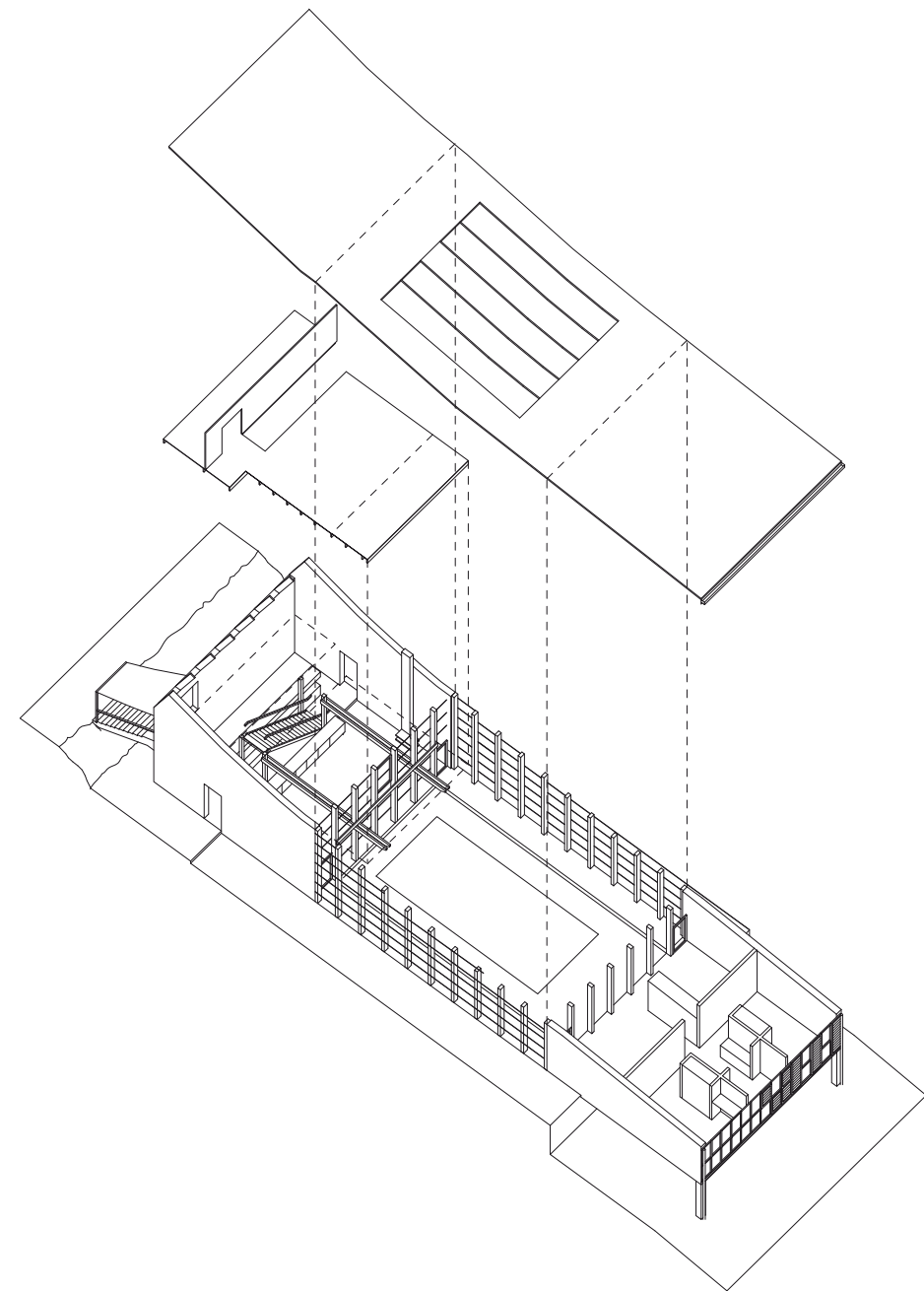
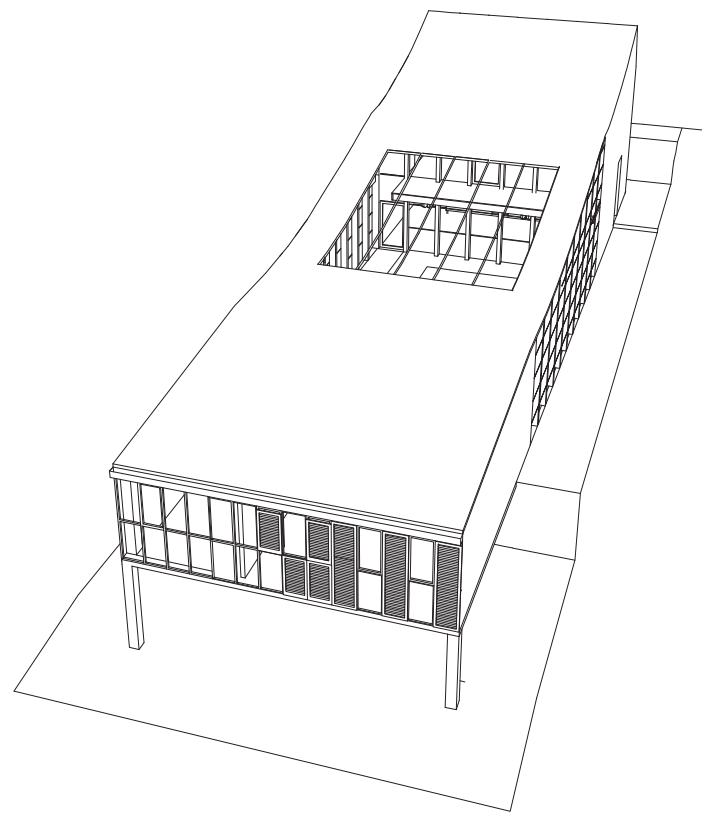


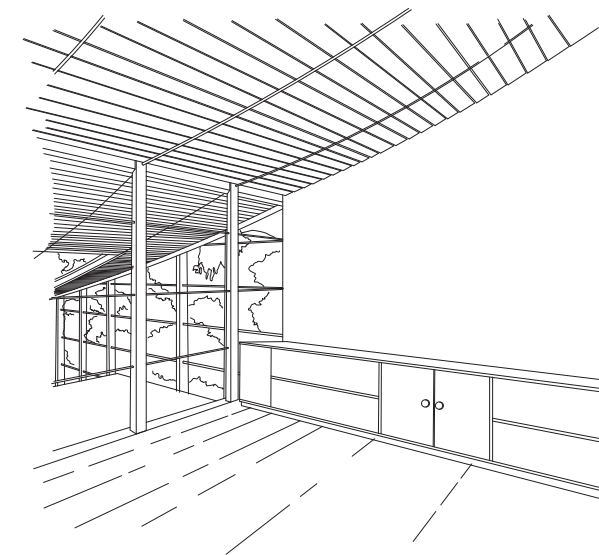
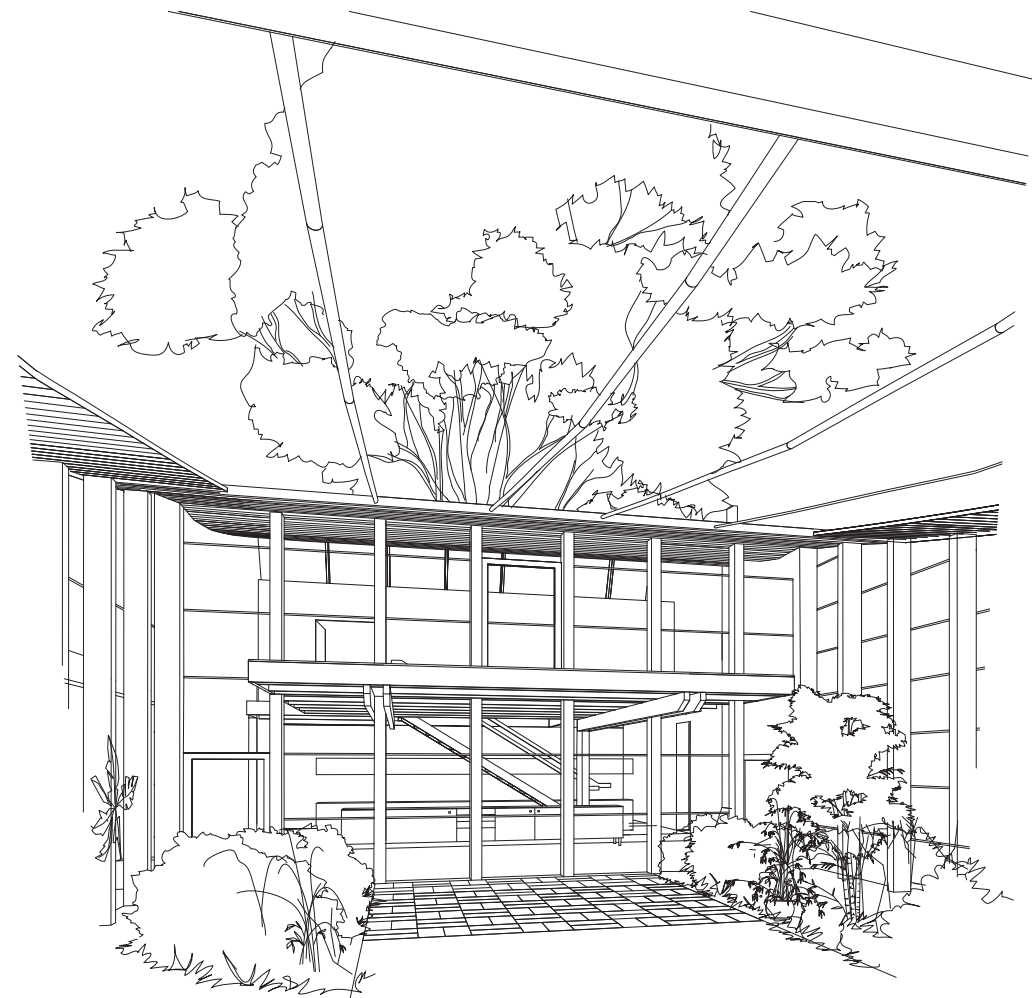
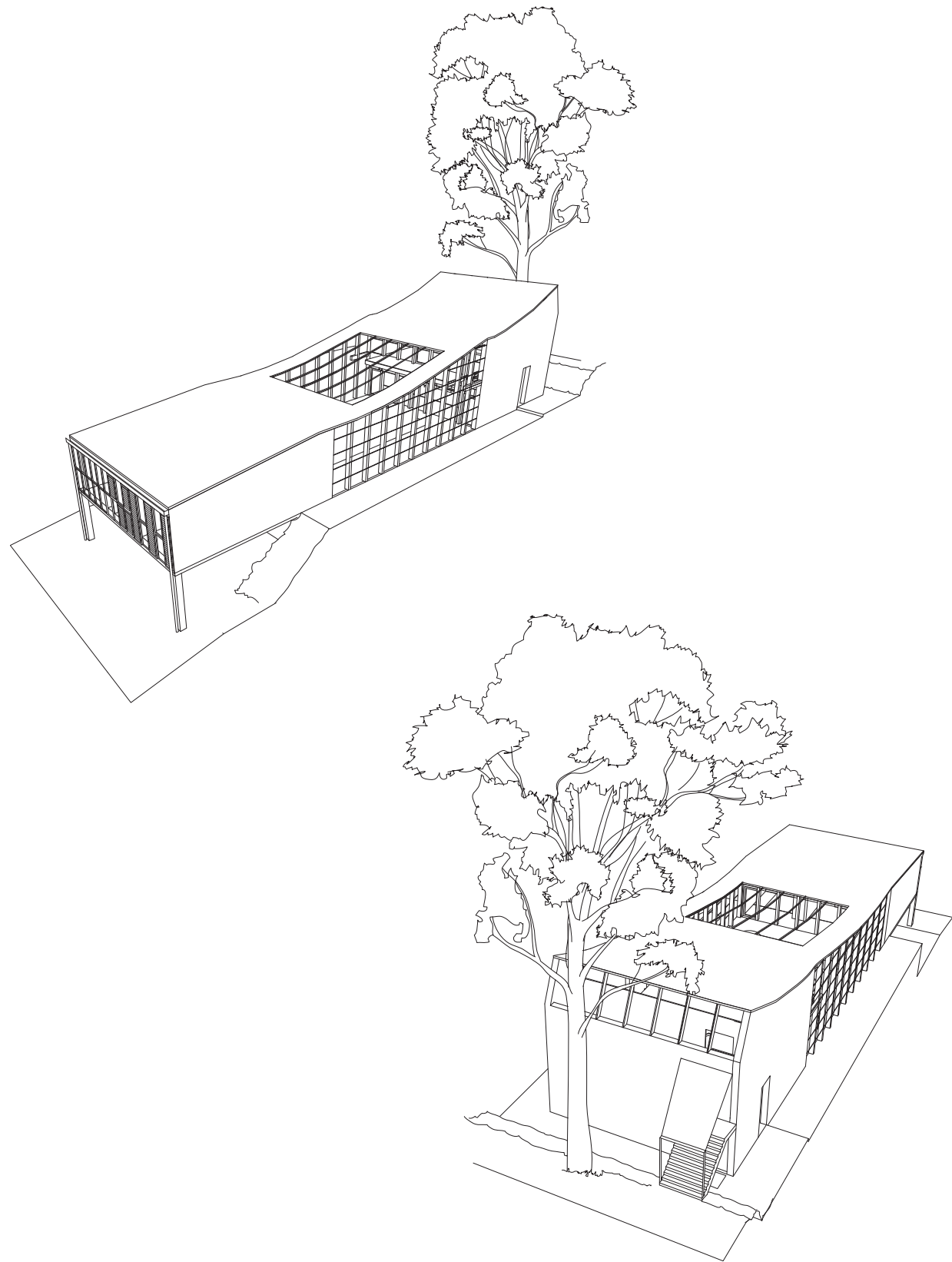
1:300

234

1:300

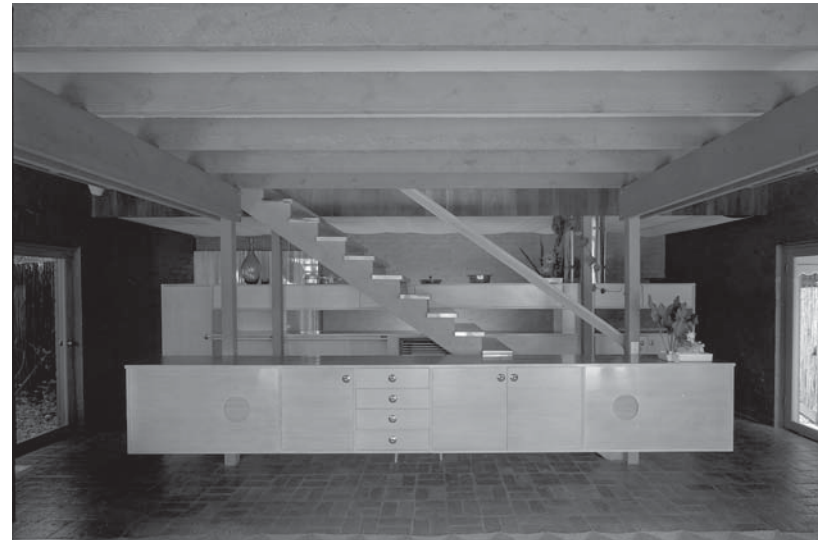
235



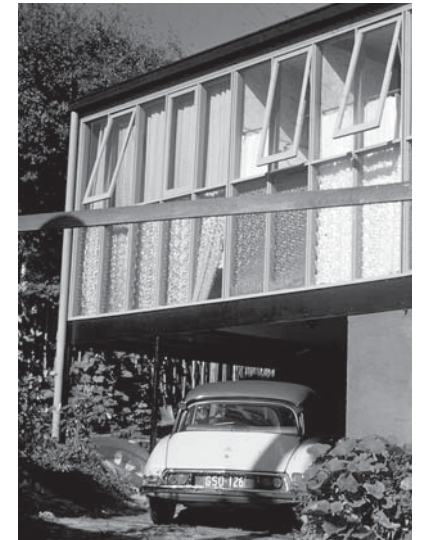




Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Peter Wille, State Library of Victoria



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco

Lloyd House
1959



Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)



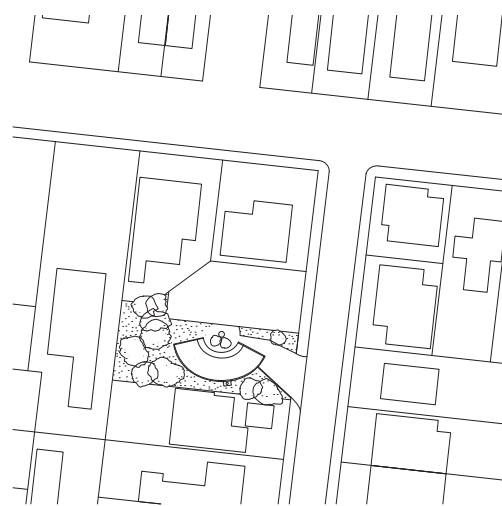
1:10 000

The Lloyd House, demolished in 2003, was located in the suburb of Brighton, approximately 12 kilometres south from the city of Melbourne, and less than one kilometre east from the coastline of Port Phillip Bay. “Built as a crescent round a northerly court”,¹ the house was placed in the centre of a rectangular block, with a concave façade embracing an internal courtyard and a convex back front facing the boundary to the south adjacent block. A driveway connected the building to the street, leading to a carport space accommodated under an extended continuous roof.

Similar to many of Boyd’s projects, the design decisions and formal solutions of this house are guided by the existing conditions of the site. An old pear tree along the south edge was maintained as a significant presence of the garden that defined the west side of the block. This open space – labelled in some early drawings as a “service yard” and “children’s garden”² – was achieved through the curving of a footprint that otherwise would have occupied a longer area of the block, modifying “a slim, rectangular Small Homes plan...into a fan shape”.³ The adaptation of this standard type into a curved plan not only provided the house with two buffer areas on the west and east ends of the block, but also allowed the creation of a semicircular internal courtyard – this inflected open space was instrumental to catching the light and sun from the north through a façade of continuous floor-to-ceiling windows. All the rooms directly related to this court, each of them radiating with an open end towards it.

The bedroom areas were located at the opposite ends of the crescent: the one for the children, on the west end next to the “children’s garden”, was effectively a large open space with a wardrobe as a dividing partition in the middle of the room; the parents’ bedroom, at the east end, was provided with an ensuite and a study, both located at the back of a wardrobe as a partition element. The remaining core area between the bedrooms included, from east to west respectively, a living room, dining room, kitchen, and playroom with bathroom/toilet and laundry at its back. A curved hall, inclusive of the entry door in correspondence to the living room, ran along the north side of the house, interconnecting the circulation between the various rooms, but also acting as a buffer space from them and the external court. Curtains instead of partition walls were used between the hall and the north end of the living, dining and kitchen areas; two sliding doors at the east and west ends of the hall provided access to the parents’ bedroom and the playroom. These ‘light’ and rather impalpable elements of separation – their informal way of providing privacy, their consistent state of openness and porosity – contributed to the sense of spatial continuity and visual permeability between interiors and exteriors; the courtyard, embraced through the transparency of the north façade, was experienced as an extension of the internal spaces rather than a separated outdoor area.

A sense of potential endless expansion is characteristic of this project and the related association of the infinite continuity of the circle as a geometric form. A modularity based on circular sectors was the means to not only define the shape and dimension of the internal spaces which were originally built (as parts of the project that are documented in these pages), but also allow the future



1:2000

expansions which occurred at a later stage (here documented through dotted lines in some drawings to represent subsequent additions to the west end, and the expansion of the carport space at the east end). It is not surprising that commenting on the additions that informed this house but never compromised its curvilinear imprint, Janys and Edward ‘Woods’ Lloyd used to joke fantasising to ultimately extend the crescent – bit by bit, circular sector after circular sector – into a circle over two blocks,⁴ in their way unconsciously echoing the coexistence of both a ‘sense of comprehension’ and ‘sense of incomprehension’ that is intrinsic to Boyd’s approach, here reflected by the vision of a circle that would be informed by the ‘comprehensible objectivity’ of its parts and the ‘incomprehensible oneness’ of its infinite totality.



Mauro Baracco

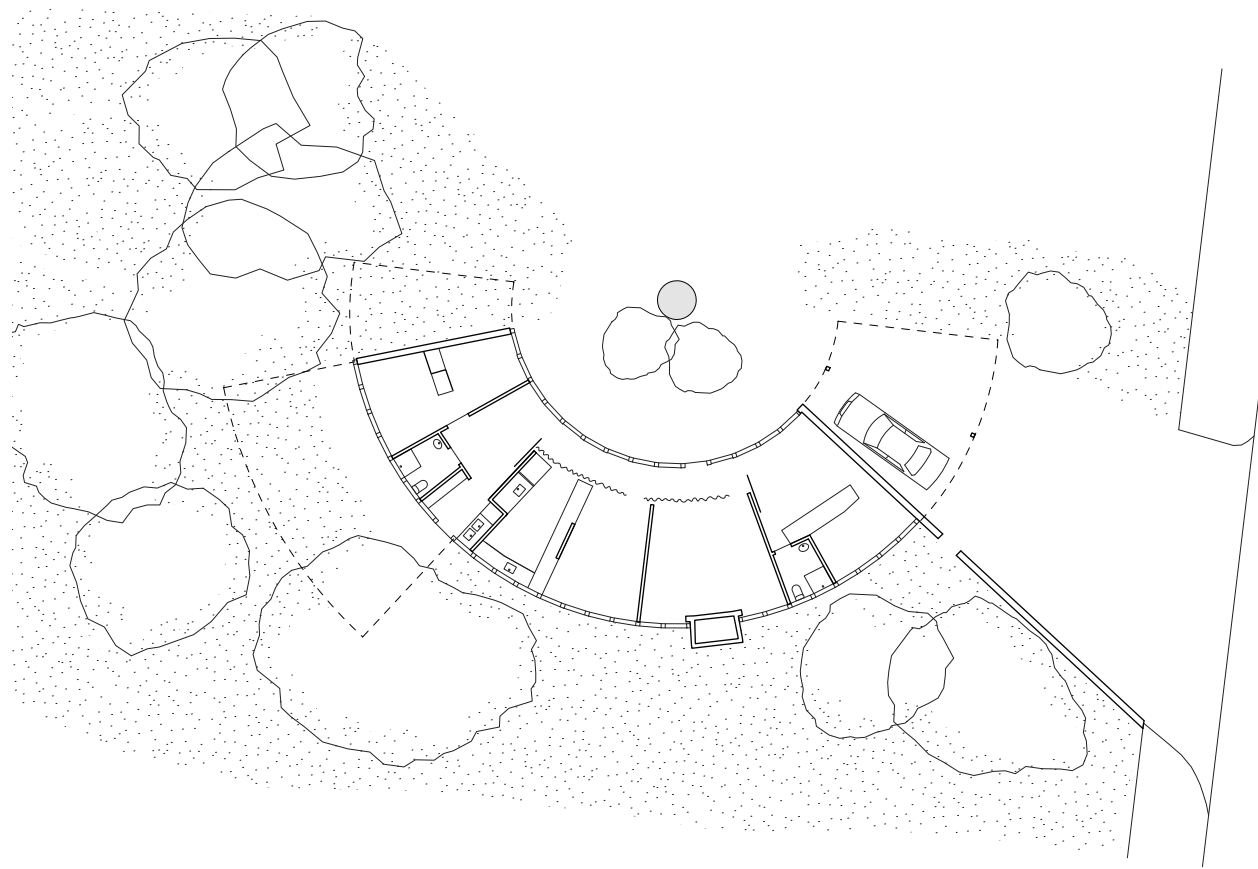


Mark Strizic



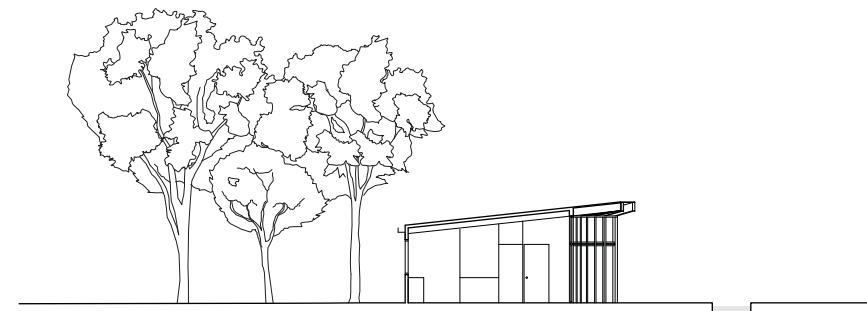
Mauro Baracco

- 1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 28
- 2 See ‘Robin Boyd Original Sketches’, *Architecture in Australia*, Vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973, p. 75
- 3 Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 187. The Small Homes Service was set up and directed by Boyd in the years 1946-1954; it was an architect advisory service for the public, sponsored by *The Age* newspaper and the R.V.I.A. (Royal Victorian Institute of Architects). As observed by Neil Clerehan, director of this service in 1951 and from 1954-1961, “The sponsorship of the *Age* enabled the Service to become the force that it did, providing a weekly column where Boyd could publish articles and designs enlightening the public about the Service”; Neil Clerehan, ‘The *Age* RVIA Small Homes Service’, *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, p. 58
- 4 As a result of a subdivision of a larger block that was originally purchased by Janys Lloyd’s grandfather in 1898, the Lloyd House was sitting immediately south from the block including the house of Janys Lloyd’s mother. The fantasy idea of the circle over the two blocks would involve (in fun) the demolition of the latter house and the relocation of Janys’ mother residence in the circle, as an independent and separate part of the extension; from a conversation with Janys Lloyd during a visit to the Lloyd House on the 12 March 2003



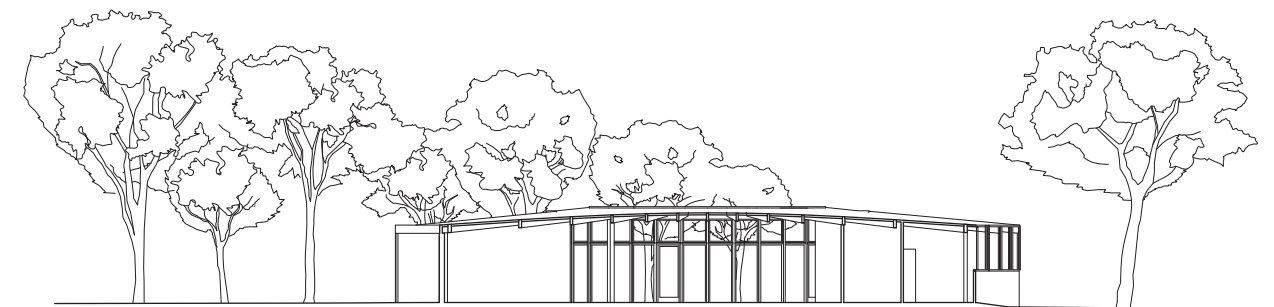
1:300

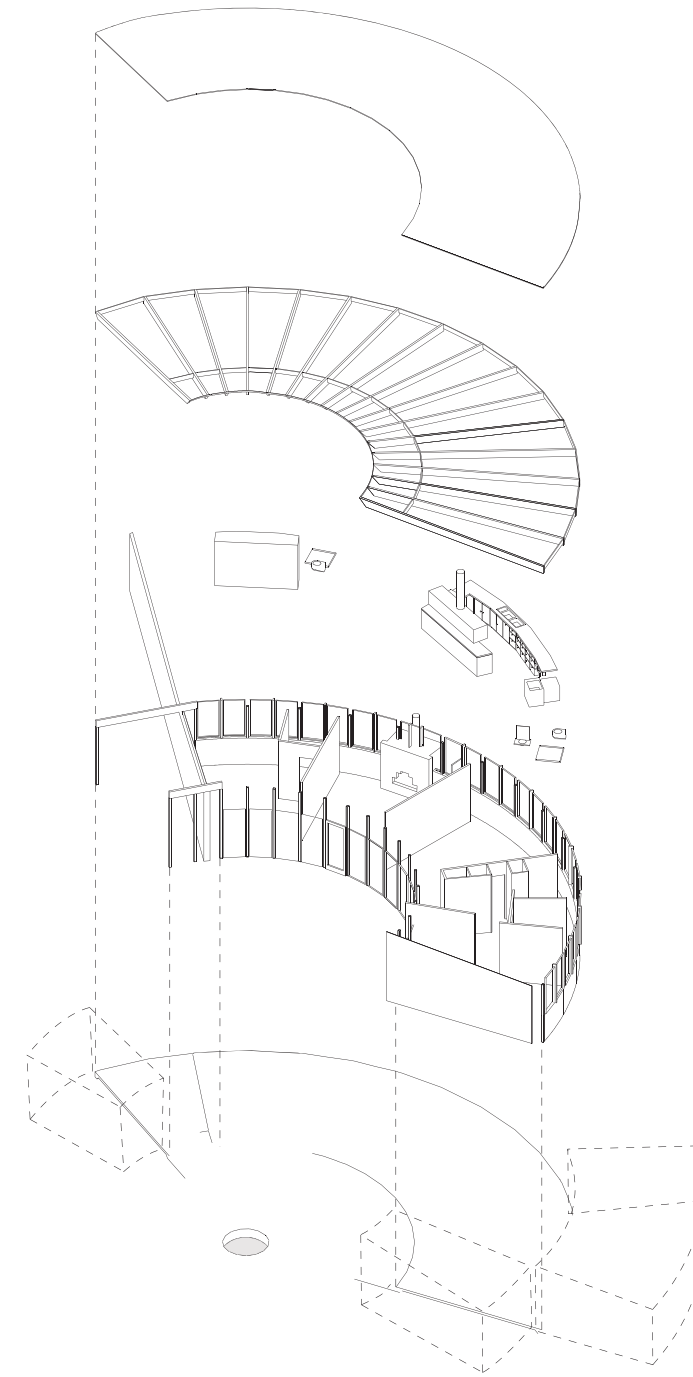
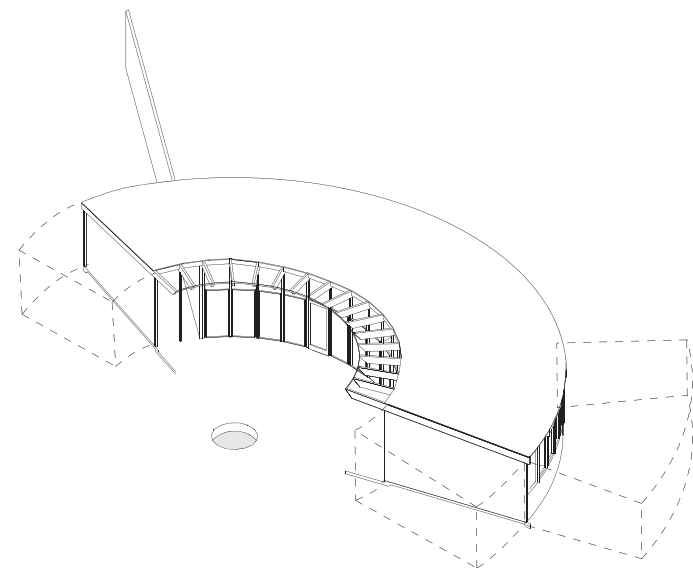
246

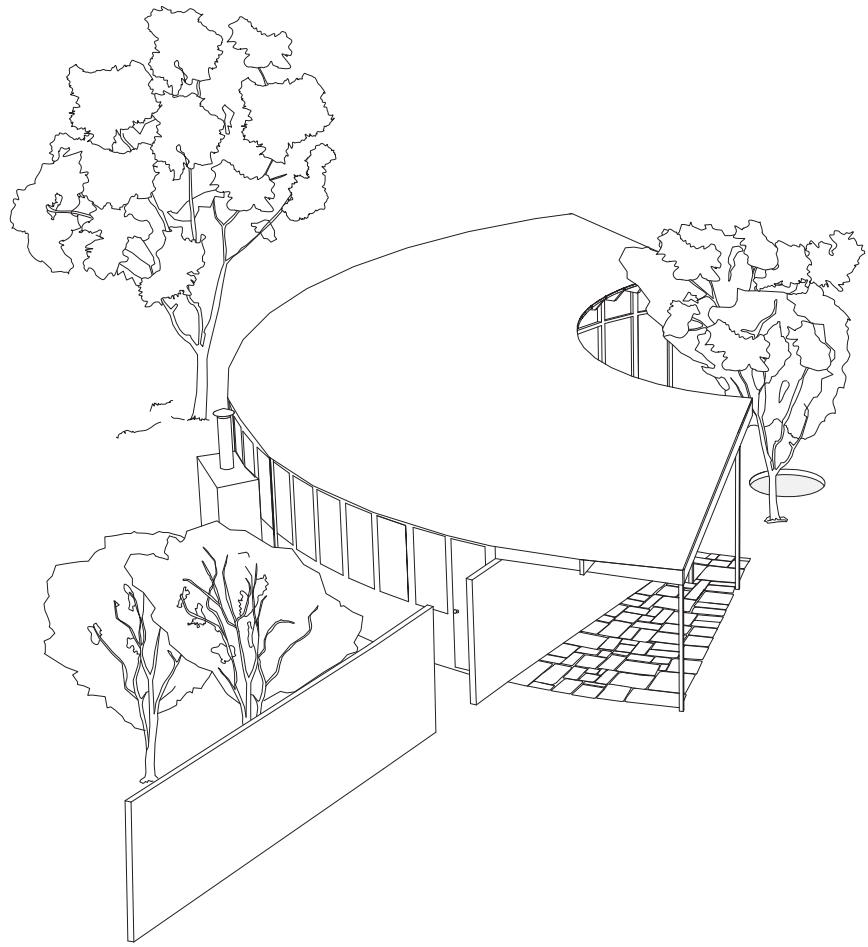


1:300

247









Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Lucinda McLean
252



Lucinda McLean



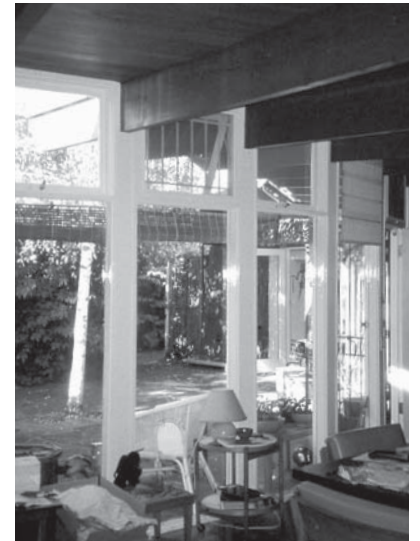
Mauro Baracco



Lucinda McLean



Lucinda McLean



Mauro Baracco

Clemson House
1959 – 1960



Aaron Pocock



1:10 000

The Clemson House is located in the relatively dense fabric of Melbourne's inner suburb of Kew, approximately 7 kilometres from the city.

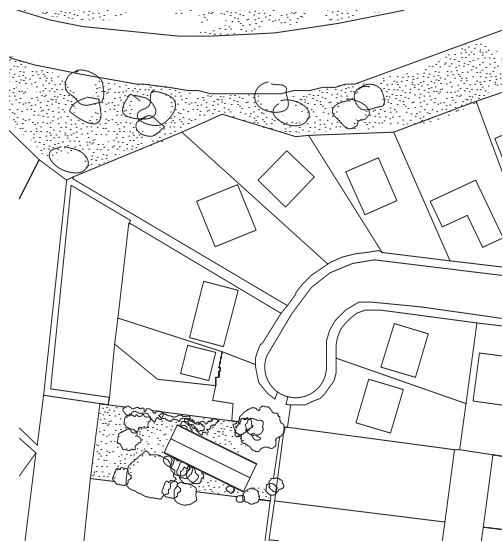
The block is considerably steep and densely planted. The house consists of some volumes that descend along the existing gully, retreating from both the neighbour properties and the external urban streetscape. Showing literally its own back to the latter, indeed sliding down from it and following the sloping ground of the gully, the Clemson House is barely visible from the street – the driveway is the only element that links it to the external world, as a faint umbilical cord from the external street to the carport space at the east end of the building, under the extension of the roof.

From that level the house dives precipitously down along the gully, relating to and embracing the thick nature of the site – a condition that contributes to the sense of isolation and detachment consistently perceived from within the property in relation to the external world that is 'up there'. The impression of being in the bush is real and yet distorted and exaggerated, especially considering the density of the built fabric in this area of Melbourne. This impression, this feeling of 'house in the woods', is even further amplified by the fact that the north edge of the block is not only occupied by dense vegetation, but also confronted by a neighbouring property that stands on a higher level, therefore contributing to the presence of shade that, spread out with different intensity over the entire block, is one of the most distinctive attributes of this site.

The house has a rectangular shape, with the day-time areas (entry, living room, dining room and kitchen) in the west half and two bedrooms, toilet and two small bathrooms in the east half – one of the bathrooms is effectively an ensuite that is directly accessible, similarly to the adjacent walk-in-robe, from the main double bedroom. Each of the bedrooms is provided with a desk/study area along the window.

Between the west and east sides there is a transitional area with glazed boundary walls. It includes a laundry on its south half and a free hall in the other half – the latter acts as an interconnecting space for the circulation between day-time, night-time and entry areas. This transitional area, essentially an 'internal courtyard' open towards the four sides of the house (although only visually towards north), clearly separates the two zones of the house and interrelates them.

Both the ends accommodate open spaces: a carport on the east side and a balcony outside the living and dining room on the west side. These two open spaces, together with the long porch/veranda areas that run along the long sides of the house, are integrated in the rectangular shape of the plan by a unifying converging pitch roof that uninterruptedly descends parallel to the house, as a mantling layer that covers all the built volumes and the immediate outdoor spaces underneath.



1:2000

The three domestic zones as described above are contained in three volumes that react to the existing slope by gradually stepping down under the roof from east to west. Expressing themselves as individual shed-like boxes and yet integrated parts of the continuous linear shape of the building, these three volumes intimately relate to the surrounding dense natural landscape through the opening of windows (above the desktops in the bedrooms and kitchen, and above the bookshelf in the living-room) and floor-to-ceiling glazed walls (translucent in the relational core area between night-time and day-time areas and transparent on the west end of the living and dining areas). A generous balcony outside the living and dining areas – its short side occupies entirely one of the 'column-to-column' spatial modules constitutive of this house, thus resulting as wide as both the kitchen area and the relational core area – contributes to visually expand the day-time area, providing it with a 'veranda in the air' that effectively works both as a platform suspended among the trees and the natural landscape and a buffer space to shelter the glazed living and dining areas from the west sun.

Painted in green to establish a conversation with the surrounding nature, this house relates to the landscape as an artificial presence that absorbs and reflects the conditions of its site. It has no intention to frame or capture nature; instead it coexists with the nature of its own site and beyond, including the parkland along the Yarra River a few hundred metres further down. As a presence among the surrounding natural presences, this house simply and effectively, thus 'naturally', stands up and holds its own ground. The use of a unifying roof to discharge rainwater is a functionally obvious and yet formally unconventional solution that confirms Boyd's inclination towards a simplicity of means; it is an approach that is analogous to natural processes, relying on its capacity to address problems through answers that are essential, indeed simple, and yet sophisticated and unusual.



Mauro Baracco



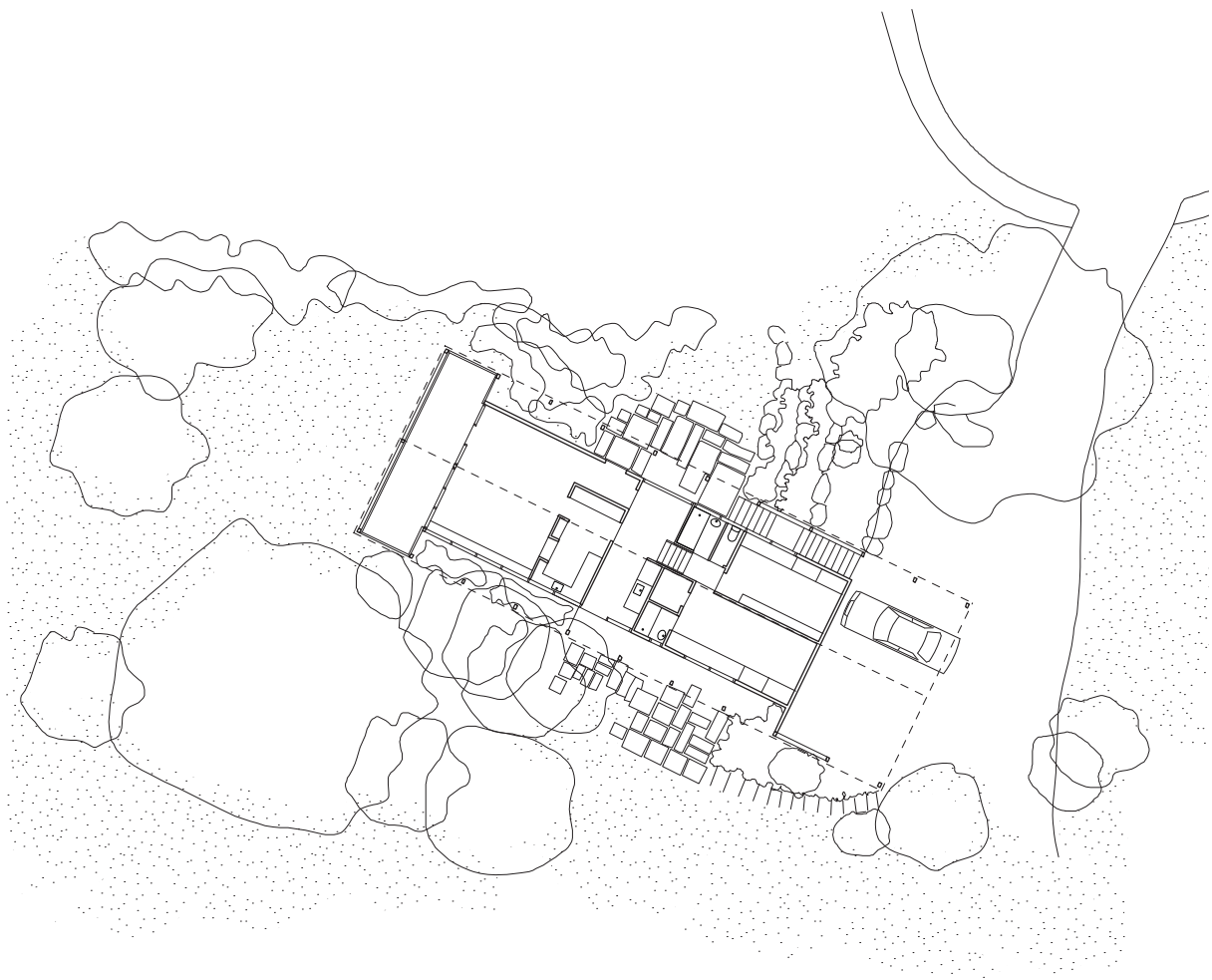
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

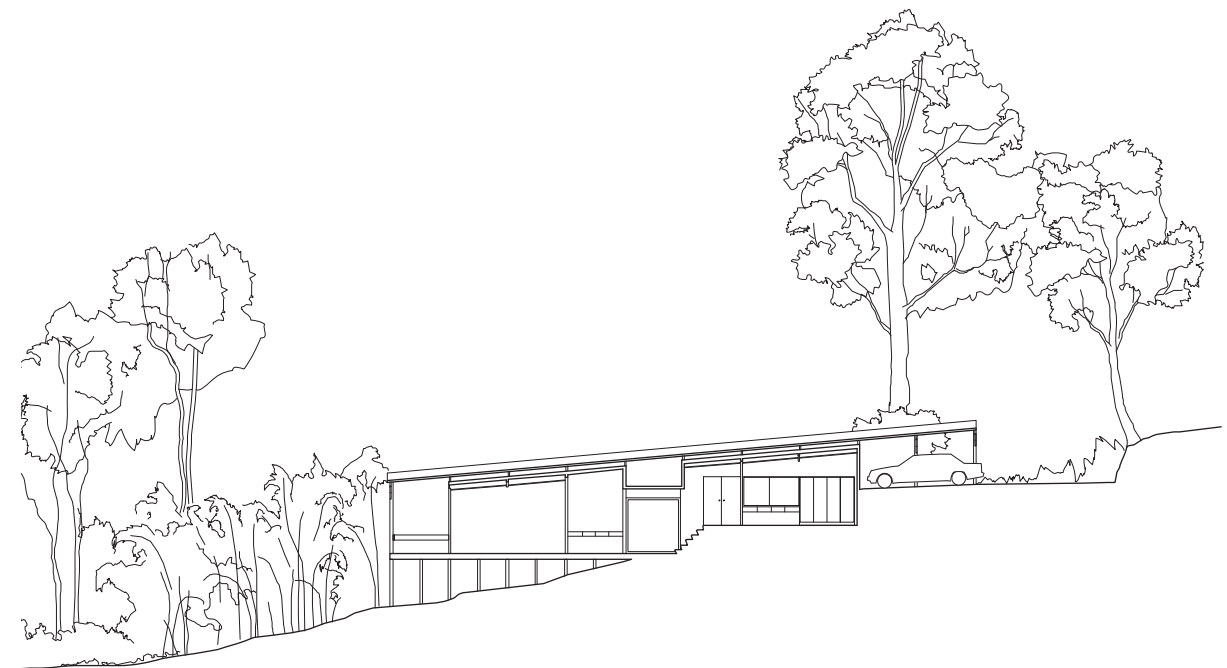


Mauro Baracco



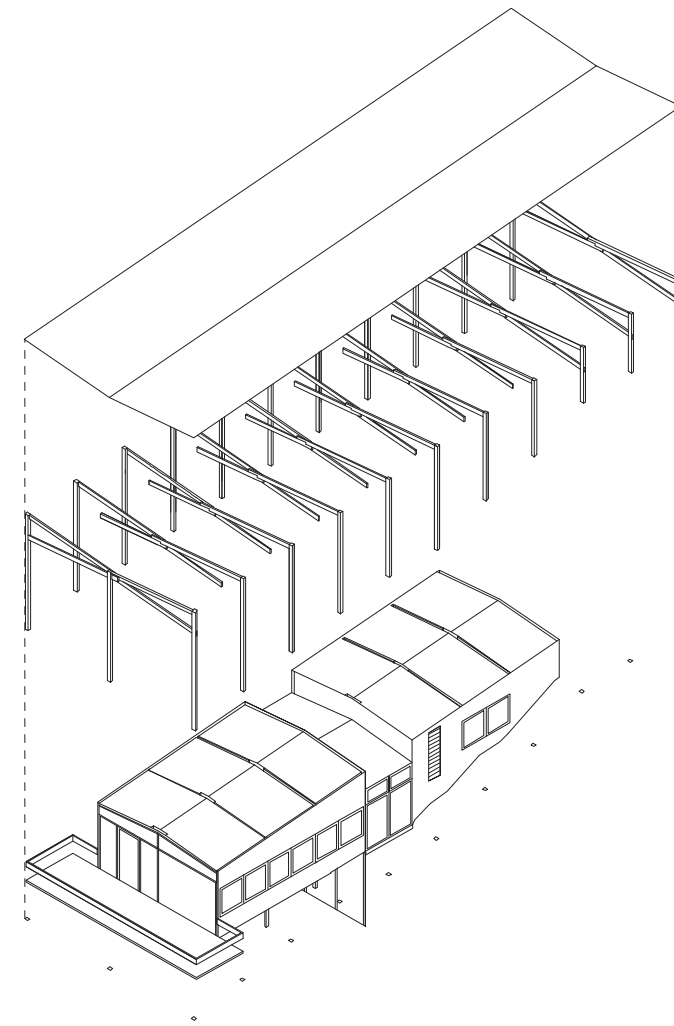
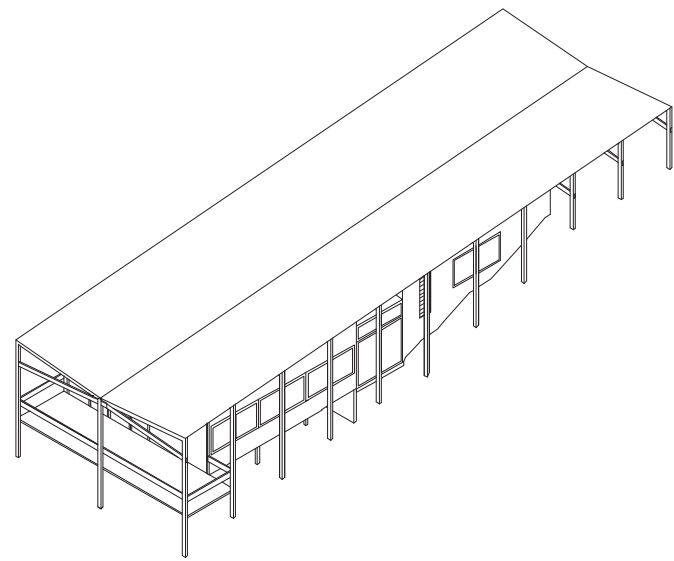
1:300

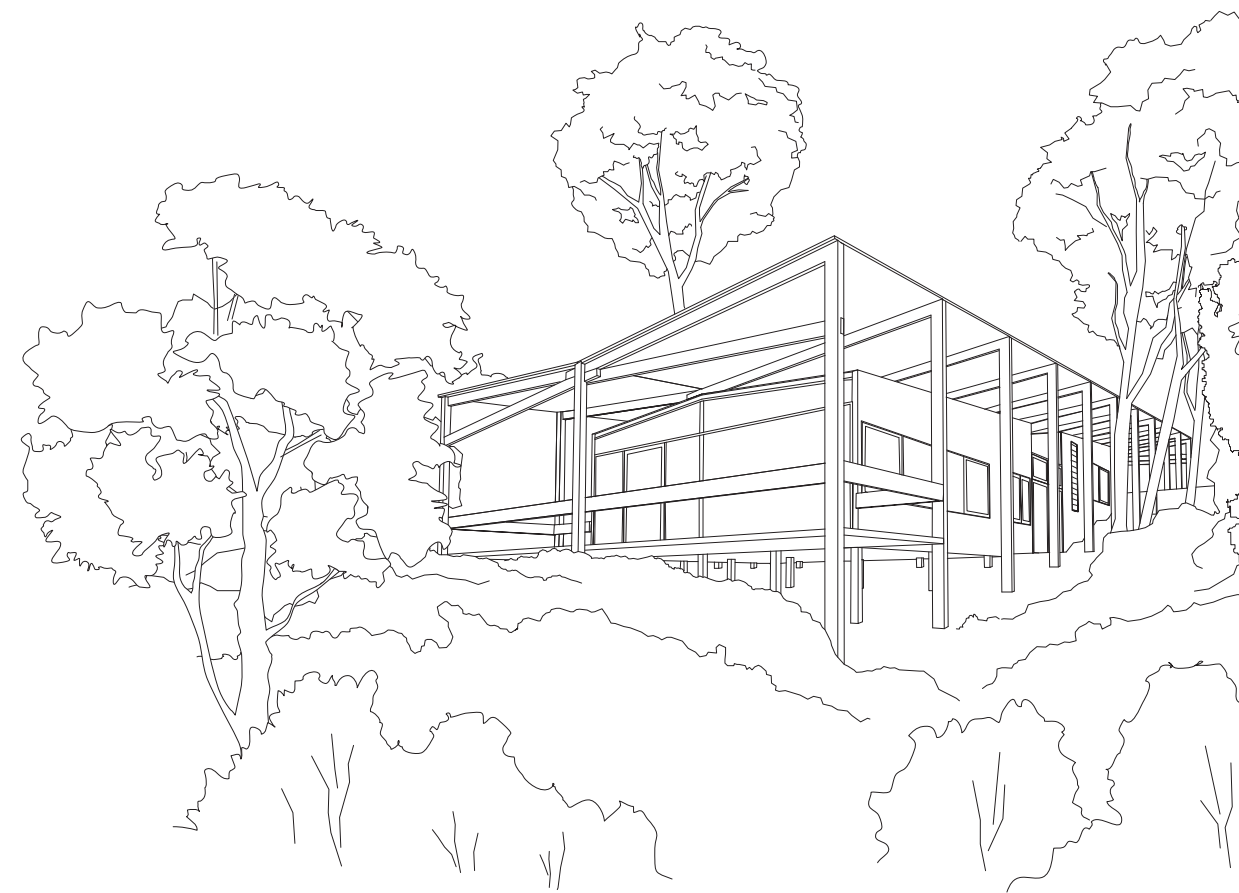
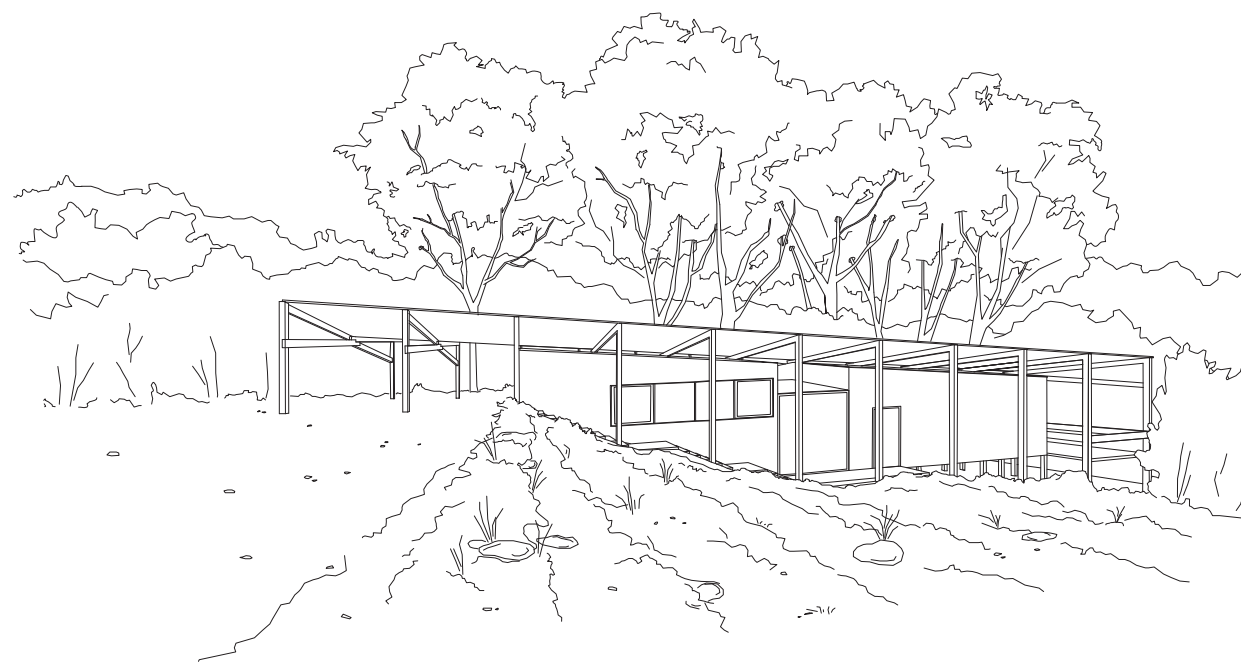
258



1:300

259







Aaron Pocock



Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



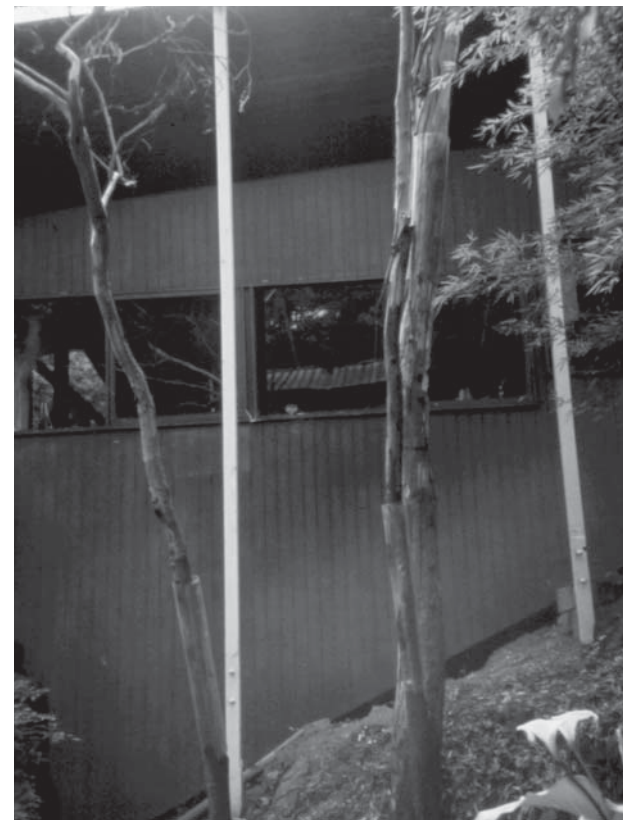
Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

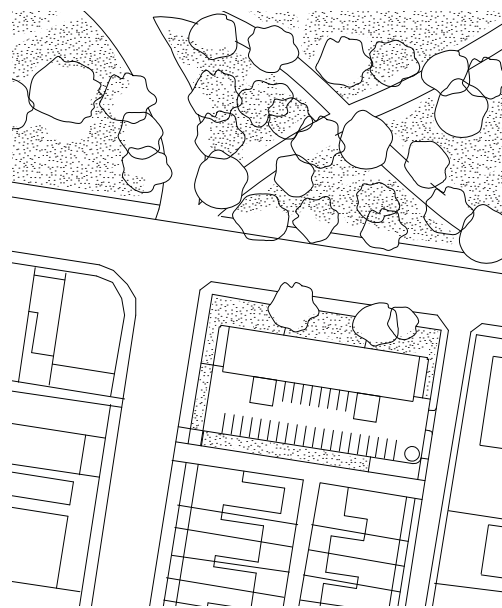
Domain Park Flats
1960 – 1962



Mark Strizic



1:10 000



1:2000

Domain Park Flats are located in the inner Melbourne suburb of South Yarra, less than 3 kilometres south east of the city. Placed immediately across the southeast corner of the Royal Botanic Gardens, this residential building embodies Boyd's ideal architectural type in response to the presence of urban parklands – "a 'highrise' block...overlooking public gardens".¹

In opposition to a general expectation in 1960s' Australian society for low and somehow 'invisible' architectures on the edges of park reserves, this multistorey building takes opportunistic and appropriate advantage of the voids that lie in front and behind it, 'charging' them with its own thin and tall presence. The revisitation of the notion of the 'charged void' consistently proposed by English architects Alison and Peter Smithson in their ideas, to which Boyd was feeling affinity, is here interestingly related to the specificity of the situation – open parkland that has historically acted as an urban hinge, absorbing and being charged by the different built densities and fabrics of the city and South Yarra suburb, lying respectively on the north and south bank of the river. Ideally related to the scale and look of the public housing skyscrapers scattered throughout Melbourne, architectural types praised by Boyd as appropriate examples of urban and social density in proximity to centrally located amenities and infrastructures, the Domain Park tower does not limit itself to an introverted relationship with its own block; rather, it is projected by its own urban spirit and demeanour to embrace the urban void of the Royal Botanic Gardens backgrounded by the city skyline on the north side, and the vast, seemingly unbounded, territorial void of Port Phillip Bay towards the south.

The deliberate narrowness of the building intends to further amplify the sense of open exposure to both these landscapes. As stated by Boyd, "all main rooms...fill its width and have an outlook both ways, so giving these rooms a heightened sense of isolation and suspension in space".² This result is also achieved through the compacting of the building's footprint, which occupies a small portion of the entire block, therefore allowing generous open space to flow all around the tower: a wide footpath with ground floor landscaped areas further detach the building from the road on the north side and makes it connect to the spaciousness of the Botanic Gardens and adjacent parkland; the relatively wide dimension of Park Street enables the west side of the building to be seen from far away; the discreet, partially buried and yet capacious carpark at the back acts as an unobtrusive low podium between the highrise building and the existing row of two-storey Victorian terraces that extend towards south – it is organized in two levels: a covered floor with the entry along Park Street on the west side, and an open space on the roof immediately above, on the same level of the side street that provides direct accessibility along the east boundary of the block.

The building accommodates twenty floors, the maximum height allowed by the regulations of that time, and is comprised of over sixty flats of four different types: medium-size two-bedroom, big two-bedroom, three-bedroom and two penthouses on the top floor. An open degree of flexibility in the layout configuration of the various flat types is allowed within the repetitive structure of

concrete vertical columns and horizontal slabs uninterruptedly expressed over the four elevations. Effectively acting in the main north façade as a modular armature to 'keep together' the randomly scattered balconies protruding from each living-room and the window mullions which are freely distributed accordingly to the position of internal partitions, this grid is the perfect device to allow "variety within unity", a notion consistently proposed by Boyd as characteristic of a less dogmatic type of modernism – a late post-structuralist modernism more inclined to certain degrees of experiential ambiguity, released from the orthodoxy of both early 20th century functionalism and following pervasive examples of monumental geometrical-structural formalism.³

Two tall and rather gaunt towers are located at the back, on the south façade. They accommodate lifts and staircases and house small shared lobbies to access the flats – never more than two per floor, often only one, from each lobby – and the external escape balconies that uninterruptedly span and provide a link between the two towers. These two towers were built before the block, allowing tradesmen, materials and equipment to be lifted, contributing to the level of efficiency and relative quickness that informed the overall construction process.

The floor-to-ceiling doors consistently used throughout the building link the various interior rooms as coexisting moments of an indivisible space rather than separated individual parts – the deliberate exclusion of head frames on the top of these doors reveals the presence of an uninterrupted ceiling in every flat, therefore enhancing the sense of spatial continuity that pervasively characterises all interiors, effectively experienced as compressed spaces sandwiched between the two continuous top and bottom layers of ceiling and floor.

This distinctive sense of compression somehow 'squeezes' the space out, projecting and extending it to the north and south horizons of Melbourne, from which this building is visible at many points as a recognizable reference – a gently brutalist presence, familiar and contextualised, differently from orthodox modernist buildings, because of its interesting ability to negotiate between the 'elegant' abstraction of the grid and the 'ugly' concreteness of the bricks, between its own weight and its own skinniness, between the awkward verticality of its towers and the horizontal compression of its spaces.

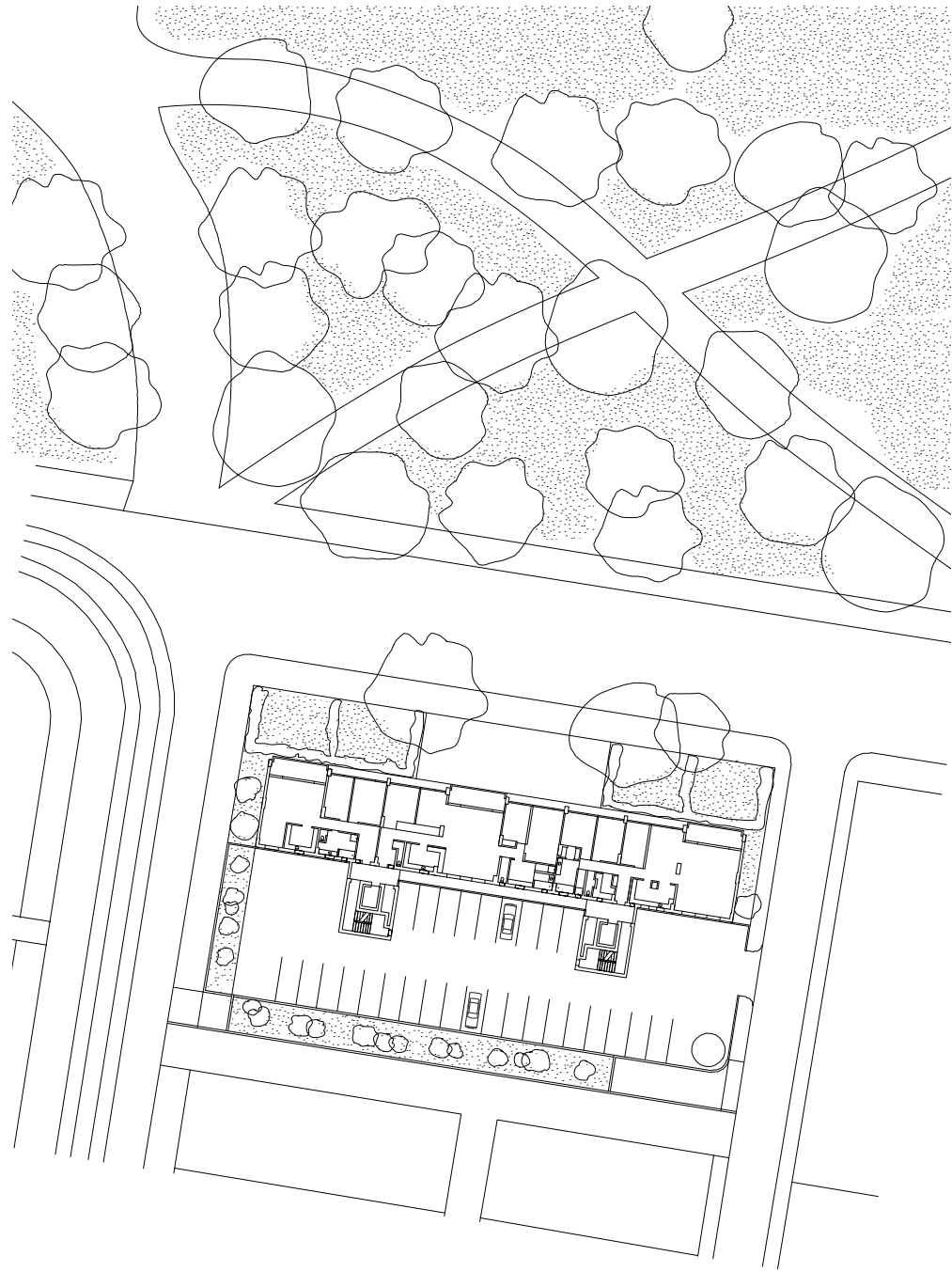
- 1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 58
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 See Robin Boyd, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965, pp. 142-145



Aaron Pocock

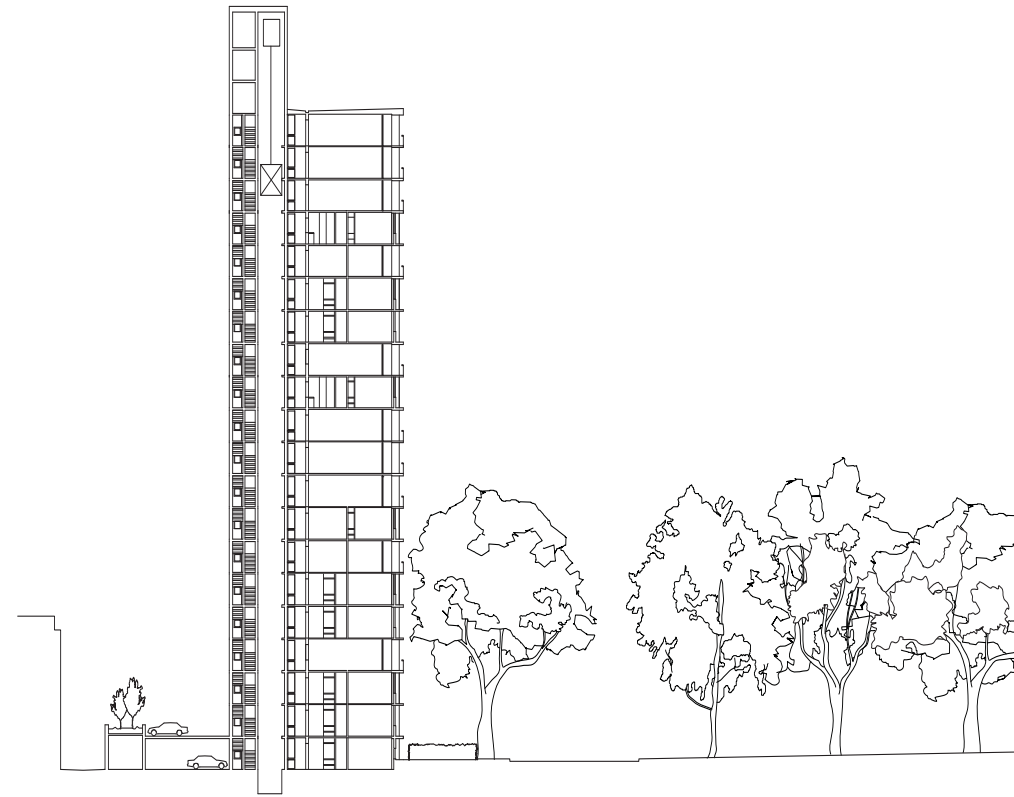


Mauro Baracco



1:750

270



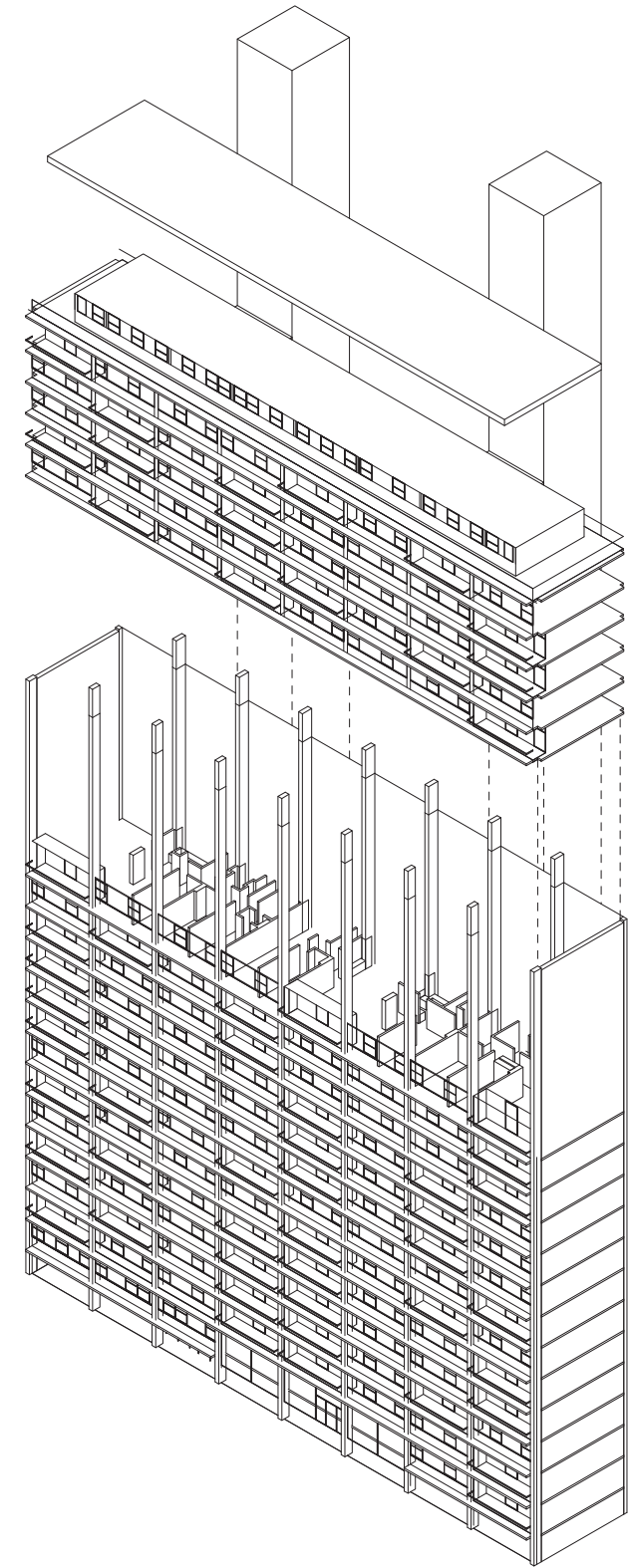
1:750

271

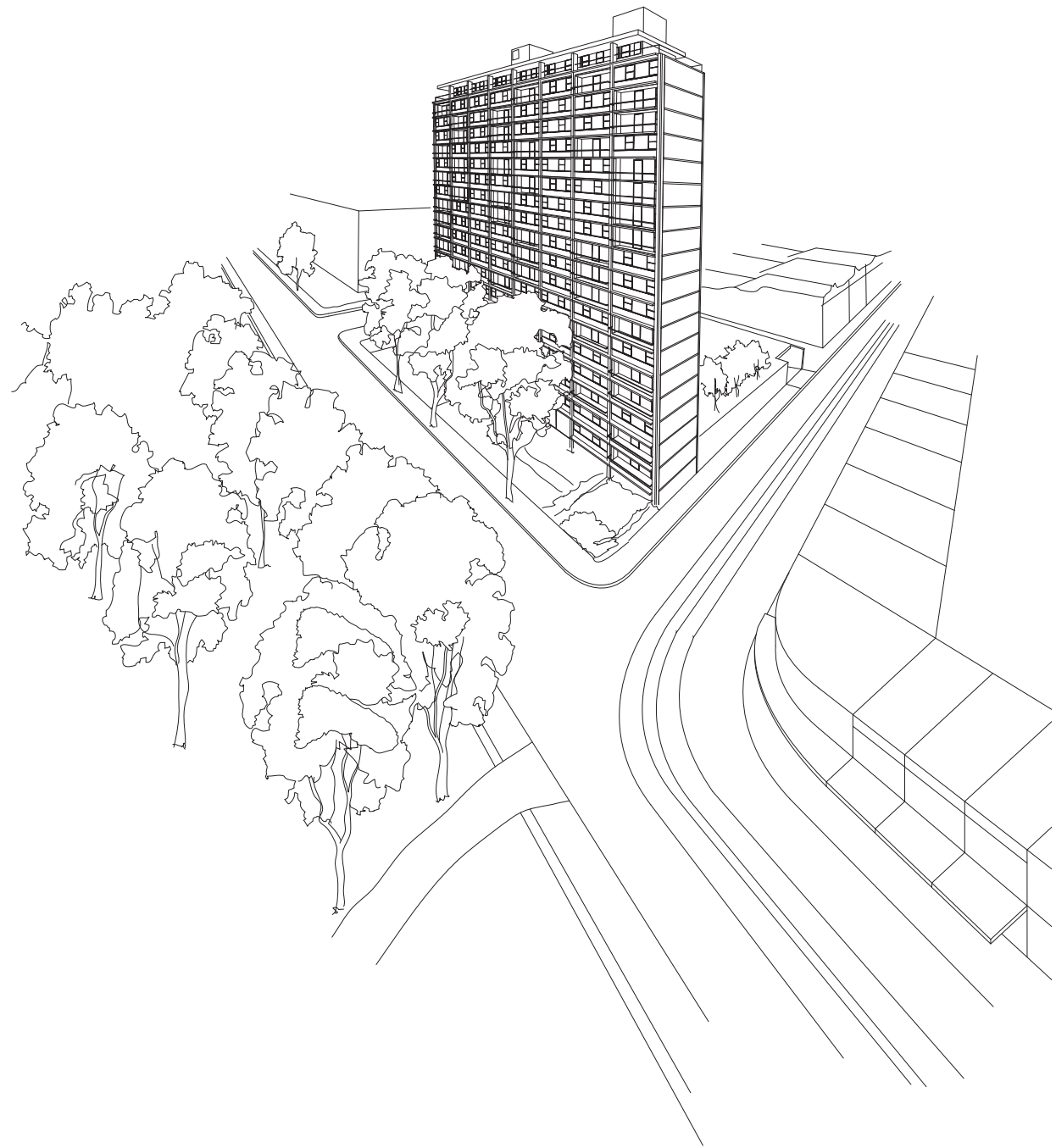


1:750

272



273





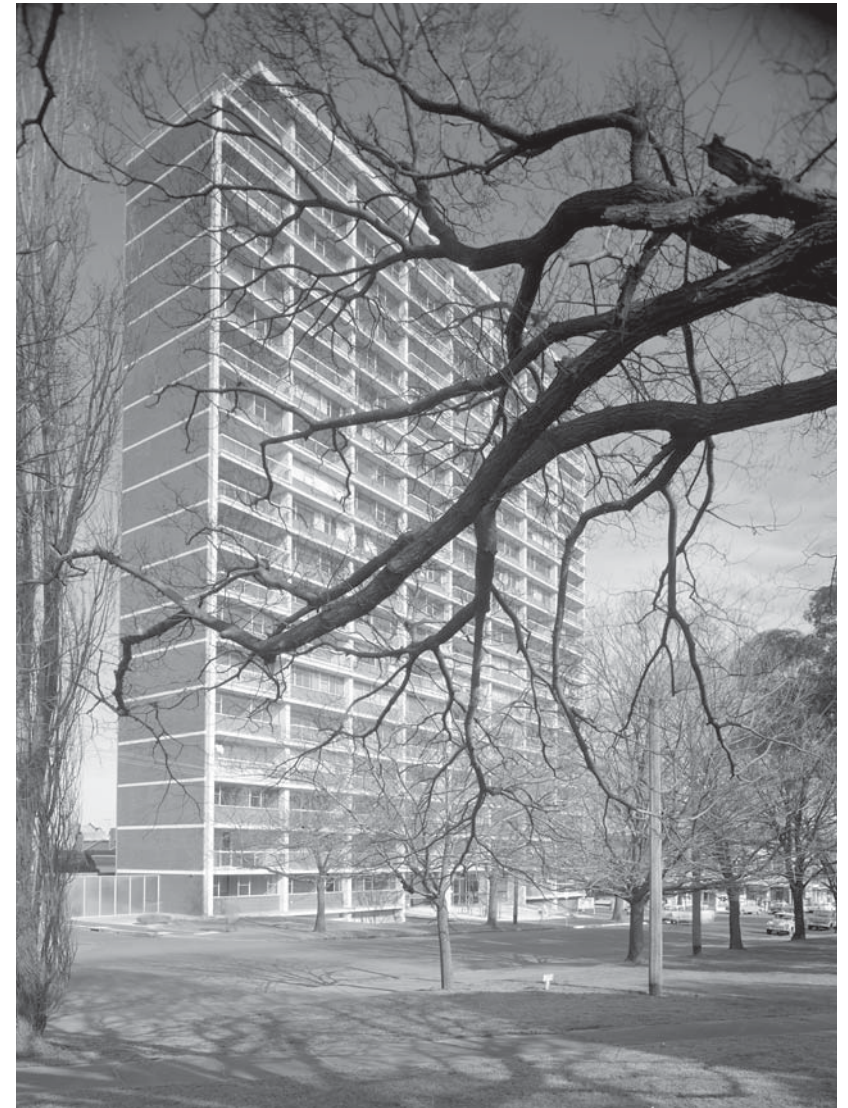
Mark Strizic



Aaron Pocock



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Ian McKenzie (Strizic archive)



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Handfield House
1960



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000



1:2000

The Handfield House is located in the south area of Melbourne's outer suburb of Eltham, approximately 20 kilometres from the city.

The block slopes steeply from north to south. The Yarra River runs at the foot of the slope, less than one hundred meters from the house. Extensive parklands lie parallel to the south bank of the river, as a large green boundary band – approximately one kilometre wide and five kilometres long – between the suburbs of Eltham and Templestowe. The Handfield House intrinsically participates in this situation; surrounded by the thick existing vegetation that includes large indigenous gums and wattle trees among other species, it is visually projected towards the horizon of the river and the parkland beyond on the south side, and literally embraces the slope from uphill, absorbing it in the outdoor and glazed indoor spaces exposed to north.

The house was designed for public relations consultants John and Esta Handfield. One of the main requests of the brief, informed by the owners' propensity to frequent house guests and visitors, was to design a building that could accommodate spaces for such temporary inhabitants, and that could easily undergo future additions and modifications. The distinctive modularity of this house is the perfect device to address this request. The structural and compositional grid adopted in this project allows Boyd to design spaces that can be not only used in a flexible way, but also built at a later stage, simply by adding new volumes to the existing formal and structural system, and enclosing spaces originally conceived as open.

The immediate outcome of this approach is a plan lay-out that accommodates some parts which are separate and independent and yet integrated in the whole formal and structural pattern; a separate appendix area in the west end of the house, including a bedroom and adjacent bathroom and dressing room is a clear example of this. All these spaces are serviced, reciprocally interconnected and linked to the rest of the house by an open covered balcony that effectively keeps this area apart as external to the house. A few years after the completion of the project, this outdoor balcony started to be used as well as the upper landing of an external staircase to connect the upper main floor of the house to an independent studio for Mr Handfield's father. The latter, now used as an office space for the current owner, is located under the living room and study of the house, and is provided with living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. The open balcony has been ultimately enclosed, and the bedroom and related facilities that were once independent are now fully integrated with the house. The external staircase was later demolished, further confirming the originally intended dimension of separate area for the volume downstairs which can be reached through the two external stairs located on both the east and west ends of the house. Over the years another independent room, a small pavilion accommodating a minimal bedroom space for guest visitors, has been added to the house. It is on the lower level, serviced by external curved stairs on the east side of the block, as a separate part with a dimensional and positional outline determined in accordance to the modular system that informs the whole project.

The rest of the house, consisting of the more 'permanent' areas at the upper level – one bedroom, bathroom, laundry and kitchen with related facilities in the east wing; living room, study and gallery space in the south wing; main bedroom with related ensuite and built-in-robe area in the west wing; external open courtyard, covered carport space and footpaths under the roof eaves – is all laid out following the grid modular system characteristic of this project. As a derivation of this approach, some constructive elements and finishing details further reiterate the modular nature of this house. For instance, some walls marked by the alternation of asbestos cement sheet panels and floor-to-ceiling windows, and the rhythmical repetition of internal sliding translucent panels to screen the windows towards the river from the external light and to separate the living room from the gallery space, clearly reassert the grid character of this project, expressing Boyd's reference to Japanese architectural tradition as commented by historians.¹

The flat roof is a flying unifying platform; it is a horizontal layer that keeps together the various parts of the projects, gathering all of them under one single gesture, and therefore visually and volumetrically minimizing the occupation of the land. Approached from the driveway's entry on the north boundary of the block, but also seen through the representation of its north-south cross section, the house expresses a strong sense of continuity with the natural ground – the horizontality of the roof, together with the horizontal slabs of the various different areas around and below the central courtyard reveal themselves as a logical response to the existing contour lines. As an artificial wedge inserted within the geological layers of its site, this house discreetly incises the ground and effectively makes space for new constructed layers. This architecture artificially coexists well with the natural landscape – it keeps its head down, never raising its top-line above the level of the incised existing slope; instead, this is assimilated by the roof, and 'stretched out' towards the valley and the openness of the parkland beyond the river.



Mauro Baracco

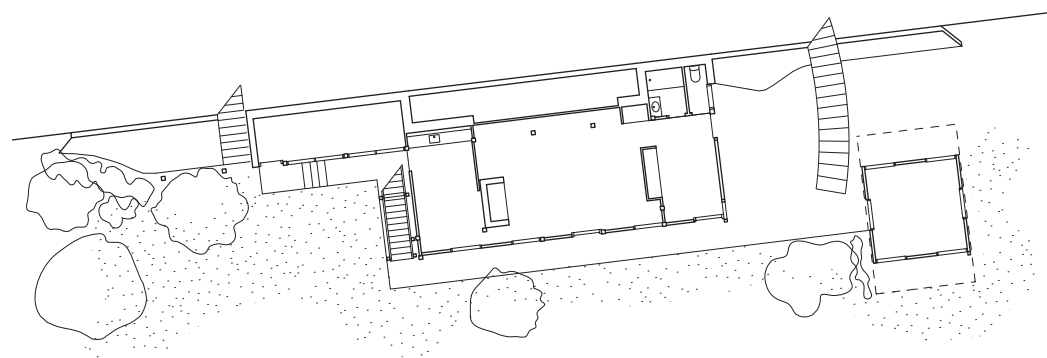


Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

¹ See Philip Goad, 'Robin Boyd and the design of the house 1959 – 1971. New Eclecticism: Ethic and Aesthetic', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, pp. 161-187; and Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd – A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 252



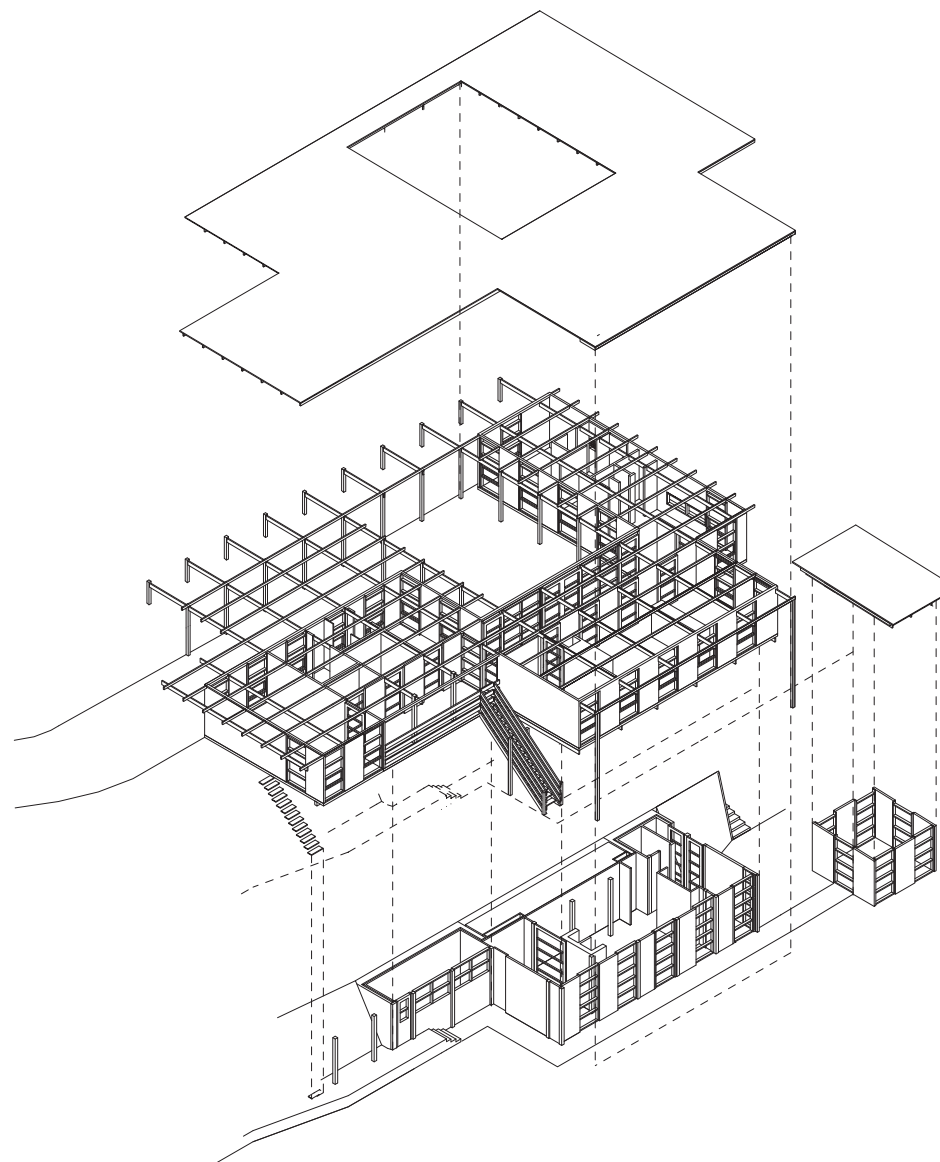
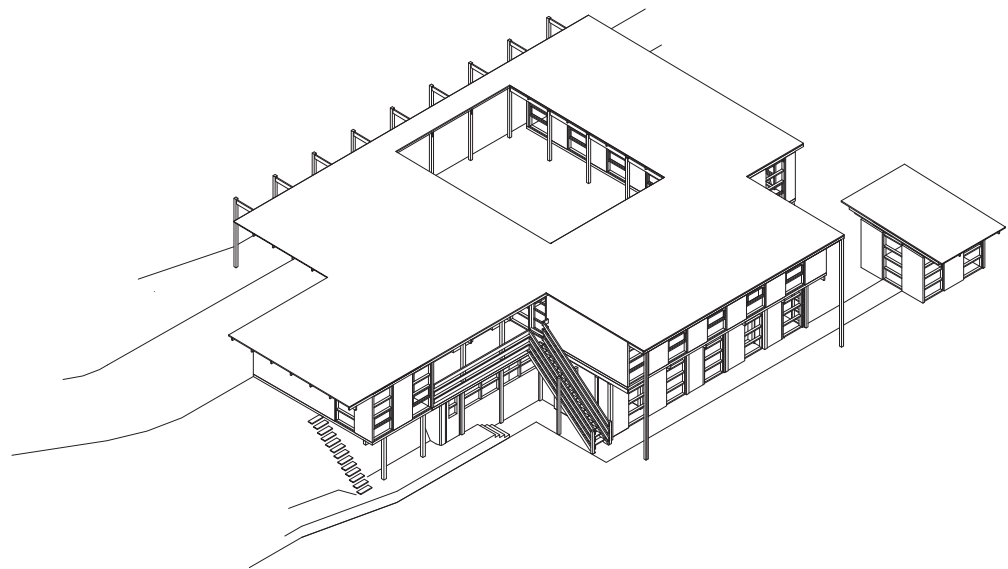
1:300

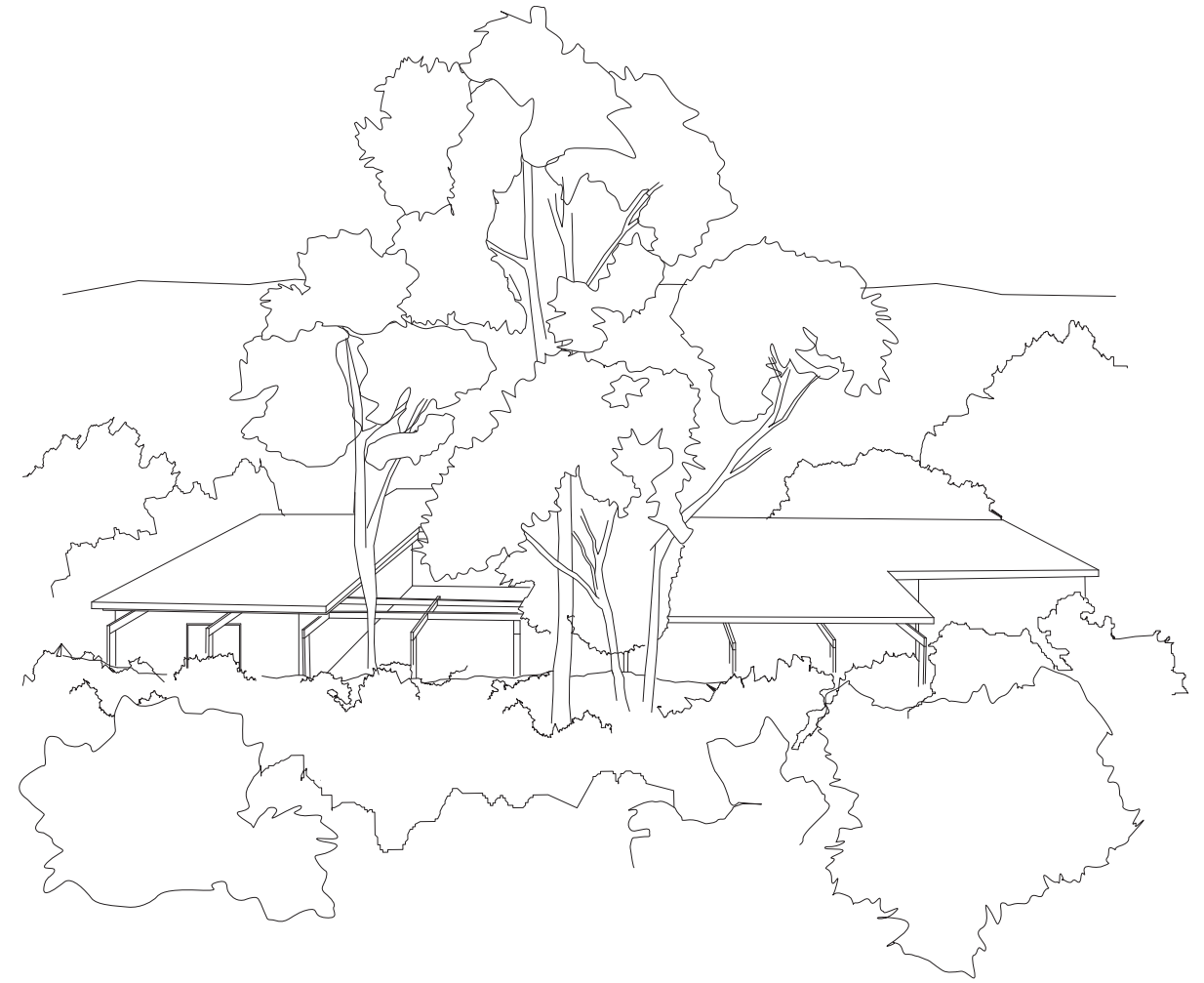
282



1:300

283







Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Peter Wille, State Library of Victoria



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

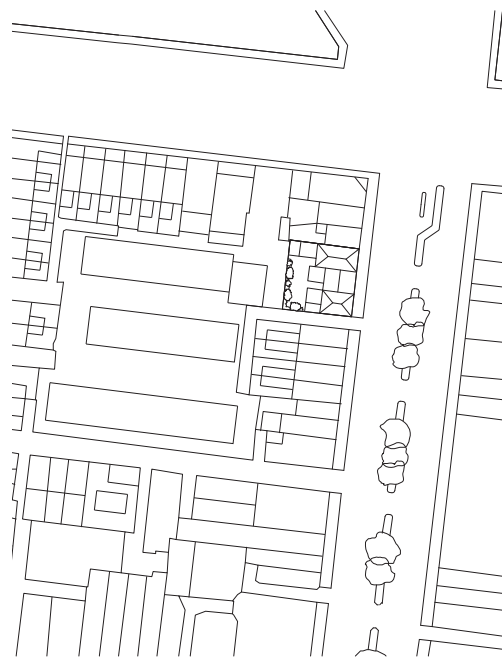
Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar
1961 - 1963



Ian McKenzie (Strizic archive)



1:10 000



1:2000

Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar, in the inner Melbourne suburb of Carlton, just over 1 kilometre north from the north edge of the city grid, is renowned in the history of wine bars and restaurant/bistros in Melbourne and Australia. Boyd himself describes this place as "one of the greatest minor institutions of Melbourne, a tourist attraction and an academic refuge".¹ Established as a wine bar as early as 1877, and located in this place in Carlton since 1935, it is named after the original owner Jimmy Watson, who since his death in 1962 has been followed by son Allan Watson and current owner and manager grandson Simon Watson in the running of the business. Following a previously unsuccessful proposal by Melbourne architect Roy Grounds, Boyd was commissioned to extend the original bar into a larger one, transforming the two terrace shops where both the bar and the Watson's residence on top were accommodated until 1962, into the current space as an amalgamation of three existing terraces. Located only a couple of blocks away from the University of Melbourne's main campus, it has been continuously frequented by students and academics, in addition to other clientele drawn from Carlton and Lygon Street's vibrant street life.

Differently from many of Boyd's domestic works, this project is compressed into its urban fabric, relating to the density and compactness of the surroundings through a front and interrelated volumes that are relatively condensed in their layout and monumental in scale and character. The rather heavy occupation of the block is however released by the presence of a backyard which has been transformed into an additional outdoor space for the customers.

This outdoor area is intriguingly similar in shape and dimension to the interior ground floor space designated to the public, including the entry room mainly used as a bar area and the adjacent restaurant room. Connected by an opening provided with a sliding timber screen, the bar and restaurant rooms carry together the same width and length of the outdoor area at the back, confirming once again, as with many others of Boyd's projects, a sense of spatial continuity and non-hierarchy between interior and exterior. Somehow in this and other projects the experience of walking from inside to outside and vice versa is like that of passing from one room to another – in this specific instance, from a 'room' vertically drawn to the sky to a room similarly induced to the top of a verticalized double-height volume that terminates into a multi-vaulted fibreglass ceiling. The continuous space that has been achieved through the merging of the three originally separate terraces still enables the various rooms to maintain their individual character – the four ones facing the backyard from the upper floor in a more segregated way, all the others on the ground and first floors behind the main street front, in a distinctively correlated way, both visually and spatially.

It is the coexistence of continuity and separation of space, and their being ambivalent parts of an indefinable and unmeasurable equation, that inherently characterises this project: the whole – the flowing of uninterrupted space: side to side, up to down, inside to outside – is the appropriate dimension that allows the revelation of the parts – the single rooms, but also the individual volumes of the three originally separate shops that bring with them and display within the whole unified space the physical presence of the boundary walls, now permeable because perforated. In the same way, the continuity of

space also embraces and uncovers the discontinuous and fragmented parts as distributed in these three existing and typically all terrace houses. A relatively rich labyrinthine world of small vestibules, steep staircases, balconies and crannies for natural lighting and ventilation, narrow corridors and passages, hidden nooks and little service/toilet rooms in corner spaces are disclosed and yet maintain their secretive nature, similarly to the two 'forbidden' rooms of the kitchen, squeezed on the ground floor between the backyard, the bar and the restaurant room.

Readjusted and revisited in this new continuous space, familiar elements are also unfamiliar at the same time, because surprising and unexpected. Free timber overheads spanning the full width and carrying concealed lights are reminiscent of the demolished floor's joists, but also mystify their lighting function behind the apparent look of structural beams. Similarly, the dividing walls of the three originally autonomous shops mark and remind the typical proportion and volumetric presence of terrace-types in rows, and yet do so by being no more than tenuous hints that have lost their weight and mass, and suddenly acquired a new ambiguous white look. Together with them, the other brick walls of the building, both inside and outside, have been muffled by a white painted bagged finishing – as a result, the expression of this architecture is informed by a distinctive state of blankness, surrealistically 'destabilizing' and indeed unfamiliar, but also abstractly allusive to the familiar relentless modularity of the three original façades through the incision of three gently arched tripartite openings that, wine-charcoal painted, strikingly emerge from the very same blankness of the main front. The three small windows on the top of one of these tripartite openings contribute to re-interpretatively delineate and evoke the individuality of one of the three original terrace fronts, enabling to 'visualize' this singular module reiterated over the remaining façade and therefore 'perceive' the other two terrace fronts in the whiteness of the blank wall.

Blankness and its intrinsic lack of visual references not only echoes in this project the equivalent impossibility to determine space, particularly when in a state of continuity, but also keeps the architecture in a state of potentiality, the perfect condition for a building that is continuously animated by the 'events' of its life – lunches, dinners, drinks, wine tasting, private functions, catching ups, celebrations, etc. etc. – rather than its own architectural components. The frames cut out within the existing walls are instrumental to the enjoyment of the various different spectacles, including the every day preparation of meals behind the frame opened to the kitchen. The three recessed double door cavities, including the entry in the southeast corner, expose the clients to Carlton street life and conversely draw the passers-by to the stage of the events inside. Private functions upstairs, in need of separation, although sheltered from the street and the more informal ground floor restaurant area, can still enjoy – at least from the two rooms facing the double height central space – the events of this place.

With no canopy along the façade, the building increases its ghostly unfamiliar expression within the context; yet the scale and civic character of its front and volumes makes this architecture strongly rooted to its own urban situation.

1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 127



Mauro Baracco



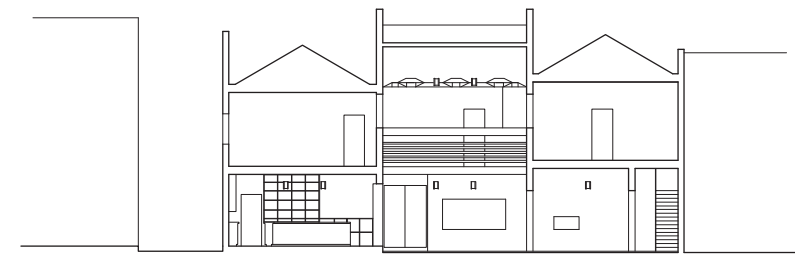
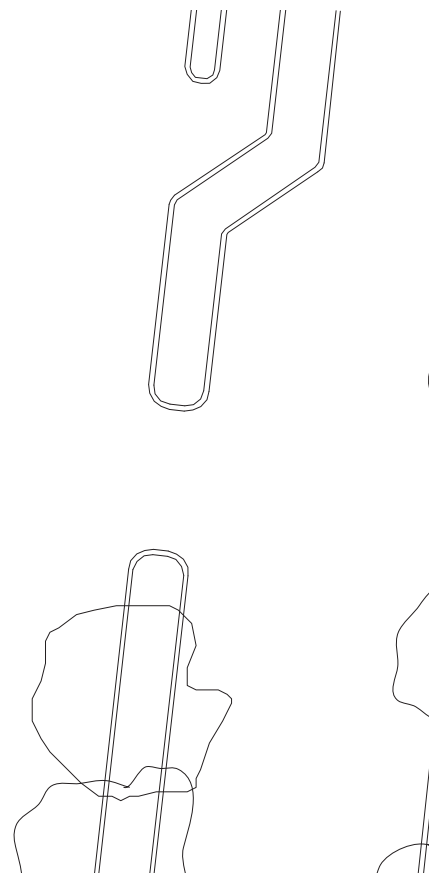
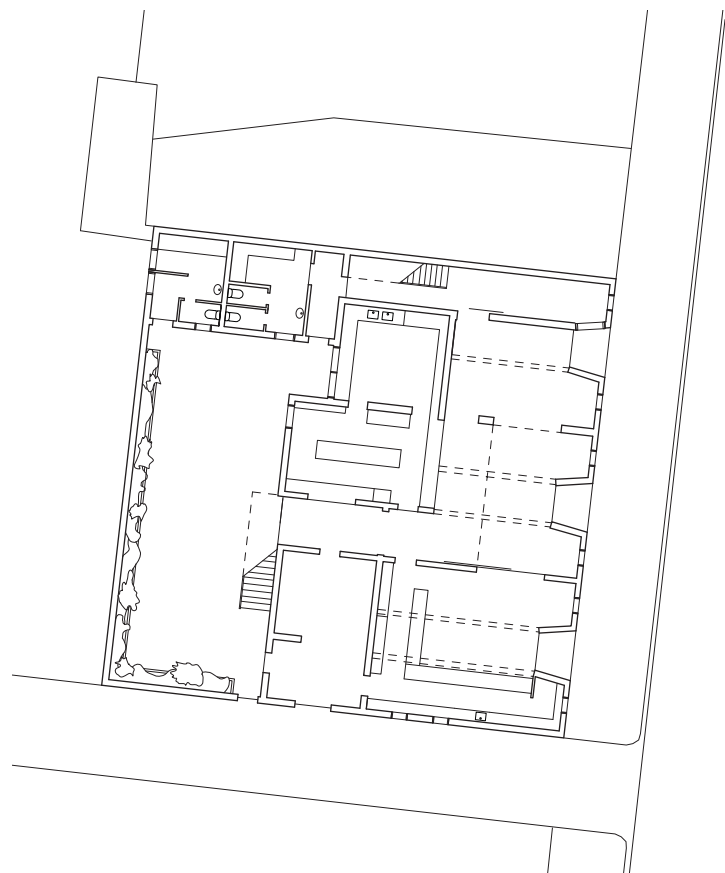
Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic

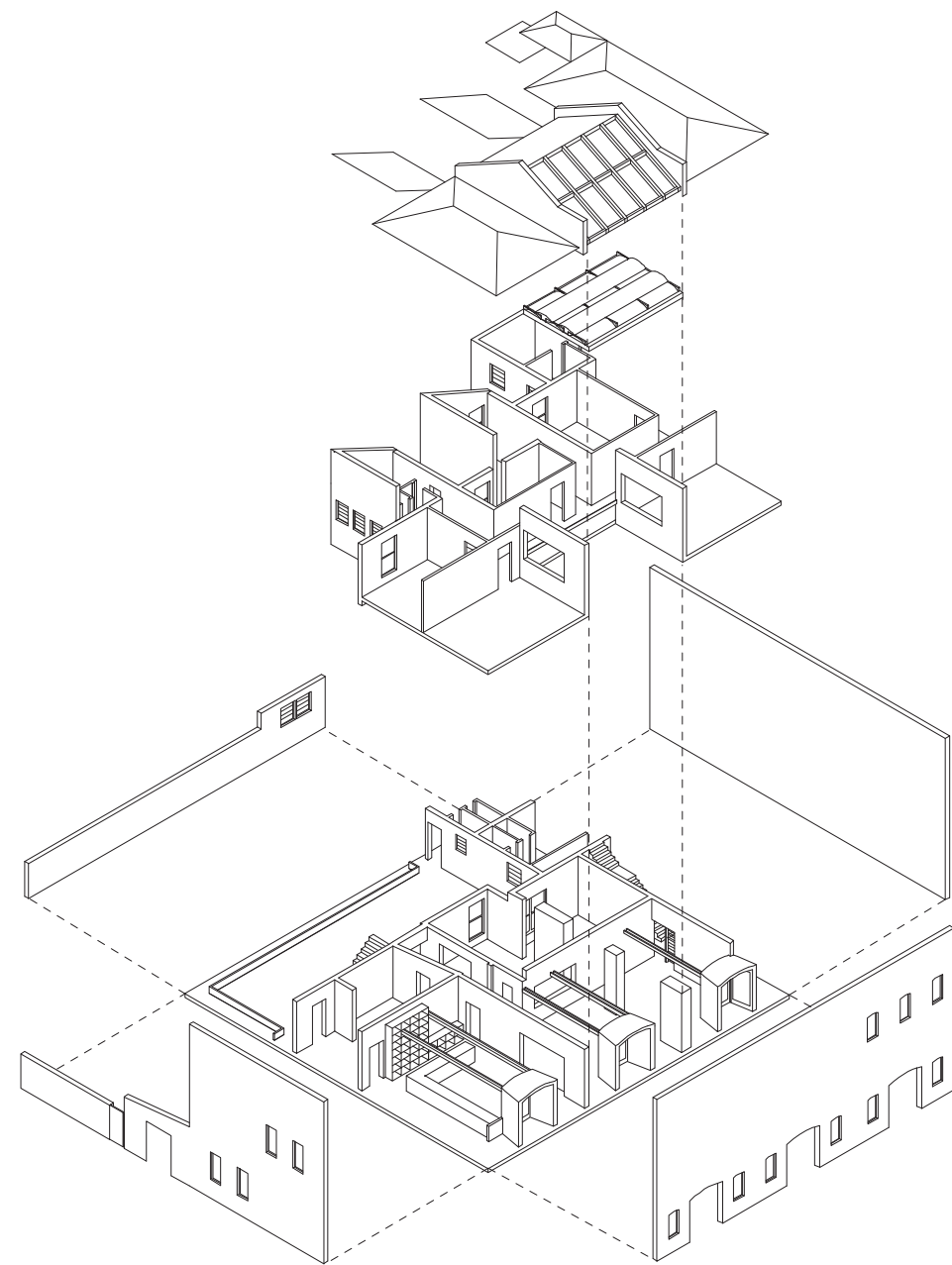
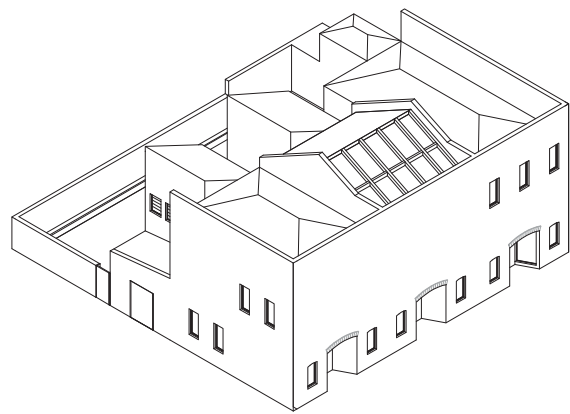


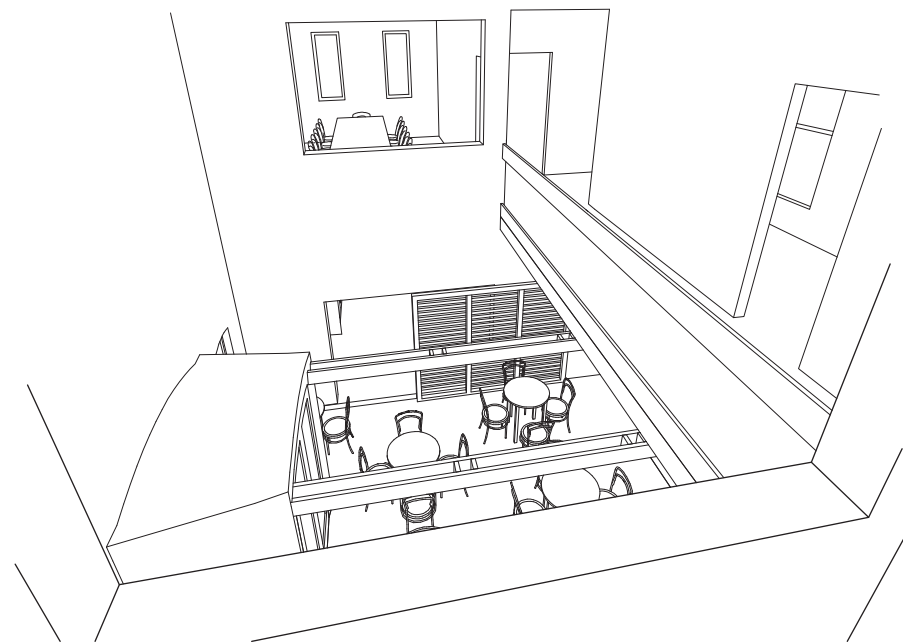
1:1000



1:300

1:300







Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



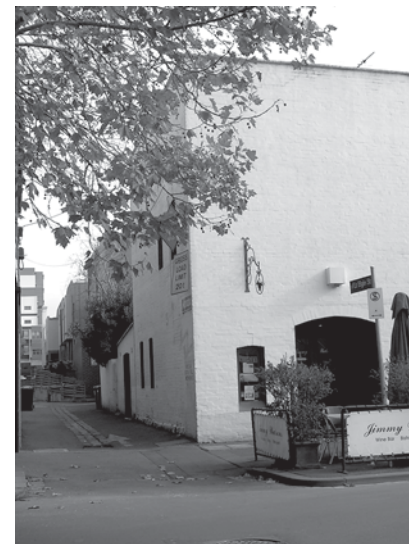
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

**Tower Hill Natural
History Centre**
1961 – 1970



Mark Strizic



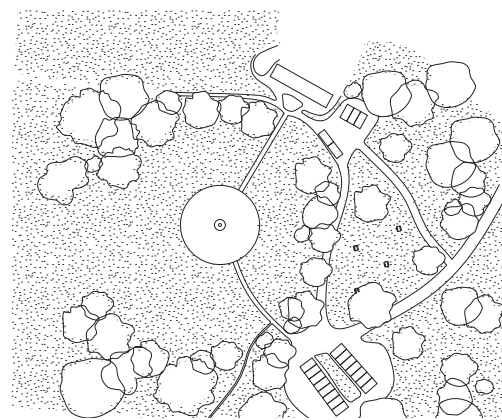
1:10 000

This little public building is located in the heart of Tower Hill State Game Reserve, approximately 280 kilometres south-west from Melbourne and 4 kilometres north from the coastline of the Southern Ocean. The reserve, located halfway between Warrnambool and Port Fairy, clearly denounces its volcanic formation through the distinctive circularity that marks its footprint (with a diameter of approximately 3 kilometres) in relation to the surrounding territory – the crater of this dormant volcano and its various constituent peaks (including Tower Hill) was formed at least 30,000 years ago due to a geological explosion, and later filled by the water of the surrounding lake. Although in 1892 this area was declared Victoria's first National Park, this did not stop the subsequent, severe deterioration of the natural environment through the continuous grazing, crop growing, quarrying and rubbish dumping. Only in 1961 the reserve began to be effectively managed as a national park through activities of reforestation – a painting of this area done by Eugen von Guérard more than one hundred years earlier has been used as a significant reference to guide the reintroduction and rehabilitation of indigenous flora and fauna.¹

The building was commissioned as a means to activate and support the program of environmental restoration. The construction did not start until 1969, and it opened to the public in 1970. Boyd, a committed environmentalist himself throughout his life,² was attached to this project and the history of Tower Hill Reserve; it is not surprising that his reviews and descriptions of this work – which in *Living in Australia* is discussed in a greater length and depth than the majority of the other projects³ – polemically highlight the damages inflicted to the area by careless colonialist activity, clearly investing this work with a strong sense of hope for the regeneration of the natural and geological landscape of this national park.

Designed to expose the visitors to the ongoing restoration process and encourage them to engage with the natural physical environment,⁴ the building is an open continuous space, with low round bases as display elements under a ceiling of exposed bent prefabricated laminated roof beams. The only partially enclosed area accommodating a model of the reserve in its original state is at the centre of the circle, naturally lit by an oculus skylight; the absence of partition walls and the continuous window along the perimeter allows the visitors to be literally drawn into the surrounding nature.

Managed by the same Aboriginal people that have been living in the area for thousands of years, the building aims to impact on the land as discreetly as possible – its shape and materiality (the stones are local), in response to the conscious realisation that “this was an artificial interloper in an area whose sole objective was to appear unspoilt by artificiality”,⁵ attempt to insert this architecture into the nature as if it was one more magmatic lump among the ones that naturally exist around it. Far from treating it as a formal metaphor of the surrounding hills – this being a simplistic and gratuitous representational approach consistently eluded by Boyd – the Melbourne architect reveals and yet ‘hides’ the ineluctable intrusiveness of this building by adding and



1:2000

‘con-fusing’ it with the silhouette of the nearby Tower Hill and the whole reserve – a silhouette of hills and cones that characterises the site and that is so accurately registered by von Guérard’s painting.

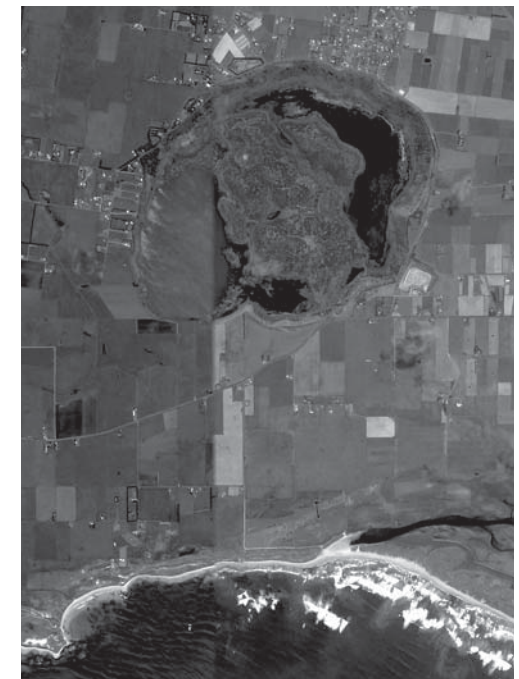
One of Mark Strizic’s photos, showing the building through a reflection effect as if it was merging with the sun and the external vegetation,⁶ is intriguingly symptomatic of Boyd’s inclination to hope for space in an inexplicable state of oneness/all-inclusiveness.



Mauro Baracco

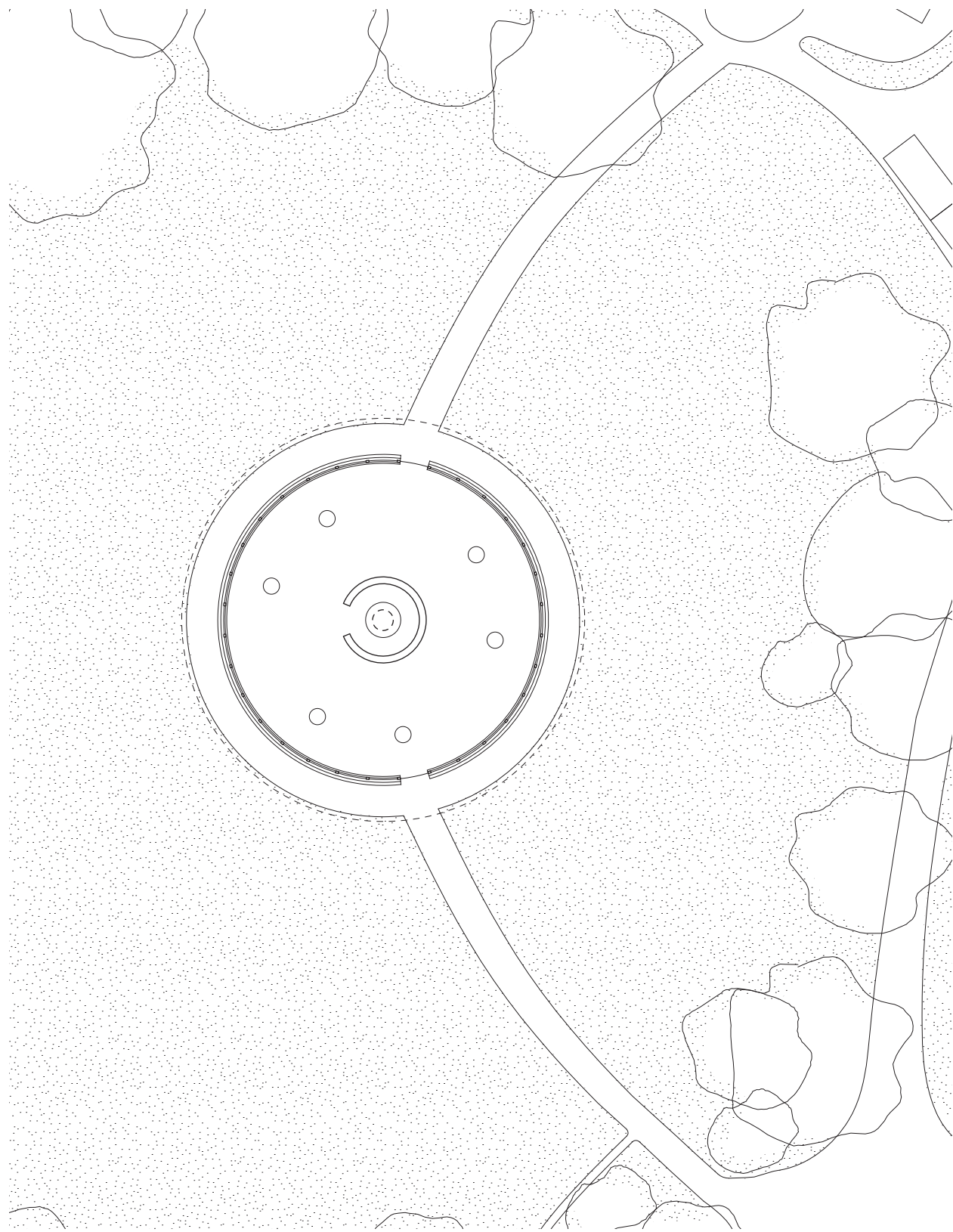


Museum Victoria (www.museumvictoria.com.au/.../html/volcano3.html)

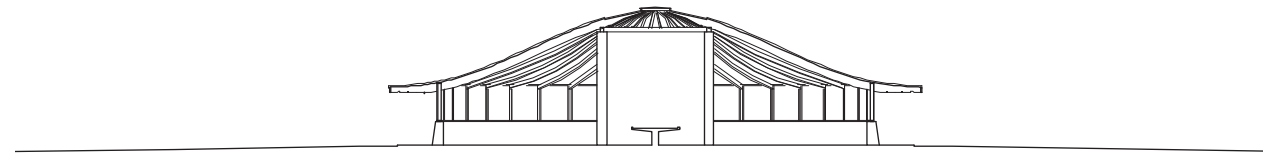


Google Earth© 2010 Digital Globe© 2010, MapData Sciences Pty Ltd, PSMA

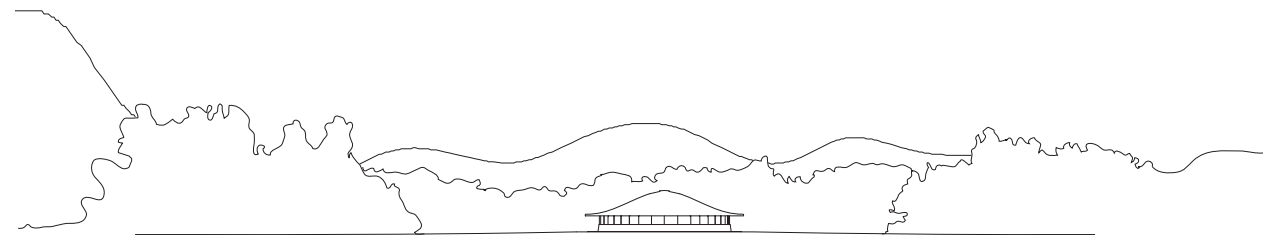
- 1 Eugen von Guérard (1852-1882) is an Austrian-born artist who lived and worked in Australia from 1852 to 1882. His painting *Tower Hill* (1855) depicts in a realistic way this area as it was before the dilapidation of its natural environment through intensive colonialist exploitation (the painting has been on loan to Warrnambool Art Gallery since 1978; see also Alan R. Dodge (ed.), *Eugen von Guérard*, catalogue of the homonymous travelling exhibition, Australian Gallery Directors Council and Australian National Gallery, 1980, p. 36 and p. 102). The Fisheries and Wildlife Division of the Ministry of the Victorian Government has used this painting as a guide for the process of rehabilitation that since 1961 has been undertaken with the aim of restoring the flora and fauna of this area to their natural state – for further descriptions of the history of Tower Hill National Park see *Victoria's Heritage/Tower Hill Reserve-History and Heritage*, www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources/22_2197.pdf
- 2 As remarked by historian Geoffrey Serle, “Boyd was a hero of the environmental movement for his prominence as a propagandist, his campaign for trees, his support for the National Trust and his crusade against ugliness.” Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp. 280, 281
- 3 See Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 102 and pp. 140, 142, 143
- 4 In words by Boyd: “Its purpose was to display to the thousands of expected visitors the restoration programme and to encourage them by explanatory exhibits to explore the extraordinary convulsions of the earth around, and to examine the unique efforts to preserve rare plant species from extinction.” *Ibid.*, p. 143
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 See p. 312, top



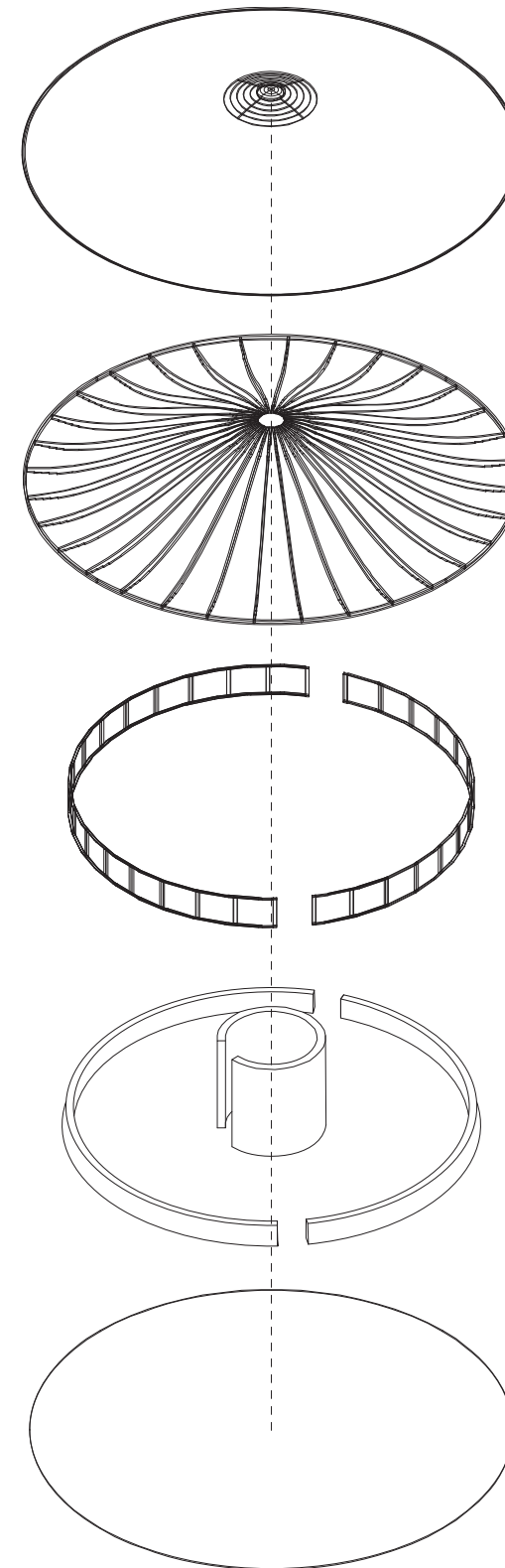
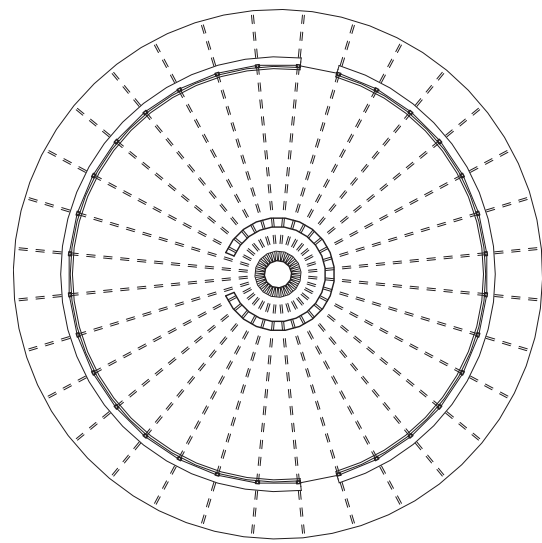
1:300

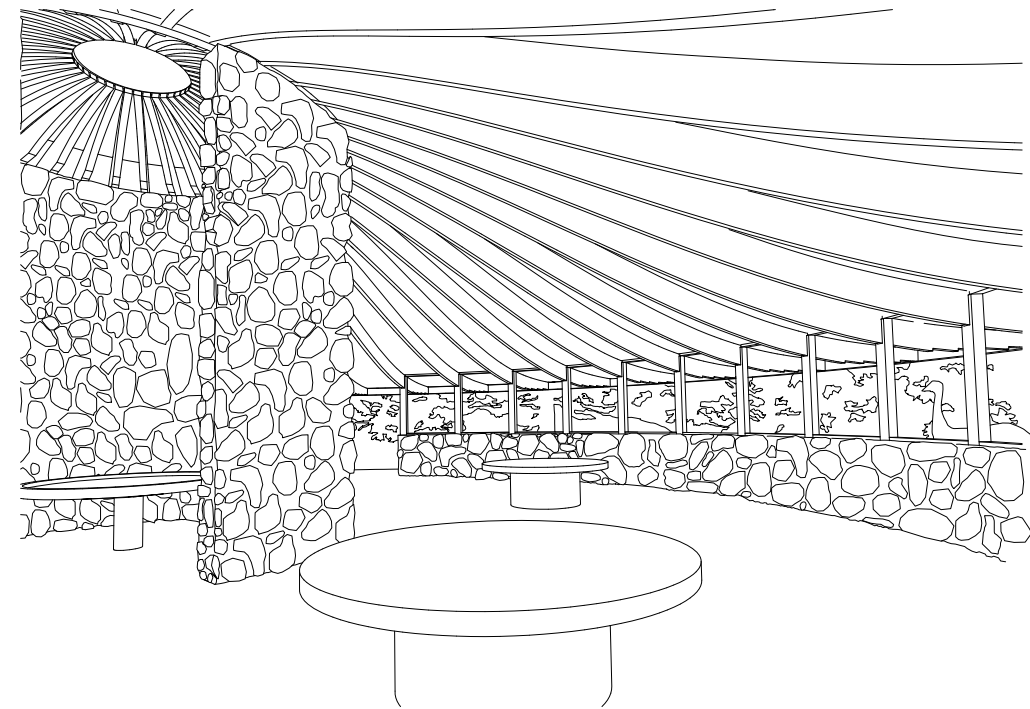
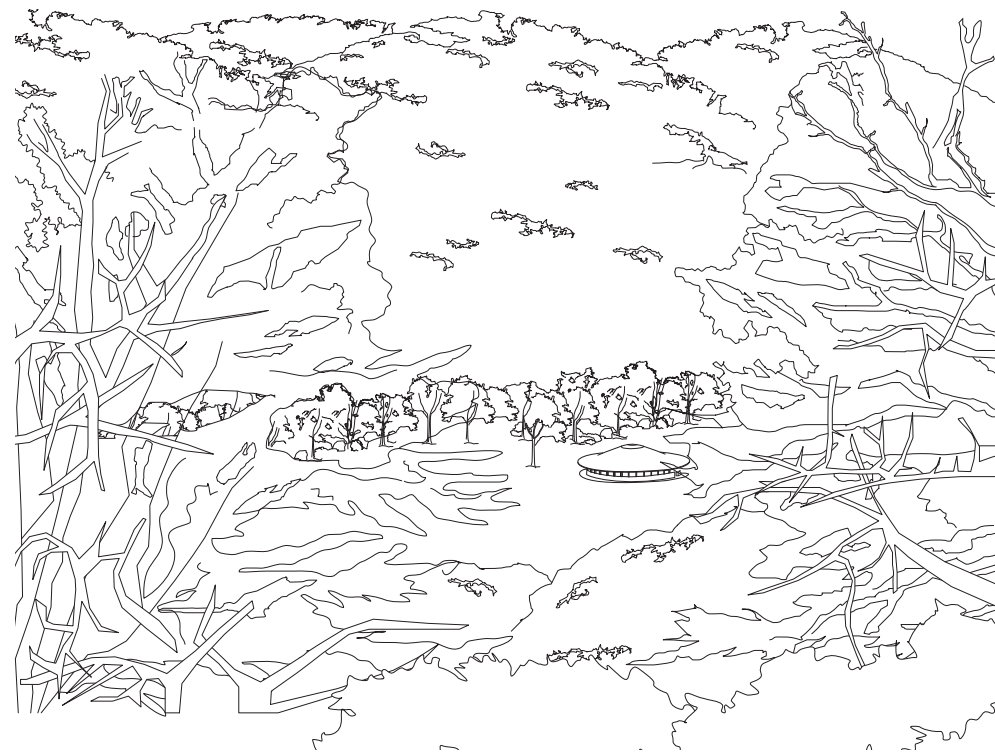
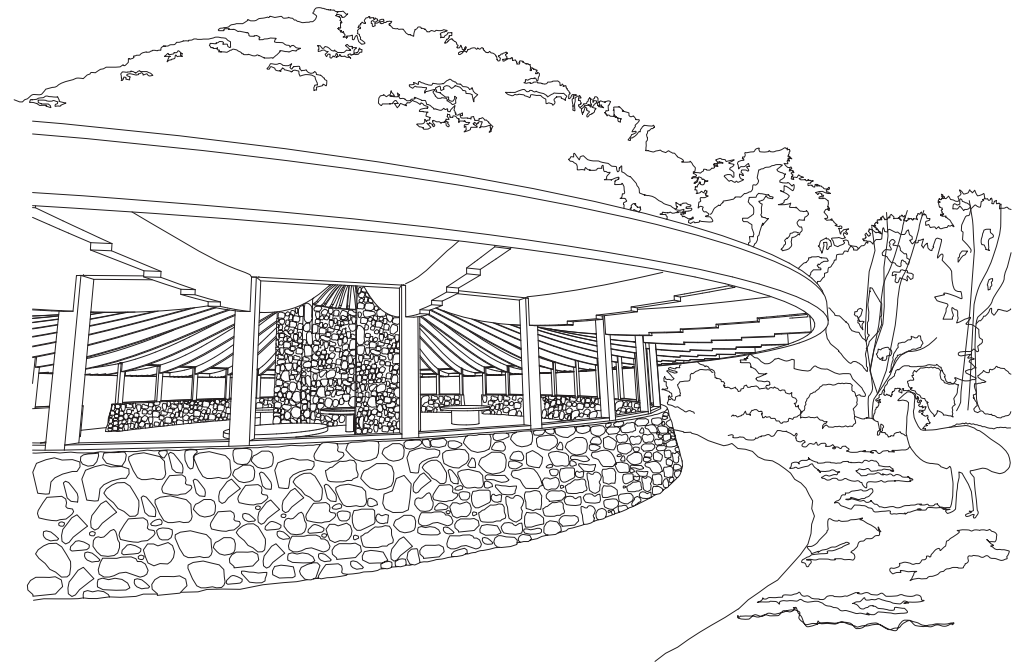


1:300



1:1000







Mark Strizic



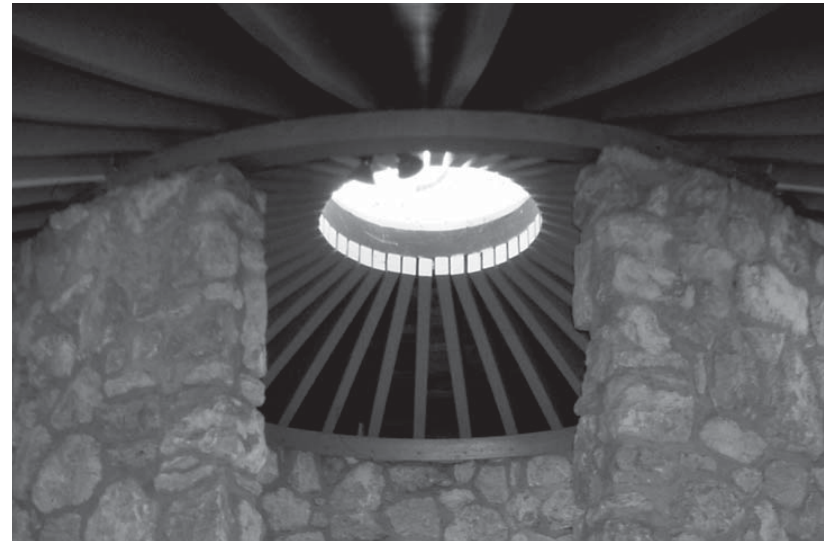
Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Wright House
1962



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

A previous project, originally designed by Boyd and built in 1950, was destroyed by a bushfire in 1962. The owners, graphic artists Mr and Mrs Wright, commissioned Boyd again to design a new house in the same place – a relatively large block of land in the north area of the outer Melbourne suburb of Warrandyte, located approximately 30 kilometres north-east from the city. The property occupies the upper portion of a bushy terrain that steeply slopes from the main road on the south-west edge of the block towards the Yarra River, which runs further down at the foot of the gully, a few hundred metres beyond the north-east boundary of the block.

The brief included the request for a studio/work-area and a sitting room for reading and music in addition to the living and dining areas. The project responds to the brief and the existing site through the design of a two-storey house – the lower level, smaller in footprint than the upper floor, is the logical occupation, but also retention, of the slope of the ground; the upper level, with a low and compressed flat ceiling, successfully minimizes the volumetric presence of the building. Both the structure and the external cladding are in bushfire resistant steel.

A hint – a ‘ghostly’ spirit – of the old house is kept alive by the presence of two walls, the only two ‘remains’ that have survived the fire; one has been reused as the north-west end of the house, the other visibly contributes to the open space of the house as a wall that screens the internal stairs. This vertical presence acts as a freestanding screen, revealing its original stone on the side that faces the staircase and a white painted bagged finishing on the other side. It is effectively the only prominent vertical element of the whole space, around which circulation, space and views flow in absence of physical boundaries. This wall/screen does not extend from floor to ceiling; with the top edge running approximately one meter above the upper level’s floor, it allows to visually experience the space as a whole, without separations between the various functional areas located on both levels.



1:2000

This sense of continuity is further reinforced by the horizontal spatial compression characteristic of the un-invasive nature of this architecture. This pervasive sense of horizontality – more distinctly perceivable at the main/upper level and already detectable upon arriving at the carport canopy – together with the house’s cross-shaped plan, provides an intense degree of continuity between the various domestic spaces and yet allows an adequate degree of separation between their different functions: entry and laundry in the south-west arm; bedroom, dressing room, sewing room and bathroom in the north-west arm; dining room and studio in the north-east arm; living room and staircase in the south-east arm; kitchen in the centre. In addition to these areas, a two-bedroom guest suite and related facilities occupy a portion of the central core of the cross in the lower floor.

The ‘negative’ spaces created by this cross-shaped plan are themselves integral parts of the house; they are effectively extra ‘rooms’ sometimes located inside – the double height area of the lower sitting room that spatially hinges the two floors – and sometimes located outside and complementary to the house – the south entrance court, the more private west side court and the balcony on the north corner. The generous dimensions of these

areas allow them to be inhabited in more than just one singular way. The two courts/verandas on the back, for instance, are “something more”¹ than just spaces for circulation; almost as wide as each of the arms that form the cross, they are relational threshold areas between the house and its surroundings. In a similar fashion, the external area on the north corner of the house is not just a balcony; it is an outdoor room symptomatically larger than the adjacent dining and studio area. It is an open space, a ‘deck in the air’,² from which it is possible to be inextricably part of the landscape, co-belonging with the trees and the natural environment of the gully towards the Yarra, rather than simply, passively, enjoying the objectified view of this horizon.

This same sense of continuity and indivisibility between indoor and outdoor spaces, between architecture and landscape, is further underlined by the presence of plants and green vegetation on the stony side of the wall/screen along the stairs. This outdoor landscape, an inclined green strip, delineates not only the presence of the existing sloping ground, but also the desire for forms of continuity between the natural and the artificial environments of this project, expressing the same dimension of indivisibility that implicitly pervades the sense of unbounded and compressed horizontality of this house. This sense of compression further extends outside, virtually tending to infinity through an expanding continuous low flat roof that covers and discloses more areas of inhabitation: a double height veranda along the northeast side, the carport and a cellar/bar under it, besides the entry portico and the veranda next to the laundry which have already been described above.

In the early 1970s a separate two-storey studio was added in the south corner of the block. It is comprised of a generous living area on the upper floor and a cellar and workshop/storage space at the lower level. Similarly to the house, it is built in steel and stones, is serviced by an open carport/entry porch on the south side towards the road, and its lower floor area is smaller in comparison to the areas of the living spaces above.

The addition of this two-storey building has significantly changed the character of the previous site condition. The space between the house and the studio has been activated by the introduction of the latter, becoming a relational court between the various parts of the project – a paved area where to sit in the shade of a tree, but also where to move and circulate from area to area; a void charged by the presence of built volumes on three sides and the openness of the gully towards north-east. It is not surprising that the Wrights used to frequently arrange parties and hold social gatherings in this space, opening up the panels of the cellar/bar-room and entertaining their guests in this domestic yet public space.

- 1 A concept discussed by Boyd in his book *Living in Australia*, and already examined previously in this thesis
- 2 I am here paraphrasing the concept of ‘streets-in-the-air’ that was introduced by architects Alison and Peter Smithsons in their Golden Gate Deck Housing project (1952) (see Alison Smithson, ed., *Team 10 Primer*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1968, pp. 76-78) and since then continuously investigated throughout their work, to which Boyd consistently referred in a supportive and positive way



Mauro Baracco



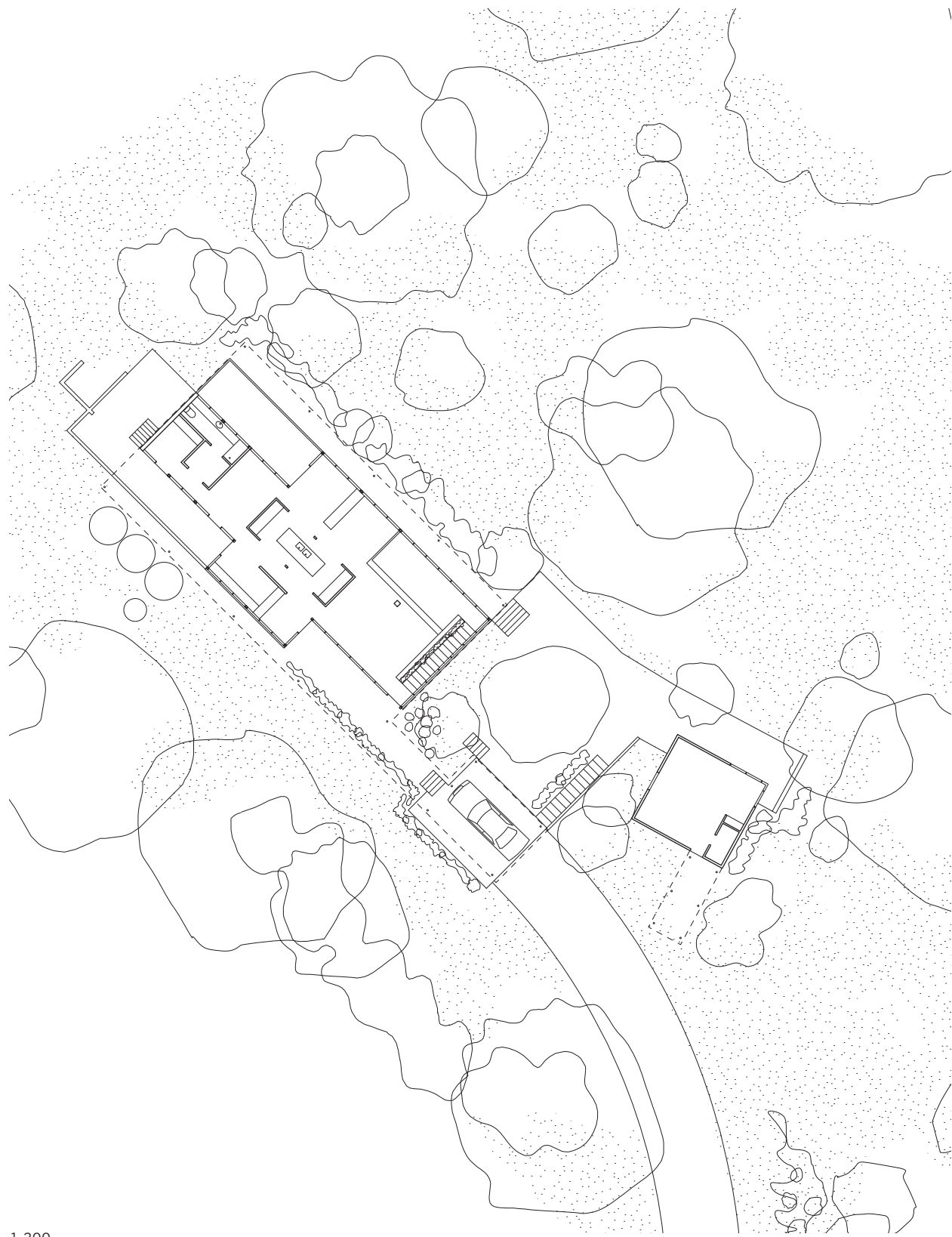
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

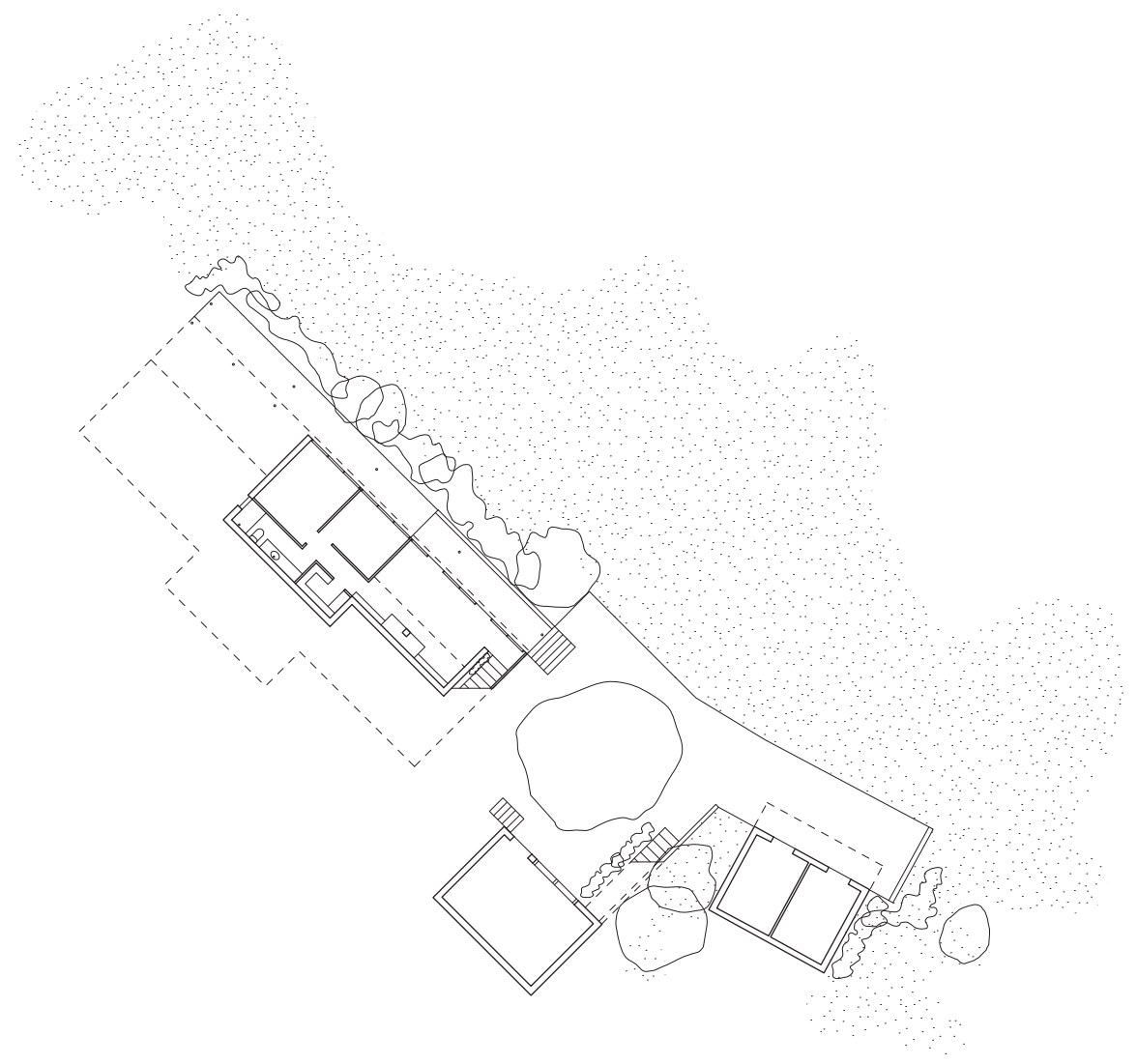


Mauro Baracco



1:300

318



1:300

319

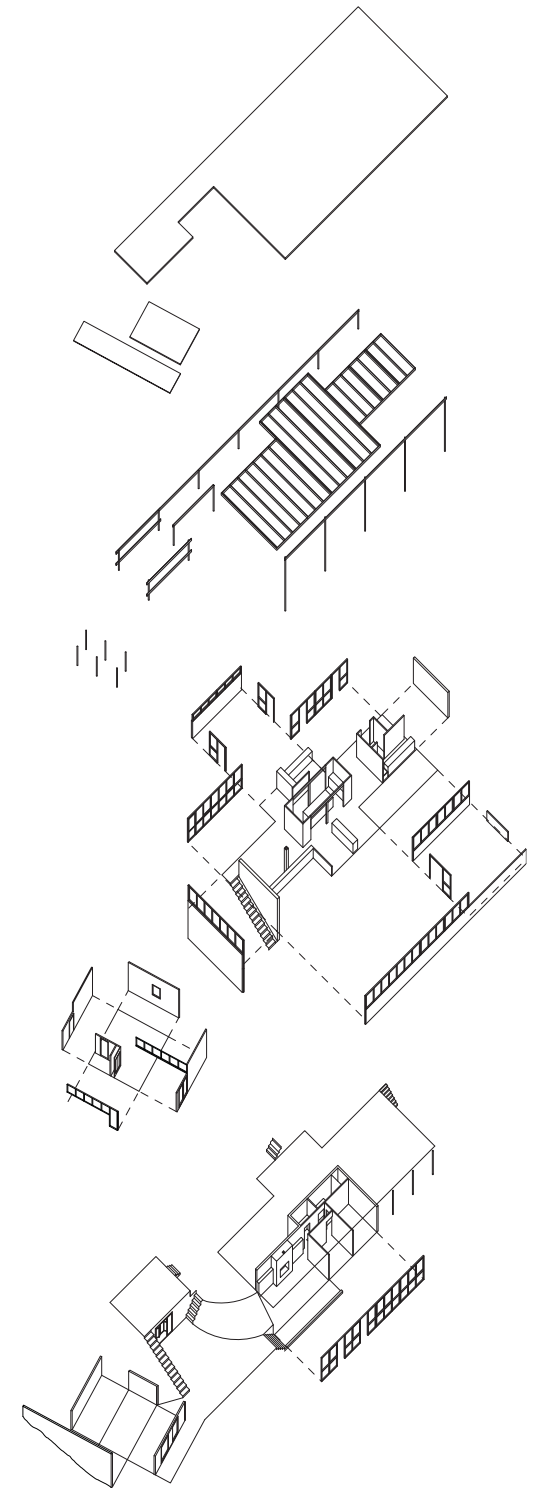
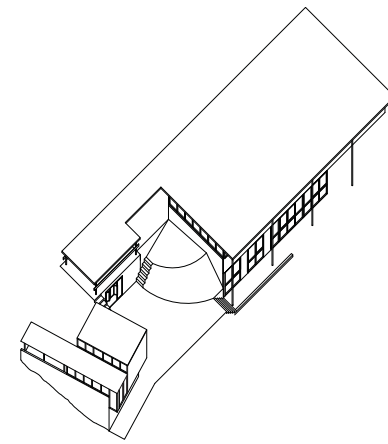


1:300

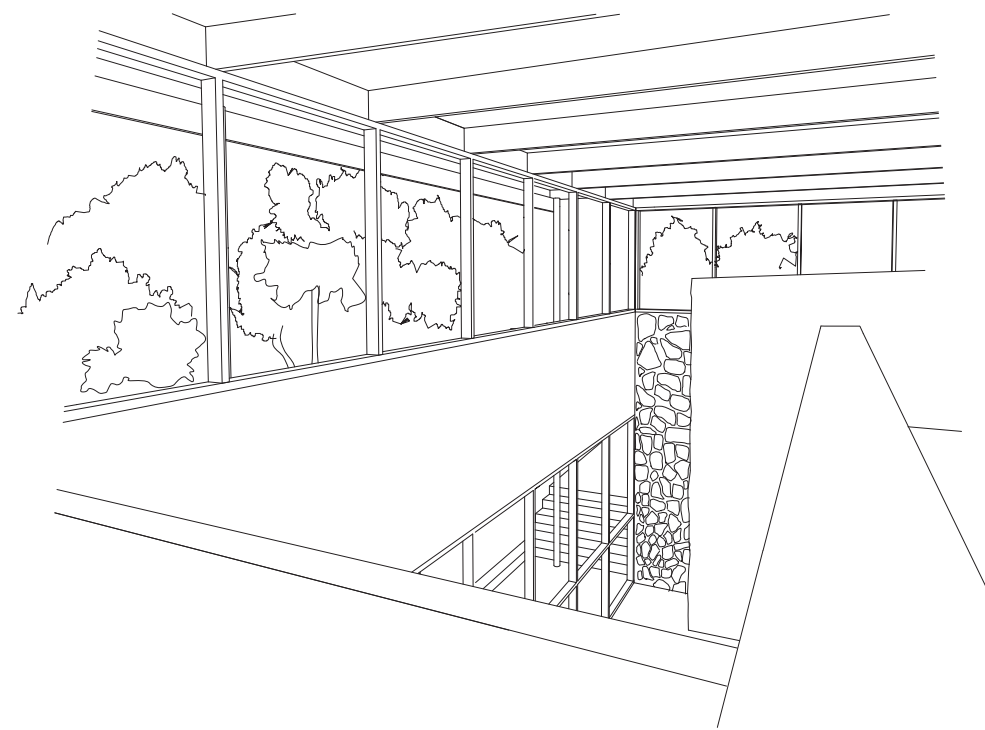
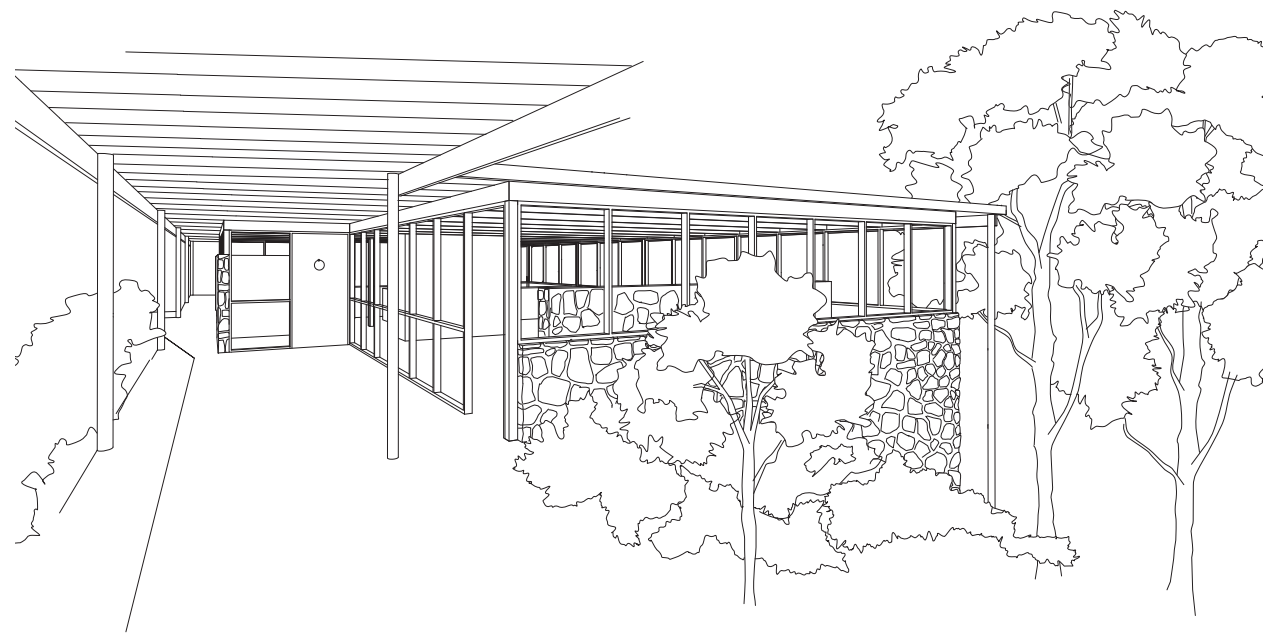
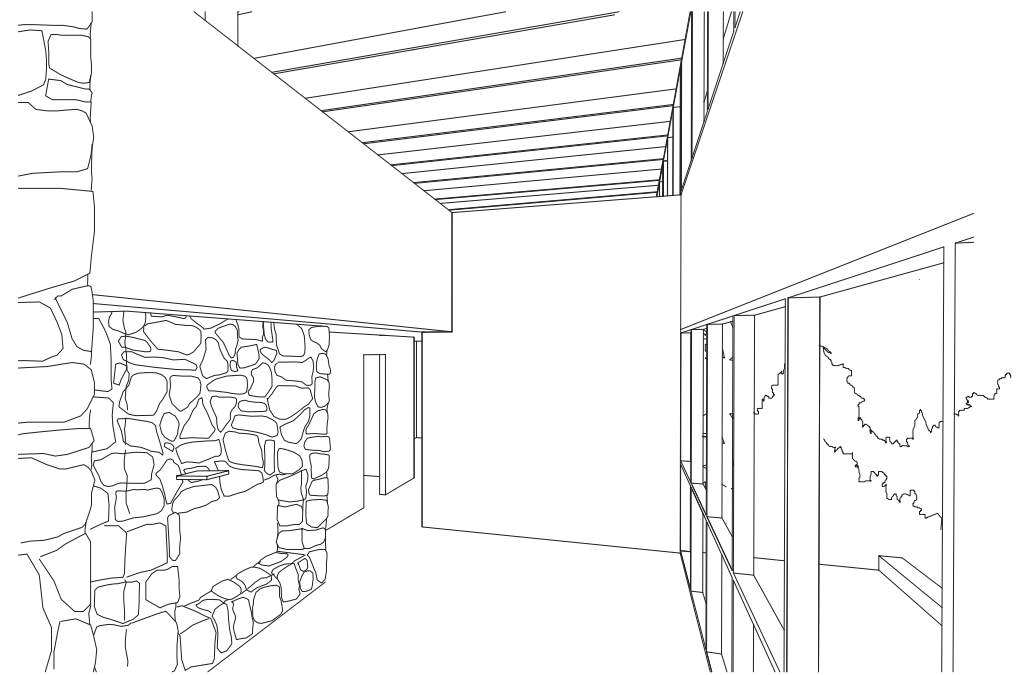


1:300

320



321





Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Adrian Featherston (Strizic archive)



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

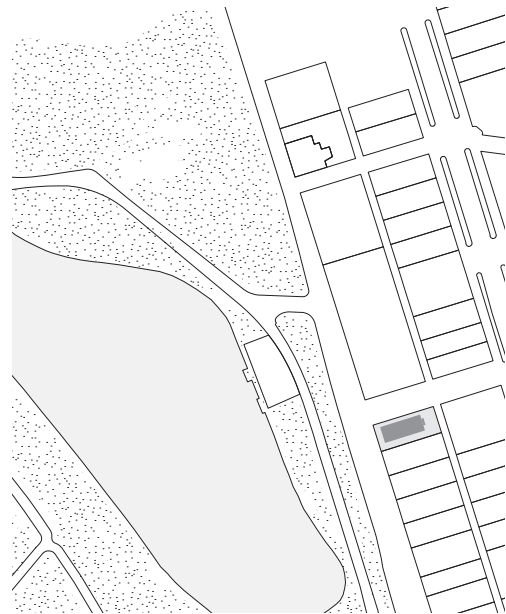


Mauro Baracco

John Batman Motor Inn
1962



Mark Strizic

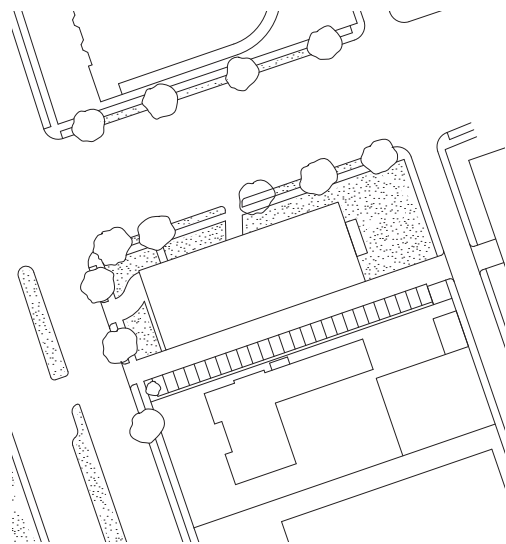


1:10 000

Located on a corner block, 4 kilometres south of Melbourne's central district, this building faces a large parkland with a lake on the other side of a major road that runs along its west side. The entry is roughly in the middle of the north boundary, with the back area – a band along the south edge of the block – occupied by a carpark. Originally designed as “Melbourne's first ‘motor inn’”,¹ it has changed its function, not its form, a few times since – from Ambulance Service Victoria's education and resource centre to its current accommodation of low-income single people's apartments.

The building's position in relation to the block, structure, general plan and perimeter definition was predetermined by a previous project and its related built outcomes that were already in place when Boyd was commissioned to take over and redefine this work: the steel columns for flat-slab construction were already up to the fourth level, and lift positions and stairwells could not be changed. Two more storeys were added to the building, and some of the space within the structural grid at the ground level was cleared to make room for a driveway servicing the main entry.

Eighty-five units are placed within the grid, a condition and physical presence that is inherited and overcome by Boyd through an intensified absorption of its linear network. In addition to the 70 basic double and single bed suits, there were also 3 interconnecting suites, 3 single rooms, 2 large double-room suites, 6 ‘executive’ suites divided into sleeping and sitting areas, and a two-storey penthouse suite on the top floor, emerging as an isolated volume within the emptiness that under the roof accommodated some ventilation and technical equipment, and allowed for future development of more suites and conference rooms. A restaurant and breakfast bar was located on the first floor, above the entry hall and reception area at the ground level. Different colours used to identify each singular floor (for instance, golds on the first floor, greens on the third, blues on the fourth), and carpets, furniture and many other interior solutions for material and chromatic finishes (mostly removed or demolished throughout the years) were the result of Boyd's direct designs or guidelines.²



1:2000

The grid, readable on the north, west and south façades as a network of white lines and modules filled in with concrete blocks and glazed surfaces (one floor-to-ceiling window for each suite, and fully glazed openings along common spaces on the ground and first levels), is not only the amplification of a found condition, but also the means for Boyd to instigate reflection on the notions of infinity and oneness in relation to space. Analogously, the arching roof, at once a curved lid to close the building and yet un-concluded in its openness, denounces the illusory sense of completion that defines this and architectural objects in general. Both the grid of this project and other works by Boyd, and the openness/un-conclusion of its roof release us to wonder about the weakness of the rational conventionality that always guides us to perceive a sense of finiteness, hence measurability and definiteness, in entities. The grid and the un-concluded roof of John Batman Motor Inn, although physically stopped at the edges of the building, are the means to impossibly expand this architecture towards its outside. These elements make us realise that rationally we are limited to the comprehension of finiteness, while at the same time they move us in search of an inexplicable dimension of oneness.³

Spatial fields that are different and physically separated become intriguingly ‘con-fused’. Cars and people are reciprocally entangled within the grid of the ground level, both serviced by long and wide circulation halls that may be different in character and materials (‘hard’ for cars, ‘soft’ for people), but similar in weighting. The lack of hierarchy allows the spaces to leak into each other; they interrelate at deeper levels in addition to the visual interconnection provided by the glazing of the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Similarly the distance between this building and other Melbourne urban and landscape presences is dissolved by the spatial continuum that is disclosed by the un-concluded top of this architecture. The openness of the roof enables the embracing and absorbing of the urban horizon displayed all around this building; it is a formal device that raises questions about the plausibility to read this building as a part – although ‘con-founded’ with other parts – of the urban territory, and furthermore prompts us to wonder about the inconceivable possibility to dissipate this and any other individual architecture over a dimension of oneness.

Some original drawings related to this project – perspective views of the suites' interiors decorated with paintings on the walls showing diagrammatic plans of Melbourne's urban grid, and an abstract and rather hieroglyphical sketch registering Melbourne's skyline as seen from the top of John Batman Motor Inn looking towards north⁴ – seem to rely on succinct and immediate forms of representation as attempts to defy the overpowering inclination that moves us to conventionally and merely construct objectivised and determined forms of reality.



Aaron Pocock

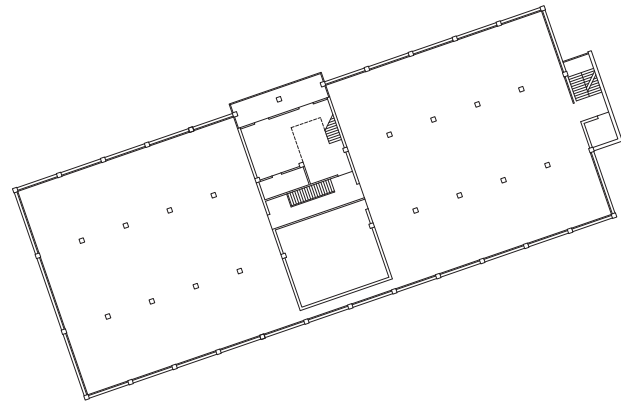


Aaron Pocock



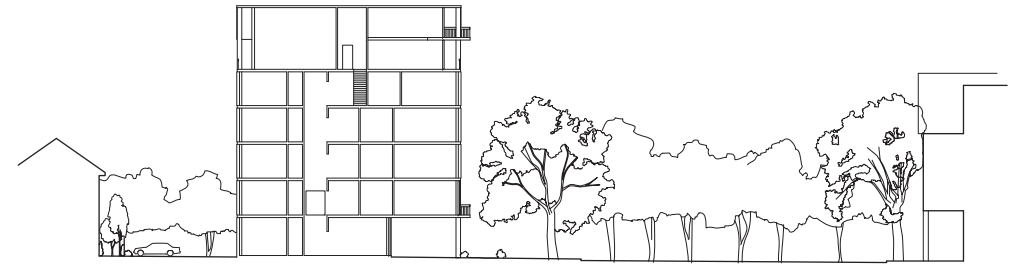
Mauro Baracco

- 1 In Boyd's words: “It was Melbourne's first ‘motor inn’, which meant that it aimed for very much more sophistication than the familiar motel pattern.” Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 72. It was described “as a motor inn...half-way between a motel and hotel. In room equipment and amenities it competes with the best of the first-class hotels, while it retains the more informal service and atmosphere of the motel”; ‘A Motor Inn in Melbourne’, *Architecture and Arts*, vol. 11, no. 2, February 1963, p. 28
- 2 Further extensive descriptions of this work can be found in the following reviews: ‘A Motor Inn in Melbourne’, op. cit., pp. 27-33, and ‘John Batman Motor Inn’, *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 53, no. 1, March 1964, pp. 91-93
- 3 For a further review of John Batman Motor Inn and other architectural works discussed in the context of such a theoretical framework, see also Mauro Baracco, ‘Completed Yet Unconcluded: The Poetic Resistance of Some Melbourne Architecture’, in Leon van Schaik (ed.), *Poetics in Architecture*, a monographic issue of *Architectural Design*, vol. 72, no. 2, March 2002, pp. 72-77
- 4 These drawings are not documented in this thesis; they are in *Robin Boyd Collection*, Boxes no. 3, 74A, 75 and 76, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne



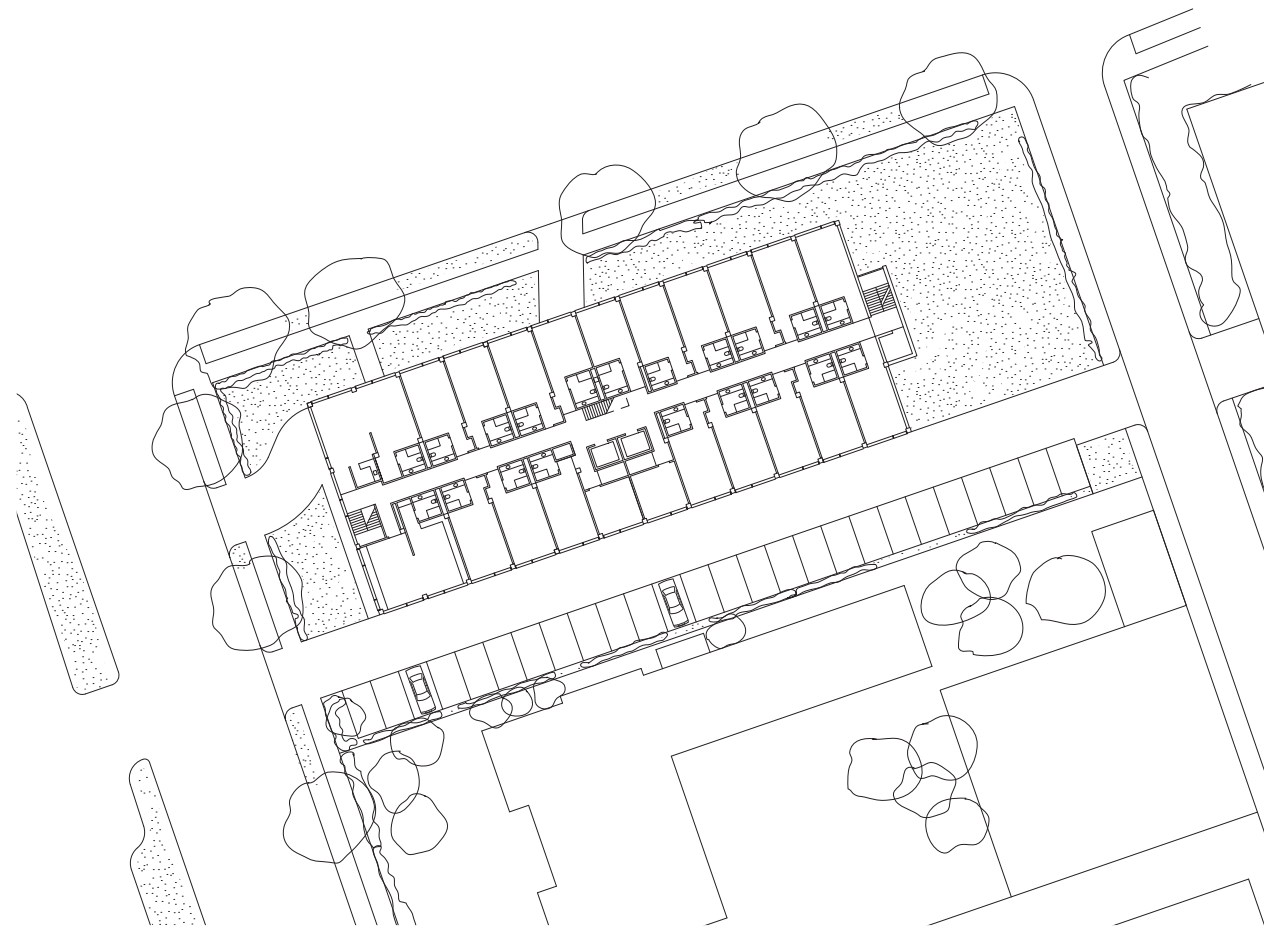
1:750

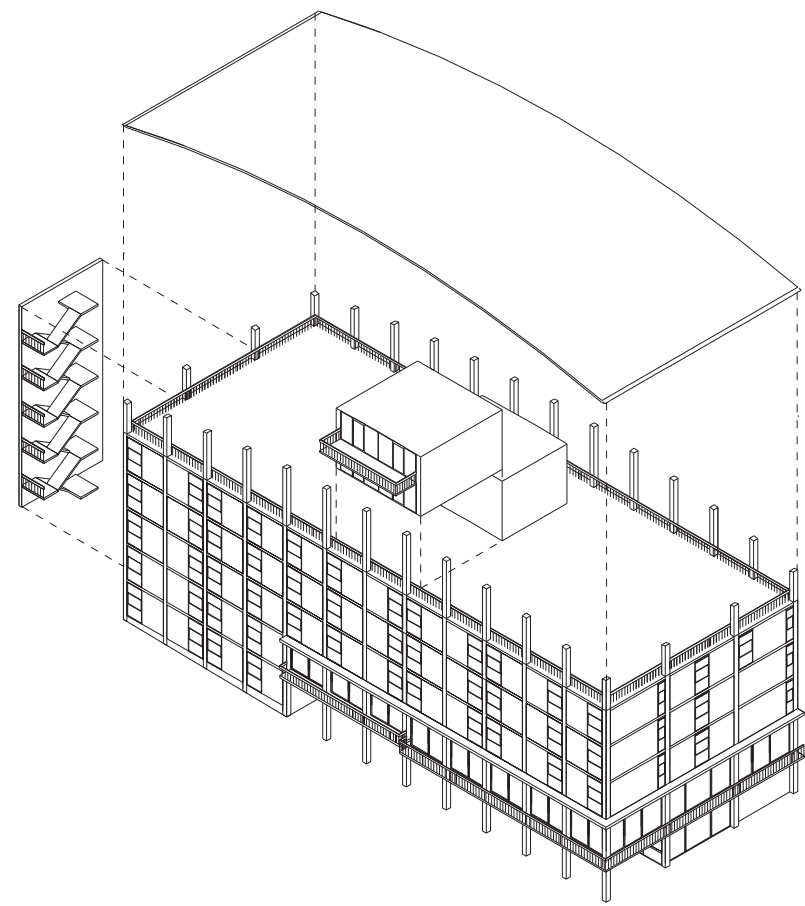
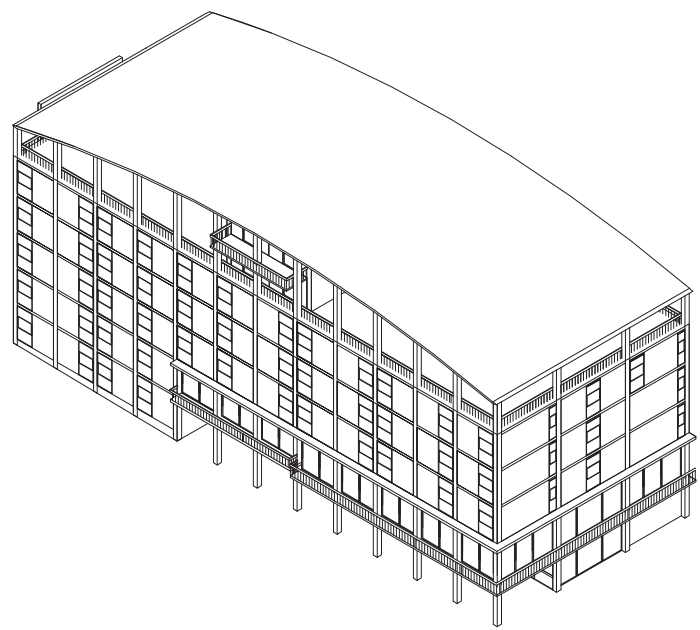
330

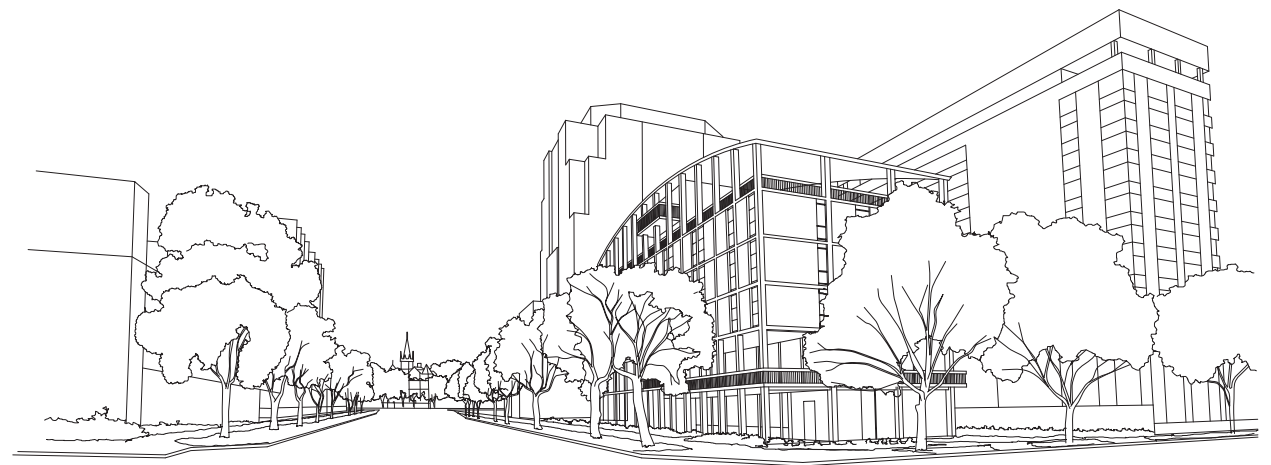
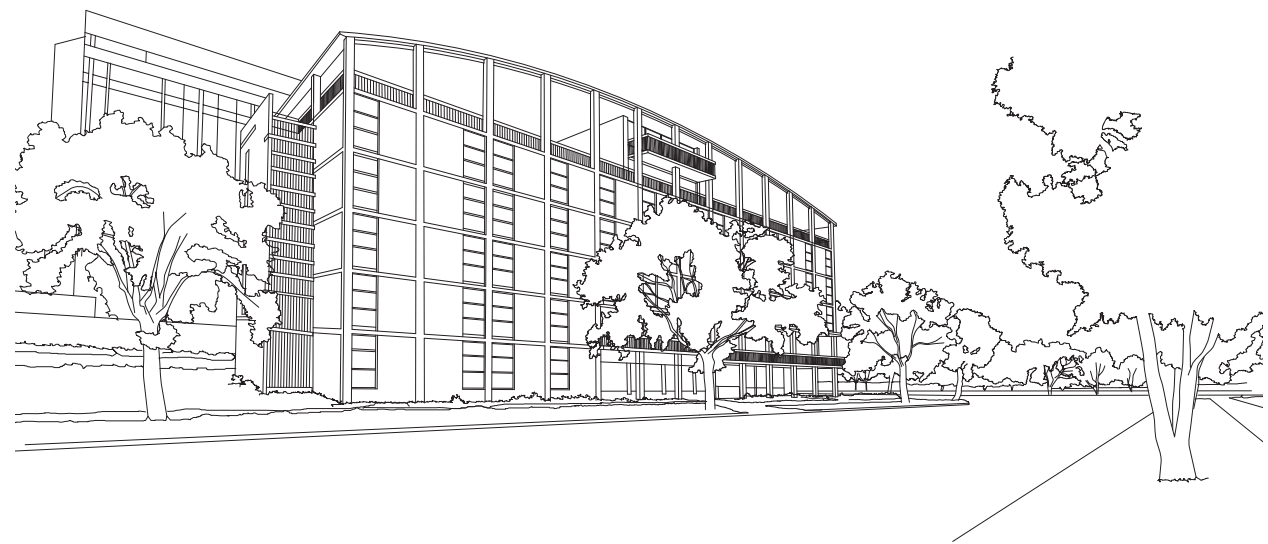


1:750

331









Mauro Baracco



Aaron Pocock



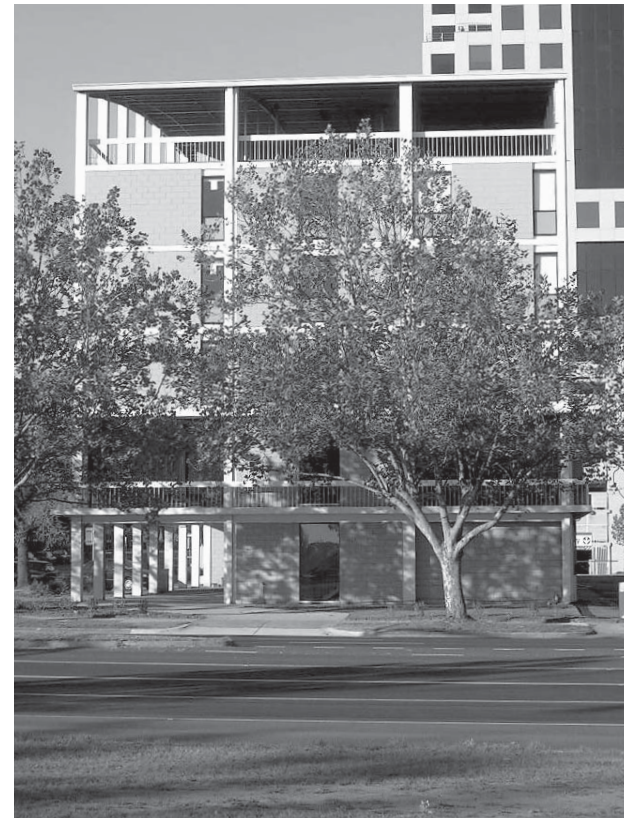
Mark Strizic



Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Wolfgang Sievers, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria

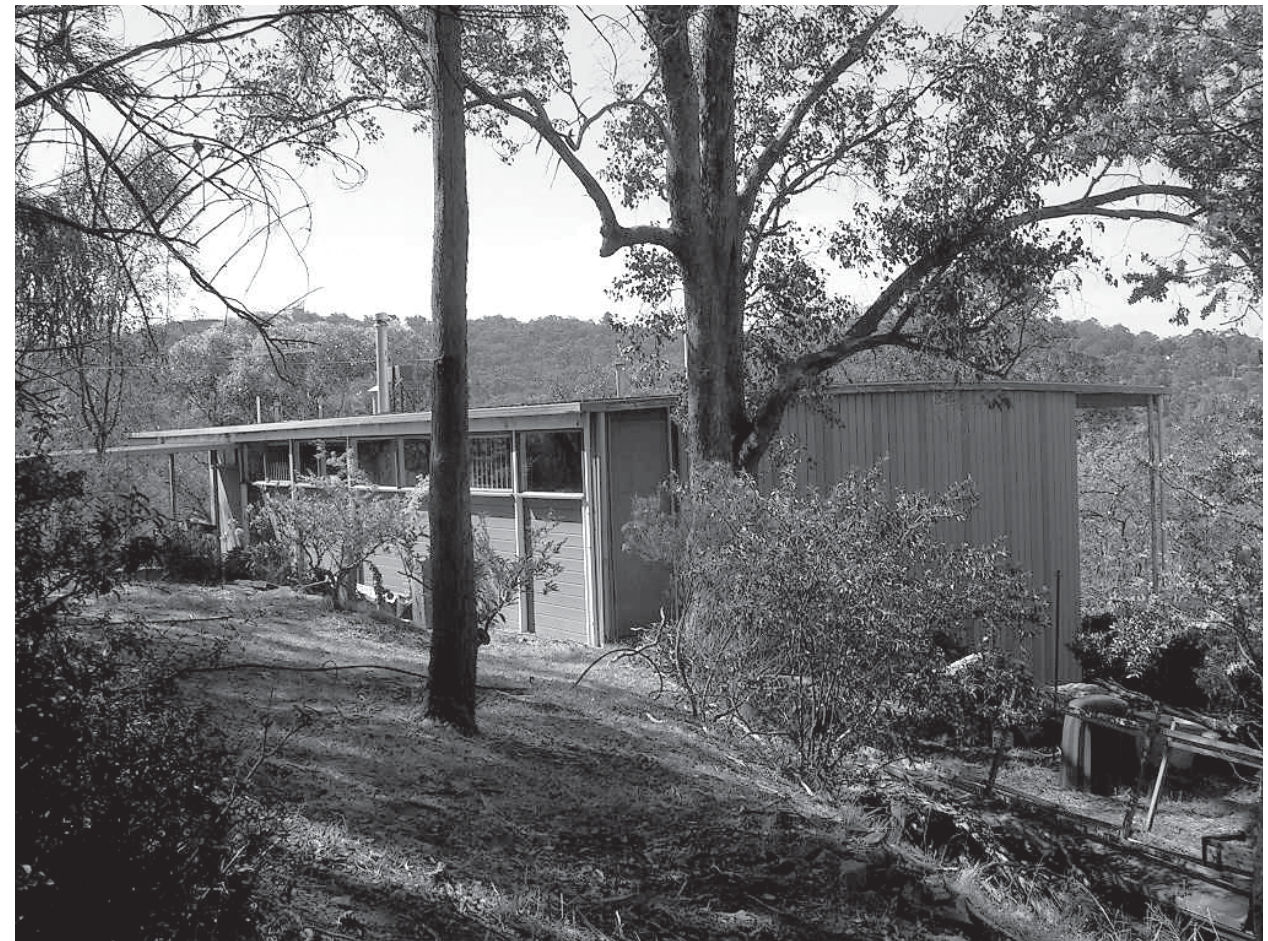


Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco

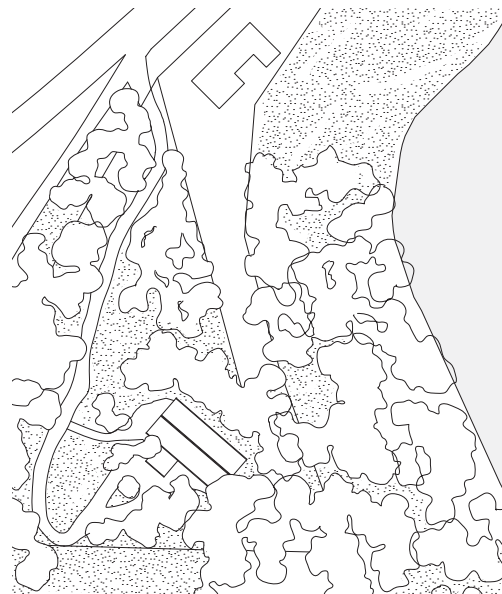
Arnold House
1963 – 1964



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000



1:2000

Kel and Ann Arnold's earlier timber house was destroyed, together with many other properties including the first Wright House¹ designed by Boyd, by a devastating fire that affected the north-east region of Melbourne in mid-January 1962. As a consequence of this Robin Boyd was commissioned to design a new house in the same block.

Located in the outer Melbourne suburb of Warrandyte, approximately 30 kilometres north-east from the city, this house stands on the top of a gentle ridge and exposes its two-storey side to an escarpment that precipitously dives towards the right bank of the Yarra River. The thick vegetation of the existing natural landscape, largely consisting of gumtrees densely disseminated all around the block, spreads out all over the two different slopes of the site – one ascending from the road on the west side, and the other descending towards the river on the north-east side. As a result of this situation, and in light of its distance from the main road, the house is physically and visually detached from the streetscape; its condition of 'isolated building' is enhanced by the close presence of the surrounding bush and the visual embracing of the river located less than one hundred meters in the valley down below. The structure and material of the house are bush-fire resistant – the roof, external cladding, framing posts and beams are all in steel.

The house accommodates two levels, responding to the existing slope and opportunistically using a portion of the space excavated under the main floor as a storage area consisting of a small square room and a larger informal 'grotto' space, which on one side edges against the earth and on the other is accessible from the outdoor veranda. The third room of the lower floor, with a glazed wall facing the double height veranda space, is separated from the storage zones by an outdoor covered garden – it is a music room that enables Ann Arnold, still currently living in the property, to practise her profession of music teacher.

The two separate levels are connected by an outdoor staircase, which effectively acts as a curved free 'hinging bridge' between the two floors. This bridging strategy is further and more pronouncedly implemented in the layout of both the entry area and the main living spaces of the house, as well as the circulation that interconnects them. A carport space, a suspended entry bridge adjacent to the curved staircase, a dining/living area and an insect-screened balcony are parts of a continuous spatial sequence along a bridging axis that is ideally and visually protruding towards the river further down in the valley. The dining/living area is a distinct bridging element not only along this axis, but also between a generous family room located on the northwest end of the house and the southeast wing of the building including the kitchen and laundry, two single bedrooms, one main bedroom with ensuite, one bathroom, a wide corridor/playroom area and an internal garden space.

Bridging can be generally considered as a device to connect things that are different and separate in character, and therefore to dilute their sense of difference and separation, making them equal and with no sense of hierarchy between one another.

This is particularly evident in the Arnold House, in which the bridging happens between parts that can be read as different and individual and yet similar in proportion and dimension. For example, the outdoor spaces on both the long sides of the central dining/living room – the flyscreened deck and the void past the carport – have the same spatial proportions of this internal space, becoming effectively two outdoor 'extra rooms' adjacent to it. Analogously, an intriguing sense of similarity characterises the spaces and volumetric dimensions of the open covered garden and the enclosed and semi-enclosed areas above it which respectively accommodate the dining/living room and the screened deck. This design approach, consistently and skilfully investigated by Boyd, leads to results in which relatively small buildings feel and look larger through the presence of outdoor spaces that are 'dimensioned' and laid out as if they were effective surplus domestic areas.

This sense of ambiguity and non-hierarchy between indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as between architecture and landscape, goes somehow hand in hand with Boyd's inclination to design spaces that can flexibly change in spatial dimensions and functional needs, therefore constantly capable to adapt themselves without being regimented by hierarchical scales to prioritise or fixedly determine specific types of use. This house is indeed a very good example of this approach. The main day-time areas on the upper level are all reciprocally interrelated, but also at the same time separable, through large floor-to-ceiling sliding partition panels, which allow the living, dining and kitchen areas to be individually used when necessary, or to alternatively be one whole continuous space, including as well the immediate outdoor spaces as described in the previous paragraph. It is not surprising that the generous family area on the north-west end of the house could be used for some years as an extra music room in direct proximity of the other spaces located on the main floor, so as to allow Ann Arnold to supervise the children while she was taking piano lessons, keeping them safely 'gated' and yet visually connected through a door made up of two swivelling panels – with the lower panel closed and the upper one open, it was possible to view beyond and keep an eye on the children while they were playing in the area in front of the bedrooms. This space not only offers to be inhabited at once as a distributive hall to bedrooms and bathroom and a playroom, but also magically opens up to, and is effectively doubled up by, an internal/external garden court. Located under the southeast roof eave and surrounded by a solid fence, this appendix to the indoor playroom/corridor is a delightful area with plants, flowers and pavers, open to the air and yet sheltered from the rain – a joyful surplus 'domesticated' landscape, a delightful release of the indoor space, a gift to the children in the form of an enclosed green playground safely tucked away from the steep gullies and cliffs that surround the house.



The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts, vol. 11, no. 12, Dec 1963

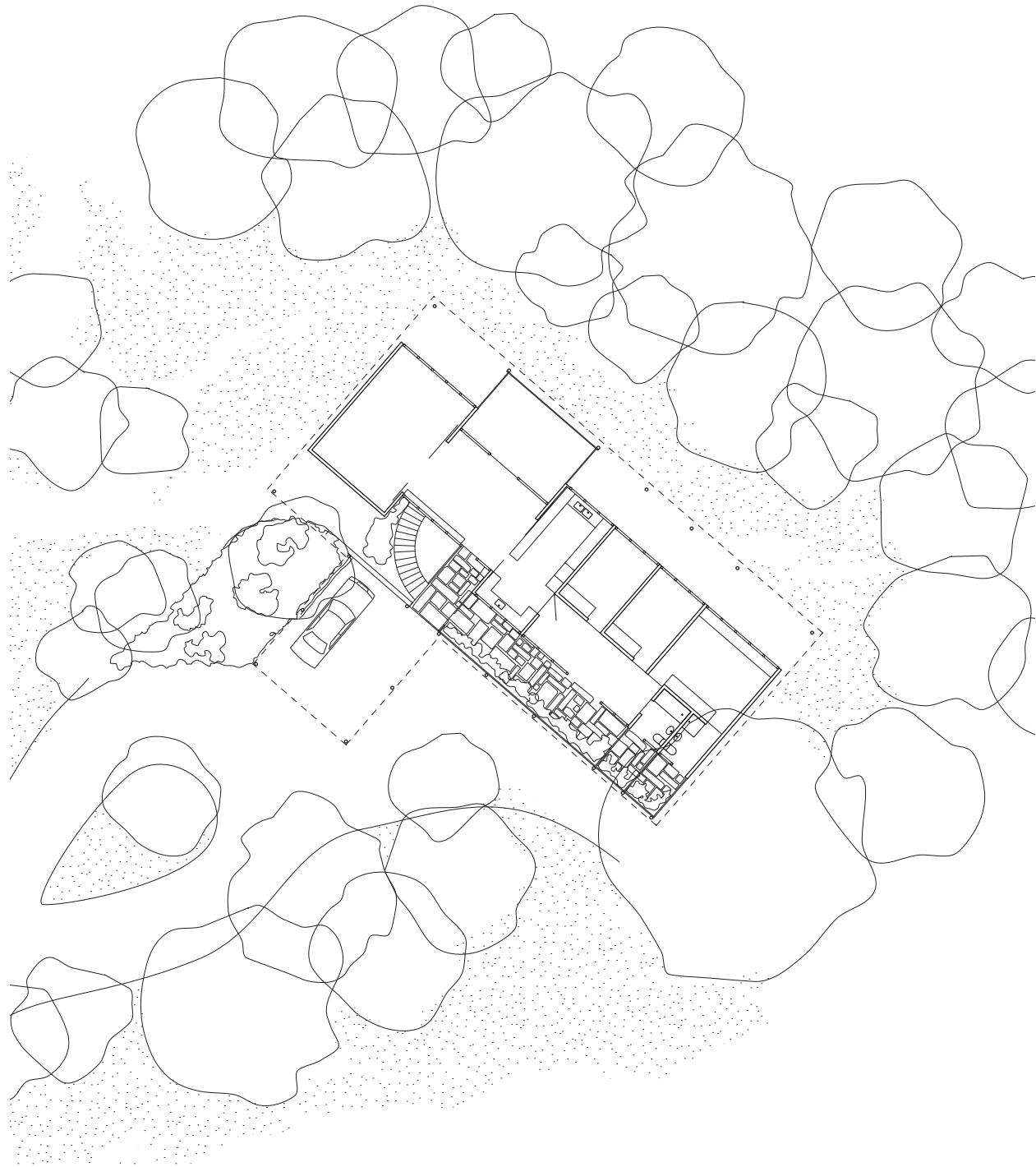


Mauro Baracco



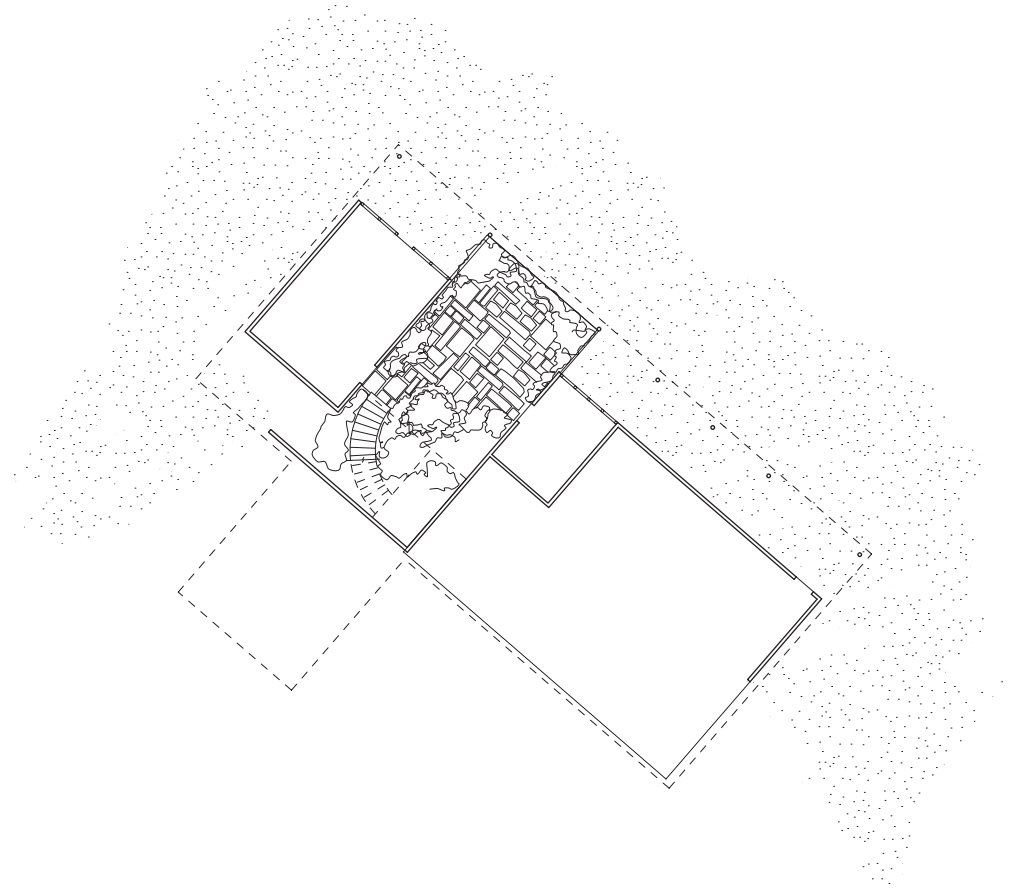
Mauro Baracco

1 See text for the Wright House in this thesis, first paragraph, p. 316



1:300

342

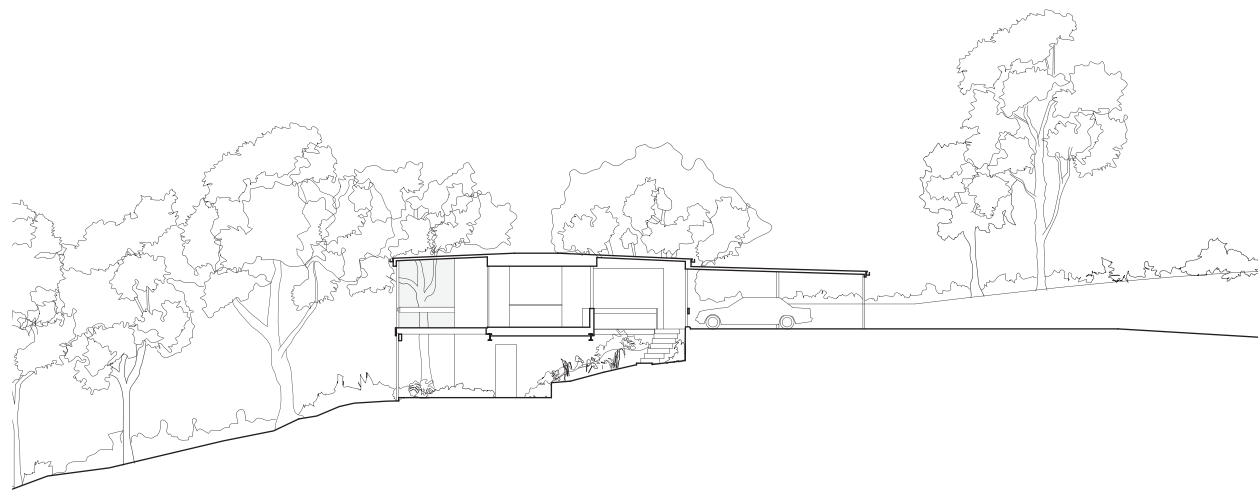


1:300

343

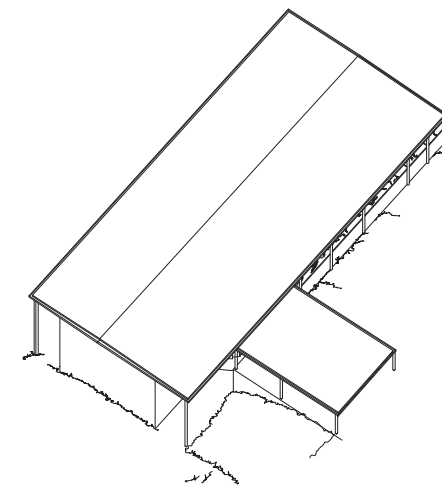
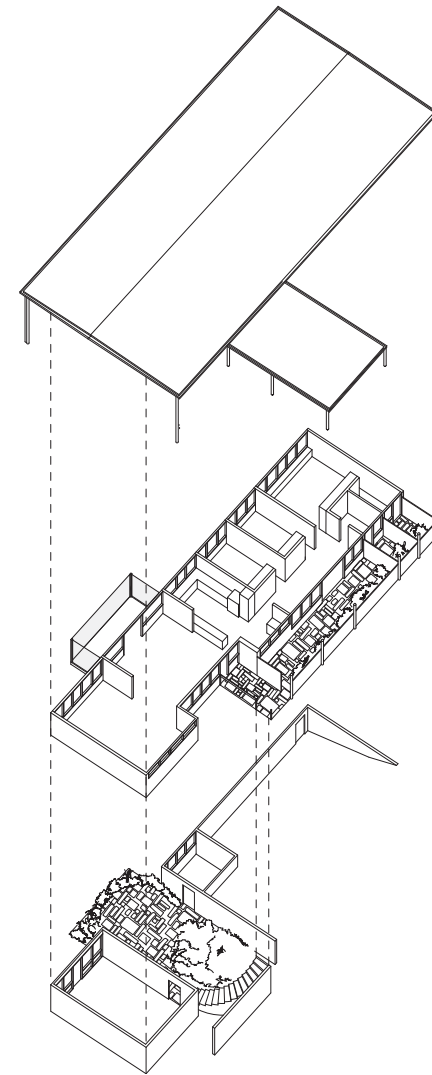


1:1000

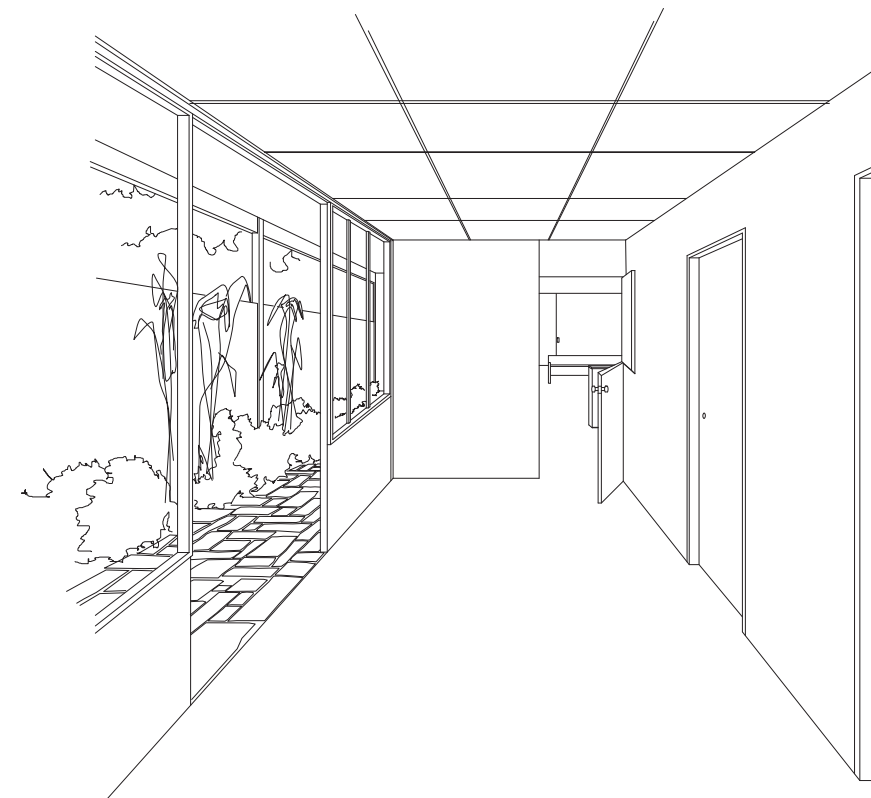
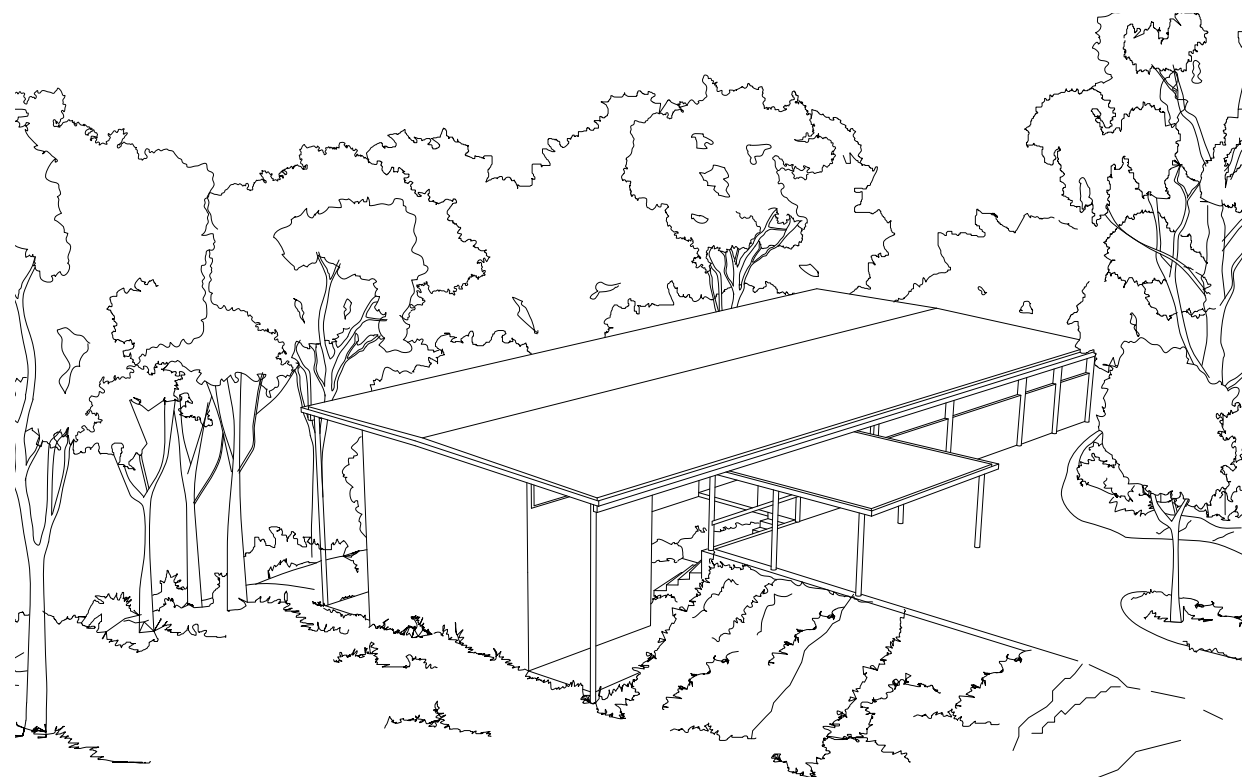
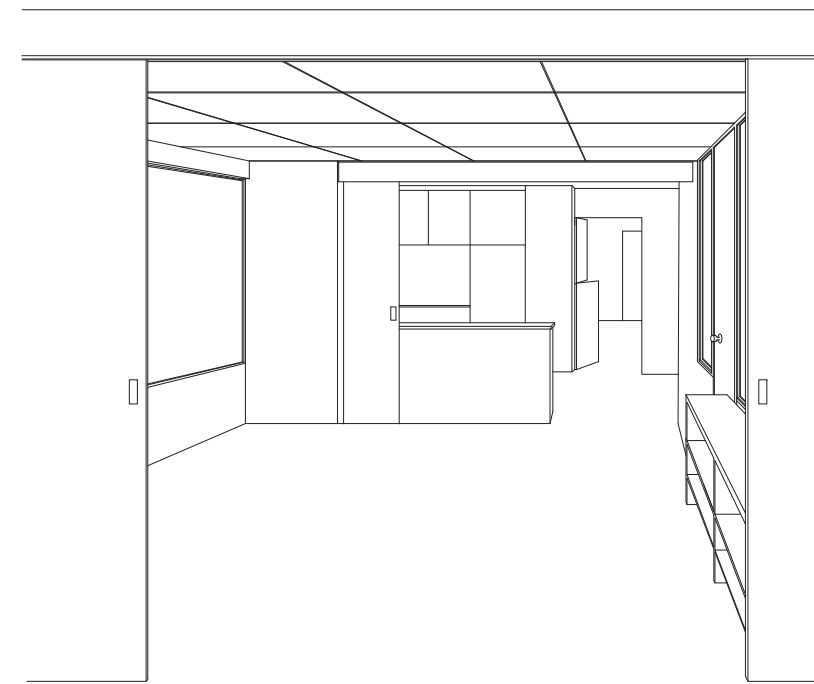
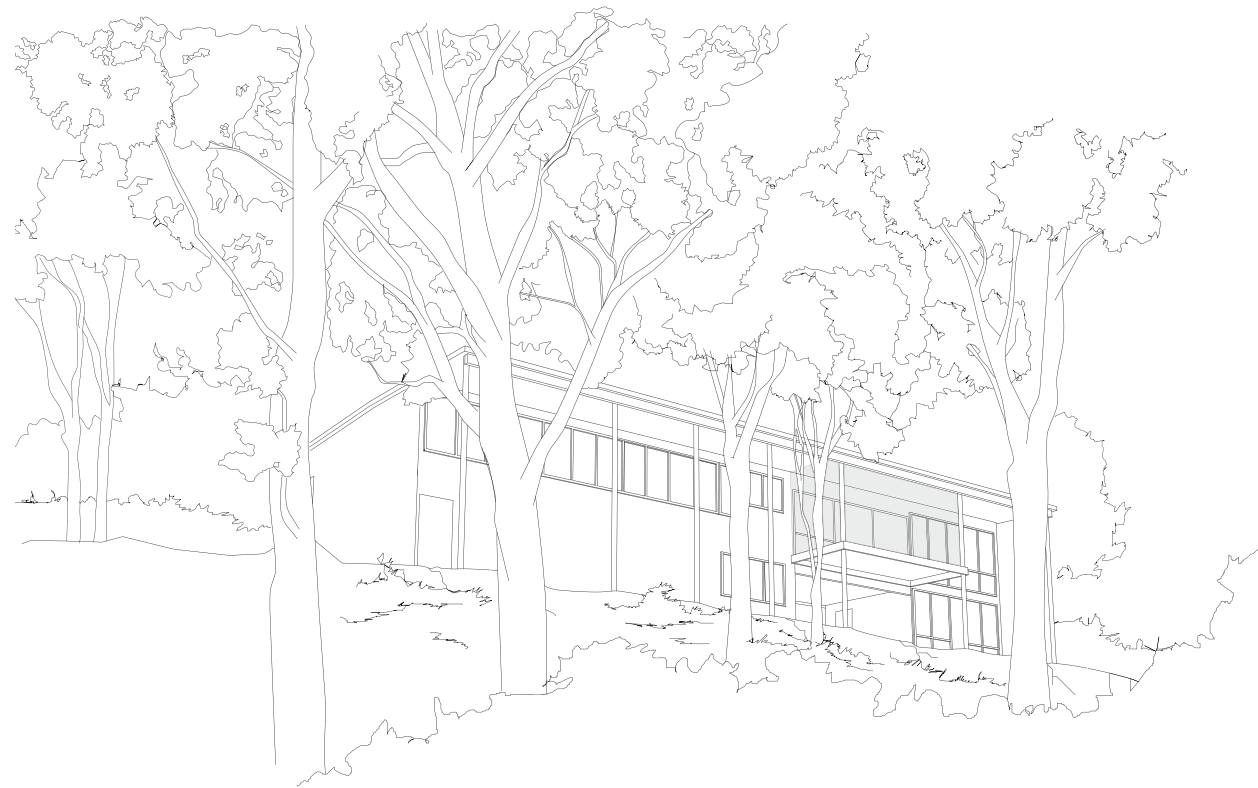


1:300

344



345





Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Baker House

1964 – 1966

Baker 'Dower' House

1966 – 1968



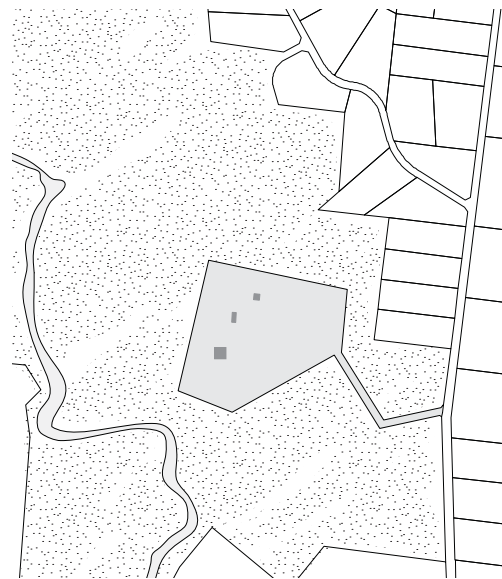
Mark Strizic

Baker House

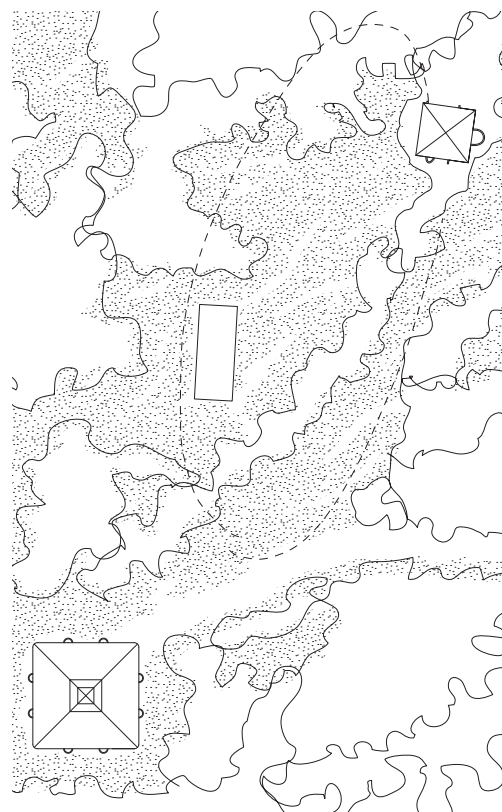


Mauro Baracco

Baker 'Dower' House



1:20 000



1:2000

Located near Bacchus Marsh, approximately 50 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, these two houses were built a few years apart to respectively accommodate the Baker family who moved from England to Australia in the early 1960s, and Mrs Elizabeth Sticklen, the mother of Michael Baker's former wife Rosemary, who followed a few years later – the name 'Dower' commonly attributed to the latter house derives from the English definition of this term, meaning: "a widow's share for life of her husband's estate".¹ The location of the houses, a private block of land of a quarter of a square mile in the heart of Long Forrest Mallee Conservation Reserve, responds to Michael Baker's desire to live in a land share that is dimensionally equivalent to the total number of Australians (the calculation was done on the basis that the 3000 square miles of all Australian territory were at that time inhabited by 12 million people). In addition to this, this specific site was chosen as a piece of bushland that would be equidistant from the two working places of Michael as a lecturer in mathematics: the University of Melbourne in Carlton (an inner suburb of Melbourne), and the RAAF Academy at Point Cook, along Port Phillip Bay's coastline. Immersed in the dense vegetation of multi-stemmed eucalypts and other various types of shrubs and grasses that typically characterise the normally flat and arid conditions of this and other mallee bushland,² the houses are like two square marks dispersed in their surrounding thick natural environment. They are approximately 150 metres away from each other, with a third building, including a library and art studio, halfway between them – this was designed by Melbourne architect Roy Grounds a few years after Boyd's death.

Baker House was designed to be as self-sufficient as possible – the tanks to collect water from the roof in seven of the twelve cylindrical volumes along the house's perimeter (the remaining five provide storage space) and the schoolroom/playroom on the south side in which the five children were taught, are symptomatic of the sense of isolation that the clients envisaged for this house. Embracing at once the classic formality typical of central plan schemes and the romantic simplicity of the farmhouse-type, this house is pervaded by a 'rough/heavy' materiality (stones from a local quarry for the walls, polished concrete for the floor, straw for the ceiling) and yet stands in the bush as lightly and exposed as a tent. It is open to the surrounding nature through separations that only tenuously define the difference between its indoor and outdoor worlds, including floor-to-ceiling glazing all around the larger rooms (clockwise from north: living/dining, kitchen, main double bedroom, schoolroom/playroom, studio, guestroom, library) and a flyscreen (now removed) above the internal courtyard. The circulation between the various rooms, evenly meandering from inside to outside (the verandas on all sides and some of the curved outdoor areas in the corners are used to link the rooms), is symptomatic of the fluidity that tends to 'con-fuse' the indoor and outdoor areas of this house. The internal courtyard, impenetrable from the three sides lined up with the smaller rooms (larder+laundry, main bedroom's ensuite and children's toilet+showers on the east side; four children's cubicles/bedrooms on the south side; cellar, guests' washroom, guests' dressing room, guests' bathroom and darkroom on the west side), is released and visually open to the surrounding mallee vegetation through its top and the glazing of both the north and south side of the entry/living/dining area.

The Baker 'Dower' House, smaller and a couple of years younger than the Baker House, has a plan of curved walls that run beneath a square, almost flat, roof. This layout, evoking somehow an ideogram in its graphic, is the residue of an unbuilt design idea that was involved with the construction of a continuous low stone wall. Intended as a fence around an oval vineyard between the two houses, this long line³ was in the end restricted to the flourish – something between a knot and a flower – originally envisaged as a twitching moment along its course to define the residential spaces. Compressing and expanding itself, the line drops its continuity into separate curvilinear filaments that allow openings between the various areas. A further negotiation between the curved walls and the rectilinear sides generates spaces that are part of a continuum, regardless of whether they are 'indoor', 'outdoor', or both indoor/outdoor at once: the flyscreened entry veranda on the west side introduces a living/dining room that spatially leaks into a circular corner containing the kitchen; one of the two bedrooms is provided with a dressing space and related external walled small garden, the other one occupies the south-east corner; the lumpish curved protuberance from the east façade incorporates a minuscule outdoor space with a water tank, and a bathroom inside the glazing; the north-east corner is a covered carport. The cladding of this house is in stones which were quarried by hand from the property block by the Baker family.

The discreetness of these two houses – their formal restraint under roofs that delicately disappear due to the extreme gentleness of their inclination, their propensity to merge with the surrounding ragged nature as two stony lumps which have somehow erupted there – is symptomatic of Boyd's research towards states of identification between the natural and the artificial. In this case the situation was particularly appropriate, as "somehow it was like designing...building(s) for Robinson Crusoe...the only man-made thing(s) to disturb the primeval calm of the bush".⁴



Mohd Hussin



Bennison MacKinnon Real Estate

Baker House



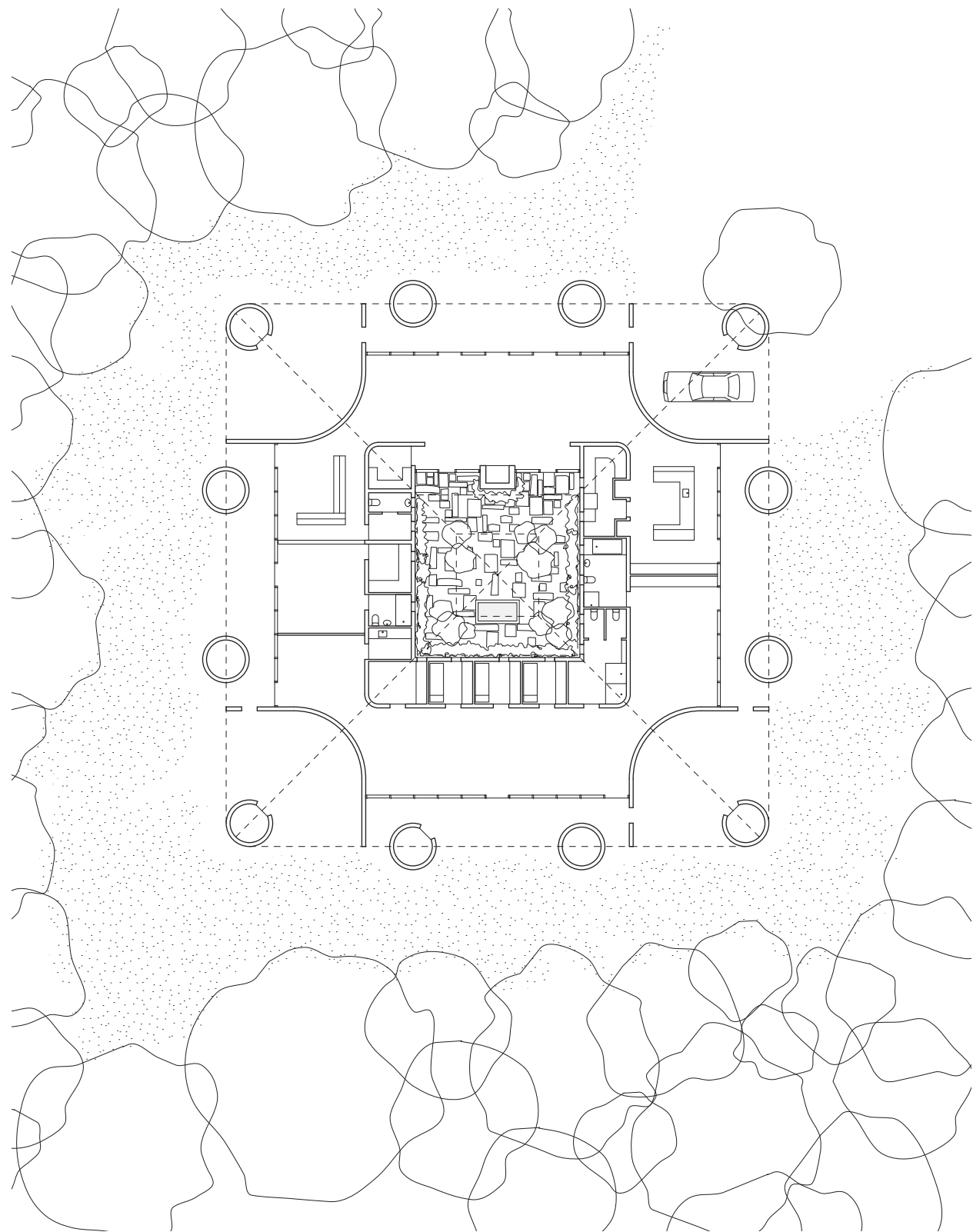
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Baker 'Dower' House

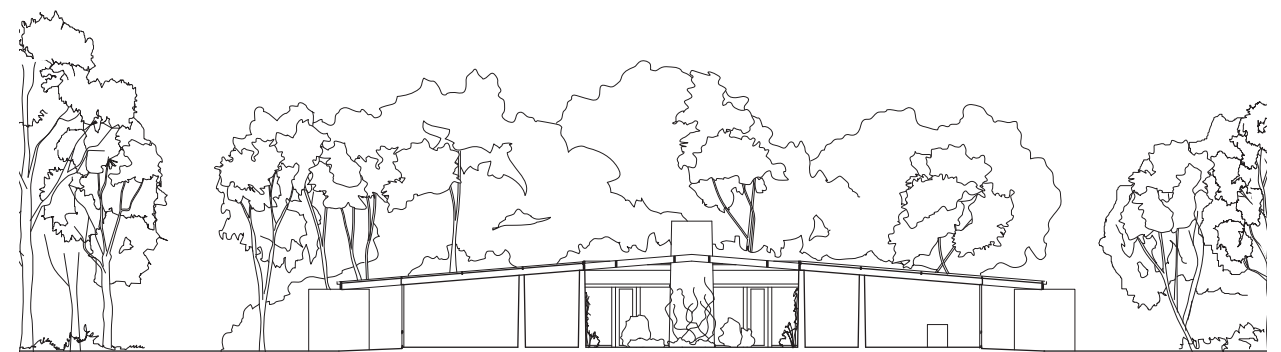
- 1 *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide* (ed. by Catherine Soanes, Maurice White, Sara Hawker), Oxford University Press, New York, 2001. The term 'dower', while used here, does not precisely reflect the family's situation; Michael Baker was always the owner of this second house while it was inhabited by Elizabeth Sticklen for three years, until her death, and subsequently by Judith Harris, Michael Baker's mother, for fourteen years. The property, including the two houses and the library, was sold to a new private owner in 2006
- 2 "Mallee is an Aboriginal name for a group of eucalypts which grow to a height of 2-9 metres and have many stems arising from a swollen woody base known as a lignotuber...Several layers of vegetation grow in association with Mallee eucalypts...Mallee areas are generally very flat"; www.anbg.gov.au/education/pdfs/mallee-2002.pdf, p. 2
- 3 See dotted line in site-plan, p. 352, bottom



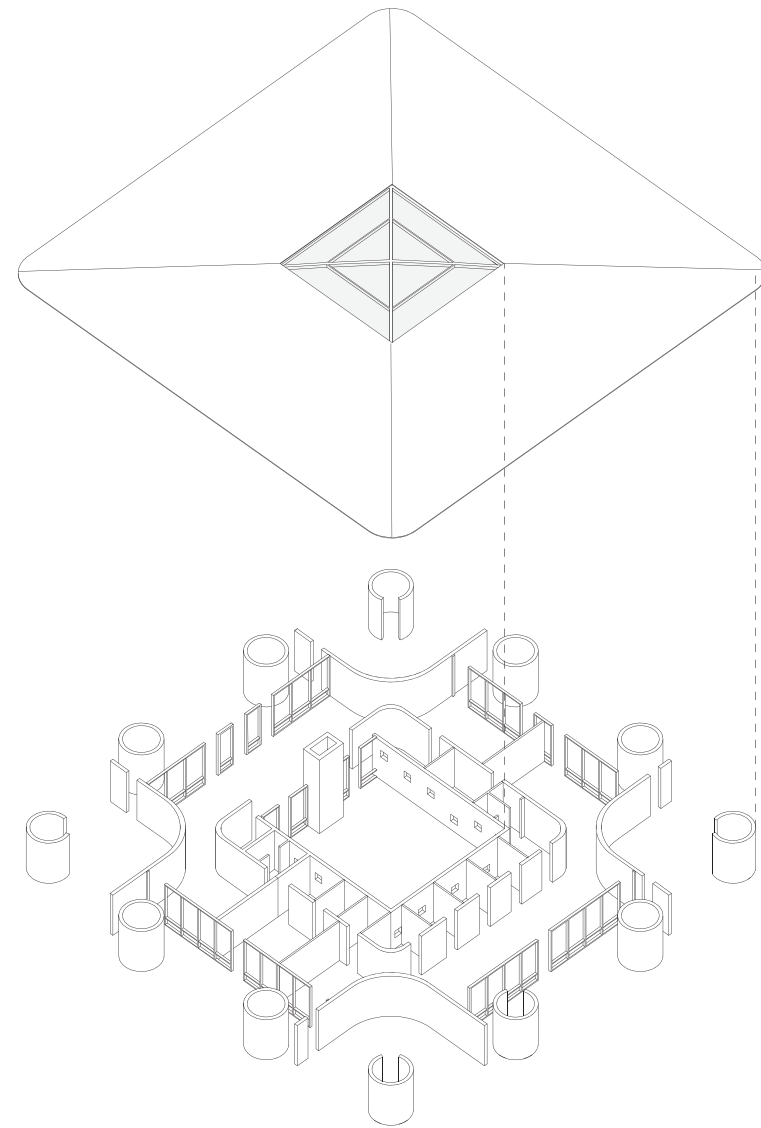
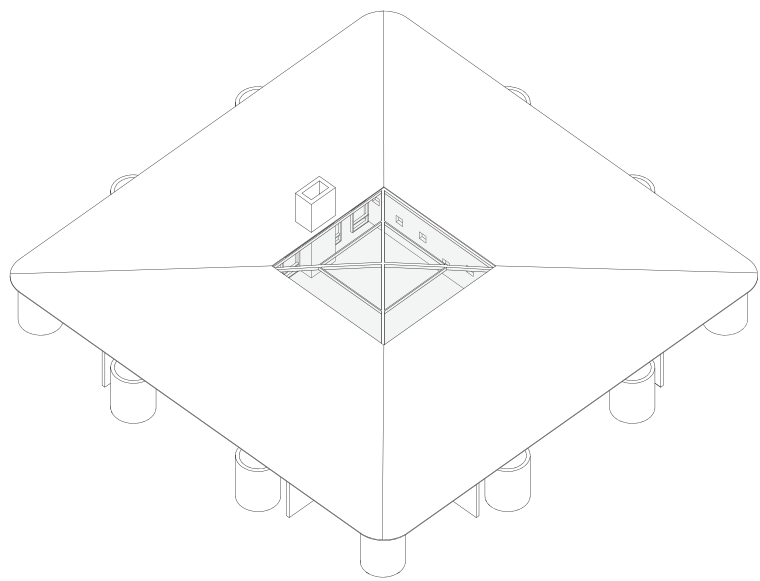
1:300

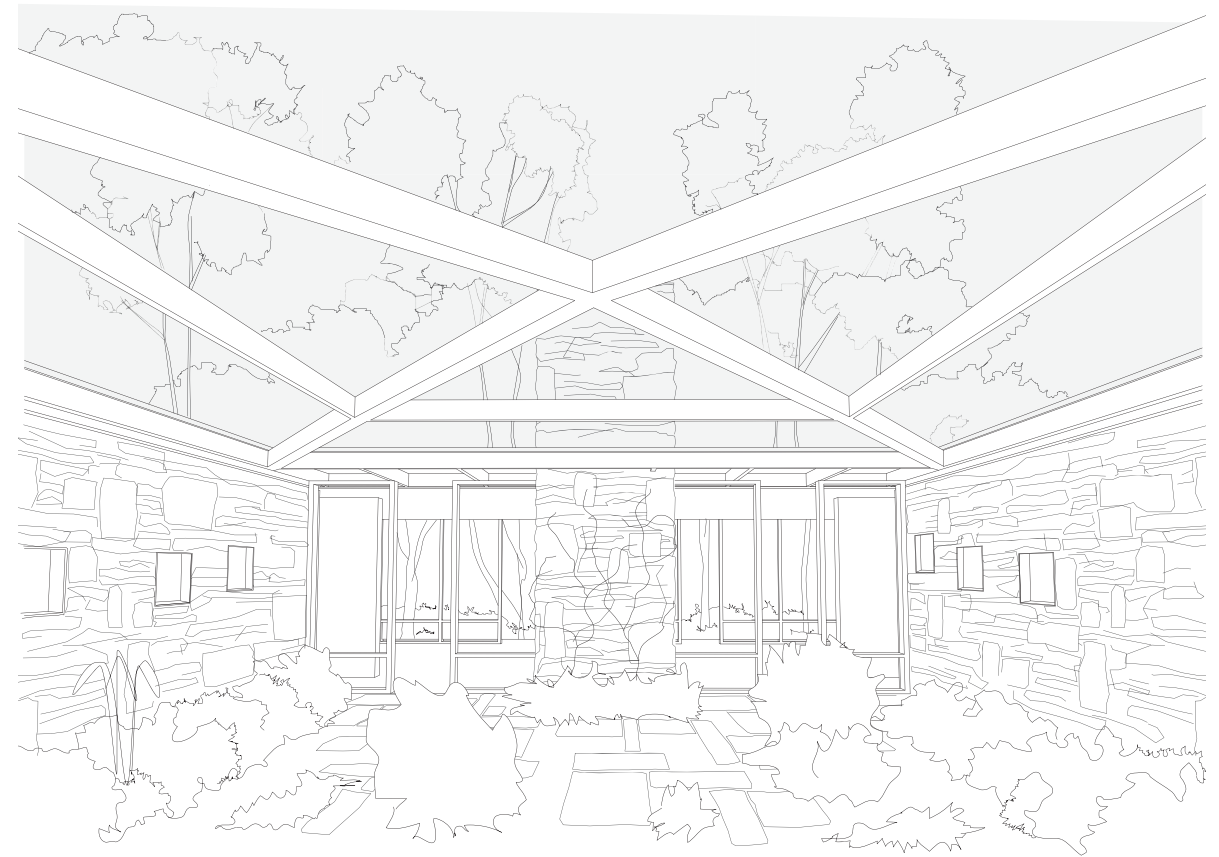
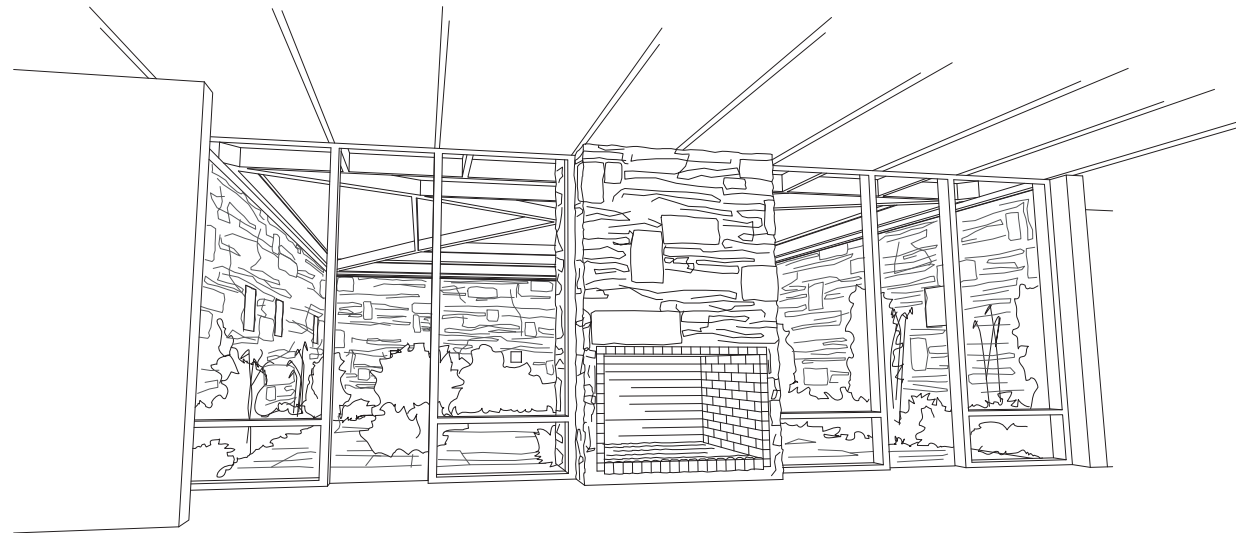
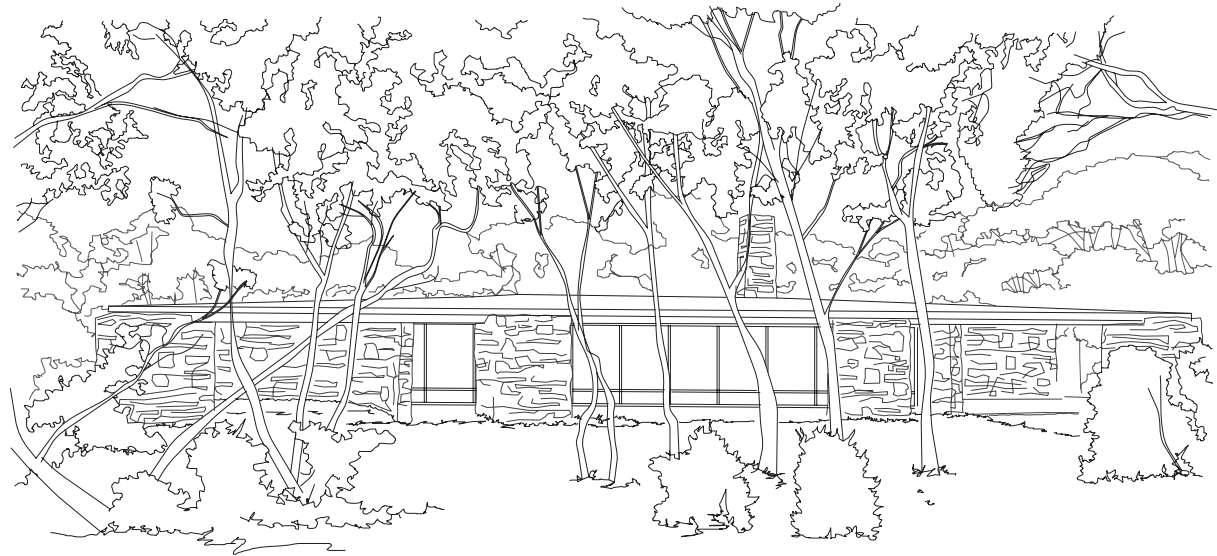


1:1000



1:300







Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



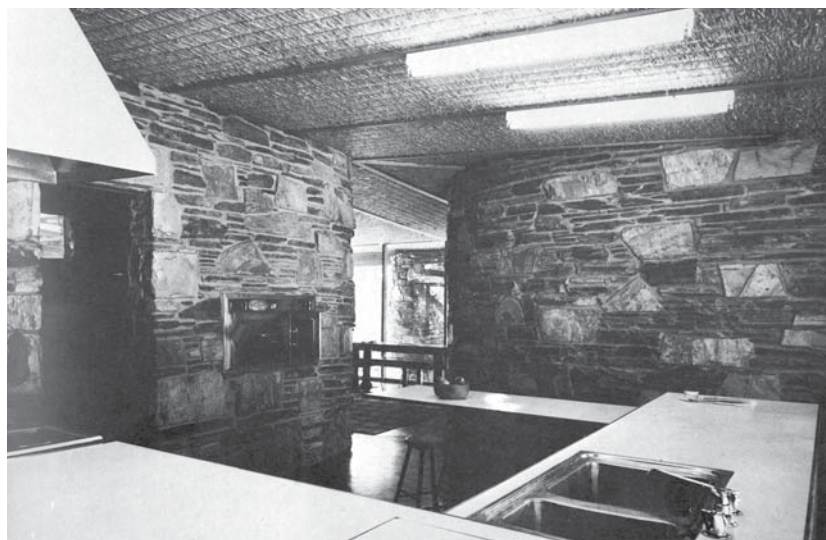
Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



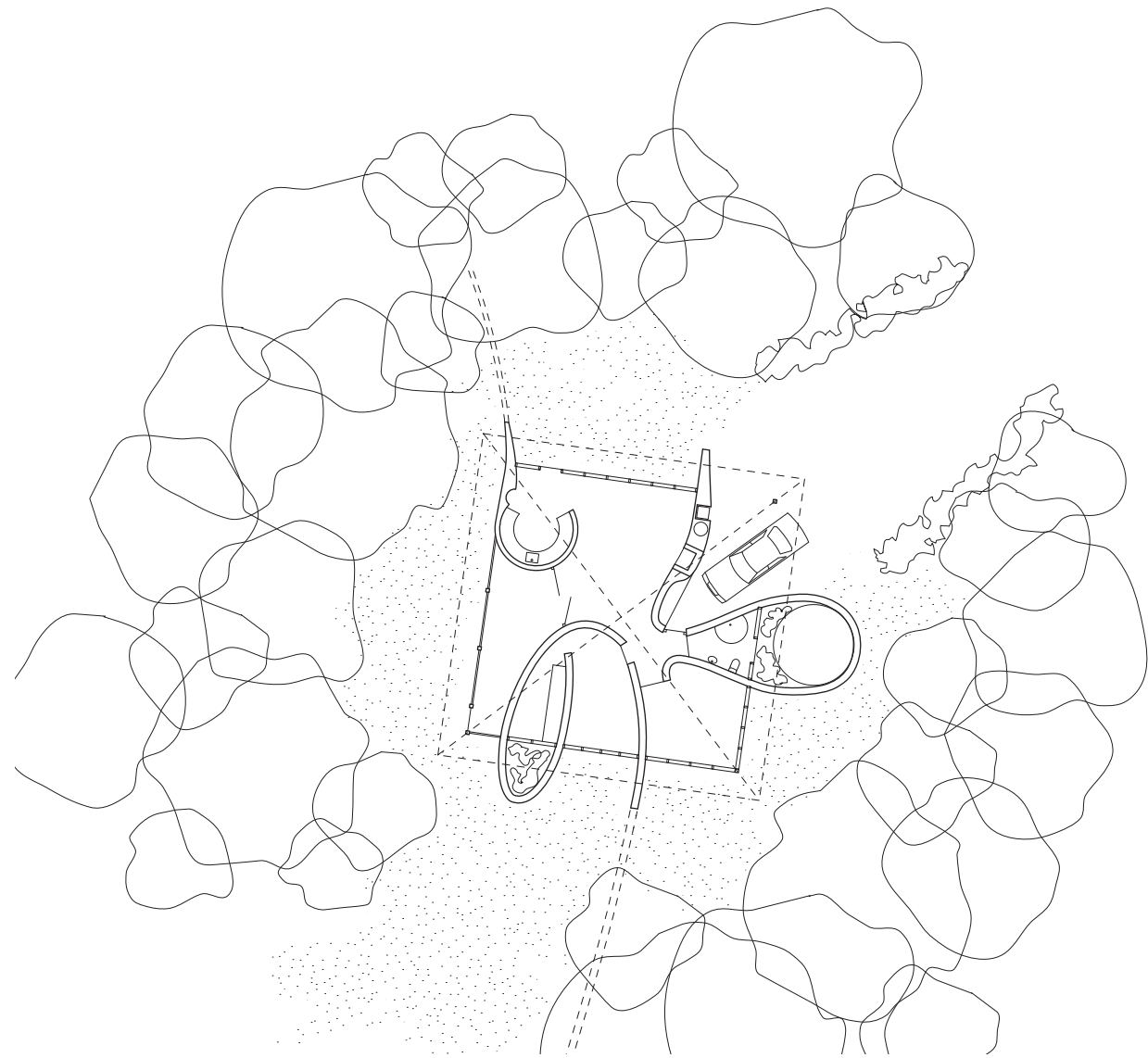
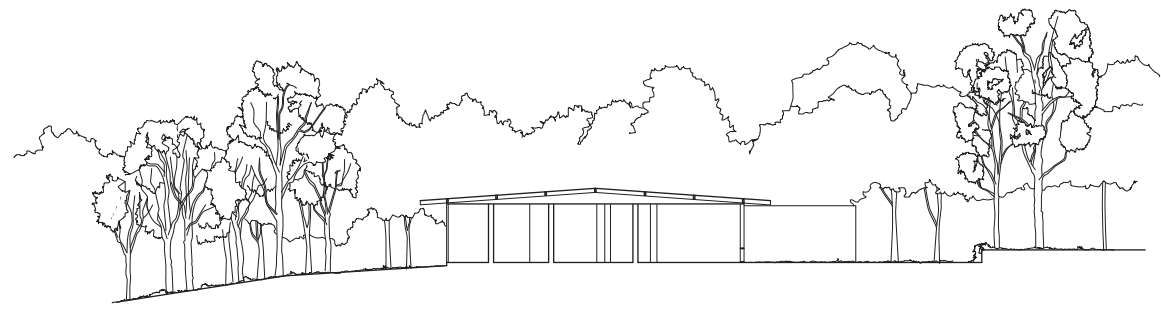
Mohd Hussin



Ian McKenzie (Strizic archive)

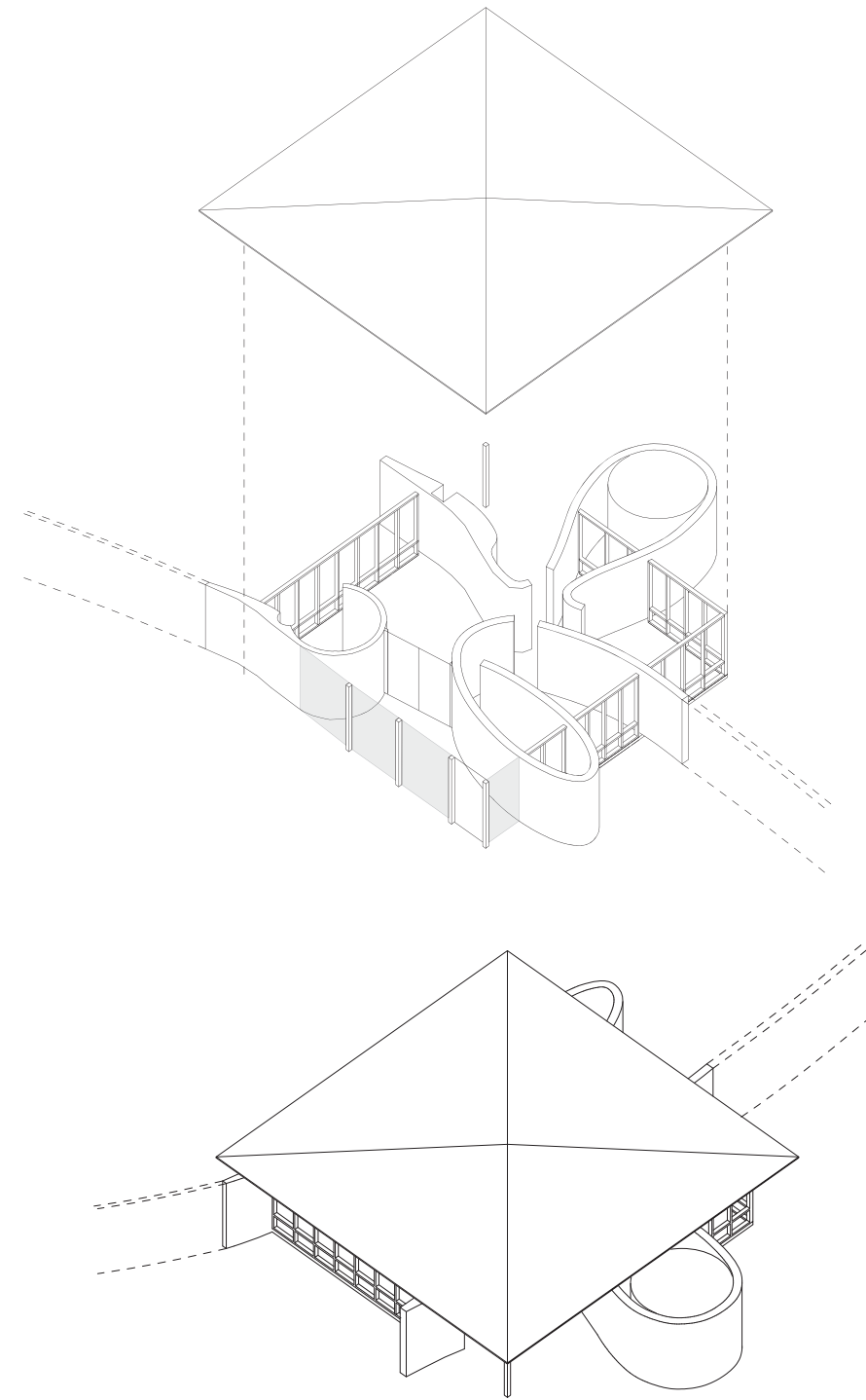


Mark Strizic

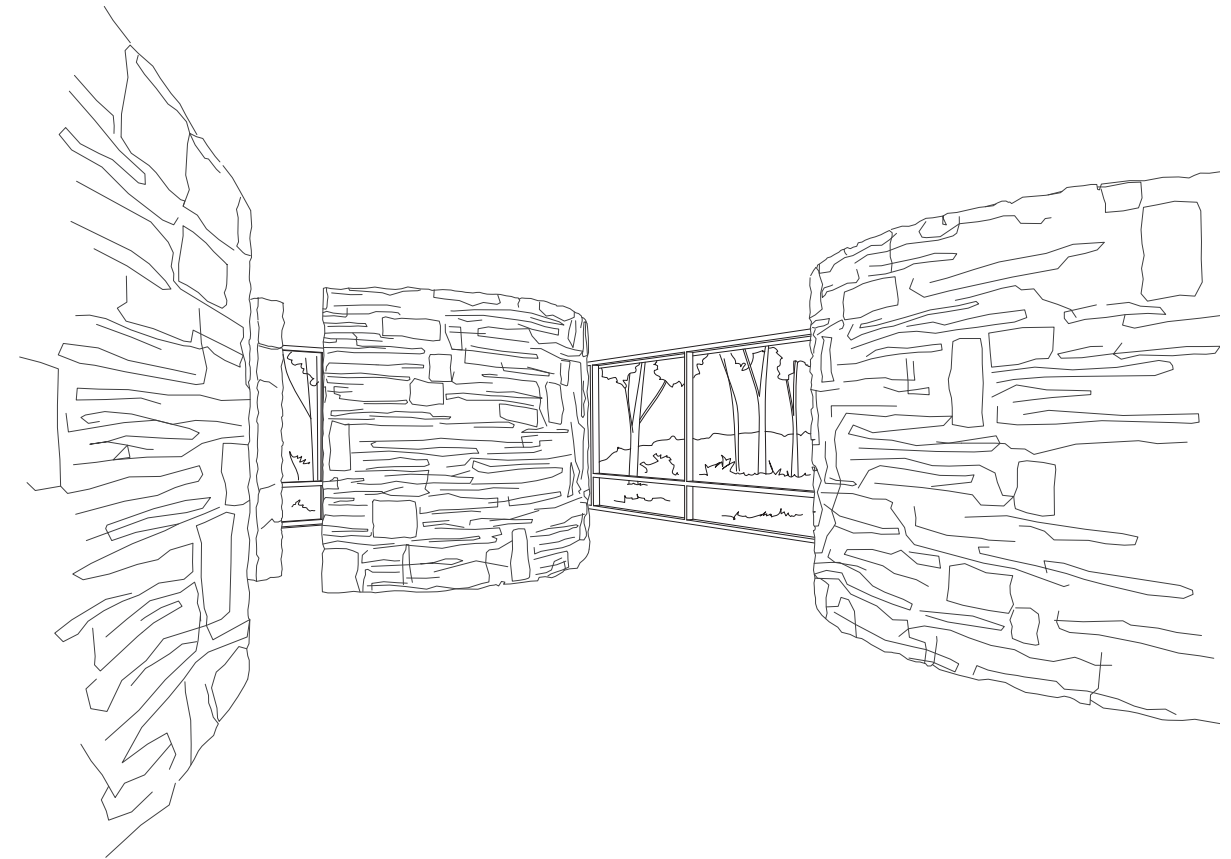
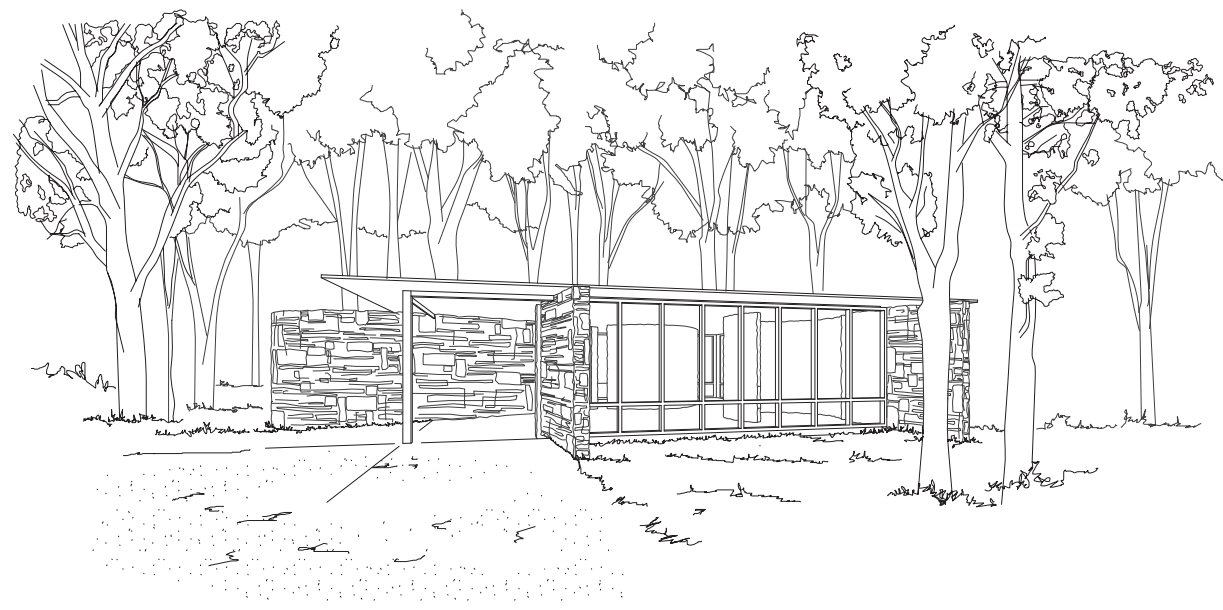


1:300

362



363





Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

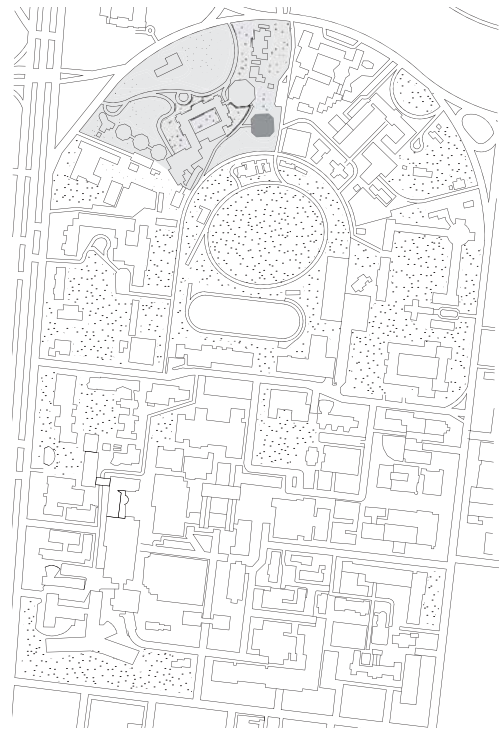


Bennison MacKinnon Real Estate

McCaughey Court
1965 - 1968



Mauro Baracco



1:10 000



1:2000

One of the buildings on the campus of the University of Melbourne in the inner suburb of Carlton, McCaughey Court is a students' residence in the grounds of Ormond College, 2 kilometres north of the city. It is located on the north side of the campus, east from the original neo-gothic building,¹ and beyond the sports area that includes a football/cricket oval and an athletics track among other facilities.

Similar to some other buildings previously designed by Boyd's associate Frederick Romberg at Ormond College,² McCaughey Court is defined by an octagonal footprint, although geometrically irregular due to the presence of shorter sides in the corners. This angular shape inserts itself within its context as a hinge to interrelate the open spaces and circulation paths of its immediate surroundings, including the 19th century building and the library on the north-west and west sides, and the oval and related built facilities on the south. Following some initial ideas for an antithetical type of intervention proposing a village-like layout of many low buildings separated and interconnected by meandering passages,³ Boyd eventually opted for this version, embracing and carrying out a schematic concept initially conceived by Romberg.

The sense of monumentality expressed by this architecture from the direction of the large open space on the south side – a sense of monumentality that is further accentuated by the difference in levels between the higher grounds of the building in relation to the lower level of the oval and nearby sport facilities – is considerably mitigated when the students' residence is approached from the north edge of the campus. From this side, which accommodates the main entry to the entire college's complex, the civic scale and dense materiality of McCaughey Court – a revisitation of a classical framework of vertical columns and horizontal architraves in exposed reinforced concrete – are an appropriate means to relate not only to the discrete and yet irrefutable monumentality of the octagonal library, but also to the mass and 'weight' that both historically and physically⁴ inform and inherently define the existing neo-gothic building.

Furthermore, its apparent 'monumentality' and 'hardness' are effectively softened by the void of a central court that is opened to the sky and sits above a common room with a glass roof. Internal balconies, leading to the residential units, surround and are opened to the court on all 6 levels above the ground floor. The interior enclosed rooms and the external open spaces are interrelated by the balconies as linked parts of an indivisible spatial continuum that expands beyond the physical limits of the building. McCaughey Court is indeed a truly urban building, vitalised by circulations flows and communal activities which broaden the domestic character of its residential functions and their related physical boundaries. The permeability of its edges and the civic nature of its spaces – its communal balconies, passages, staircases and rooms, the arcade at the ground floor and the courtyard to the sky – release this building to the immediate surroundings and also, ideally, beyond the college block and the entire campus.

Various and diverse types of spaces coexist and share facilities in this 'building-city': the entry, common reading room and other non-residential spaces are on the ground floor; one-room units with communal halls, bathrooms/toilets and laundries, and larger "fellow's flats"⁵ are accommodated in the first 4 floors above the ground level; more common laundry spaces and two-room flats with kitchens and incorporated desk-and-shelf areas as study cavities bulging from the façade are located on the 5th and 6th floors; equipment and recreation rooms are housed in the roof. One lift and two staircases provide vertical circulation throughout all floors.

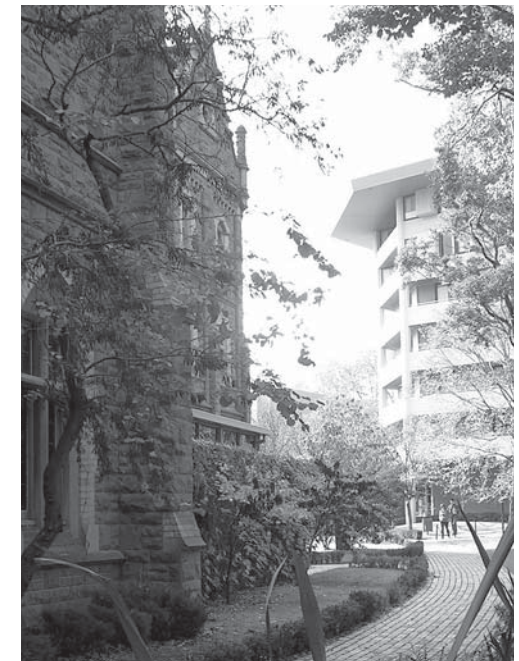
Together with many other details and formal and spatial solutions distinctively designed by Boyd as significant shifts from Romberg's preliminary concept, the roof shows a sensibility that is strongly detached from the formulaic expressivities of Modernist-Functionalist derivation; unexpectedly voluminous and surprisingly figurative and 'sweet' in relation to the bony brutalism of the building's body, it evokes the same sense of ambiguity and irony that analogously informs other international examples critical of mainstream Modernism – Kazuo Shinohara's and some Italian Neoliberty works come into mind for their indirect and yet striking similarities.⁶

Further to the ambiguity of its architecture and despite the apparent definition and solidity of its form, McCaughey Court is an ambivalent building that encompasses many worlds at once, with no sense of separation or hierarchy between them; the identification between urban, architectural and landscape scales enables this work to be at the same time an architectural monolithic object and yet an urban composite of disseminated moments. The planting around the glass roof on top of the common room is emblematic; inclined to defeat the conventional sense of separation between indoor and outdoor, this internalised landscape is ideally, but also physically – through the air of the central court – leaking to the outside, part of the nature spread out around the building and throughout the campus.

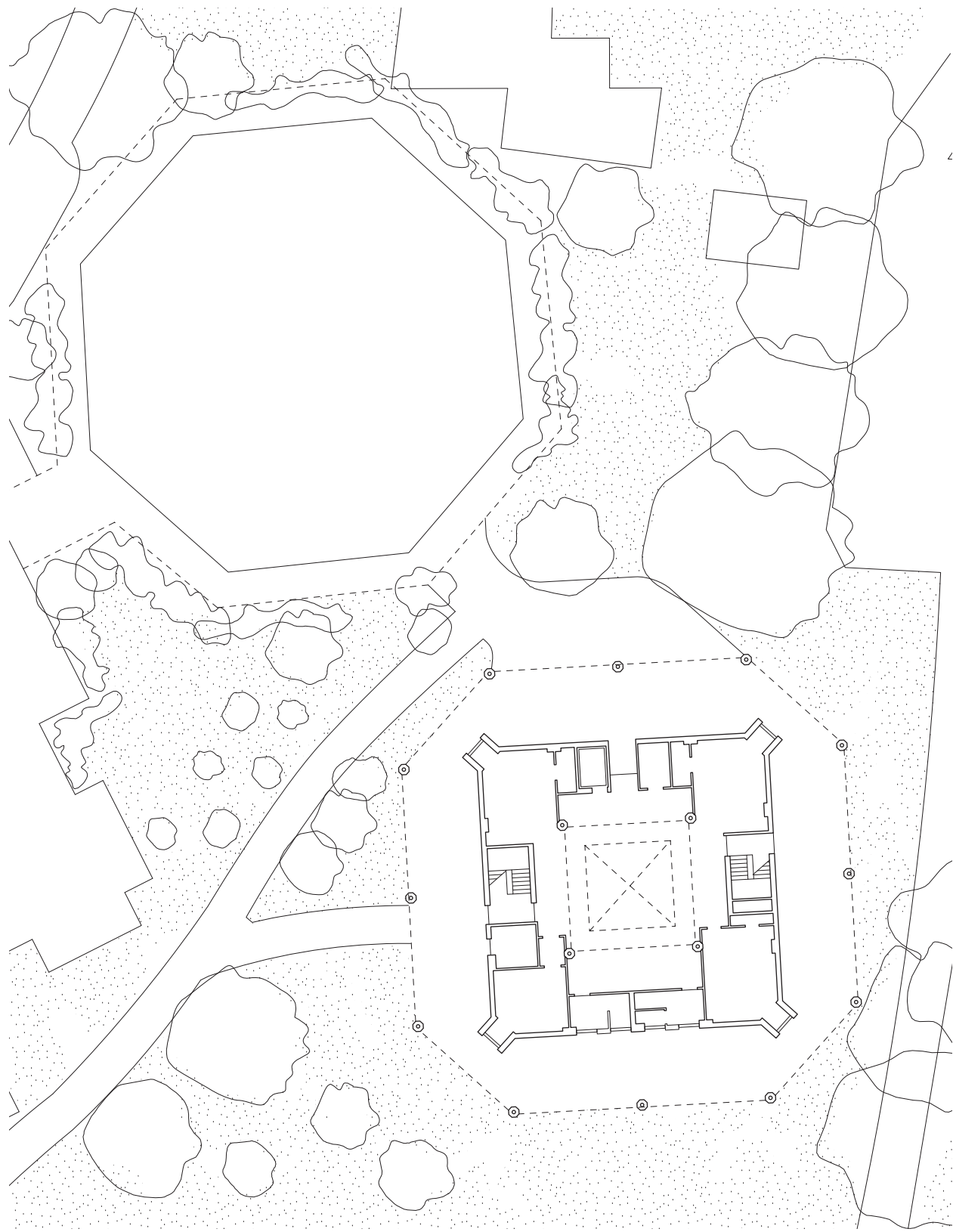
- 1 The original neo-gothic building of Ormond College was designed by Joseph Reed and Frederick Barnes in the early 1880s, and built through many stages and different architects until the early 1920s (for a more detailed account of the history of this building see Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 1999, p. 60)
- 2 The three octagonal buildings of Picken Court, located south-west from McCaughey Court, on the other side of Ormond College, were designed in 1963 by Romberg to provide accommodation for staff – currently only a few of them are for tutors, the majority are for students' residence. The octagonal volume of MacFarland Library, immediately north-west of McCaughey Court, was completed in 1967, still under the design of Romberg
- 3 For this project, not documented here, see 'Robin Boyd, Original Sketches', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973, p. 72
- 4 The neo-gothic building is described by Philip Goad as "constructed of rough-hewn Barrabool sandstone on a bluestone plinth"; Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, op. cit., p. 60
- 5 See legend related to the plan published in 'McCaughey Court, Ormond College, University of Melbourne', *Architect*, vol. 2, no. 3, May/June 1968, p. 23
- 6 Kazuo Shinohara's and Italian Neoliberty architecture have been discussed earlier in this thesis as works that among others are referential to and empathetic with Boyd's projects



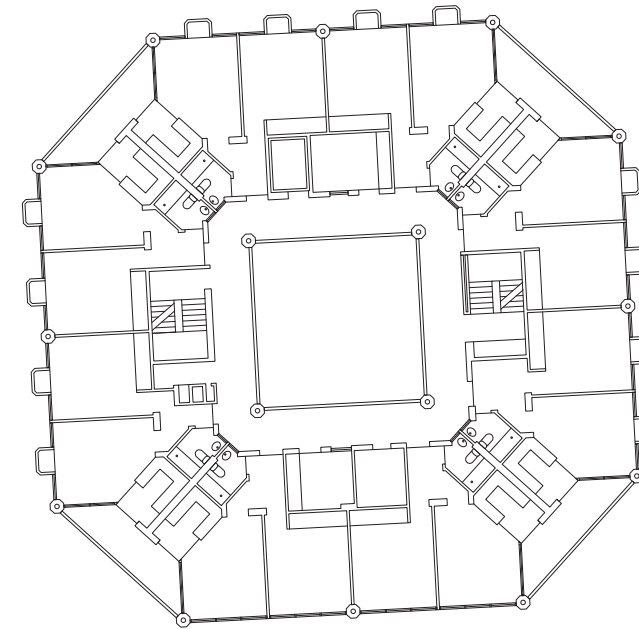
Mark Strizic



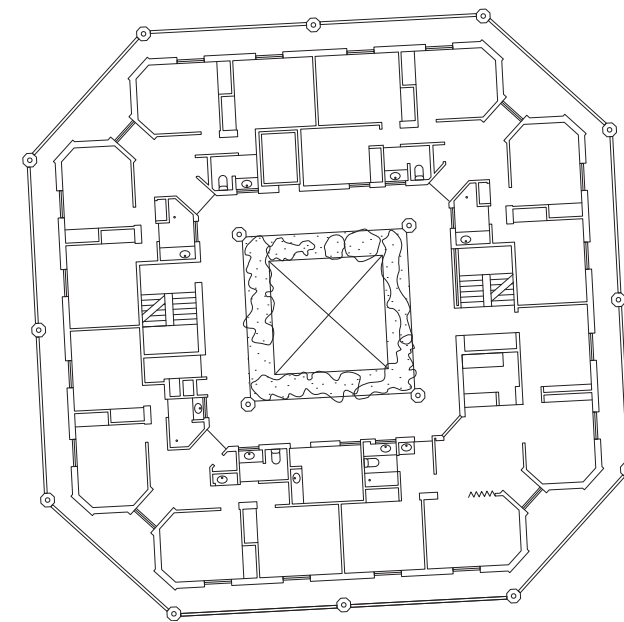
Mauro Baracco



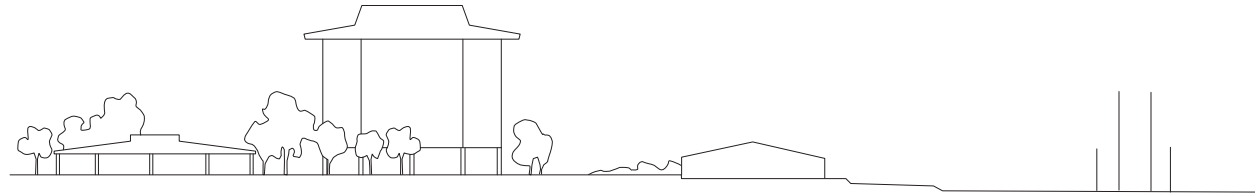
1:300



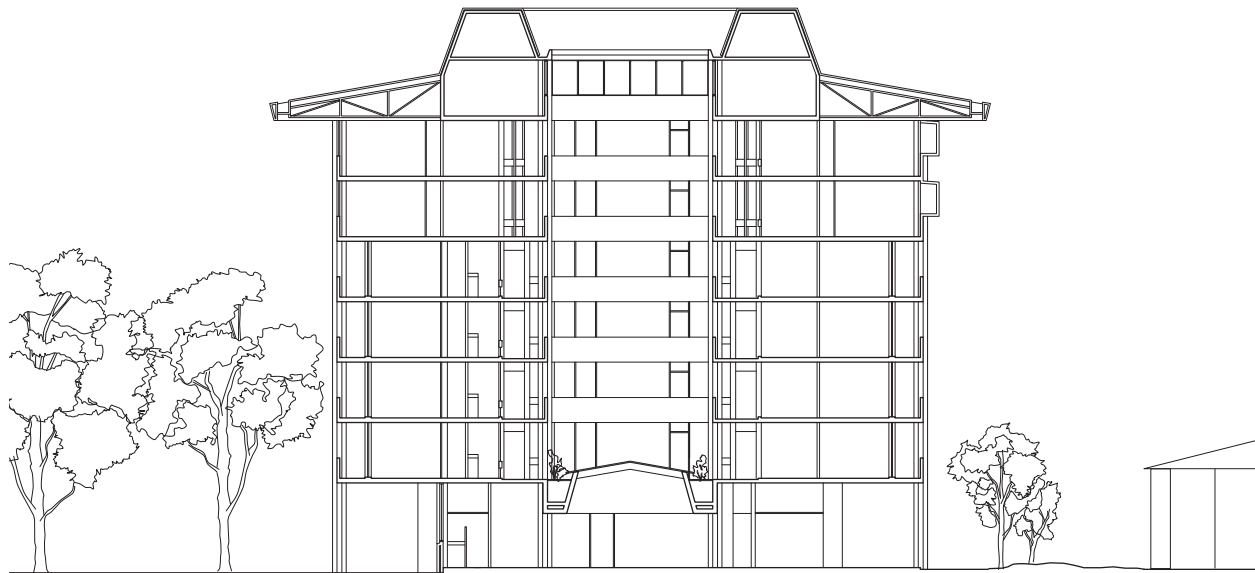
5th + 6th Floor



1st to 4th Floor

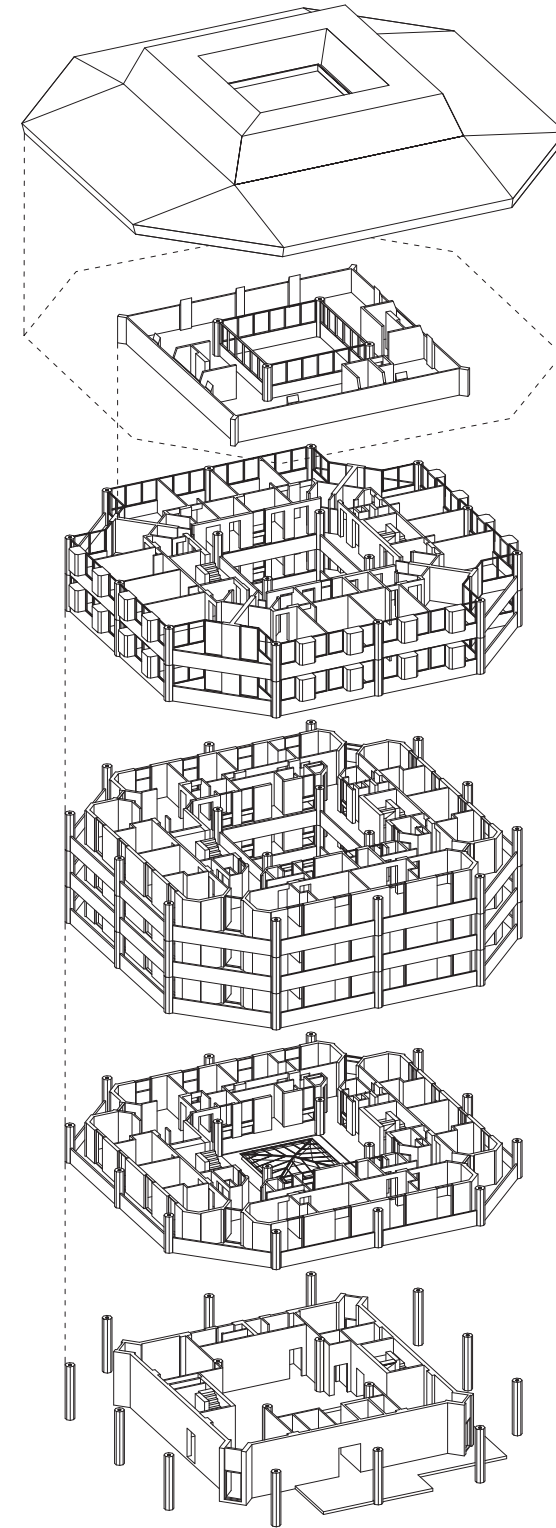


1:1000

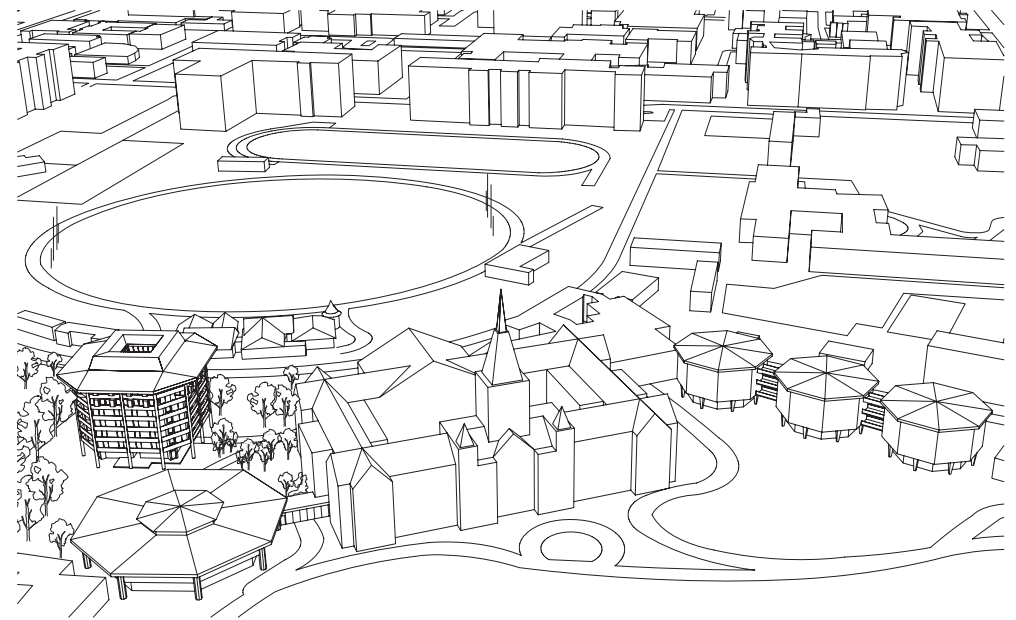
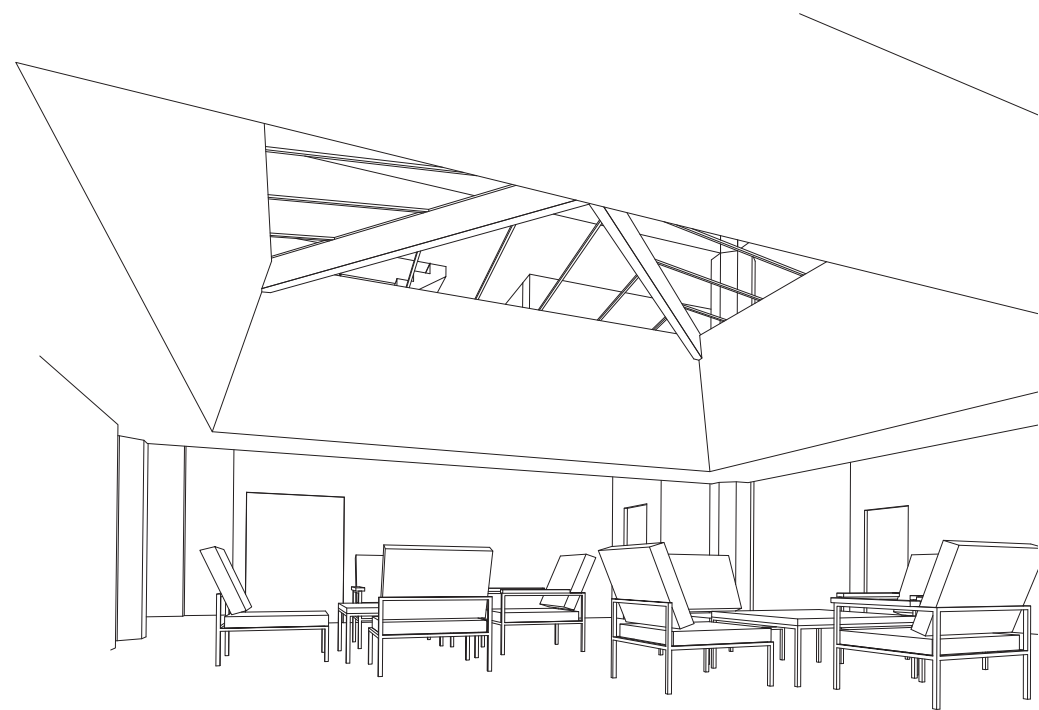


1:300

374



375





Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic

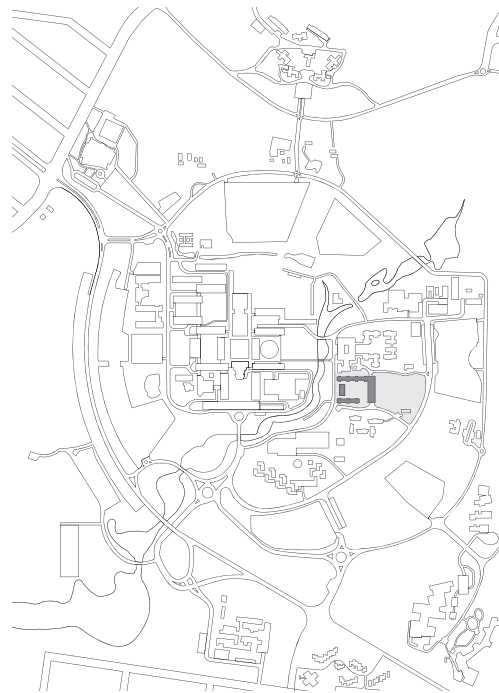


Mauro Baracco

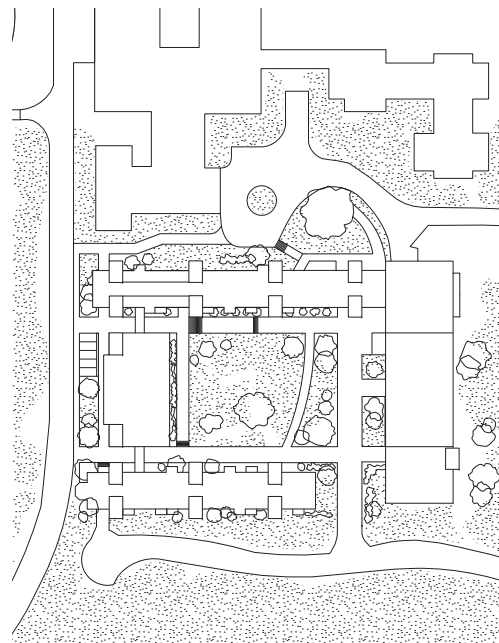
Menzies College
1965 -1970



Mark Strizic



1:20 000



1:2000

Menzies College is in La Trobe University's main campus, in the Melbourne's outer suburb of Bundoora, approximately 17 kilometres north-east from the city. Located on the east side of the campus' circular area, it is sited between the other two university colleges (Glenn College on its immediate north adjacency and Chisholm College further down south-west, past the large Union Hall complex), with parkland at the back of its east boundary and its west block facing the creek that traverses the campus from north-east to south-west. Both the extensive parkland and the creek as part of a system of interlinked lakes are the outcome of a landscape and architectural master-plan that has transformed this existing flood-prone farmland into a natural drainage basin expansively revegetated with Australian native species and connected to Darebin Creek, a few hundred meters further south-west.

In contrast with the master-plan for the overall campus, conceived in 1964 by Roy Simpson of Yuncken Freeman Architects as an environment of relatively low architecture so as to achieve a world of "harmony and consistency, happy relationships between the buildings and the landscape, Australian in character",¹ Boyd's project is rather urban and dense. Carried out and built in different stages, through several design variants and many controversies between the architects and the University's building committee,² Menzies College's form, scale, materials and construction details are more muscular and severe in comparison to many of the other buildings on the campus. The use of concrete, amplified by Boyd to accompany the bricks as the main elected material in the master-plan's guidelines,³ marks this project distinctively with a sense of material and aesthetic rawness.

The two long sides of the quadrangular complex accommodate the study-bedrooms in volumes modulated by concrete towers that contain stairwells and bathroom/laundry areas; the administration offices and some seminar rooms are located in the west block; the east block includes some common rooms and a dining room, the latter on the first floor; a theatre finds space in the north-east corner of the complex. The blankness of the façades not only counteracts the expressiveness of the concrete structural props, but is also instrumental to the striking emergence of protruding volumes, ambiguously intriguing as elements that present themselves with no 'ethical' desire to reveal their interior.⁴ Informed by this spirit, scattered pods randomly protrude from the façades along the north and south sides of the internal court as evocative extrusions of the modules that regulate the rhythm of these volumes; also a gazebo on the west façade surrealistically disrupts the blankness of this front, extending the Resident Fellow's flat towards the canopies of the trees along the creek.

Despite the various polemics of this project, Boyd is decisively in tune with the "Australian character"⁵ envisaged by Roy Simpson as the main quality of this campus. If Menzies College is less spread out than the other two colleges nearby, this is also because it is related in a different way to the natural landscape that is recognised by Boyd as extensive in scale and presence. Aware of the inevitable opposition between the built nature of architecture and the unbuilt character of natural landscape, Boyd is not drawn by the simplistic idea to merge these two entities through an architecture that, following Roy Simpson's urban guidelines, would be mimetic – in scale more than in aesthetic – with the surrounding nature. Beyond this superficial vision of 'harmony' between architecture and nature, Boyd intrinsically understands the abundant bushland character of the natural environment that since the campus' opening in 1964 has been continuously revegetated with native plants among the various buildings, and developed as an extensive natural buffer from the surrounding urban areas.

Menzies College is as densely clumped as the large bushland vegetation of this campus. It is a built presence that sits within the large unbuilt vegetation around it, and yet draws it into its grounds, opening to the landscape through the gaps – the pedestrian passages – in the main west front and the south-east corner. Through them, the surrounding bushland is swallowed up into the large central court, a space with an urban and green character at the same time. The natural environment is captured by the architecture, and yet the architecture is eroded by the infiltration of nature – the continuous growing of the natural elements since the completion of this project has ultimately weakened the 'brutalism'⁶ and strength of its forms, volumes and stark materials.

Boyd's vision for Menzies College goes beyond the completion of the building; opened to unlimited terms, it envisages an all-inclusive and inseparable continuum of architecture and nature. An unbuilt design version with long wings stretching towards the bushland in the back, further homogenised by the relentlessness of their modularity,⁷ is symptomatic of Boyd's inclination to embrace and simultaneously comprehend a dimension of rational differentiation and irrational 'con-fusion' between architecture and nature. Reminiscent of the infinite scale of Superstudio's *Continuous Monument*, the largeness and repetitiveness of Menzies College – hinting to infinity in the unbuilt version – is monumental and yet at the same time disappears within the monumentality of the surrounding natural environment, as a means that cannot escape the rational conventionality of a world in separate parts, and yet investigates to the irrational intuition of a dimension of oneness.⁸

- 1 Words by Roy Simpson as quoted in Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 293
- 2 An account of the various problems that arose through the design and construction phases of this project is included in Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd A Life*, op. cit., pp. 292-295
- 3 See Roy Simpson's account of this project in Geoffrey Serle, *Robin Boyd A Life*, op. cit., p. 293
- 4 The need to 'ethically' express the building in its 'truthfulness', that is: in the revelation of its structural and interior components through a 'transparent' and unconcealing façade, is typical of the formulaic design processes of many positions affiliated to mainstream Modernism, more distinctively the ones related to Functionalism and the associated ideological conception of architecture as a 'machine à habiter'. Robin Boyd's positions, as argued in this thesis, resist the sense of reassurance that is simplistically and illusorily achieved through the application of these and other types of formulaic design processes
- 5 See text quoted above, related to note no. 1
- 6 According to Philip Goad this work is a "striking Brutalist landmark"; Philip Goad, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 1999, p. 194
- 7 See plan and elevation, respectively top and middle of p. 385
- 8 Superstudio's *Continuous Monument* as a reference to Boyd's architecture is also discussed in relation to the Flinders Vaults project in this thesis, pp. 496, 497. An empathetic analogy can be drawn between Boyd's embracing of rationality and irrationality, and Superstudio's paradoxical notion of monumentality and 'disappearance' – as remarked by Superstudio member Adolfo Natalini in relation to their *Continuous Monument*, "if design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois model of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture...until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture"; Adolfo Natalini, lecture at the AA (Architectural Association) School of Architecture, London, 3 March 1971, quoted in Peter Lang, William Menking, *Superstudio. Life Without Objects*, Skira, Milano, 2003, pp. 20, 21



Mauro Baracco



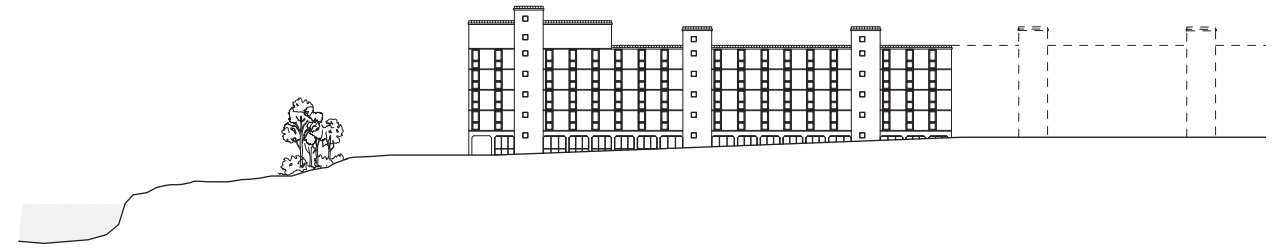
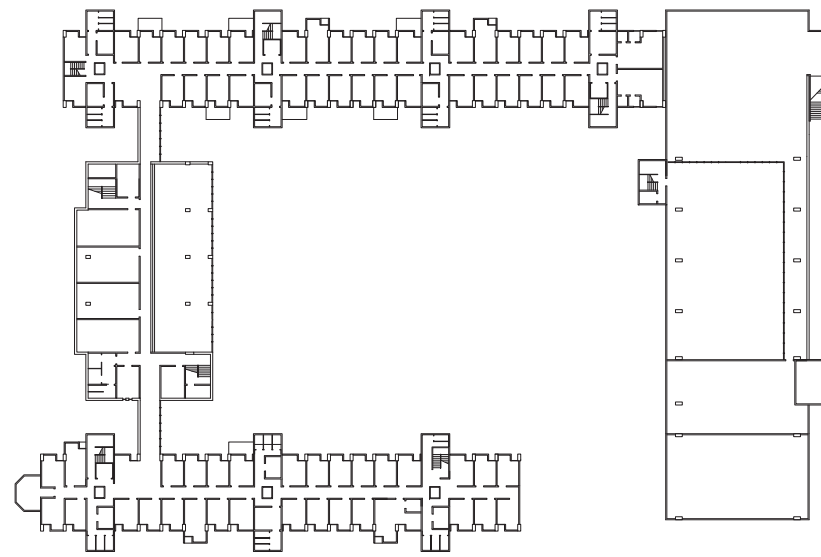
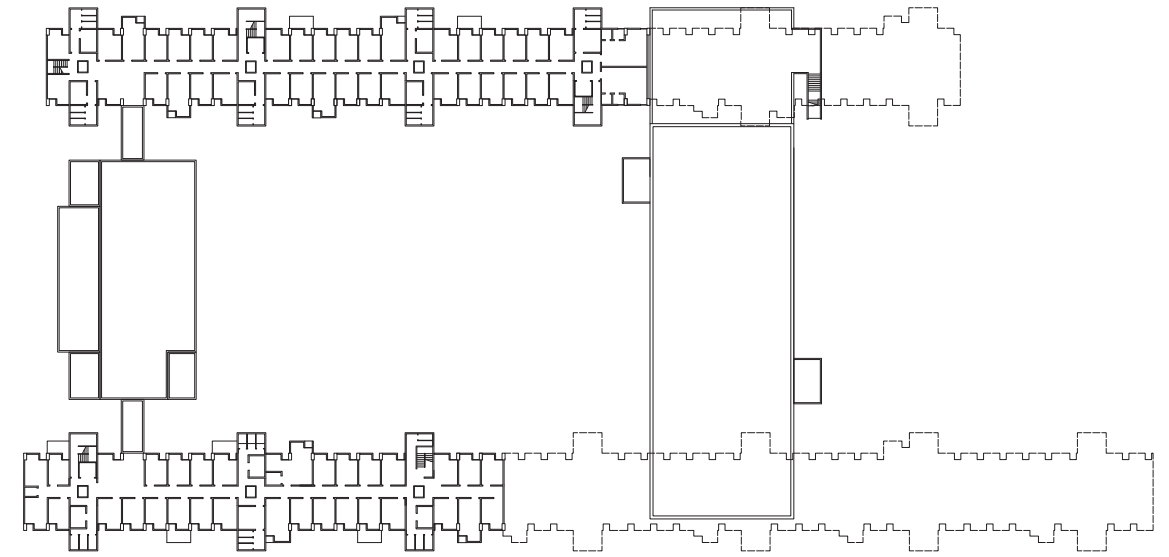
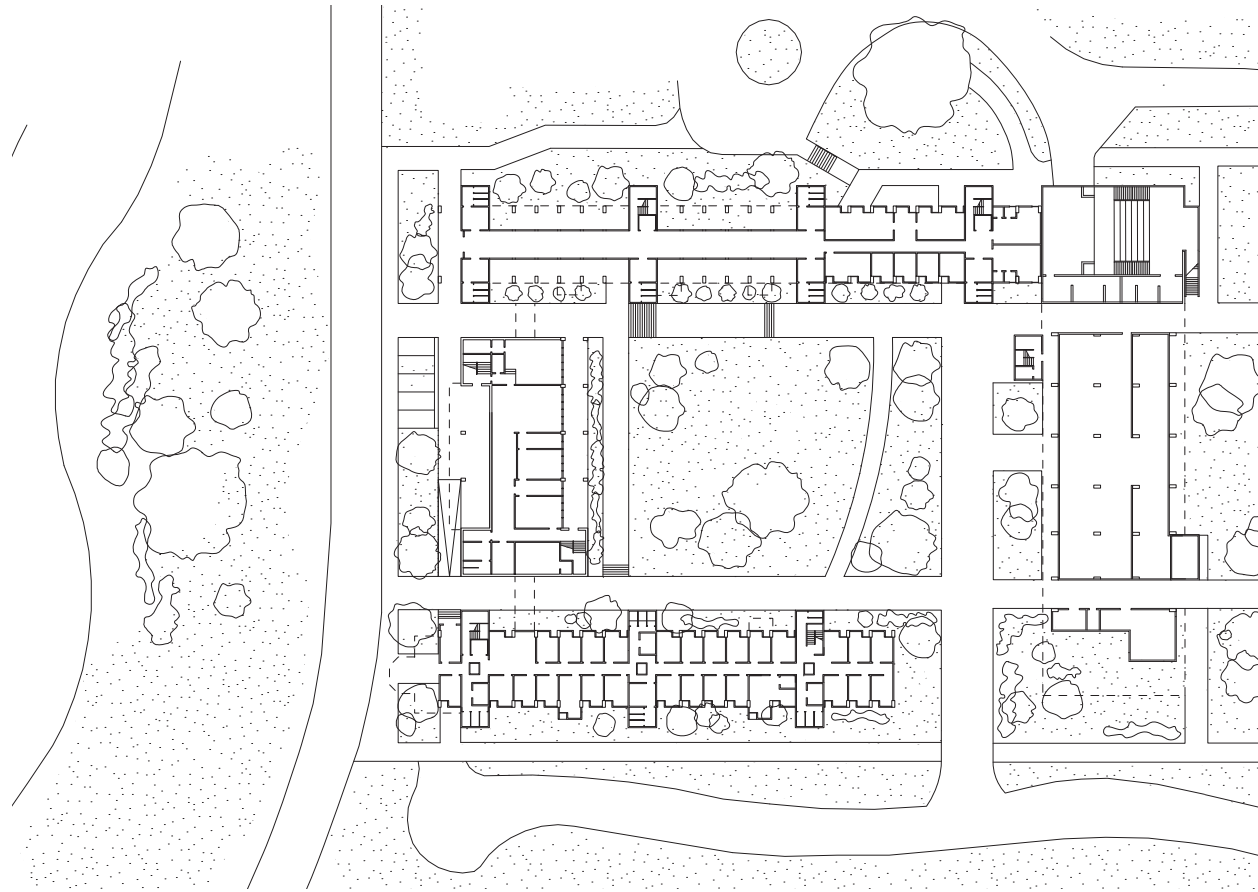
Ming Jun Lee



Ming Jun Lee



Mark Strizic

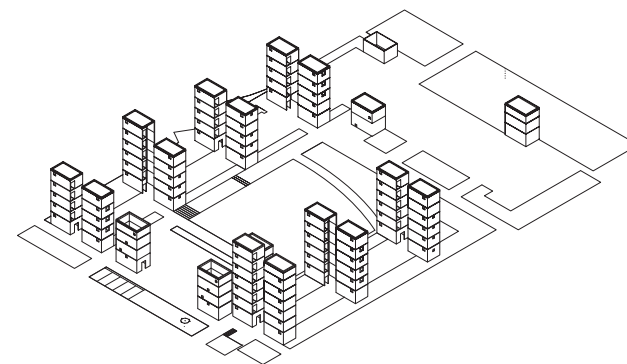
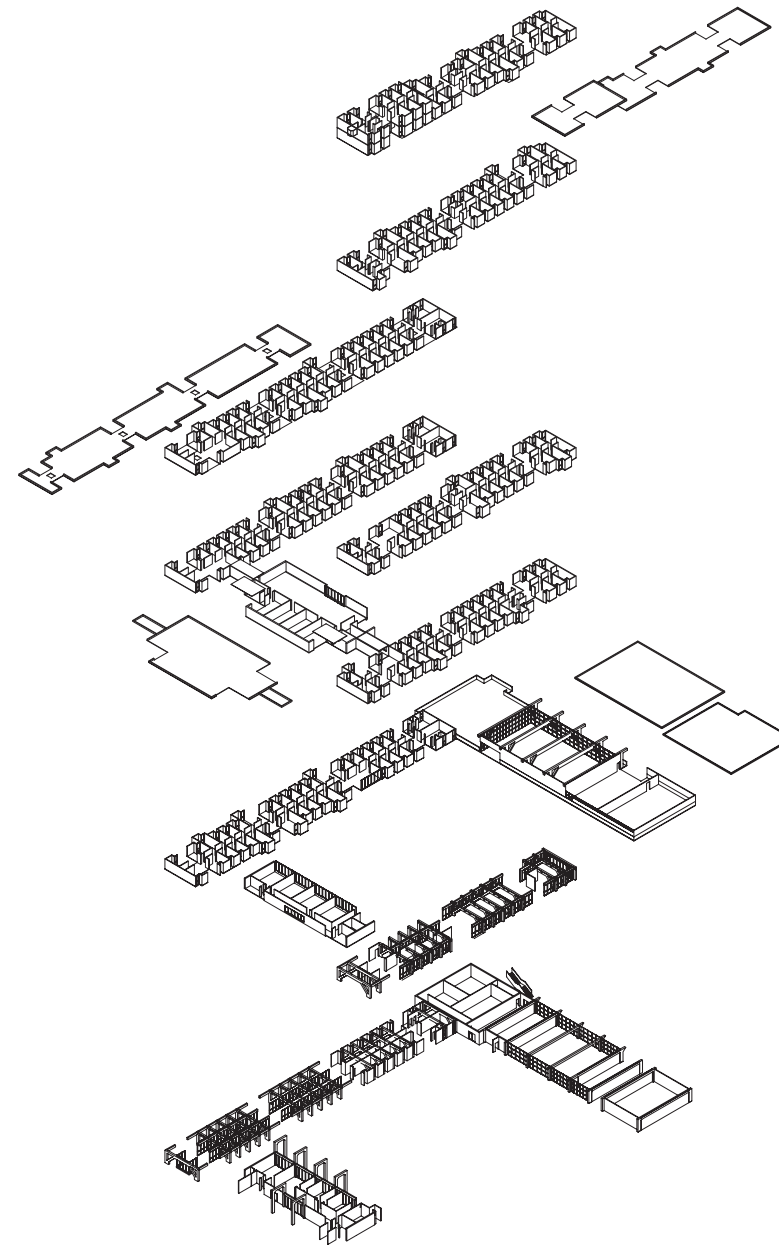
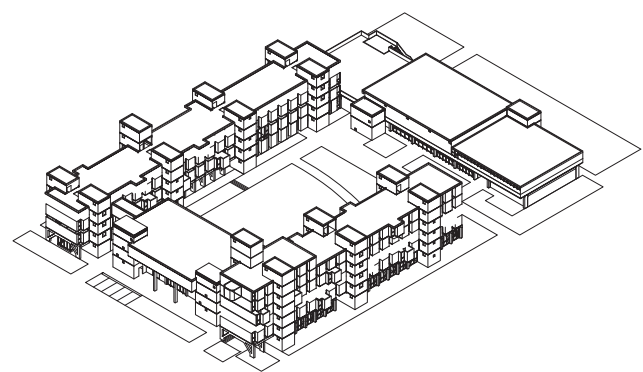


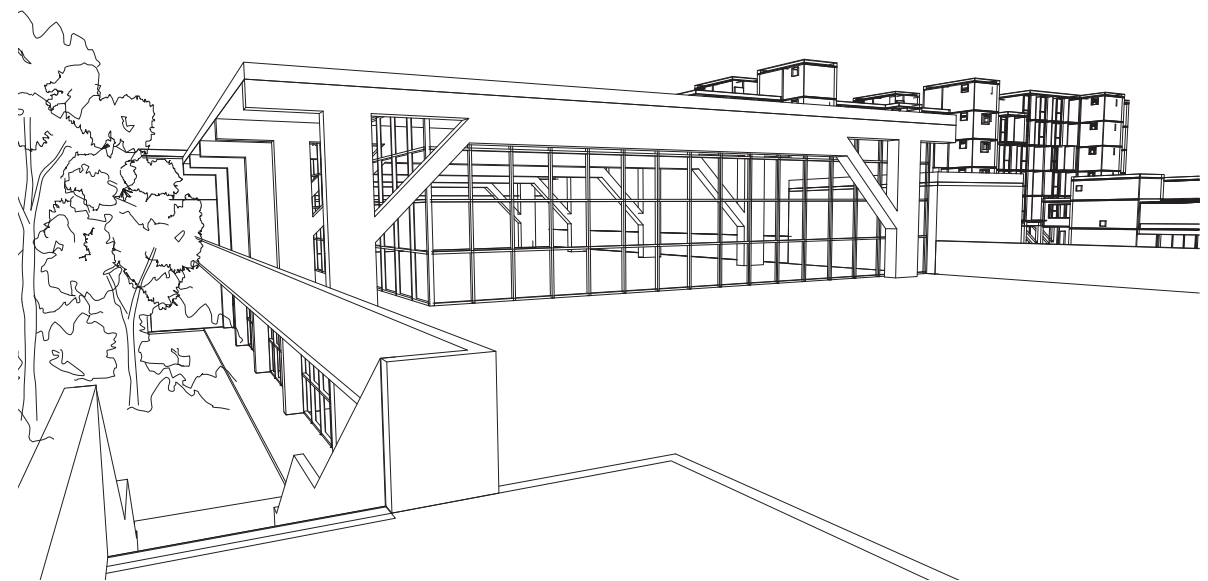
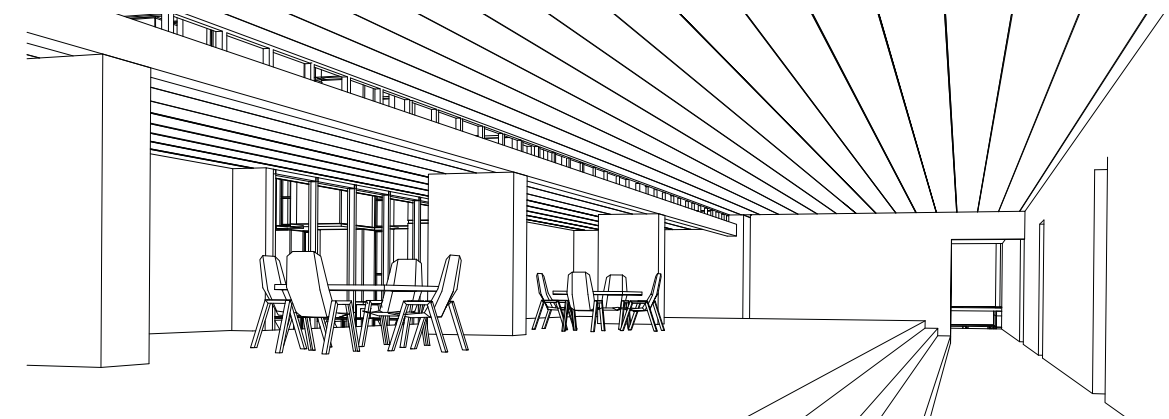
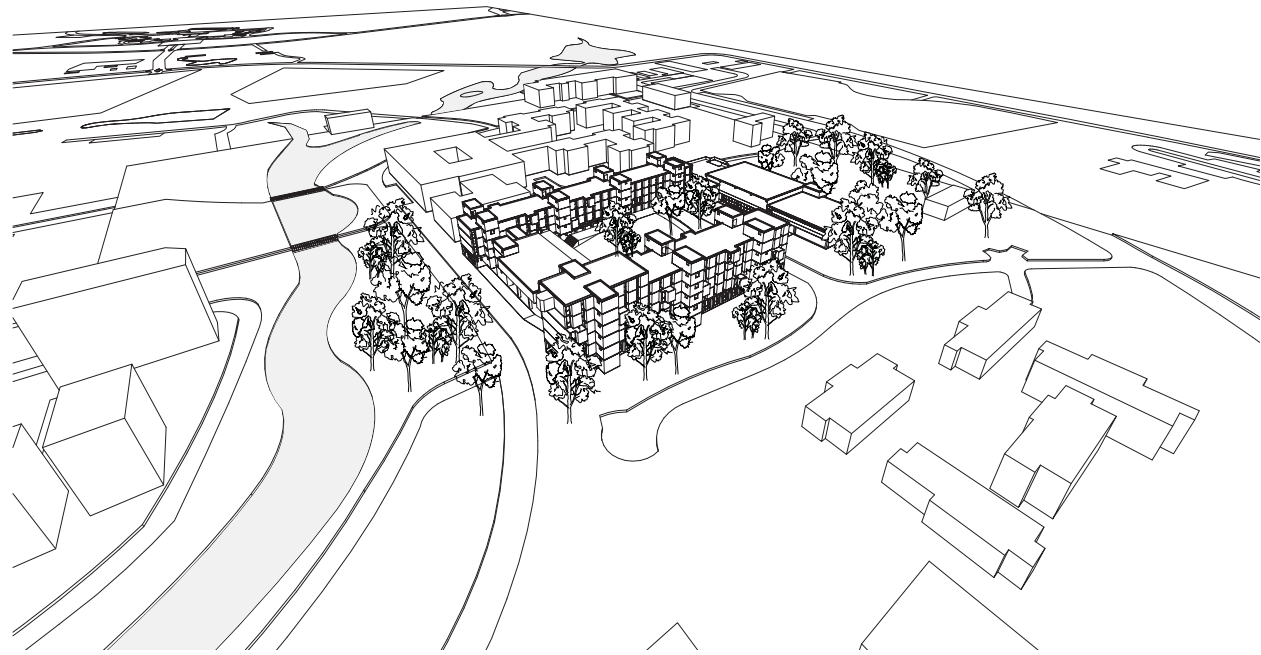
1:1000

384

1:1000

385







Mark Strizic



Ming Jun Lee



Ming Jun Lee



Mark Strizic



Ming Jun Lee



Mark Strizic

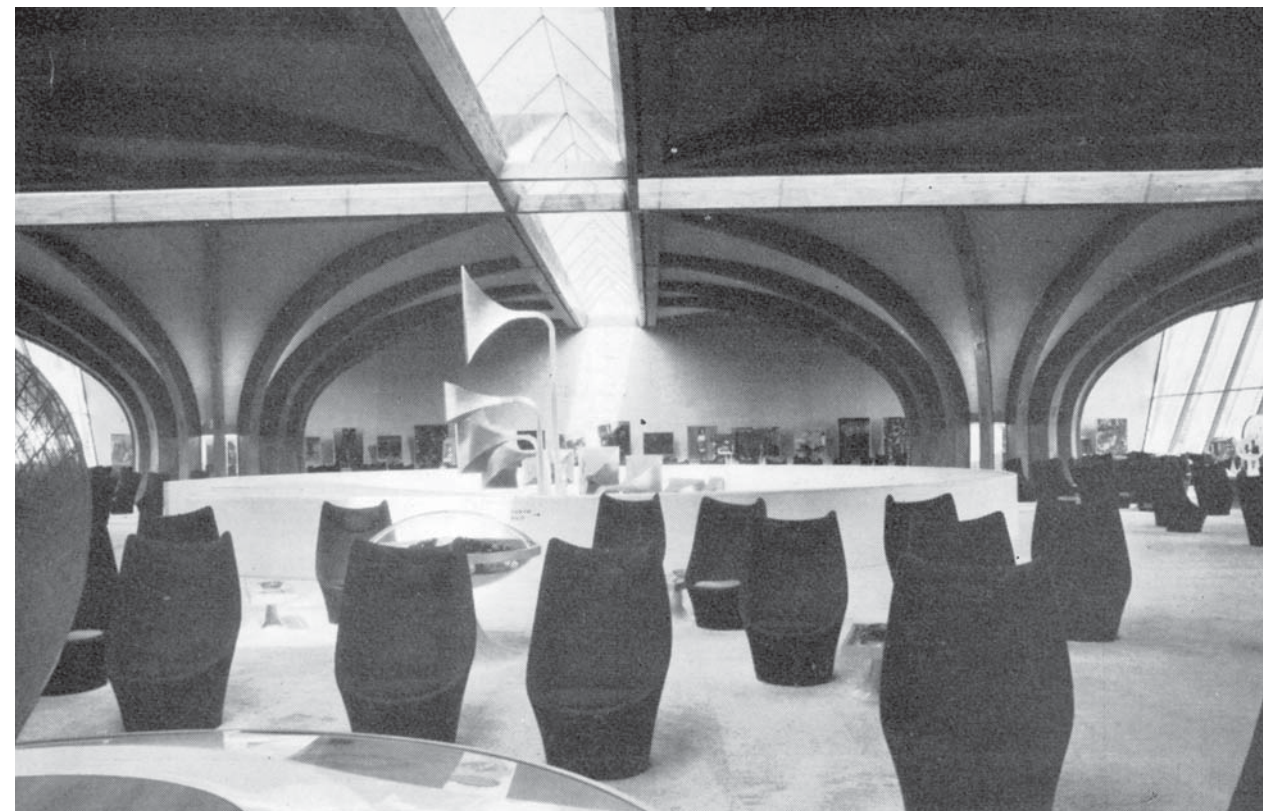


Mark Strizic

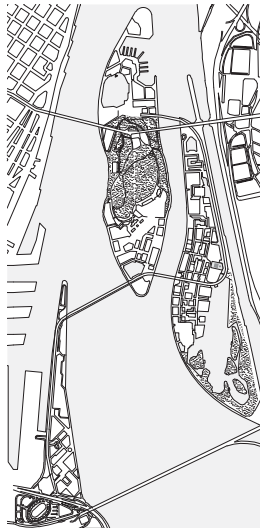


Ming Jun Lee

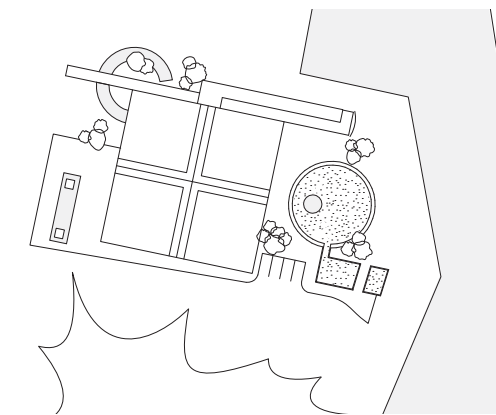
Australian Pavilion at
Montreal Expo '67
1966 – 1967



Architecture in Australia, vol. 61, no. 1, February 1972



1:20 000



1:2000

394

In 1965 Boyd was commissioned to design the exhibition fit-out – interiors and landscape – of the Australian Pavilion for Montreal's Expo '67. The 'architectural container', an elevated square box, was designed by James Maccormick, principal architect with the Commonwealth Department of Works. Expo '67 was distributed on three contiguous sites: the main gate, administration headquarters and introductory thematic exhibitions (including 'Habitat' experimental housing by Canadian architect Moshe Safdie) were located on a triangular dock-area along St. Lawrence River's west bank at the east end of Montreal's city precinct; the National Pavilions and more thematic events were scattered across Ile Sainte-Hélène and Ile Notre-Dame. These three sites were interlinked by a train express line internal to the Expo.

On the east edge of Ile Notre-Dame, next to the tensile structure of the German pavilion designed by German architect Frei Otto, the Australian exhibition was spread out in various areas: landscape and outdoor spaces at the ground floor extended from the front to the back and undercroft of the building, introducing three circular 'mushroom base' blocks which provided vertical interconnection between the two different levels and accommodated a reception lobby, offices, staff area, service staircases, toilets and technical rooms, as well as a double height entry space encircled by a ramp. A predetermined circulation – from the ground floor west outdoor areas to the first floor indoor space, back to the ground floor outdoor rear on the east side, and finally to the exit path along the outdoor north edge – gradually modulated the various exhibition experiences. Gums, ferns, kangaroo paws among other native trees, shrubs and ground covers, as well as red stones and a 'billabong' in a form of shallow water over stony bottom, were disseminated among paved areas on the west entry side, leading under the building and leading the visitors to the indoor spaces through various vegetations typical of both the Australian bush and outback. The following ascending to the first floor was offered by a wide winding ramp exposed to images of different aspects of Australian society mounted on photographic panels that were branching out from an aluminium 'tree' as the focus of the circular volume. Glimpses of the outdoor experiences located both under the building and at the back of the pavilion were revealed through the glass wall of this entry cylinder.

The main exhibition area at the top of the ramp, in the open space of the whole first floor volume was a "huge, elegant salon" with white wool carpet on the floor and walls, white curtains draping the south and north glazed walls, and white asbestos acoustic spray on the ceiling between laminated timber curving sections. In this calm and relaxing environment – envisaged by Boyd with a "background... plain and peaceful to allow the exhibits to shine" – visitors could circulate through the exhibits, grouped under the themes of Arts, Way of Life, Science and National Development and displayed on the walls and circular low stands, but also choose to sink and rest into the 240 comfortable 'talking chairs' disseminated all over in the room. These armchairs, designed by Australian designers Grant and Mary Featherston under Boyd's commission, were equipped with a built-in stereophonic sound system enabling the sitting visitors to hear conversations of noted Australians (from the worlds of politics, science, art, music, literature and sport among others) in relation to both Australian general topics and the specific exhibits. All upholstered in black wool fabric, some of the armchairs – those delivering sound descriptions in French language – had orange cushions; after the Expo these armchairs were adapted for the domestic market and produced without the top padding that originally included the built-in speakers. To enhance the 'soft-cell salon' effect, some 'coffee tables' were placed among the armchairs and the circular low stands, carrying ashtrays and books under glass related to each of the exhibition themes. The achieved atmosphere, as envisioned

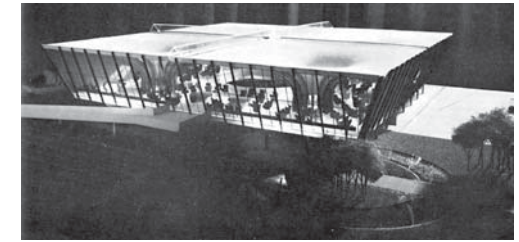
by Boyd, was "of restful, welcoming comfort, a haven of tranquillity away from the bustle of the fair. The aim is to have the most luxurious and civilized salon at Expo '67. Fairgoers should advise their friends: 'When tired, go to the Australian pavilion.' Yet, while they rest we will tell them of the Australian adventure".³

After having recharged in the softness of the chairs and passively learnt about Australia, the visitors could descend back to the ground floor through a rectilinear ramp on the north side; have a look at some kangaroos and other native animals contained, together with more typical Australian landscaping, in a large circular pit at the rear of the building; experience a coral cay with fish that, located in the undercroft between the three circular volumes, was built with pieces of authentic coral from the Great Barrier Reef; and finally exit along the north path, passing through the pavilion's last garden area in the north-west corner.

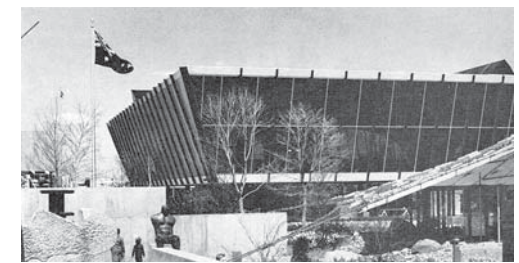
The Australian exhibition was positively received – the exhibition spaces and layout, more than the heavy and rather uninspiring dullness of Maccormick's volume, attracted extensive attention from the media. Resisting conventional forms of hierarchy between architecture, interiors and landscape, but also rejecting the typical dualism between container (for the exhibition) and contained (the exhibits), Boyd sets up a series of spaces that ask to be 'inhabited' rather than merely viewed – integrated parts that are all equally relevant in guiding the visitors through a continuum of experiential moments: from wandering through native flora and fauna, to embracing Australian society while walking up a ramp; from sinking and resting into an armchair, to circulating through paintings and other displays; from browsing through a book, to listening to a recorded talk. Boyd's desire to "avoid cluttering the building with exhibits",⁴ and his conviction that the "building should be regarded as an exhibit in itself"⁵ go hand in hand with his radical reluctance for those spectacular and impressive effects that typically characterise the design of exhibition spaces: "this relaxed, trusting, drawing room atmosphere... should be a contrast to the inaccessible spectaculars elsewhere".⁶

In a highly sophisticated way, the resistance to the obvious – the spectacular effect – is undertaken through the implementation – absorption and consequent overcoming – of a similarly obvious element: the chair. An object often included as an obvious exhibition equipment to simply aid the passing visitor, the chair is here exaggerated in scale (from chair, to armchair with speakers!) and number (from, say, a dozen, to 240!), acquiring a completely different meaning. The amplification of this obvious exhibition's equipment-type is the fresh, ironic, provocative and radical idea for the Australian Pavilion's project. Disseminated in large quantity, the talking chairs become a surprising and indeed subtly 'spectacular' presence – an unfamiliar and unexpected crowd of familiar and expected resting aids.

- 1 Robin Boyd, 'Expo 67: The Australian Pavilion', project description, p. 4, *Robin Boyd Collection*, Box no. 85, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne
- 2 Robin Boyd, letter to William Worth, Deputy Commissioner General, 21 September 1966, *Robin Boyd Collection*, Box no. 85, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne
- 3 Robin Boyd, 'Expo 67: The Australian Pavilion', project description, op. cit., p. 5
- 4 Robin Boyd, letter to William Worth, Deputy Commissioner General, 21 September 1966, op. cit.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Robin Boyd, letter to William Worth, Deputy Commissioner General, 21 March 1966, *Robin Boyd Collection*, Box no. 85, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne



Architecture in Australia, vol. 55, no. 5, September 1966



Architecture in Australia, vol. 55, no. 5, September 1966

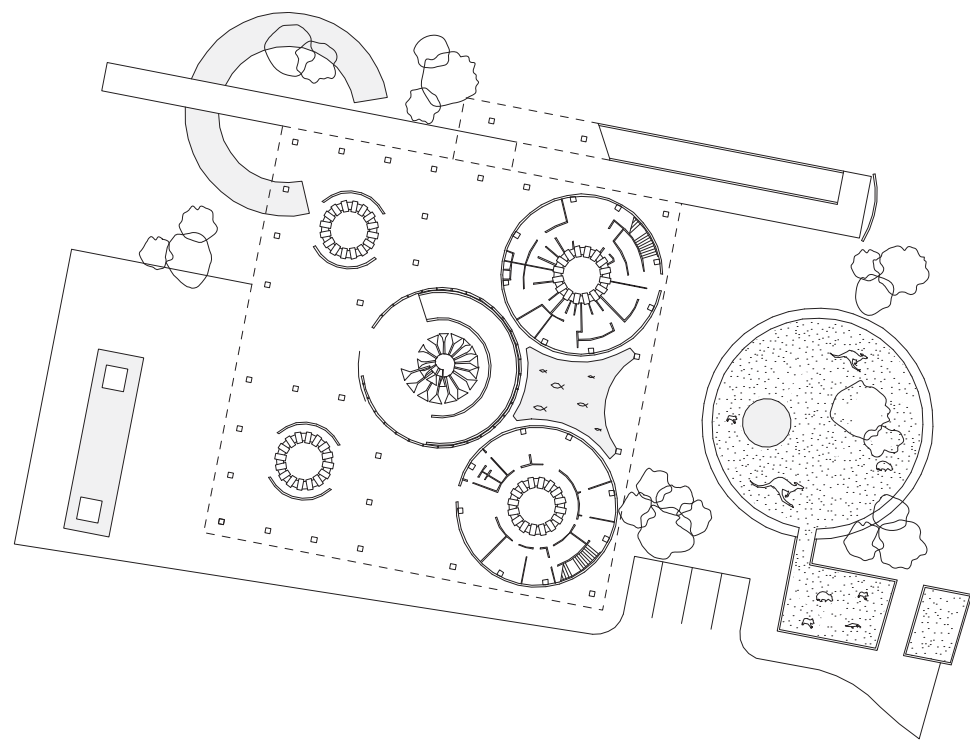


The Japan Architect, vol. 42, no. 133, August 1967



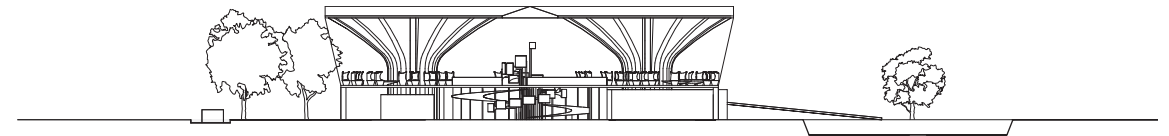
The Japan Architect, vol. 42, no. 133, August 1967

395

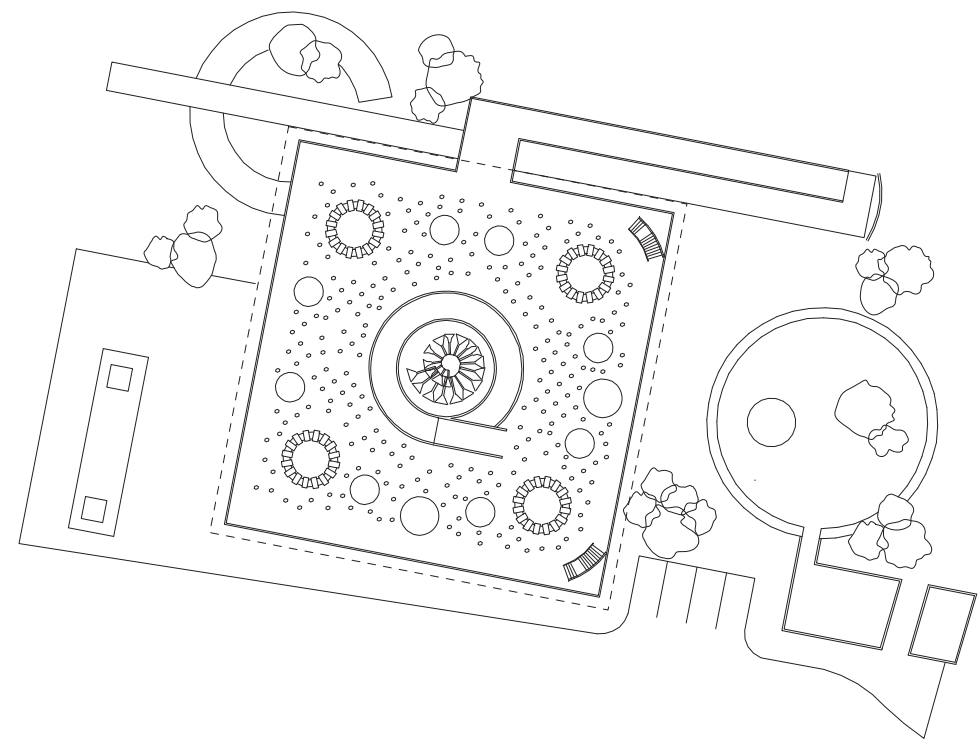


1:750

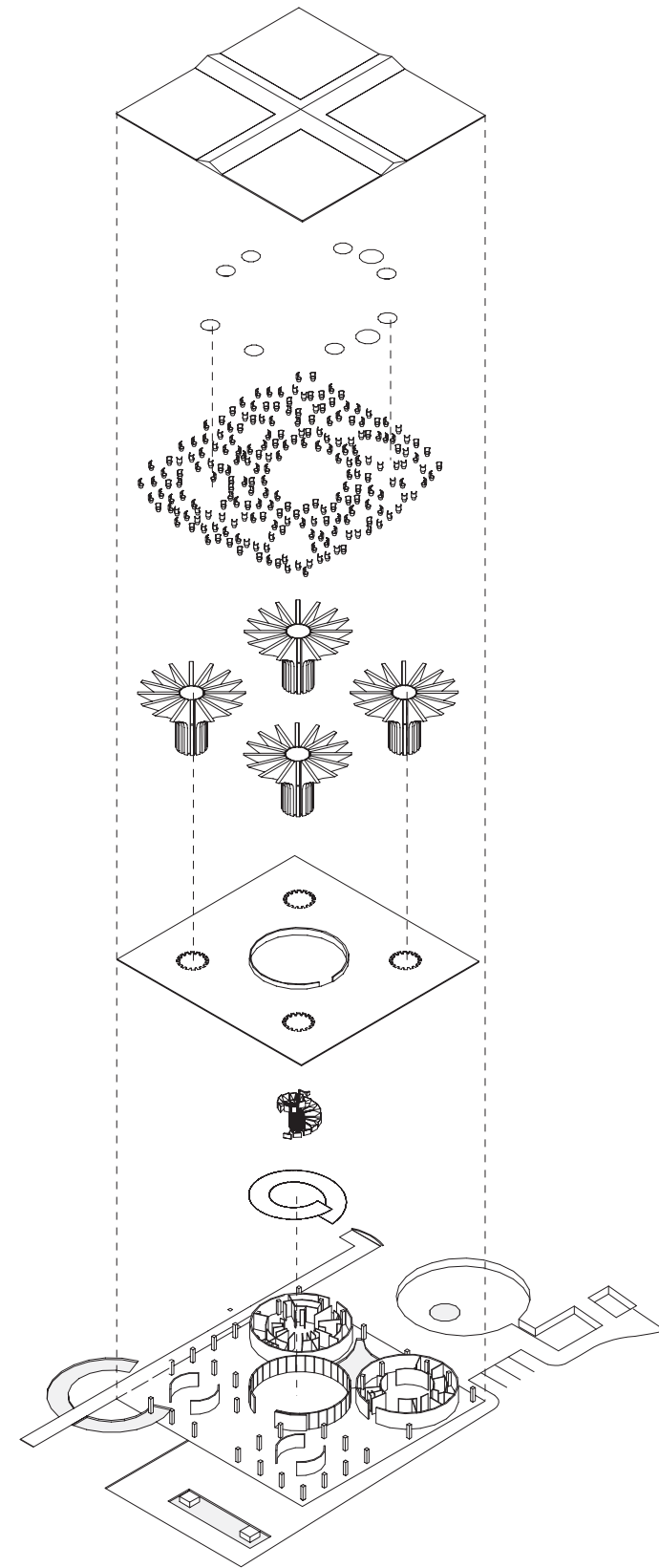
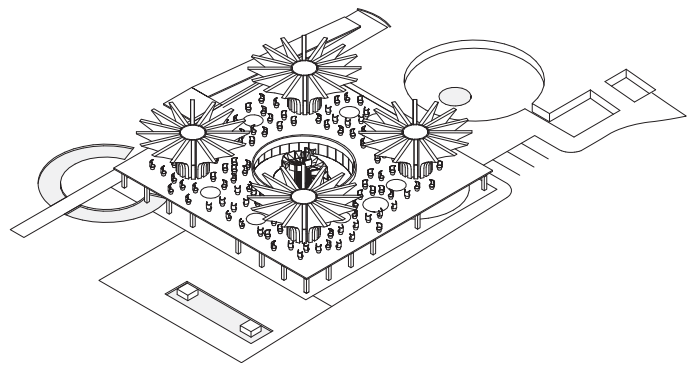
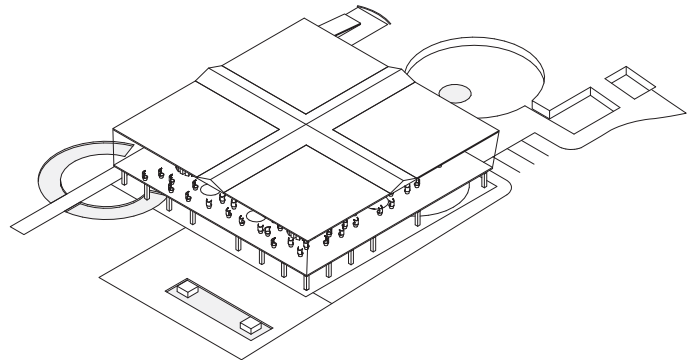
396

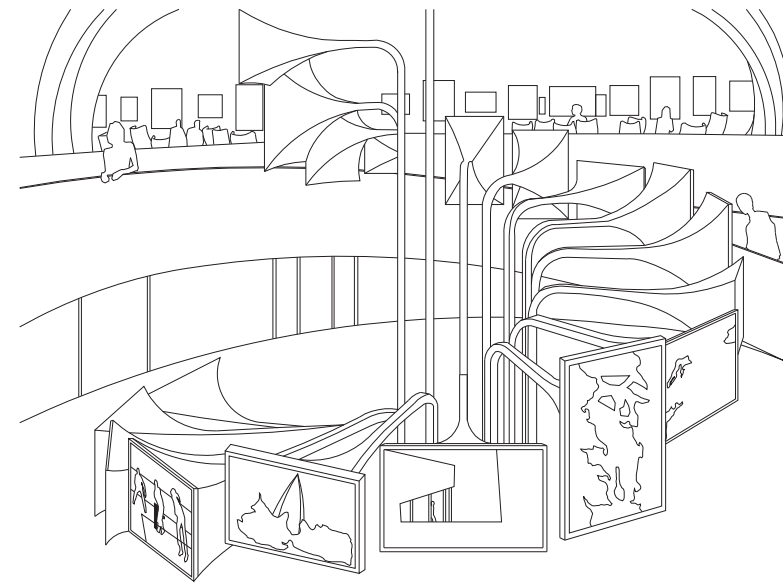
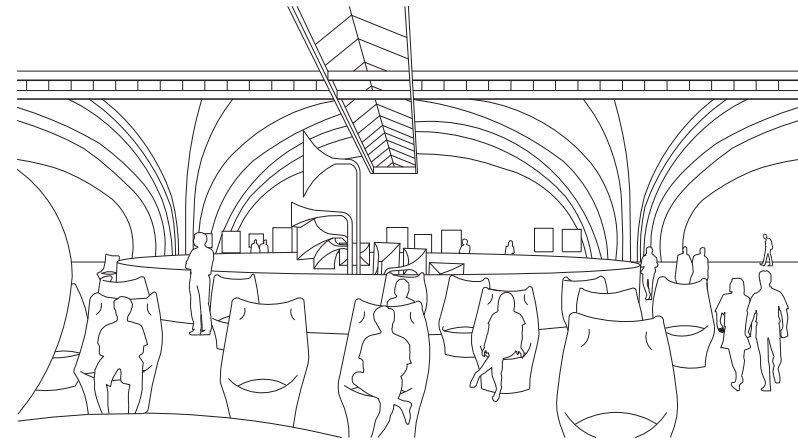
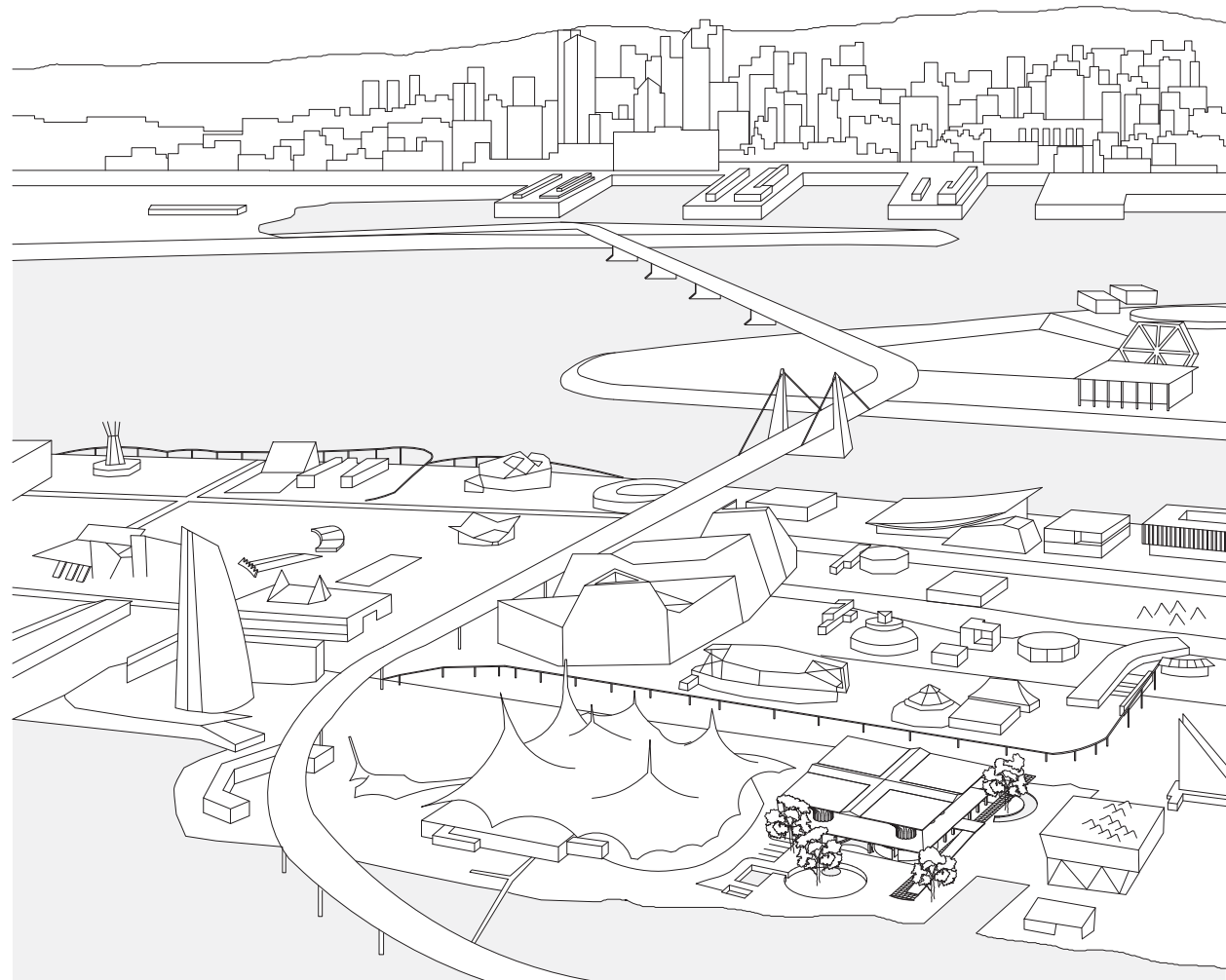


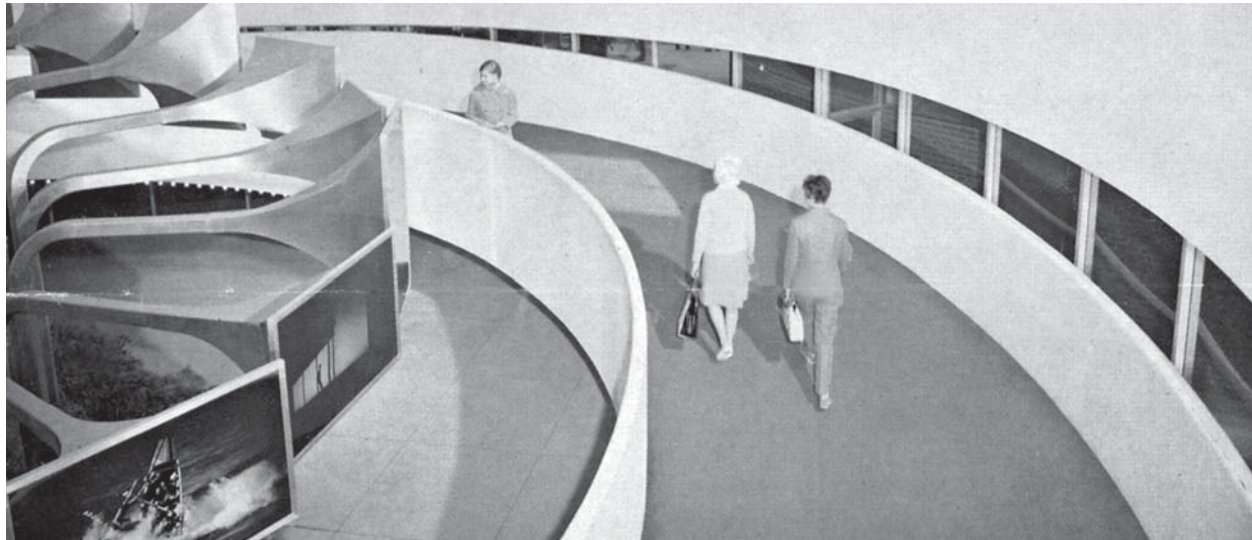
1:750



397







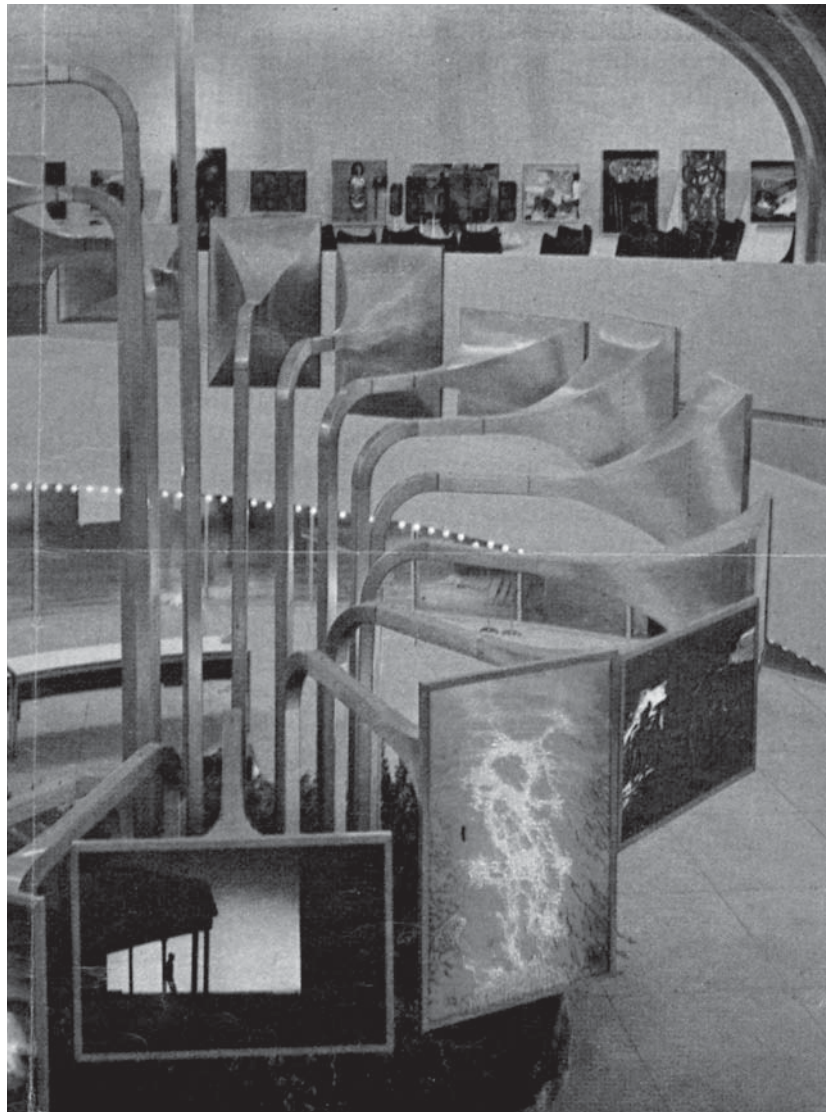
Hy-Craft wool carpets, advertisement flyer



The Japan Architect, vol. 42, no. 133, August 1967



The Japan Architect, vol. 42, no. 133, August 1967



Life, 28 April 1967



Featherston archive



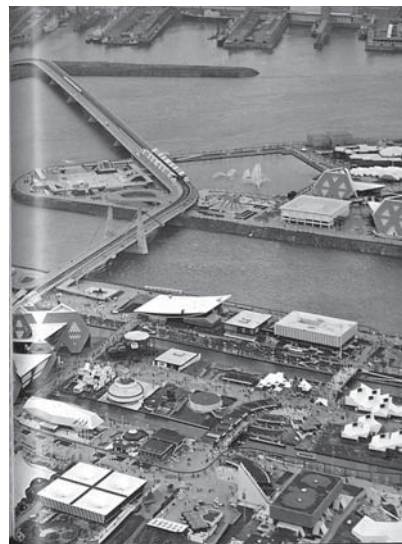
Featherston archive



Latrobe Studios



The Architects' Journal, vol. 145, no. 23, 7 June 1967



The Japan Architect, vol. 42, no. 133, August 1967

Lawrence House + Flats
1966 – 1968



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

The Lawrence House and Flats are located in Melbourne's inner suburb of Kew, approximately 7 kilometres from the city. Three different households – two two-bedroom flats and one single-family house – share the same block, on a piece of land that slopes considerably down from east to west. This site condition is exploited by the project in a proficient way, becoming the means for a subdivision in which the house's spaces are vertically compacted into a tree-level building in the west half of the block, where the clearance from the ground floor is at its highest degree.

Urban densification, consistently promoted by Boyd as a way to contain the sprawl of Australian cities, is here achieved through a building that even if considerably smaller than some of his proposals for multistorey towers,¹ does however offer a radical alternative to the low density of its surroundings, and more generally to the Australian suburban fabric typically consisting of one single-family house per block. As a denser clump of buildings, this work is an innovative precursor of the contemporary investigations into urban and architectural sustainability, including strategies of densification by subdivision.

Two flats in the volume at the front of the block are serviced by a common stairwell directly accessible from the footpath. Each of them accommodates two bedrooms, a living room, bathroom/toilet and laundry. A double carport is located under the building, open to a ramp that descends from the street. An annexed open service area is fenced on three sides by brick walls.

The south half of the front along the street is taken by the carport space assigned to the house. A long deck/balcony, raised by a few steps from the street level and squeezed between the house's carport and the flats' block, leads to the house's entry, running above and parallel to the main and largest area of the outdoor space that surrounds the house. A living room, dining room, study, kitchen, laundry and toilet are located on the second floor, past the entry door. A deck separates the house from the flats' block, providing space for service activities mostly related to the kitchen and laundry areas; a balcony on the west front, accessible from the dining room, offers an extensive view of Melbourne's north-west areas and beyond, with the horizon marked by Mount Macedon.

Three bedrooms, a bathroom and toilet are accommodated on the first floor, one level below. The main bedroom, in the north-west corner, is provided with a generous changing room; one of the two remaining bedrooms is tucked in the basement of the flats' block, reachable from the house through a glazed volume that bridges over the outdoor space. The ground floor, designed originally as a large playroom further down below, has been later transformed into a relatively independent space with a kitchen unit and separate bathroom. Connecting the three storeys, a staircase also becomes a pivot space that on the first and second levels is wrapped by a continuous circulation that interlinks the service areas to the main rooms. A storage space below the garage and a plant room in the north-east corner of the house are accessible from the garden at the ground level.



1:2000

The use of exposed brick throughout the building, including all exterior and many interior walls, provides a sense of continuity to a project that is articulated in various volumes, with the façades further broken up by brick step-backs and corbels. At a different but related level, a sense of spatial continuity is enhanced by the insertion through the building of open spaces which are similar in shape, dimension and character to the internal rooms: the deck/balcony to the entry door as an outdoor hallway; the deck next to the kitchen, screened by a sliding panel along its south edge, as an open service room; the undercroft below the living room as an additional double height outdoor living space; the main garden area, carved out from the volumes that are around and above it, as an outdoor playroom. Conversely, many interior spaces are drawn outside of their boundaries: the glazed bridge/hallway/link to the bedroom below the flats is an enclosed outdoor space; both the study on the second floor and the main bedroom below are projected towards the trees' canopies and the open landscape beyond through an unframed glazed corner, a tenuous and impalpable limit between inside and outside; the staircase servicing the two flats is covered and yet symptomatically left unconcealed, open to the air.

Negative and positive spaces are 'con-fused', intertwined vertically and horizontally throughout the building, instigating doubts about our logically relational way of conceiving them as separate, different and often hierarchically laid-out. The logical duality that is applied as well to the relational contrast between architecture and nature is expressed by opposing the artificial building, a constructed network of horizontal and vertical elements, to the natural inclination of the existing sloping ground; yet, the openings that erode the apparent mass of the building call for an illogical all-inclusiveness of architecture and nature.

The Piranesian air of the undercroft space is not surprising – intriguingly evocative of the labyrinthine spaces depicted in the *Carceri*,² it is an open interior and enclosed exterior at once, ambiguously unmeasurable and precariously unstable as an eerie grotto that haunts the apparent stability of the building.

A recent project of restoration and renovation, in empathy with Boyd's approach, has redefined some interior spaces and provided the outdoor space of a long timber deck that runs from the main garden area at the centre of the block to the west end of the building, floating through the undercroft space.

- 1 See Domain Park Flats and Carnich Towers, respectively pp. 267-277 and pp. 475-481 of this thesis, both projects strongly informed by Boyd's inclination to urban density
- 2 Strongly in empathy with Boyd's disposition towards unmeasurable dimensions of spatial continuity as a reflection of the coexistence of rationality and irrationality, the visionary drawings for the *Carceri*, depicted by Italian engraver and architect Giovanbattista Piranesi in 1761, are described by Manfredo Tafuri as "an opening toward the infinite"; Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1995 (original ed., *La sfera e il labirinto. Avanguardie e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70*, 1980; first translated in English, 1987), p. 31. Furthermore Tafuri discusses Piranesi's research as informed by outcomes in which "irrational and rational are no longer to be mutually exclusive"; Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1996 (original ed., *Progetto e Utopia*, 1973; first translated in English, 1976), p. 15



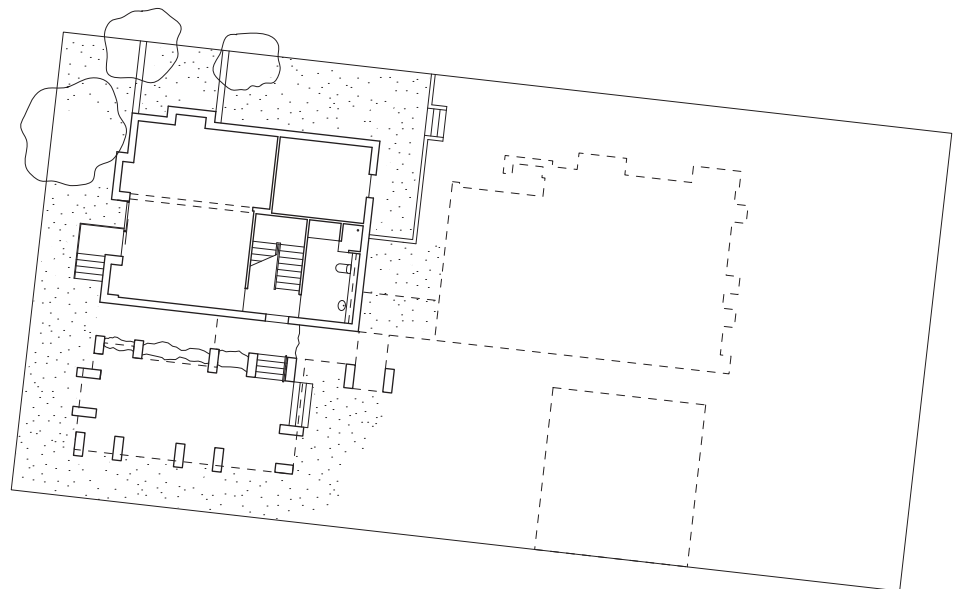
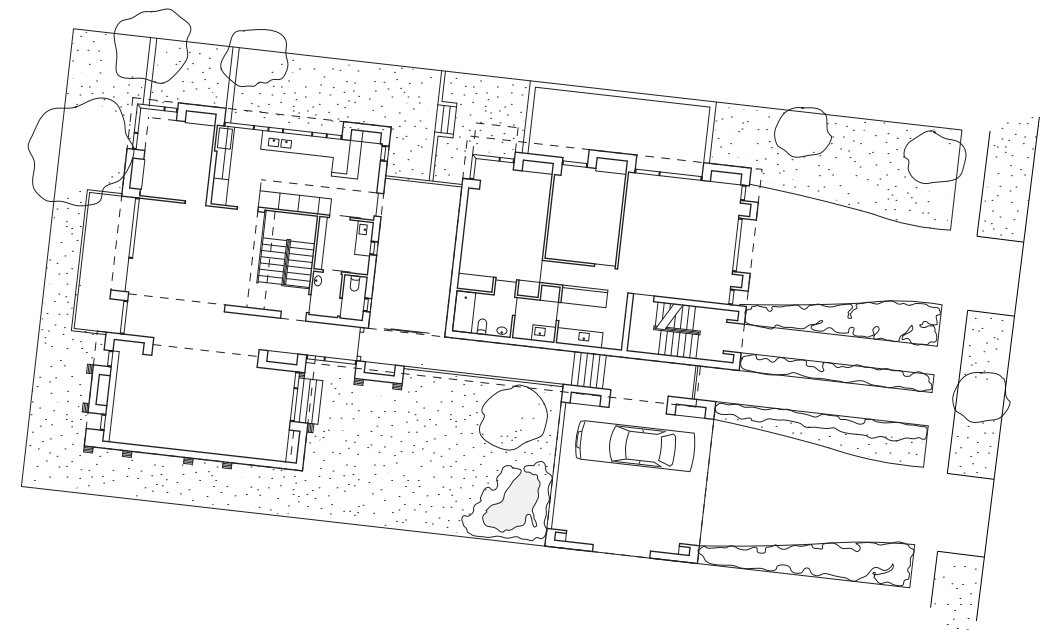
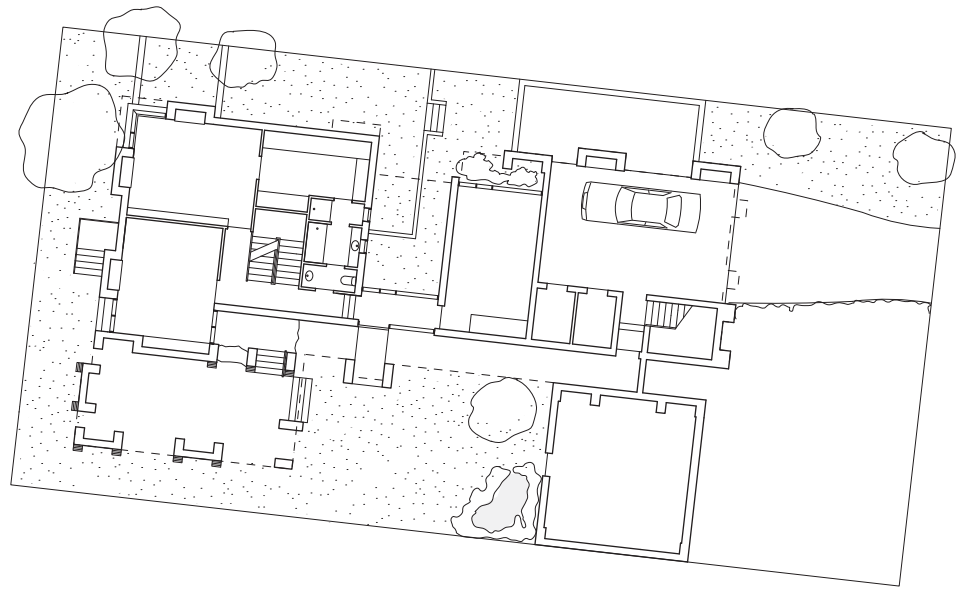
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

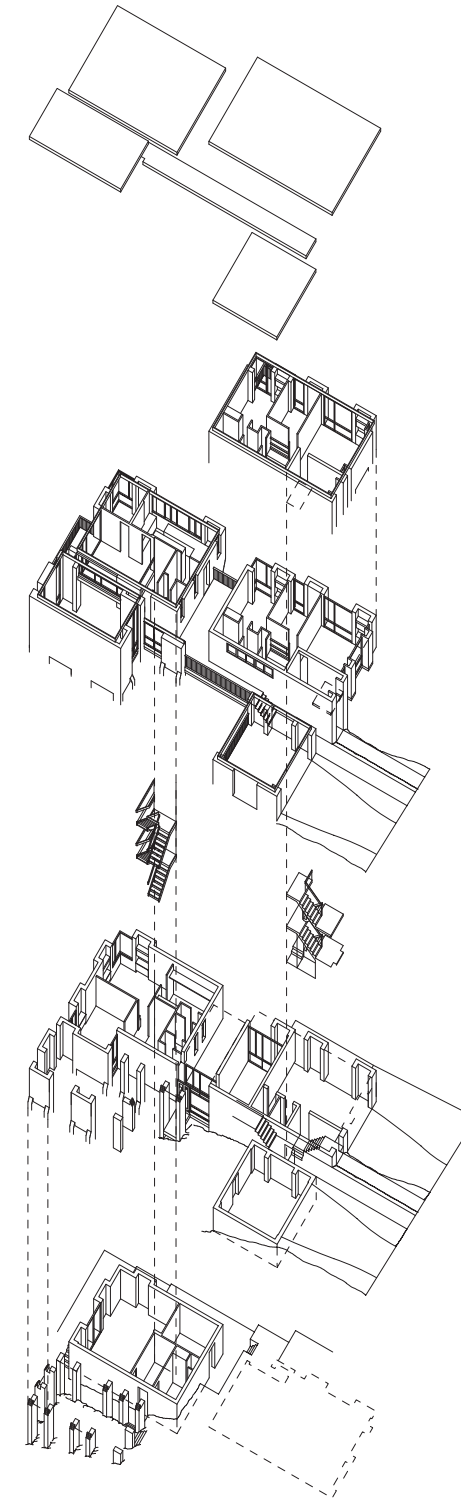
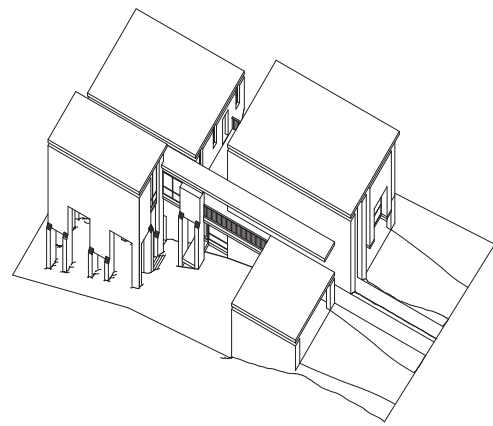


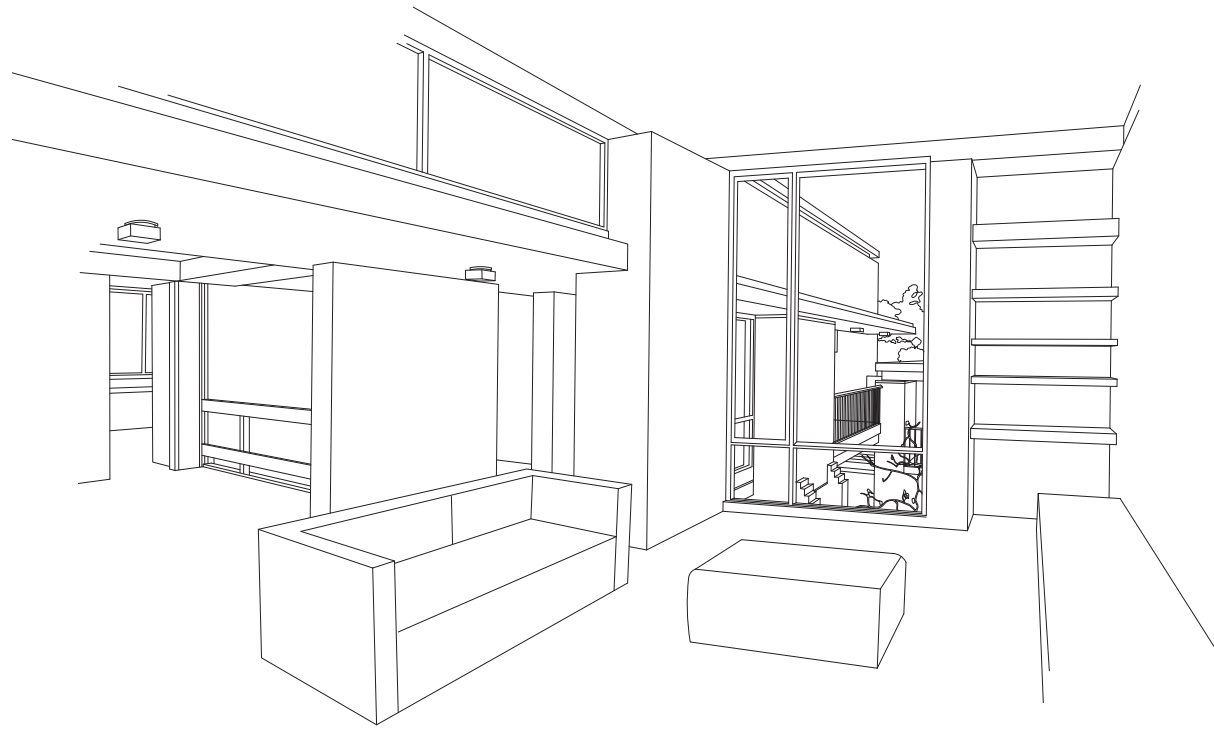
1:300

408

1:300

409







Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Aaron Pocock



Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Aaron Pocock

Farfor Holiday Houses
1966 – 1968



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

This group of four holiday houses is in Portsea, 100 kilometres south of Melbourne. It is the outcome of an investment project by the owner of a relatively large block of land which was subdivided to include three more houses in addition to the owner's residence. Located at the end of the long shoreline on the east side of Port Phillip Bay, less than 5 kilometres away from the opening of the bay towards the Southern Ocean, the block is situated between the major road of the area and the cliff above the beach.

A shared driveway not only allows circulation to and throughout the buildings, but also acts as a virtual form of separation – an 'intangible fence' – between the units and some of their outdoor spaces. The houses, all equally configured with the same internal spatial distribution, relate to a range of outdoor conditions due to their different positions within the block;¹ as stated by Boyd, they "are identical but each has its own private, and in some way different, outlook from the long window-wall of its main rooms".² As a group of 'identical' and yet 'different' entities – the two on the north side more directly exposed to the bay, the one in the middle surrounded by the internal landscape of the block, the one along the road relating to more internalised types of views and outdoor spaces – these houses reflect Boyd's inclination towards "variety within unity", a notion embraced by the Melbourne architect as symptomatic of a design approach that is less formulaic in comparison to some early Modernist positions.³

Each house is comprised of three bedrooms (one of them is provided with an ensuite), a living/dining space, kitchen area, toilet, bathroom, internal courtyard/garden, carport and wide hallway. Allowing circulation throughout the house, from the entry door to the outdoor area located below and in front of a tilted timber canopy, the hallway is effectively an additional "semi-outdoor garden space";⁴ with a floor of pebbles, pavers and plants, this 'internal exterior' is open to the outside through a flyscreen that runs along one of its two long sides. The carport and the internal courtyard/garden, tenuously defined as 'exterior' spaces by this permeable edge, are also at the same time drawn inside the house, in direct continuity with the outdoor character of the hallway.

The dialogue between outdoor and indoor, a recurrent theme of Boyd's enquiries into spatial interrelation, is addressed here by the more informal type of inhabitation that typically characterises holiday houses and their related activities, usually inclined to spill out and overlap in spaces that are interrelated between each other with no distinctive sense of hierarchy or individual separation. The windowless bedrooms along the hallway are 'tent-like' spaces that relate to their 'camping ground' – the hallway and internal courtyard/garden – by receiving the natural breeze through the flyscreen; the carport, hallway and internal courtyard/garden provide surplus space for various uses, from storage to additional playroom areas conducive to literally 'chilling out'; the kitchen area is turned inside out, exposed to the internal courtyard/garden from one side and released, through the openness of the other side, to the spatial continuum between the living/dining space and the outdoor areas beyond; the main bedroom and its own ensuite shares the rectangular space at the back with the living/dining space, to which it directly opens through a sliding panel.



1:2000

A veranda space along the back edge of each house is defined by a cantilevering timber canopy which is tilted towards the sky in order to allow a deeper penetration of sunlight. Despite the expressiveness of this structural resolution, the four canopies have become intermingled with the surrounding trees and vegetation. Hardly visible from both the road and the cliff, and increasingly hidden by their vegetation, these houses do not feel the need to visually relate to their surroundings in order to belong to their place; they are intimately part of the site through the embracing and unconditional absorbing of the surrounding physical and natural elements. Becoming places themselves by being inhabited by the breeze and vegetation of their place, and leaking into the already existing place through indivisible space, they also make us wonder about our conventional concept of place as a determined and bounded entity located in a pre-given space.⁵



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria

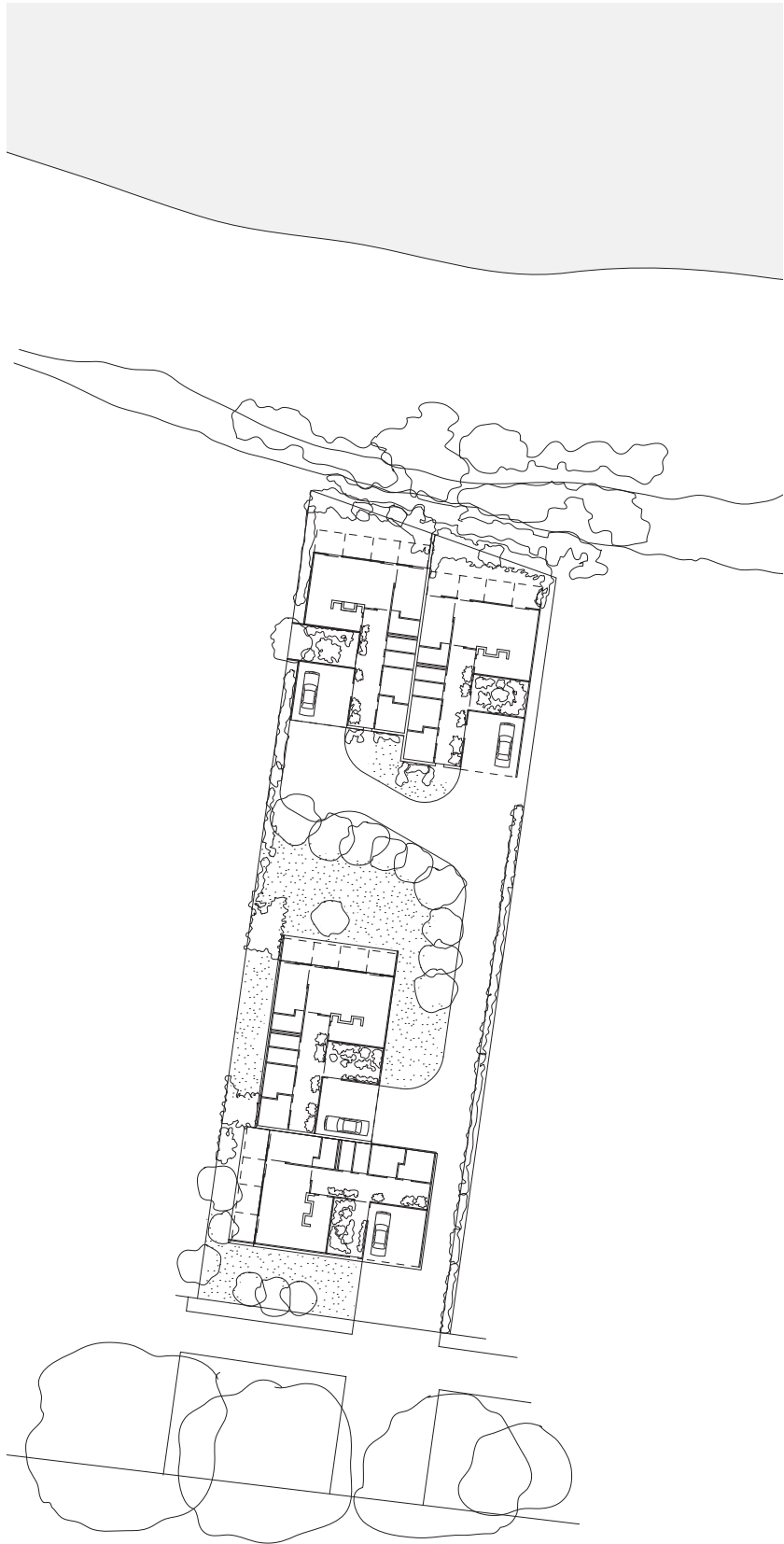


Mauro Baracco



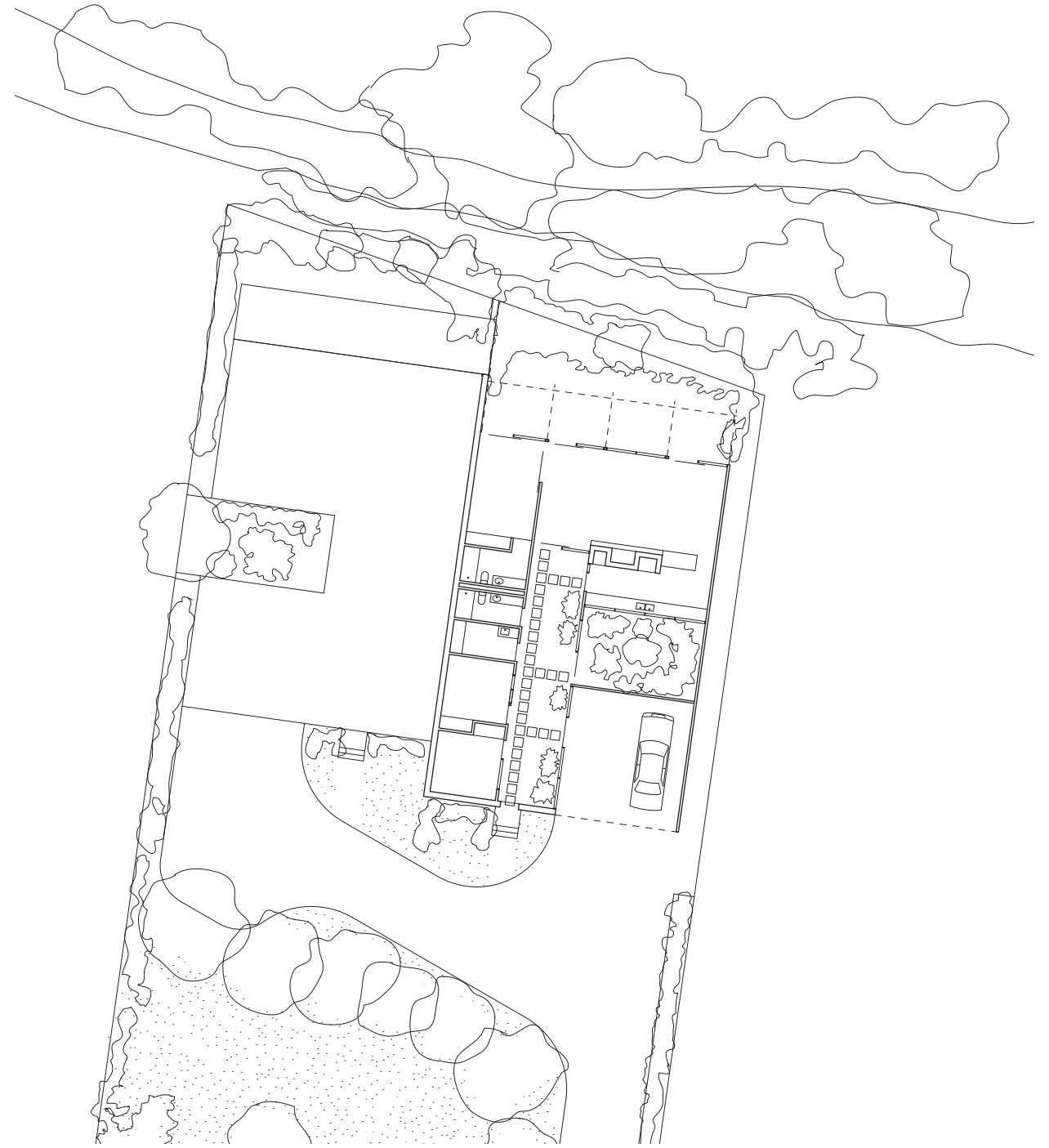
Mauro Baracco

- 1 This project is illustrated through various photos and drawings: some of these are focussed on the houses as a group, others are focussed on the documentation of a single house. When the drawings illustrate a singular house, it is the one located in the north-east corner (plan, p. 421; section, p. 422, bottom; axonometric views, p. 423). Out of the three large original photos by Mark Strizic, two show the back front of the houses along the north edge of the block (the two houses together, p. 417; the house in the north-east corner, p. 427, top) and one shows an interior view of the house in the north-west corner (p. 426, top). One more original photo (by Peter Wille) shows the façade of the house located in the centre of the block, with the south house in the background (p. 419, top). The remaining photos document the current conditions – they all relate to the house located in the north-west corner (including the image of the view of the bay from the veranda in the back outdoor space, p. 427, bottom right), except for the one that shows the house along the south boundary from the road (p. 419, middle)
- 2 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 60
- 3 Robin Boyd discusses "variety within unity" in *The Puzzle of Architecture*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965, pp. 142-145, where this notion is investigated through a comparison between different modernist approaches. This concept is also discussed earlier in this thesis as related to Domain Park Flats, see text, p. 269
- 4 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, op. cit., p. 60
- 5 The interrelation between the concepts of "space", "place" and "things in their belonging together" are discussed earlier in this thesis, referring to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. According to the German philosopher, "Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things in their belonging together... We would have to learn to recognize that things themselves are places and do not merely belong to a place. In this case, we would be obliged for a long time to come to accept an estranging state of affairs: Place is not located in a pre-given space, after the manner of physical-technological space"; Martin Heidegger, 'Art and Space' (original ed., *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969), in Neil Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 123



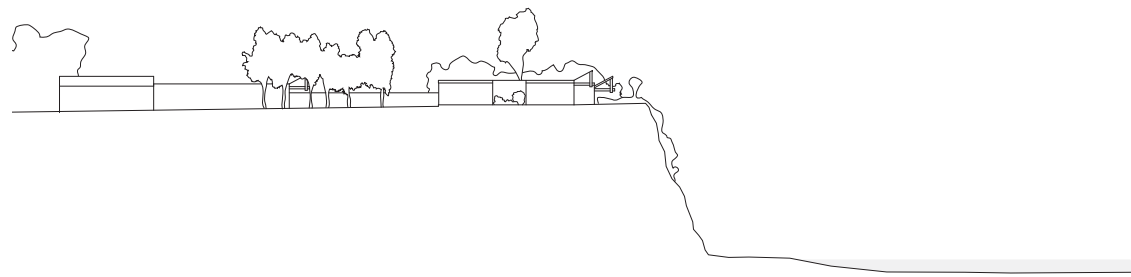
1:750

420

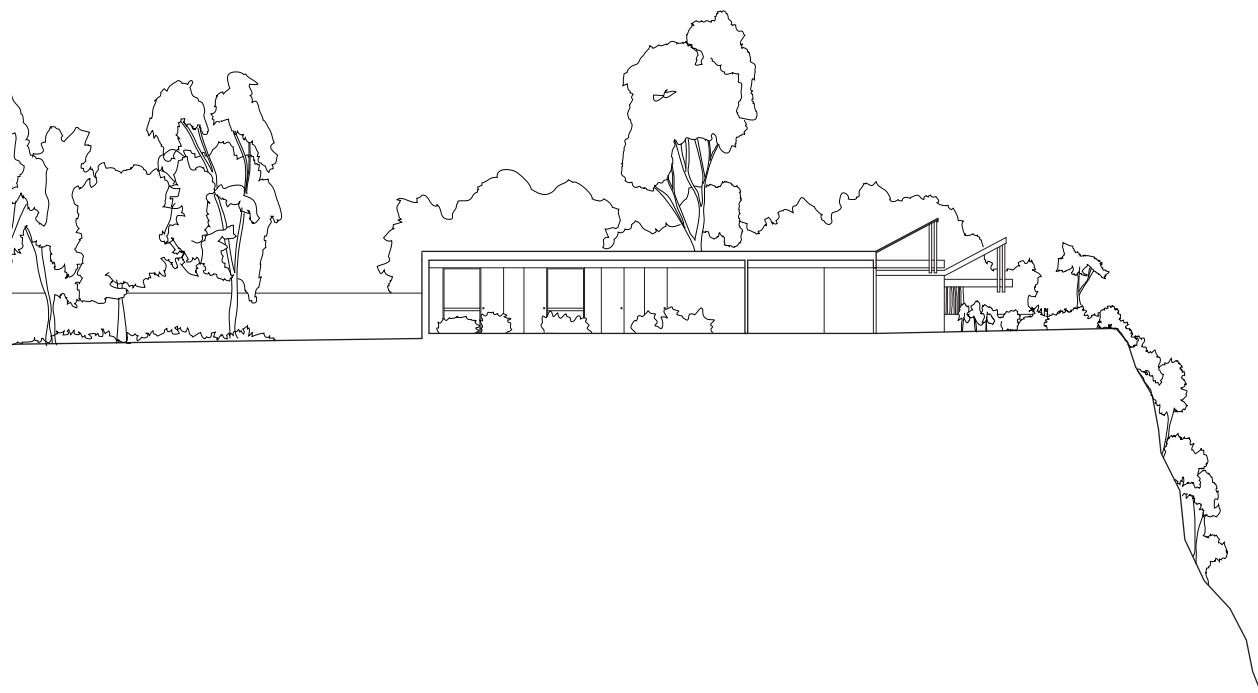


1:300

421

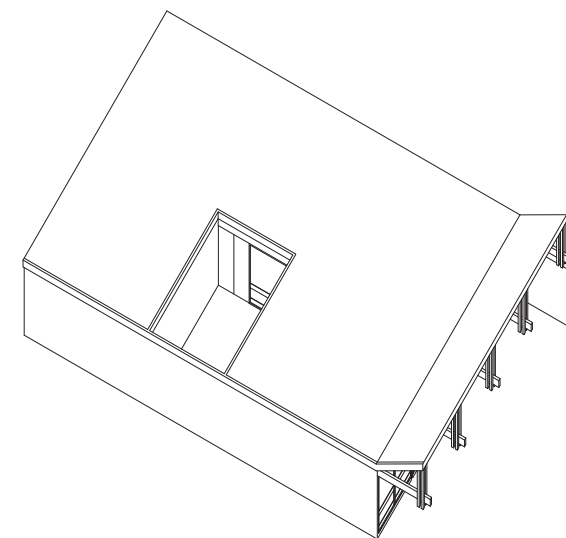
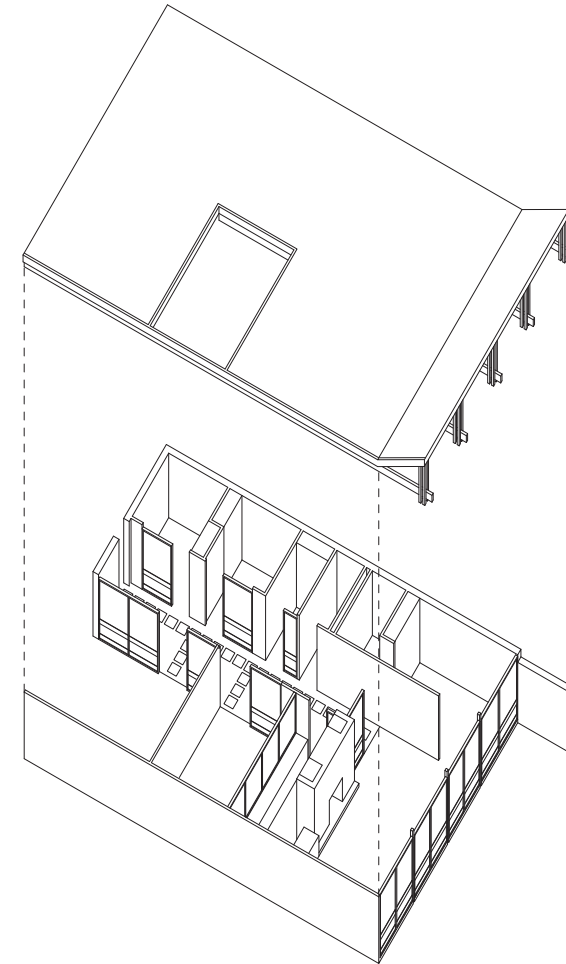


1:1000

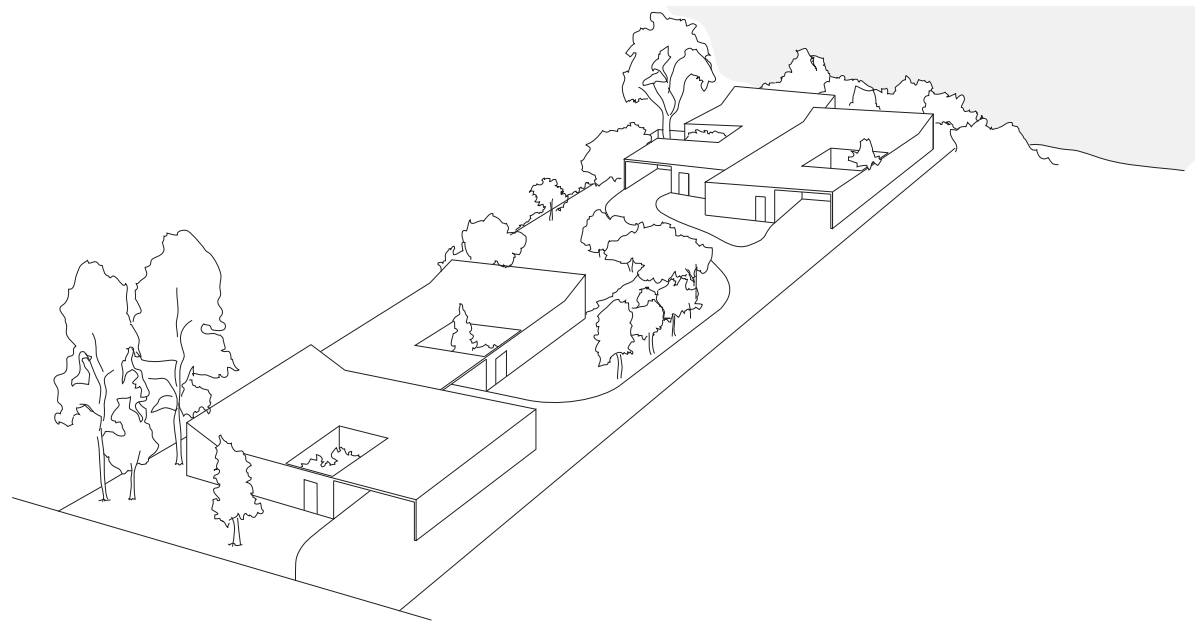
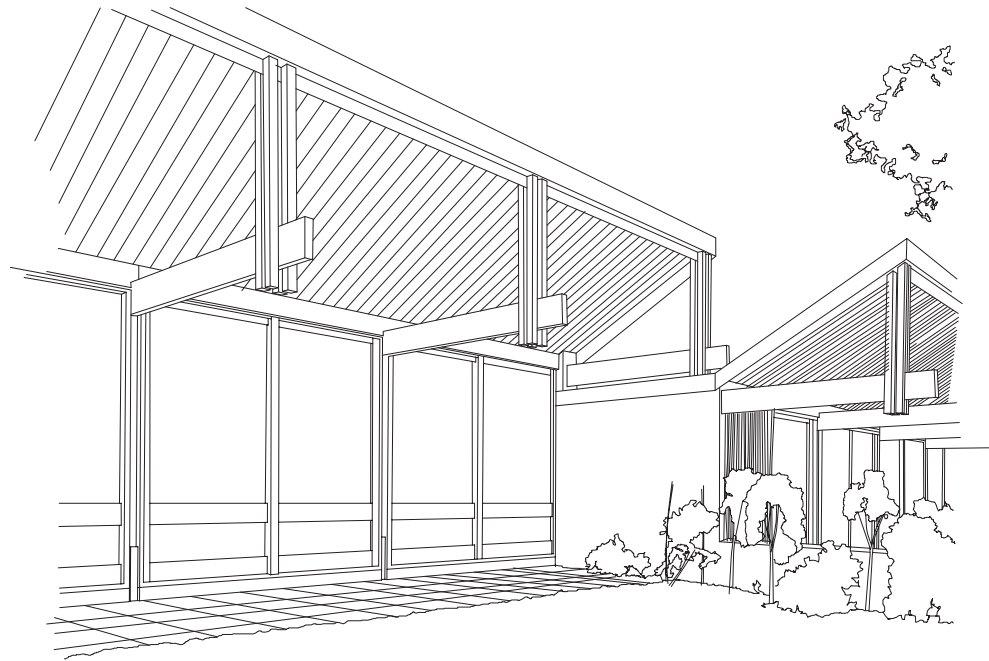


1:300

422



423





Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Milne House
1966 – 1970



Mark Strizic



1:10 000

The Milne House is in Melbourne's inner suburb of Toorak, 7 kilometres from the city. The block, rectangular in shape and considerably smaller in comparison to the typical blocks of this same area, has long sides aligned to a busy thoroughfare. In response to this existing situation, the project proposes a rather dense occupation of the lot through a building comprised of several parts. More markedly pushed towards the west side of the block, the building introverts itself in relation to the surrounding urban world, confronting it with a collection of blank volumes – a combination of shed-like forms, each of them with its own individual roof.

The need to accommodate a rather large family has also certainly conditioned Boyd towards the design of a building that according to Philip Goad looks like a “collected shed roof house...as an agglomeration of discrete forms”.¹ All these forms and volumes co-participate to the whole, revealing themselves as individual elements of a larger ‘castle-like’ world. Like a typical castle, this house mysteriously and impenetrably stands towards the external streetscape with its lumpish blank pointy blocks, greatly opening itself inside through a series of interior open spaces that reciprocally leak into each other, and releasing its own introverted inscrutability through large windows and glazed walls that face the internal landscape and the central courtyard.

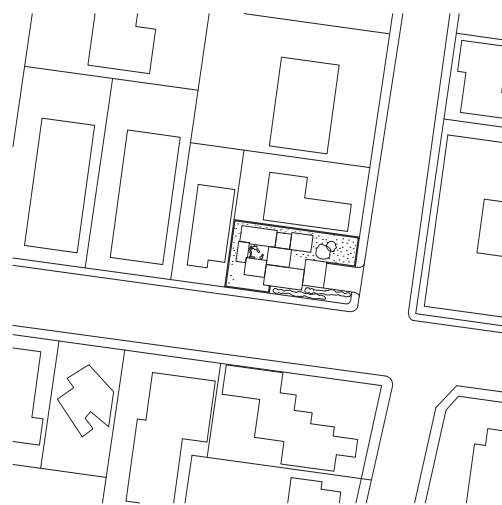
Boyd skilfully embraces the gentle sloping ground of the existing site and pushes this condition even further, arranging a combination of multiple split-level spaces. The result is a rather intricate house with many rooms and areas located on four different levels as parts combined in apparently separate volumes, yet in reality connected in plan along a continuous circulation that loops around an internal courtyard.

On the entry level are located the main external spaces (garden on north-east corner; garage on the south-east corner and adjacent driveway; internal courtyard), the main double bedroom with ensuite and walk-in-robe area, one of the three single bedrooms, and the family bathroom.

Above the entry level, five steps further up, the house accommodates the kitchen, a family room and a dining area; the last two rooms, connected by a sliding door, overlook respectively the entry and living area from a translucent balustrade.

Below the entry level, five steps down, is the living room mentioned in the previous passage as well as another single bedroom; the former is located on the south side of the house and the latter is part of the north wing, accessible from a platform spanning between two flights of steps along the corridor.

The lowest level of the house is located five more steps further down. In addition to the third single bedroom placed at the far end of the north wing, it includes a cellar and laundry room (under the entry area and family room), a narrow and high studio space at the western end which effectively acts as the connecting



1:2000

element – the link enabling the continuity of the loop – between the south and north wings of the house, and two large flexible spaces for playing and games activities. The more enclosed of these two spaces, immediately below the kitchen, receives light from a slit window that runs on the top edge of the internal wall, in correspondence of the bottom edge of the courtyard's south wall. Both these rumpus rooms are directly related, through glazed doors, to an outdoor backyard space that is located in the south-west corner of the block, still on the lowest level of this house.

This layout allows separation of activities – between children and adults, but also between night and day uses – without hindering the inherent sense of spatial interconnection and continuity that is provided by the uninterrupted circulation flow and the high proportions of many situations – a distinctive sense of vertical expansion is perceivable not only along the stepped-level corridor distributing the bedrooms and throughout the entry/family and dining/living/playing split-level areas, but also in the one-level kitchen, main bedroom and lowest level studio areas. Through this diffused sense of internal spatial verticality, which fluidly links and correlates the various different levels, the house confirms itself as a whole, in spite of both the labyrinthine nature of the intricate layout of its own plan and the apparent individuality of its own scattered volumes.

The white colour all over the bricks of this house – inside and outside – is a further confirmation of Boyd's inclination towards continuity, although this abstract – somehow unfinished and ghostly – effect of whiteness seems rather a means to speculate on the sense of ambiguity that essentially informs both the process and the possibility to reach an absolute level of continuity. As ambiguous as the blank whiteness of its look, also many of its interiors are not enclosed or determined rooms, but rather flexible spaces for circulation and inhabitation at the same time. The large windows that visually connect these ambiguous spaces to the inside world counterbalance the strong sense of external inaccessibility, opening the house and contributing to closely interrelate its own spaces. The internal courtyard is an extra relational ‘open room’ – it is no coincidence that its dimensions are pretty much the same of the living areas around it. Long slit windows on the top edge of some of the individual volumes, immediately under the roofline, not only allow extra light, but also and essentially capture the sky, underlining once more the spatial verticality of this house and providing a horizon which lies well beyond the rather internalised world of this castle-like project.

The natural vegetation that has been profusely growing over the blank walls has perhaps sweetened the harshness of this house but not certainly weakened its own sense of impenetrability, now expressed through the generous provision of a pleasant green urban presence for the busy road.

1 Philip Goad, ‘Robin Boyd and the design of the house 1959 – 1971. New Eclecticism: Ethic and Aesthetic’, *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, p. 178



Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



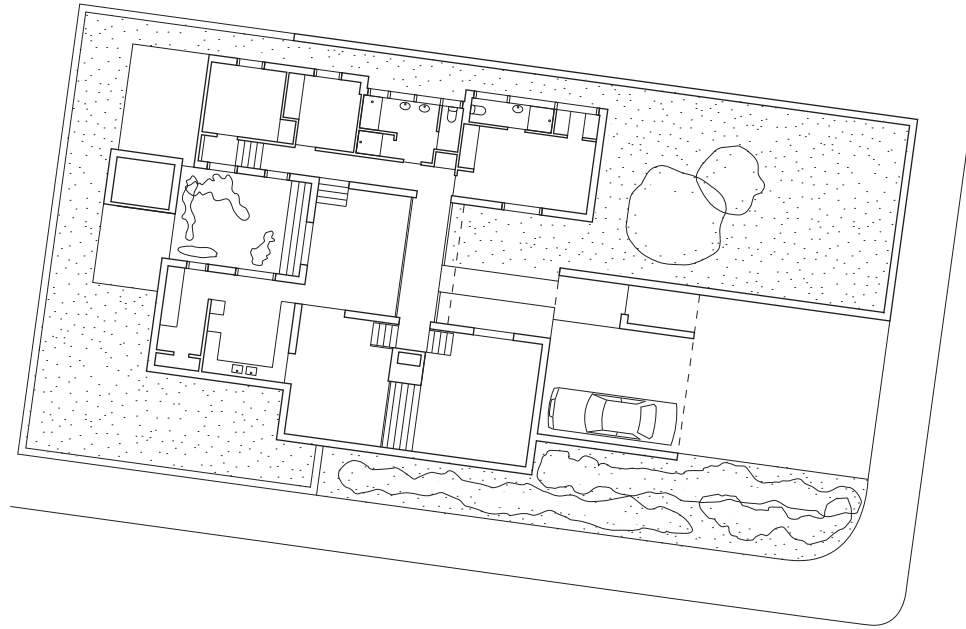
Peter Wille, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria



Mark Strizic

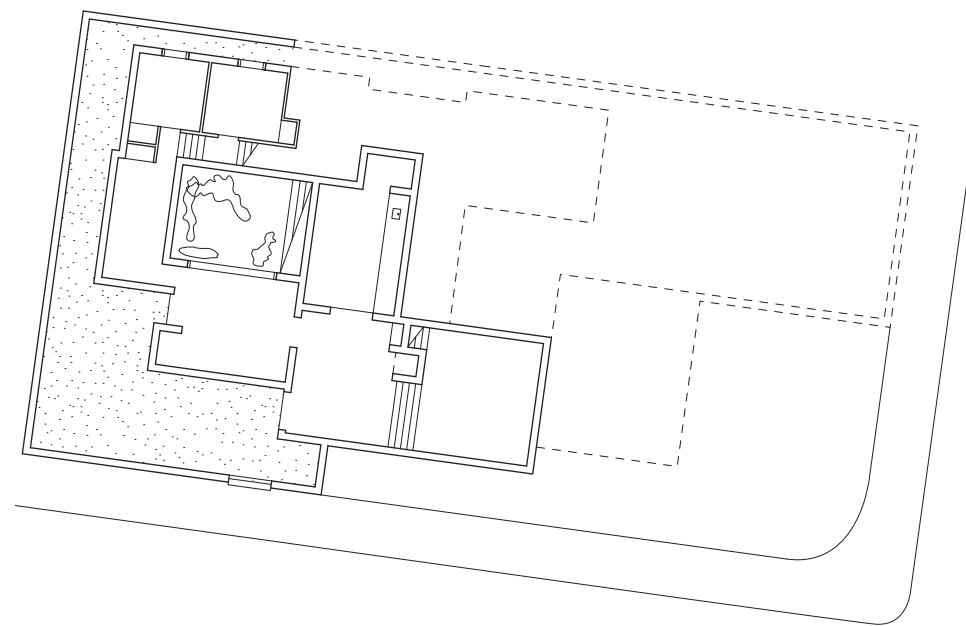


Mauro Baracco

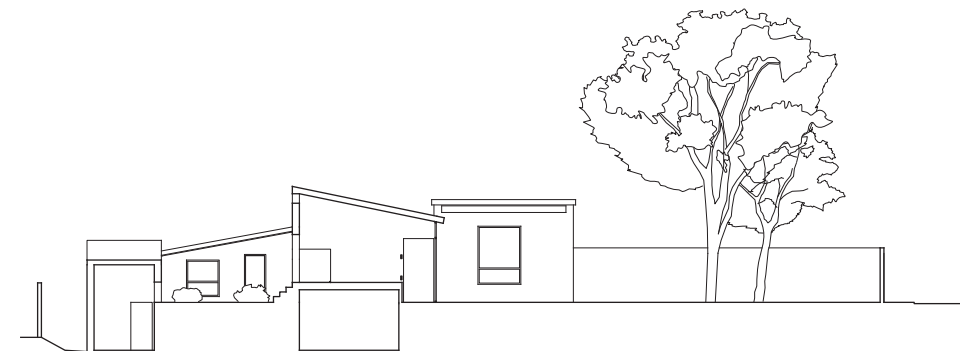
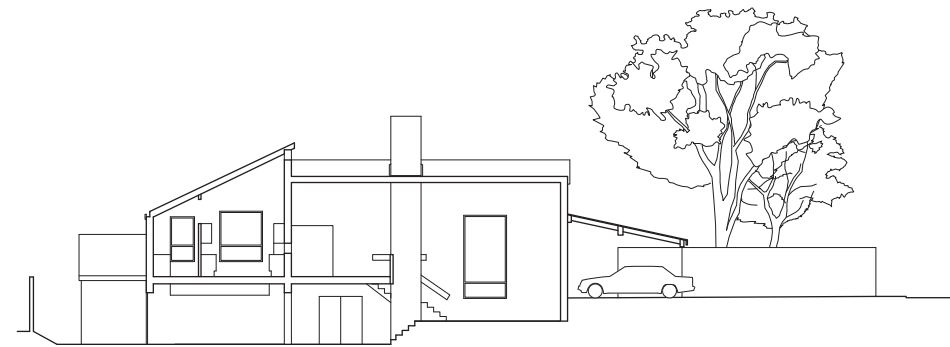


1:300

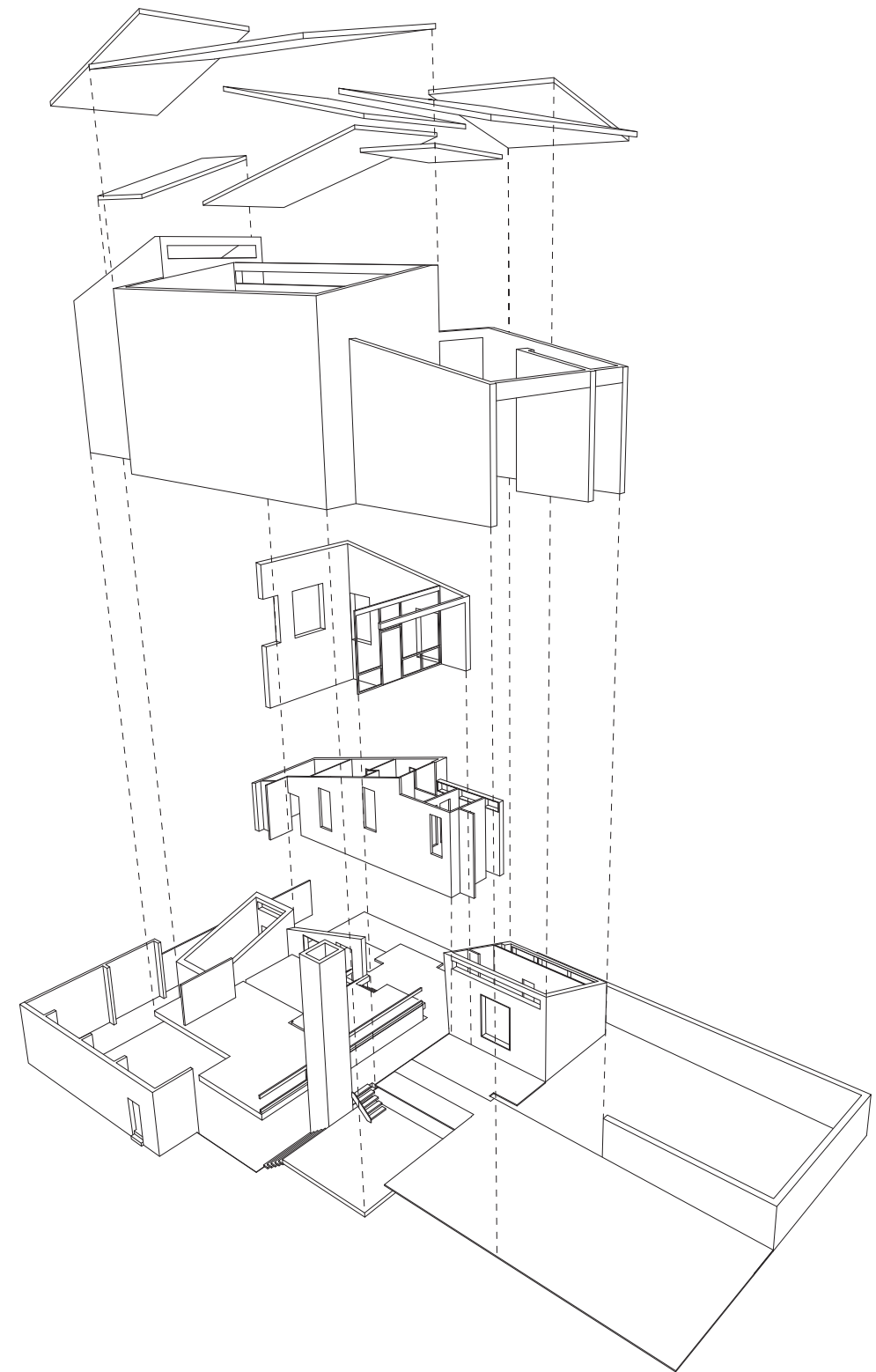
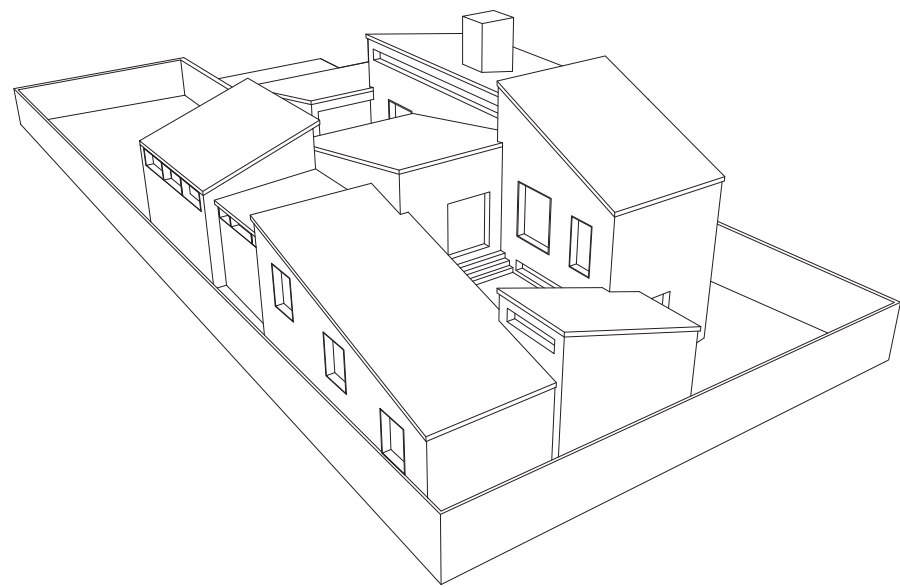
432

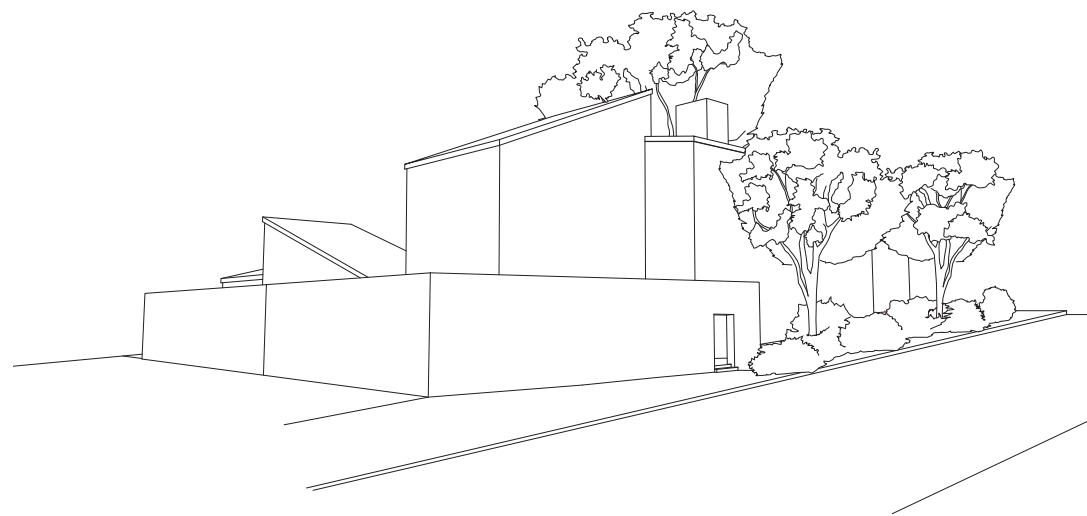
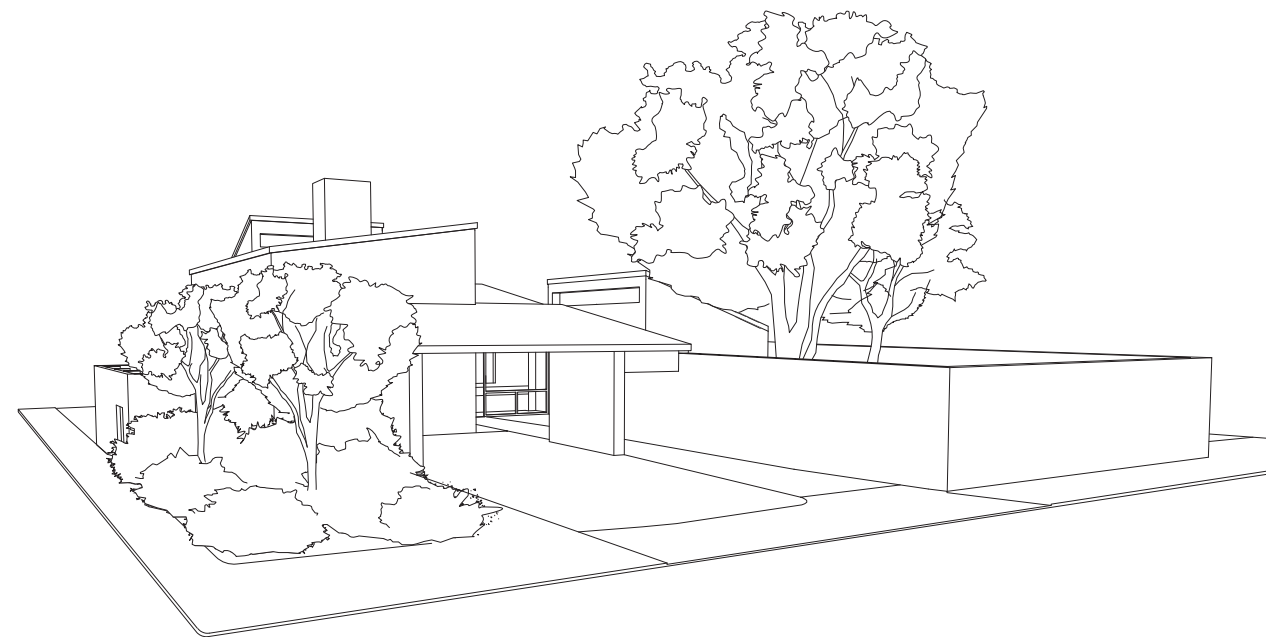
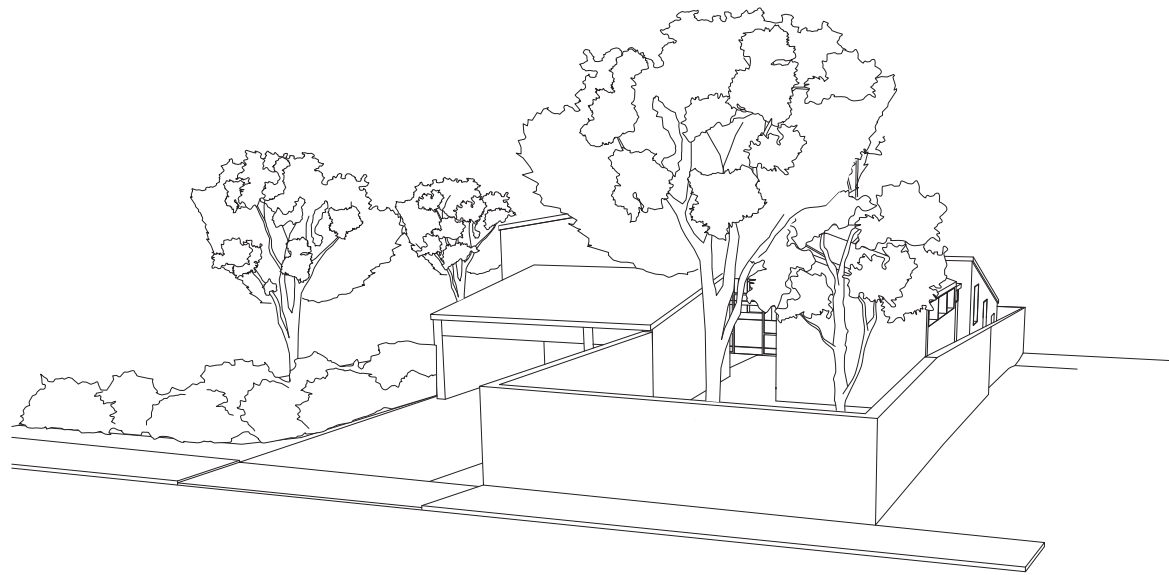


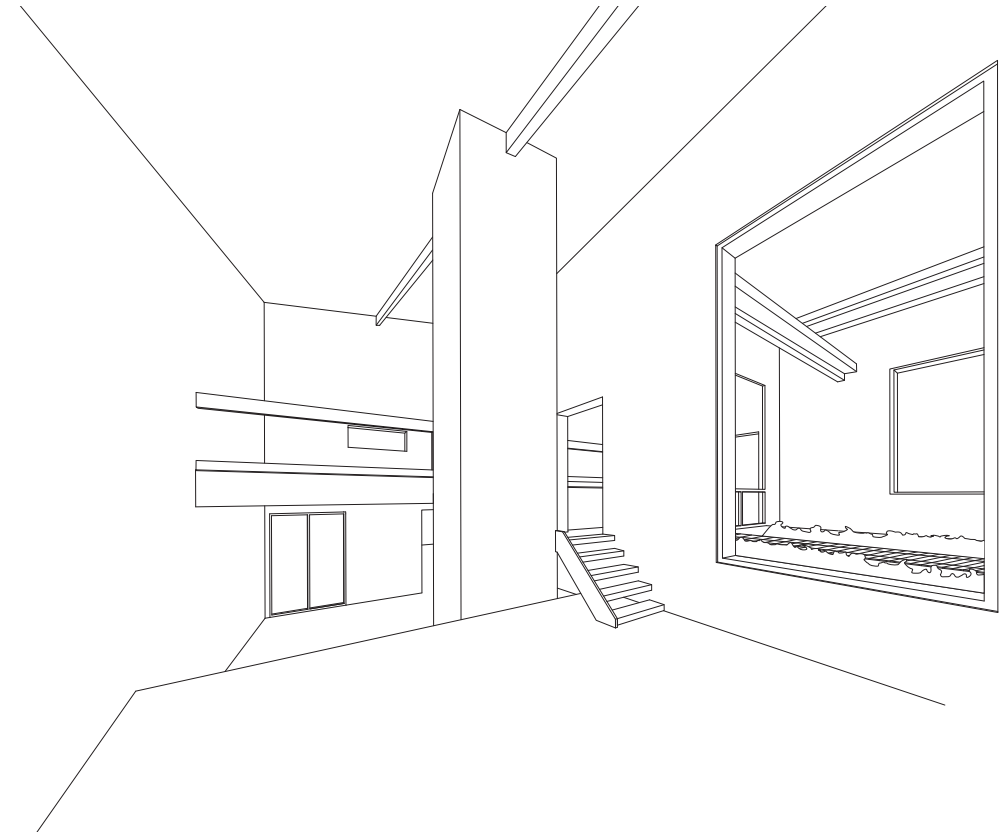
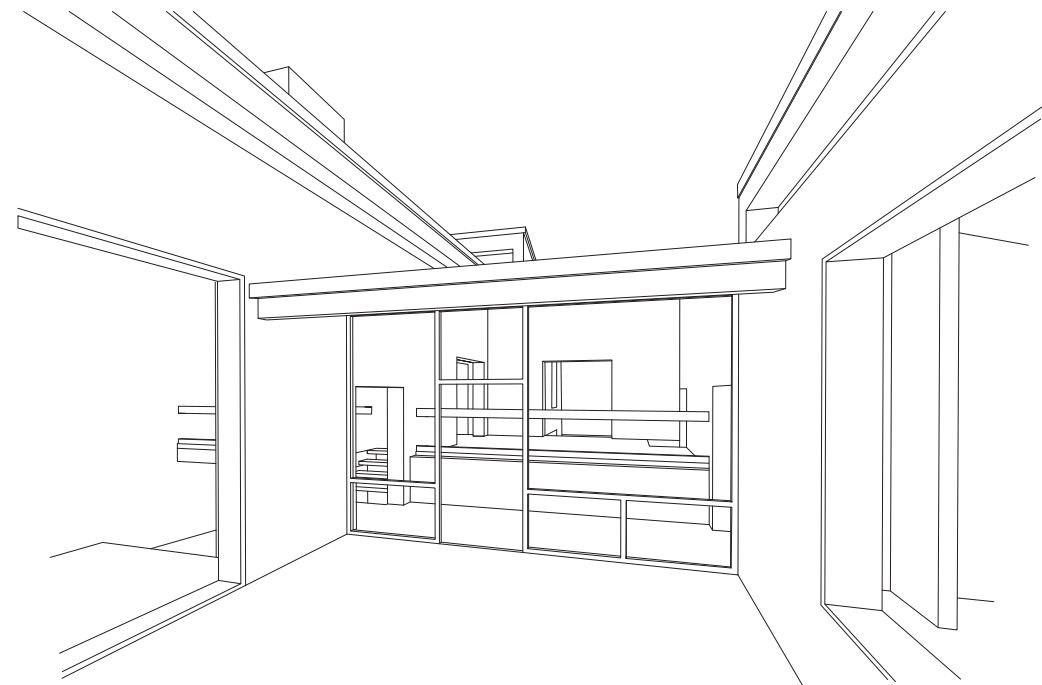
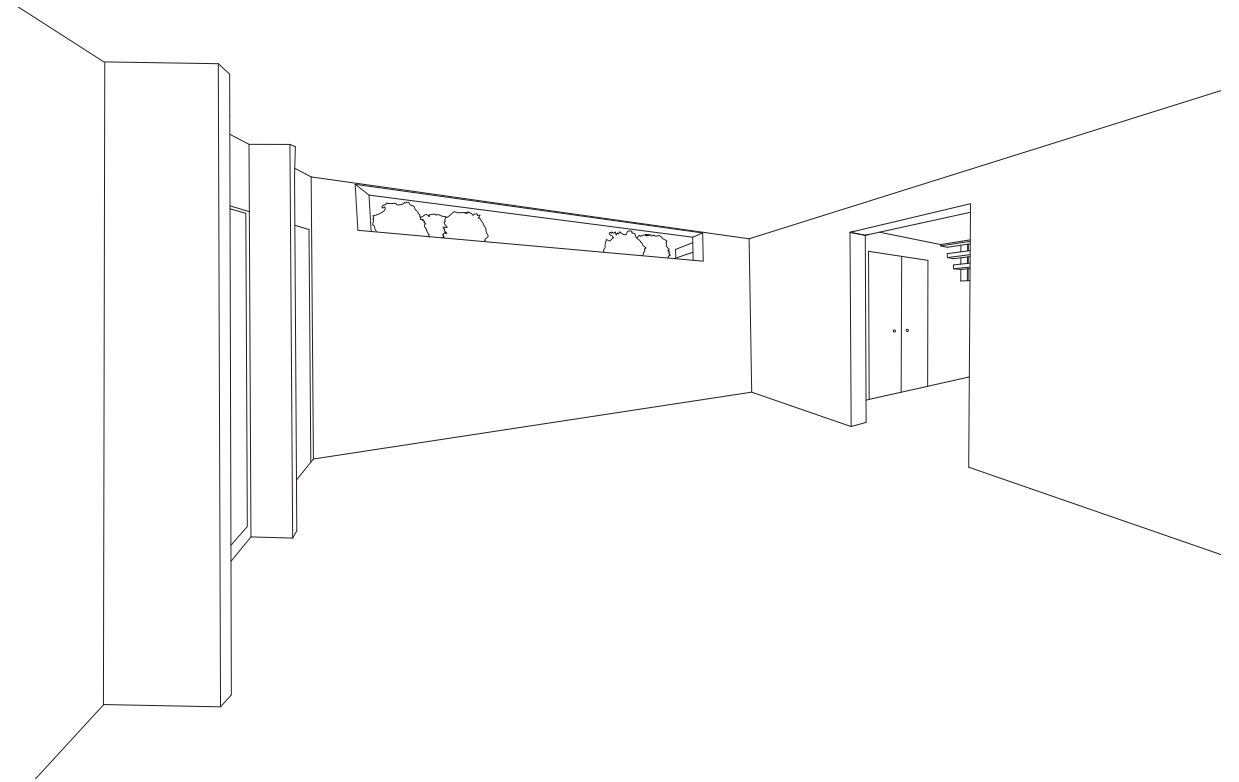
1:300



433









Mark Strizic



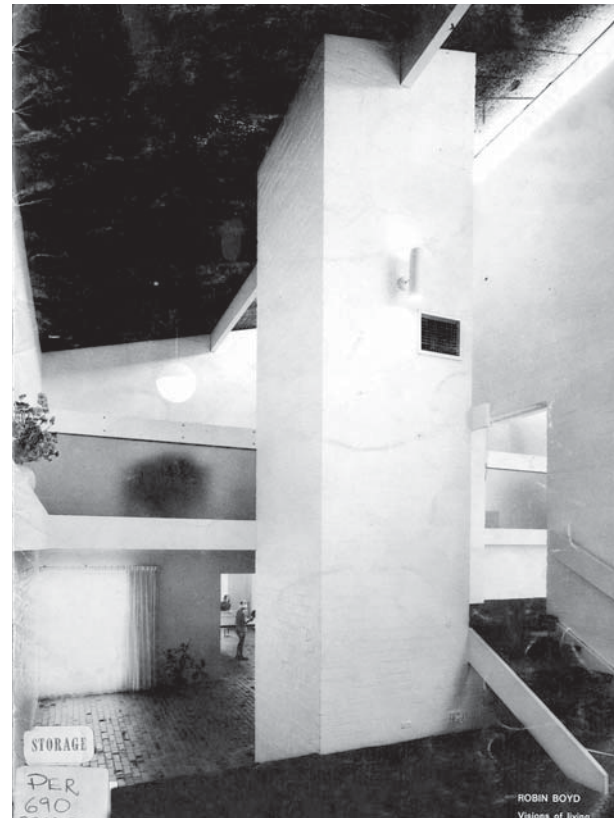
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic (*Building Ideas*, vol. 5, no. 5, March 1973)



Bennison MacKinnon Real Estate



Mauro Baracco

McClune House
1967 – 1968



Mark Strizic



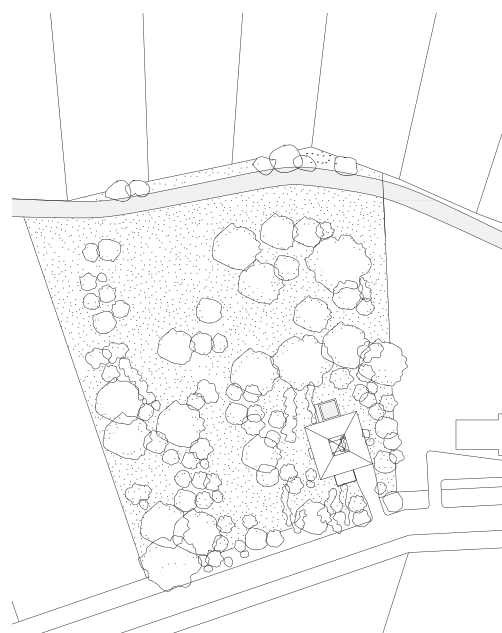
1:10 000

The McClune House is located in south Frankston, approximately 45 kilometres from Melbourne's city area. Sited a couple of kilometres inland from the coast, equidistant from Frankston pier and adjacent foreshore strip on its north, and Pelican Point on its west – the latter is the site of Boyd's Myer House demolished in the mid 1950s – the house is placed in the south-east corner of a block that slopes towards a creek as the north boundary edge. A steep gully parallel to the west façade of the house runs from south to north, approximately cutting through the middle of the block.

The entire site is densely vegetated. The house, although accommodated in a clearing, completely embraces this situation in many different aspects. Unobtrusively withdrawn in a corner of the block, and sensitively occupying a marginal portion of the existing bushy land, the building requires no more than a short and relatively unintrusive link to the street – an undisclosed driveway that is edged and somehow hidden by the surrounding trees and vegetation. Avoiding any picturesque temptation to counteractively relate to the density of the existing natural landscape through the dissemination of distinct volumes or the scattering of individual forms, the house incorporates all its spaces under the presence of a unifying roof, in a form of a compact whole; as such, as a dense and lumpish architecture – a thick growth within a thick bush – it intrinsically engages with the density of the surrounding natural environment. The gentle inclination and low silhouette of the four pitched roof – described by Boyd as "a big parasol"¹ – enables the building to lie discreetly tucked into the nature, openly disposed to be continuously touched, eroded, 'compromised' by the surrounding vegetation.

A generous internal garden court, sheltered on all four sides by continuous translucent fibreglass eaves and exposed to the sky by means of a central square opening, refers to and embraces the surrounding nature as an essential and intrinsic quality of the site; somehow 'pulled inside' this indoor/outdoor space reminiscent of a Roman atrium, the vegetation is 'domesticated' in garden beds that are distributed around and between intersecting brick pathways. This central court is literally a threshold, a transitional space that provides entry to the house and absorbs crisscrossing shortcuts between the various domestic spaces around; it is of course "something more"² than this, well and truly echoing Boyd's passionate belief for the extra qualities that would result from the involvement of architects into the design project: as an additional indoor/outdoor room – a greenhouse/sunroom – it shelters from the heat, wind and other excesses of nature, facilitating cooling and cross ventilation in conjunction with the raised roof, and offering protection from the unsettling 'indefiniteness' of the surrounding bush.

In addition to this central space, two smaller outdoor courts are similarly open to the sky and yet introverted in relation to their immediate surrounding landscape. Highly interiorized, they offer at once a sense of spatial expansion and private containment of their related interiors, preventing them, since effectively placed on the 'urban' edges of the house, from being exposed to the street and the neighbour's block and house that are respectively located on the south and east sides. The almost square south courtyard, although protruding from the street front, is essentially the 'backyard' of the house, an outdoor extension of the laundry area that accommodates the clothes line and all other facilities related to typical 'backyard activities'. The longer and narrower rectangular court on the east side provides the main double bedroom and adjacent bathroom and toilet with an outdoor area, allowing an external link between these three interior spaces.



1:2000

Adjacent to and physically between these two domestic areas comprised of indoor and outdoor spaces, the covered carport at the end of the driveway is similar in proportion, dimension and shape to the internal rooms of the house. It is indeed an 'open room', an open and yet defined space that provides shelter to the car but that also at the same time accommodates the main entry of the house. The entry door pushed into the corner works perfectly as a relational hinge to ambiguously separate and reciprocally link the outdoor/covered carport and the indoor/outdoor central atrium, the former as an informal preamble and the latter the 'official' introduction to the interior spaces.

Analogous in character and cornered position to the entry door, the small square vestibule at the diagonally opposite end of the garden court, is a transitional space that interconnects the circulation between the indoor/outdoor central atrium, the outdoor space on the north side, and the two different types of areas inside the house: day-time spaces (living room, dining room, kitchen, pantry and laundry) in the west and south wings, and more private and night-time rooms (study, one single and one main double bedroom, bathroom) in the north and east sides. The square presence and four-pitched shape of the roof provides the outdoor spaces along the house's external perimeter with a continuous veranda that changes in dimension and character accordingly to each specific situation: in addition to the carport and two smaller 'service' courtyards described above, the narrow and long west portico relates rather unassertively to the dense vegetation nearby, whereas the stepping back of the north façade, allowing room for a wider deck, confirms the intended exposure of this side to its natural and built landscape – this projection towards the bush and the creek down below is highlighted by the denounced extroversion of the north front, continuously clad, unlike the others, in floor-to-ceiling timber frame glazing, including two doors and some openable windows. An outdoor pool, never built, further contributes to make this site a clear moment of transition between the artificial and the natural; a world that provides favourably exposed outdoor activities embracing the indefinable openness of the bush; an informally constructed space that negotiates between the artificiality of the built landscape and the naturalness of the existing vegetation.

The materials and finishing consistently applied throughout reinforce this sense of mediation between the artificial and the natural. Both the internal and external lining of the walls in off-saw pressure-treated pine boards which have been stained grey, confers a quiet earthy expression to the house, somehow consolidating, together with the similar reticent presence of the greyness of the metallic roof, the soft milkiness of the fibreglass sheeting, and the creaminess of some brick floor areas inserted in the mute continuity of the concrete floor (later replaced by the current slate paving), the inclination to make the house somehow feel like an artificial lump of earth. The inorganic aspect of the walls, with an intriguing resemblance to petrified wood, and the running of the brick floor paving areas into the internalized garden court and the surrounding undomesticated bush, both outdoor worlds although distinctively different in character, make Boyd and us wonder, once again, about the possibility to set up clear boundaries in space.

1 Robin Boyd, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970, p. 105
 2 On the notion of the "something more", already discussed earlier in various passages of this thesis, see Robin Boyd, 'Living and Architecture', introduction to *Living in Australia*, op. cit., pp. 4-16



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

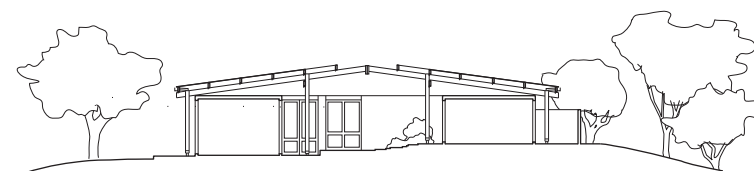


Mauro Baracco

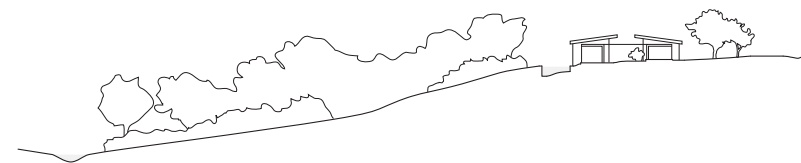


1:300

446

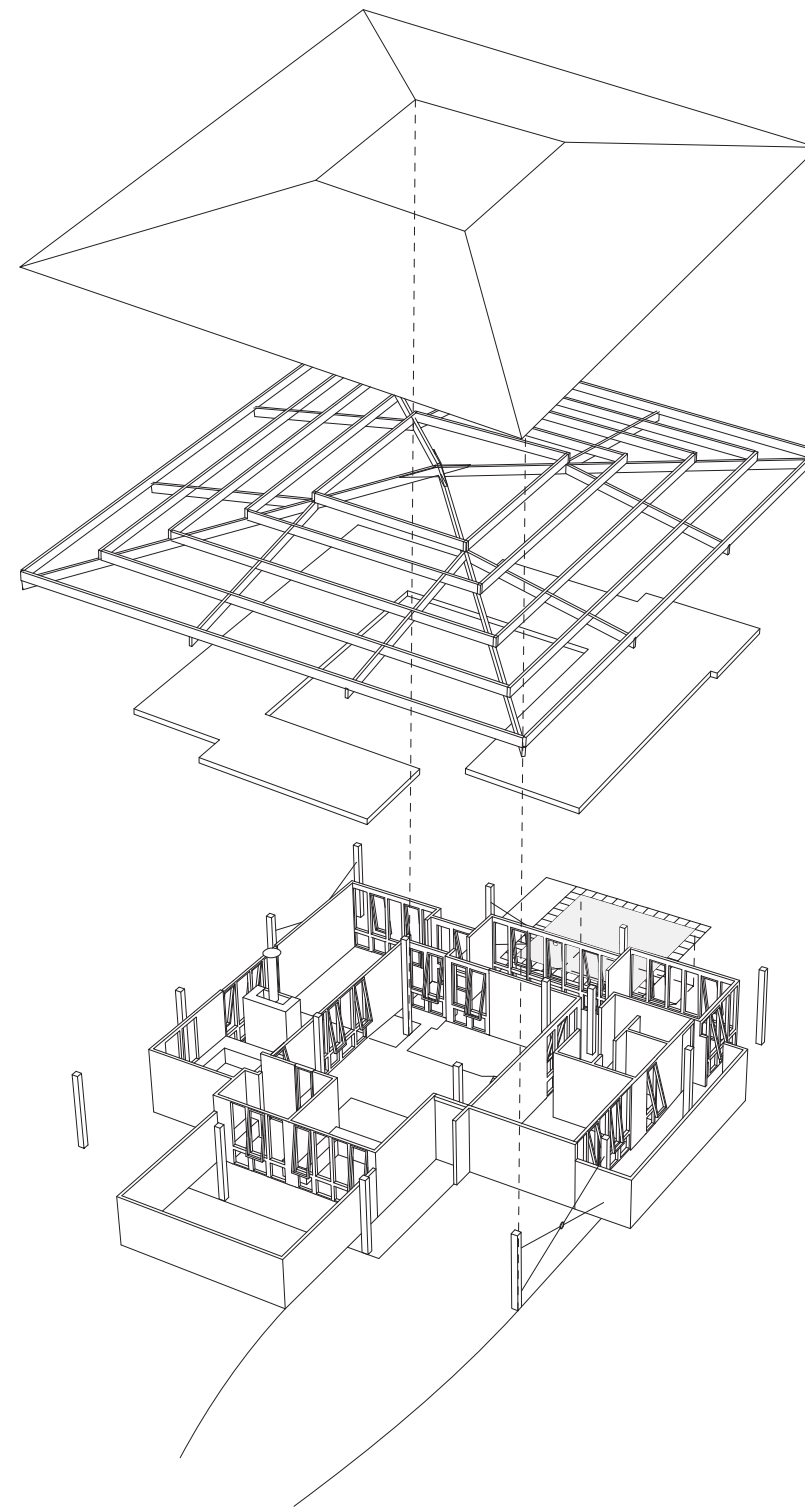
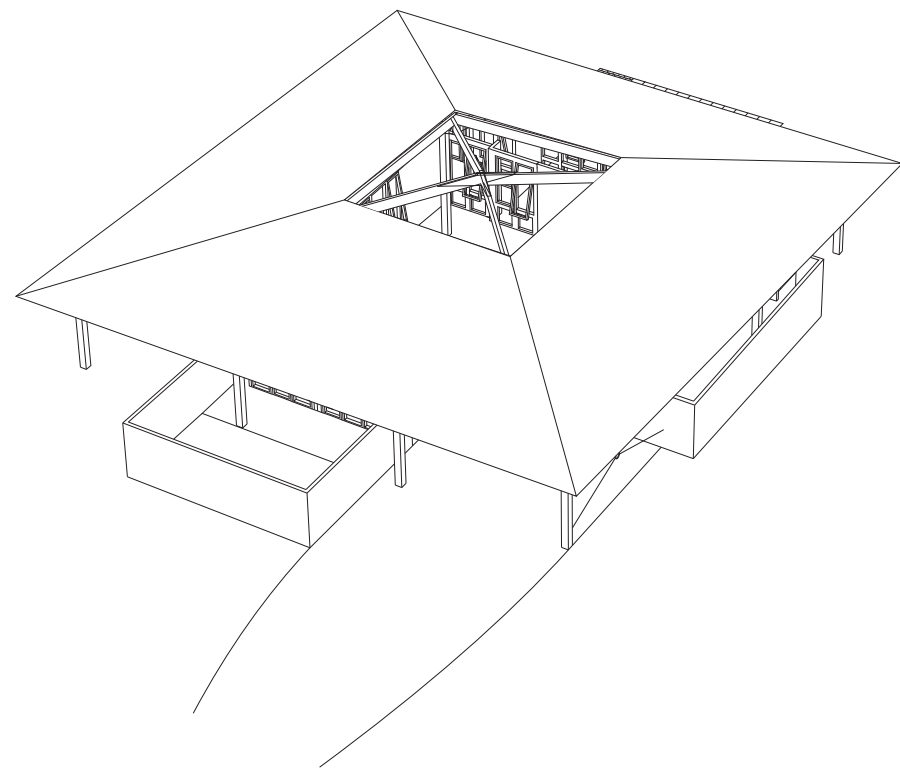


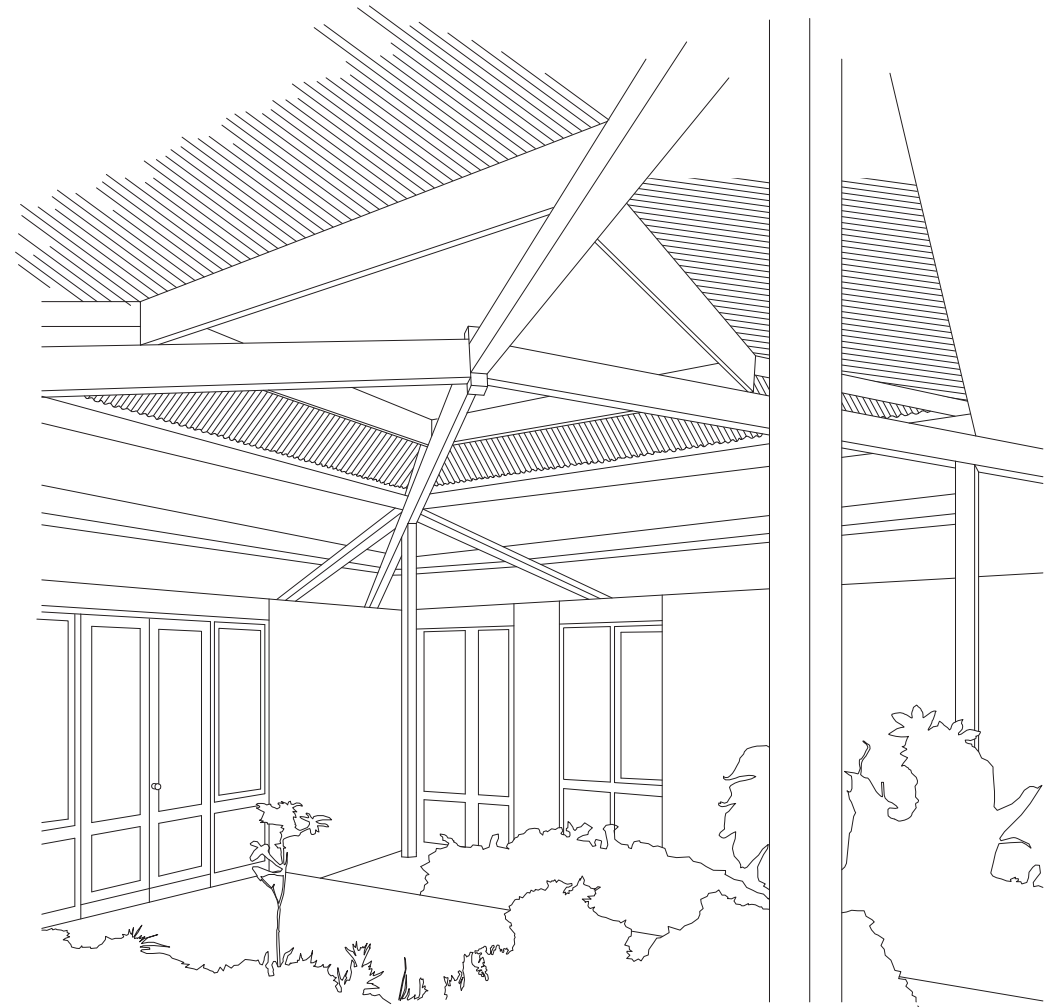
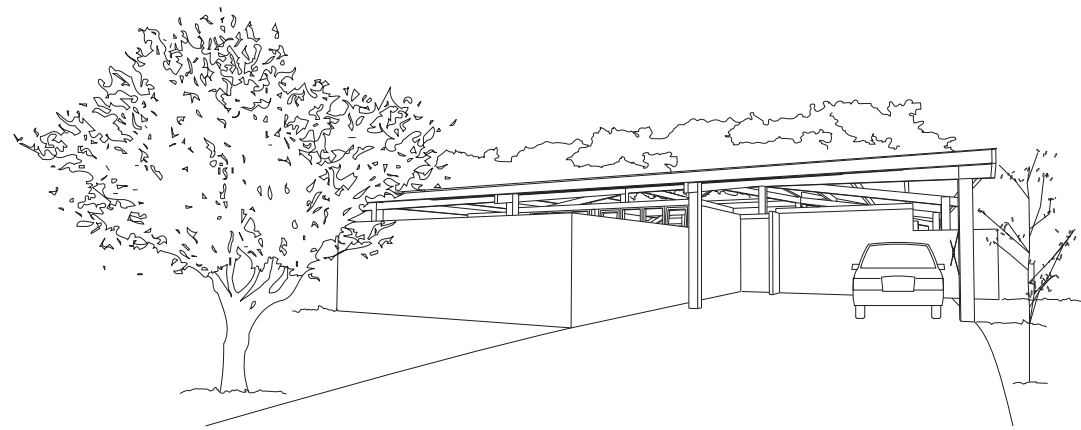
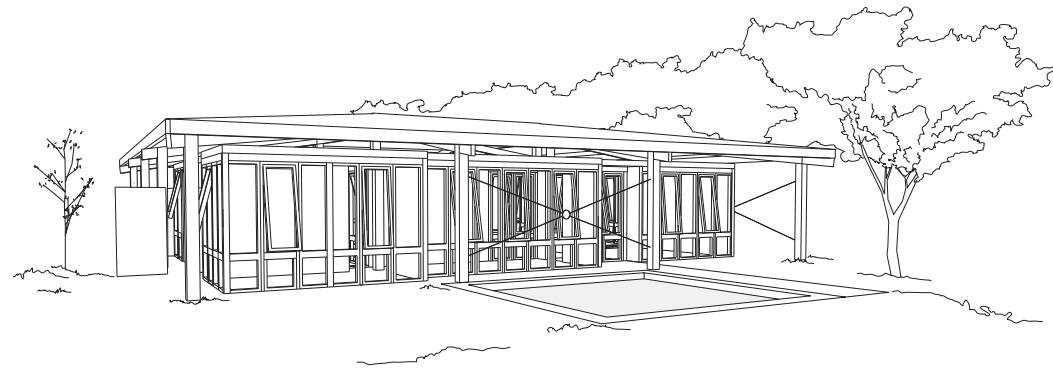
1:300



1:1000

447







Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mark Strizic



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

Featherston House
1967 – 1969



Aaron Pocock



1:10 000



1:2000

The house designed for Mary and Grant Featherston, two industrial designers, is located in Ivanhoe, an inner suburb of Melbourne. It is comprised of an open and boundless large central space containing the general living areas, and two volumes on its two sides to accommodate both some service rooms (a workshop, a kitchen, a family room, two guestrooms, a bathroom and dressing room) and an annexed two storey flat which was originally designed for Mary Featherston's parents.

Located on the threshold between the built fabric of south Ivanhoe and an open area comprised of a park reserve, a creek and the green fields of a school, this house instinctively absorbs the existing situation of its site, displaying a hard, solid and blank front to the mass and severity of the sloping edge below the road on the north-east suburban boundary, and opening itself to embrace the bushy landscape of the south-west open area through a 'softer' transparent glass wall.

The response to Mary and Grant's dream to live in 'the open' was to design a house with no individual and separate rooms. Provided, instead, with areas of inhabitation reciprocally interrelated by a pervasive sense of spatial continuity, the openness of this house carries at once the character of two different conditions – that of the big industrial shed and that of the covered outdoor space.

The former is further confirmed by the presence of a 'dumb' and unpretentious carport as the main façade of the house – as an introductory 'face' and volume to be traversed for entering the space of the domestic open plan core. Carrying the same width of this open plan core and from it separated by a green open buffer space, this carport anticipates the sense of openness and indivisibility that fluidly pervades the platforms of the studio, dining, living and bedroom areas. The informality of this arrangement – 'carport-shed' and 'house-shed' one after the other – is emblematic of the sense of formal indefiniteness and spatial indivisibility which characterise the reciprocal interrelation between the various areas of the warehouse-like core space.

The other sense of openness, mentioned above as an attribute of the condition of covered outdoor areas, is here visibly reflected in the presence of earth, plants and a continuous green ground-cover vegetation as the floor of this central domestic space. The various platforms, floating above and in between the internal garden, contribute to create an unseparated space which, differently from typically common conditions, is here never informed by a sense of hierarchy between architectural components; ground, mezzanine, upper floors, but also architectural and landscape presences and all façades on the perimeter, including the translucent roof, coexist and reciprocally contribute to the unlimited – thus ungraspable and incalculable – dimension of this continuous and endless space.

The quintessential nature of this project resides after all in the 'crude' directness, but also unselfish quietness, of its 'under-expressive' resolutions; in the 'dumb' simplicity, but also exquisite generosity, of its boundless, 'unfinished' and undetermined space; in the wholeness of its space and its profound critique towards the usual inclination to arrangements that conventionally consist of measurable individual volumes; in the continuous presence of both a day-light and day-life feeling and therefore in the sense of ambiguity between private and communal areas – a sense of ambiguity inherently related to the virtually infinite degree of flexibility which has effectively allowed the occupants of this house to continuously shift and change the original locations of different types of inhabitation, accordingly to the domestic situations and needs that have been constantly evolving in the life of the house. A swapping between

office, dining and living areas has been continuously affecting this house not only, in general, as a reflection of the generous and compelling sense of indeterminateness between its own 'private' and 'common' spaces, but also to address some specific situations that occurred in the life of this house: the arrival of computers in the working environment and the consequential necessity to locate them away from the glare of the glass walls; the sickness, in different moments, of some members of the family and the parallel temporary adaptation of this house into a place for serenely passing through such difficult times; the obsolescence of the workshop due to some changed conditions of the work activity, and the following transformation of this space into a kitchen; the conversion of the spaces located at the ground floor of the south-east wing, below the two storey annexed flat, into a more independent apartment for Mary and Grant's son.

The numerous variations in use provided by the indeterminateness of this house are the immediate reflection of a pervasive sense of potentiality. It is not certainly coincidental that in the same period of the design and conception of this project Boyd praised the floating platforms and the open plan of Frei Otto's German Pavilion for the 1967 International Expo' in Montreal – which he could visit while he was involved with the design and construction of the Australian Pavilion's interiors at the same exposition – as a "keen, brave and potential (space)... the design (of which) is, literally as well as figuratively, open-ended... it changes continuously and engagingly as the visitor walks among the exhibits on the many-stepped platforms".¹

The flexibility and potentiality of the Featherston House, analogously to the lightness and indeterminateness of Otto's 'tent' for the Montreal Expo' and many other works of this German architect, is the result of a level of simplicity based on the coexistence of density and understatement of form at once. These qualities allow this house to effectively act as an unassertive means not only for constant changes and events, but also for continuous forms of correlation between the architecture and its own site, situation, place. Symptomatically, the full-width and floor-to-ceiling south-west glass wall is not certainly a frame for 'possessing' the view, but rather a medium, a filter, through which indoor and outdoor landscapes – ground-cover inside and grass outside, floating internal platforms and swinging external tree branches – indivisibly coexist and reciprocally co-participate in the same situation.

Alison and Peter Smithson, whose architecture Boyd often refers to as characterised by a design approach that is empathetic to his own, listed, a few years after his death, a series of conditions that are distinctive of "The Canon of Conglomerate Ordering".² Intriguingly, although not surprisingly, the Featherston House could be perfectly described by a number of the qualities that the Smithsons list in their concept of a building of the Conglomerate Order:

"has a capacity to absorb spontaneous additions, subtractions, technical modifications without disturbing its sense of order, indeed such changes enhance it"... "has faces which are all equally considered... no back; no front; all faces are equally engaged with that lies before them; the roof is 'another face'"; "is an inextricable part of a larger fabric"; "is dominated by one material... the conglomerate's matrix"... "is lumpish and has weight".³

- 1 Robin Boyd, 'Germany', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 142, no. 846, August 1967, pp. 129, 135
- 2 Alison and Peter Smithson, *Italian Thoughts*, A. + P. Smithson, London (printed in Sweden), 1993, p. 62
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63



Mauro Baracco



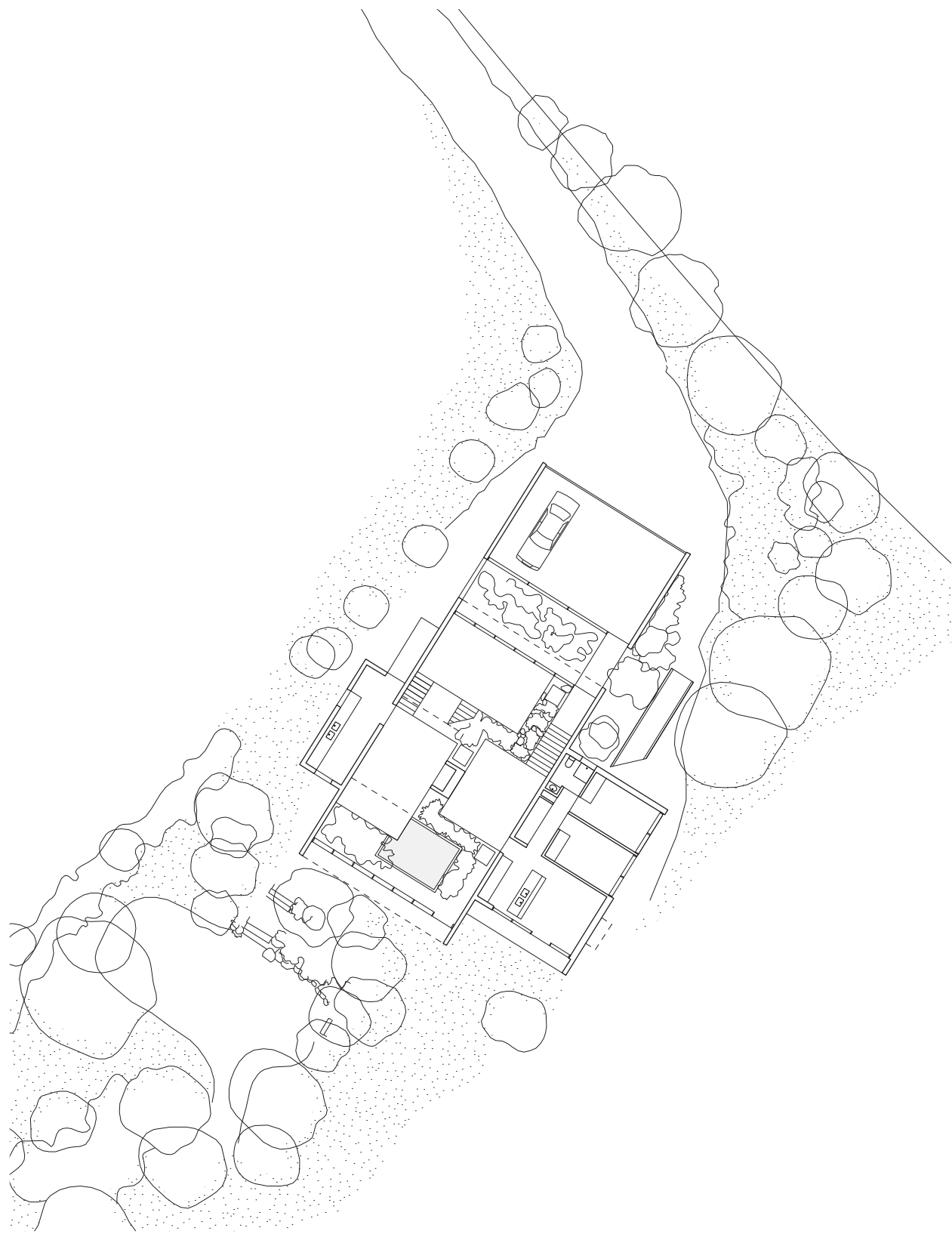
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

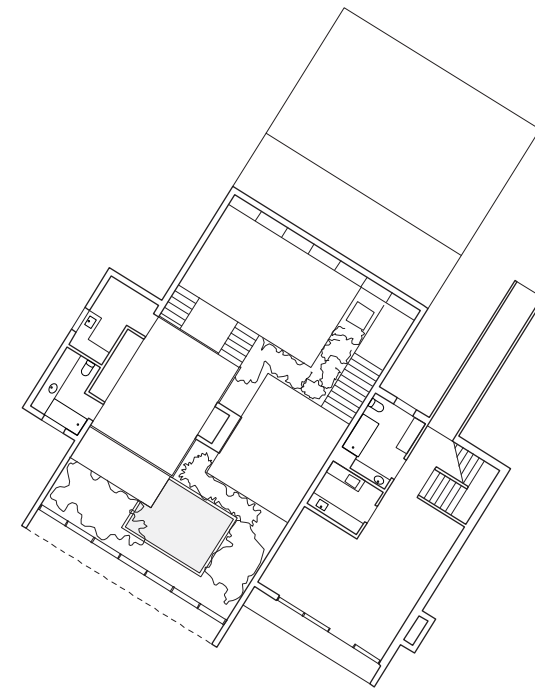
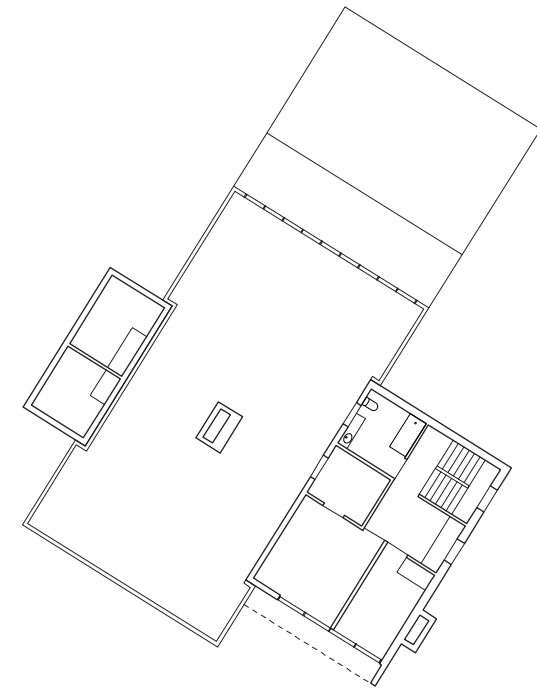


Aaron Pocock



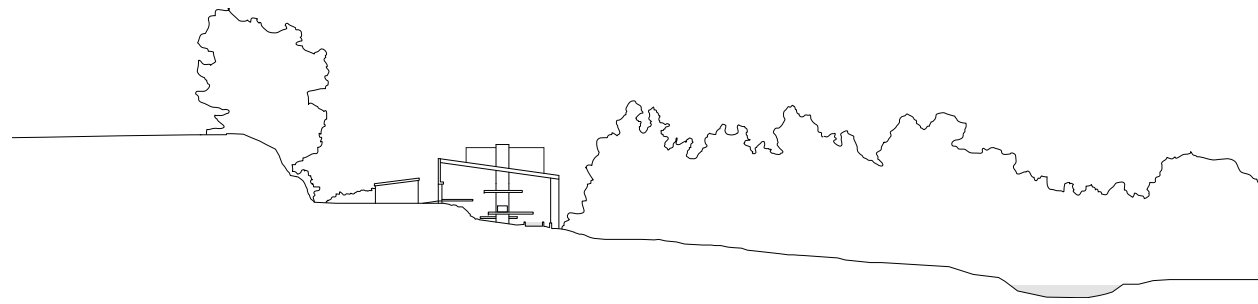
1:300

458

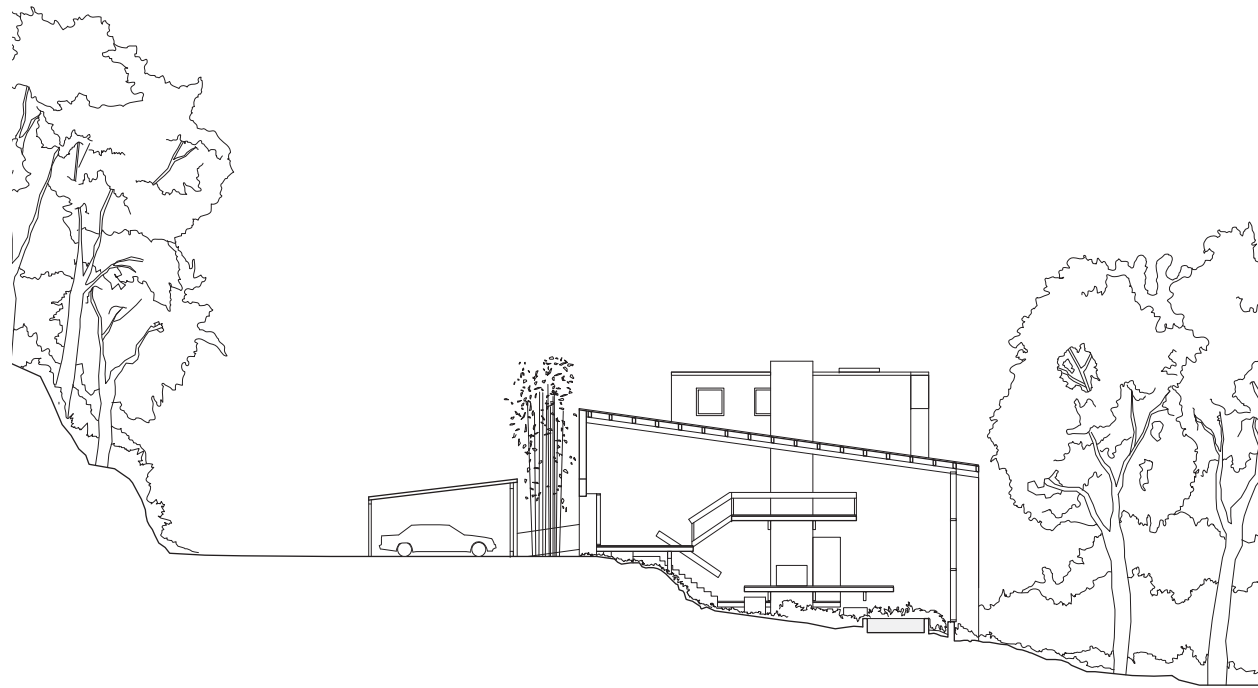


1:300

459

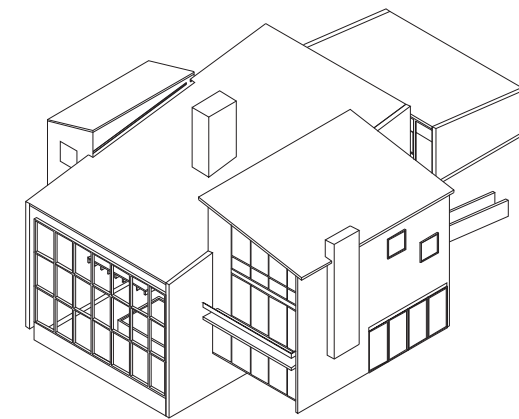
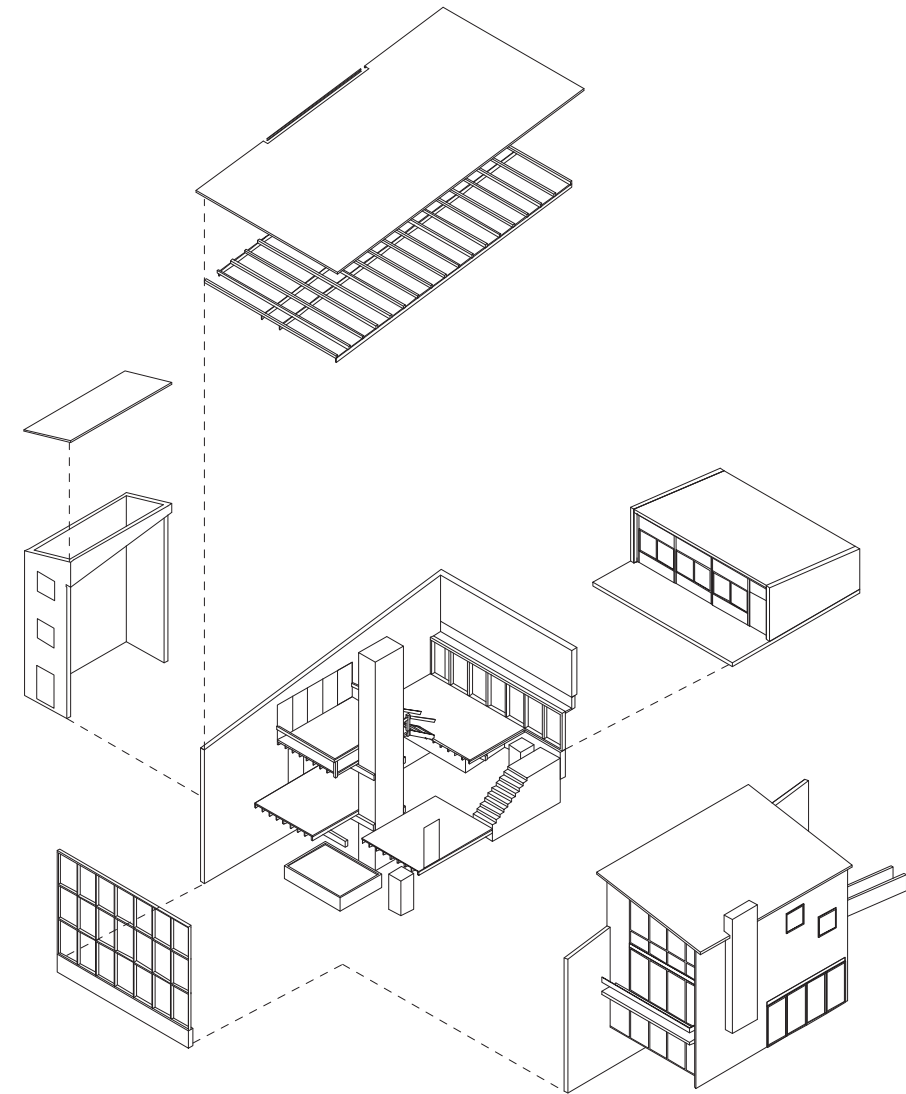


1:1000

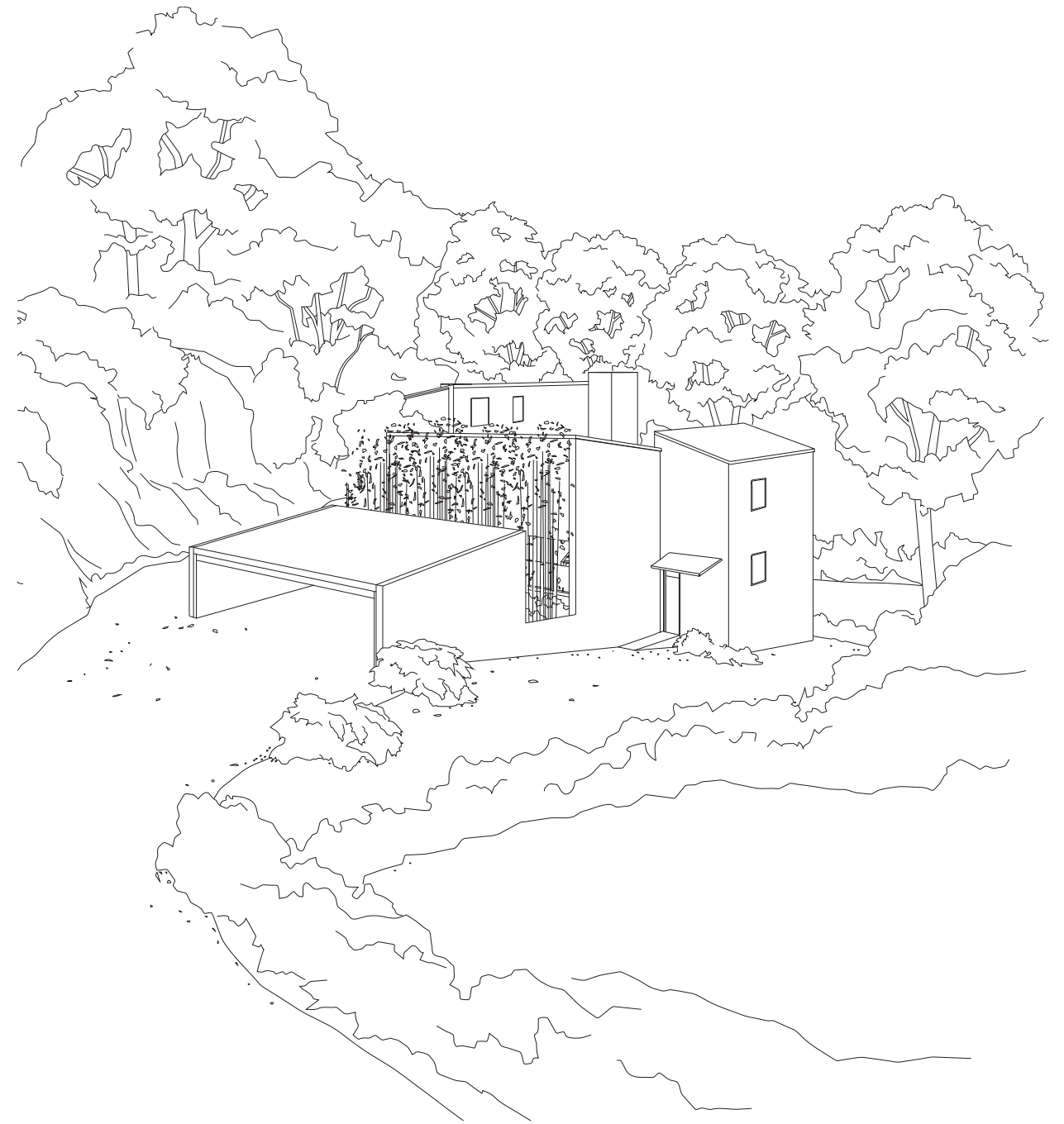


1:300

460



461





Mark Strizic



Aaron Pocock



Aaron Pocock



Mark Strizic



Mark Strizic



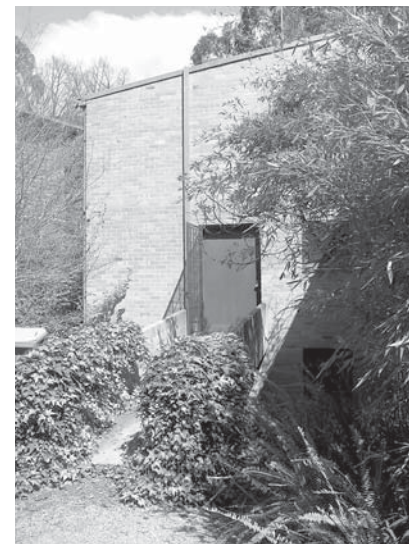
Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco

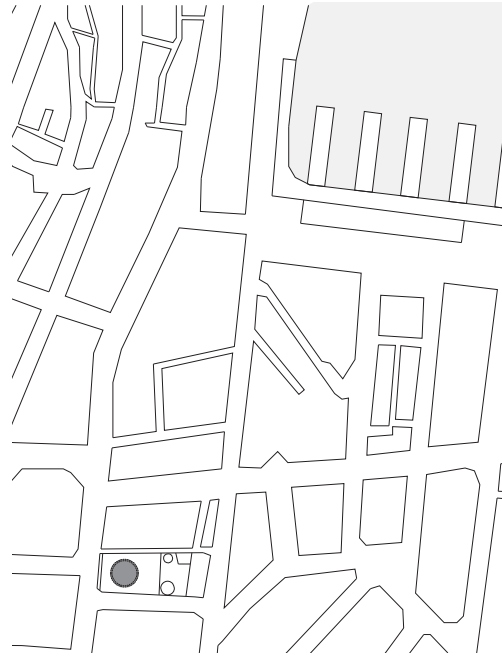


Mauro Baracco

'The First 200 Years' Exhibition
1968



Max Dupain (*Architect*, vol. 2, no. 4, July/August 1968)



1:10 000

In 1968 Boyd designed the installation for a temporary exhibition in Sydney called 'The First 200 Years'. This was organised by the Industrial Design Council of Australia with the intention of showing historical projects and future challenges related to the current state and traditions of Australian industrial design. The exhibition was accommodated along the entire circular first floor of the office tower that was completed in 1967 as part of architect Harry Seidler's project for Australia Square.

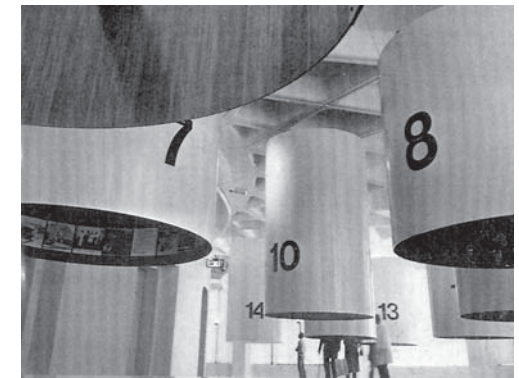
Twenty white cylinders were suspended from the ceiling of the existing indoor space, acting as exhibition 'rooms' dispersed throughout the floor. They were all marked by numbers that, rather large in size, became the only expressive feature of an installation which was described as "almost non-existent".¹ The various displayed material, including physical objects, models, prototypes and photographs, was grouped in thematic sections and exhibited inside the cylinders, hanging from their individual roofs and continuous circular walls. Visitors were forced to stoop in order to enter and exit each cylinder, and once inside they were surrounded by the exhibition's content, and absorbed in it in a rather intimate fashion, modulating the experience of the 'fullness' inside each enclosed and introverted circular moment with that of the 'emptiness' throughout the open relational space outside and between the cylinders.

Boyd understood and was able to interpret the character of Seidler's building. The cylinders were not only a pertinent formal response to the circular footprint of the existing architecture, but also addressed the indeterminable roundness of the all-encompassing "doughnut-shaped"² space. This infinite sense is intuitively echoed by the continuity and unlimitedness of the cylinders' perimeter and by the state of suspension that keeps them floating unboundedly in space, detached from both floor and ceiling, as parts of an endless and unmeasurable whole.

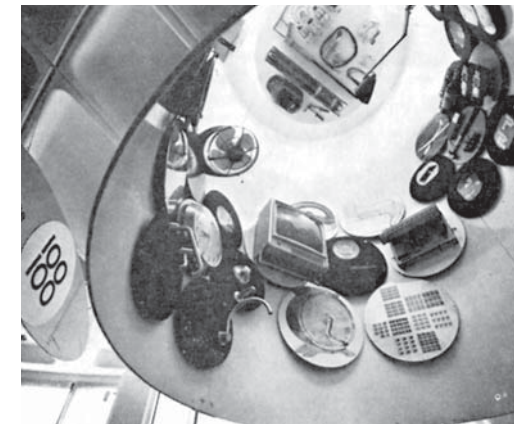
Also the sense of potentiality that informs the existing open space as a 'charged void'³ was acutely grasped by Boyd. The aseptic whiteness of the cylinders, together with the absence of floor-to-ceiling partitions, reflects his inclination to intrude minimally within the spatial and architectural qualities of the given container. The continuous pattern of the ribbed ceiling, exposed at the ground and first floors of the tower, was emphasised and used as an extraordinary background to the exhibition. Its sense of graphic richness and 'baroque expressiveness',⁴ distinctive from the classical severity of the rest of the modernist building, was further heightened by the sense of evanescence that informed both the lightness and tonal blankness of the exhibition installation. In the same way, the potentiality of the outdoor plaza between the two office buildings (the circular 50-storey one on the west side, and the rectangular 13-storey one on the other end) – "an area of recreation where food is available and people can sit between trees and near a central fountain...to linger and relax, attracting large lunchtime crowds"⁵ – was opportunistically exploited as an urban 'charged void', and at the same time conversely charged by the presence of the exhibition. Understanding the intrinsic character of the site, Boyd enhanced it through the public exposure of the event, which could be seen and enjoyed from the

outdoor plaza and the streets around as an additional temporary happening. No graphic signs or advertising banners were needed: the exhibition itself and the surprising sense of surreal suspension of its ephemeral installation was the most effective sign for the urban surroundings, openly revealed to the city through the floor-to-ceiling glazing of the first floor area.

This surreal mood goes hand in hand with the sense of irony and playfulness that forces the visitors to uneasily bow and often jam with others in the relative darkness of the cylinders' cores, looking from outside as a puzzling crowd of legs with no upper body. Not surprisingly a similar type of irony informs exhibition designs produced at that time by other international architects who, analogously to Boyd, are critical and provocative in regard to orthodox functionalism and mainstream modernism.⁶

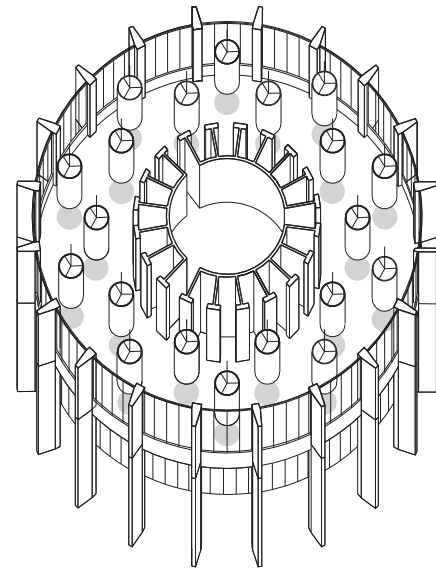
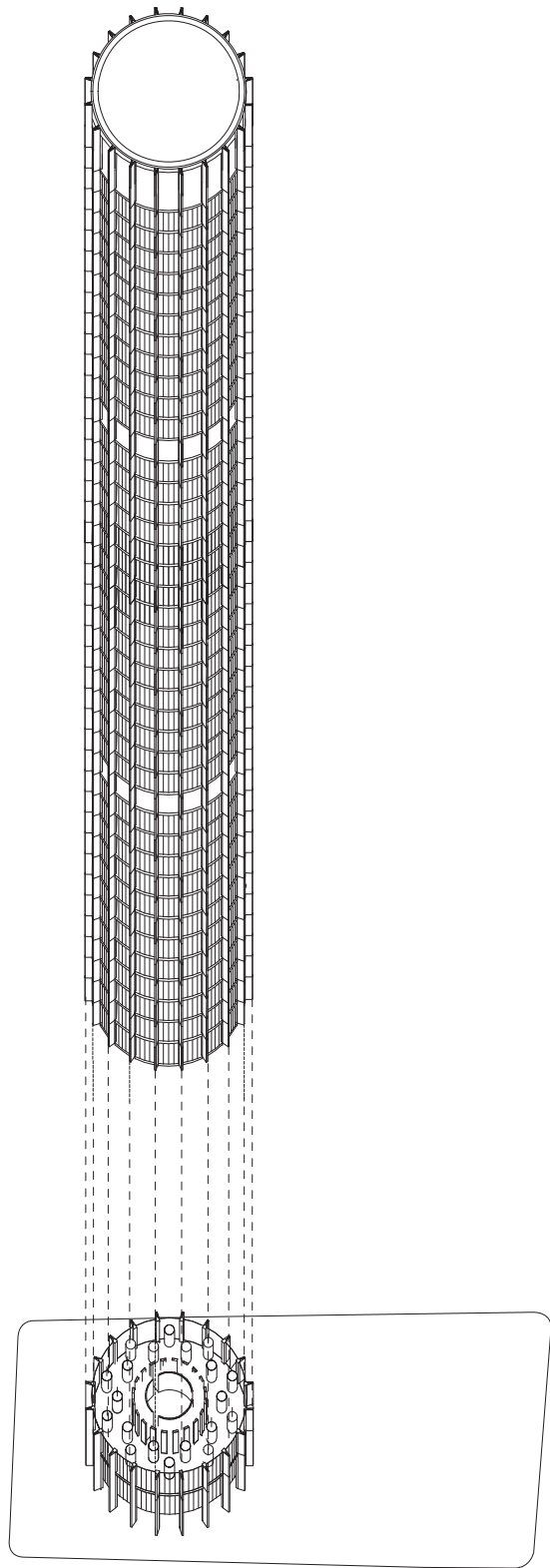


Max Dupain



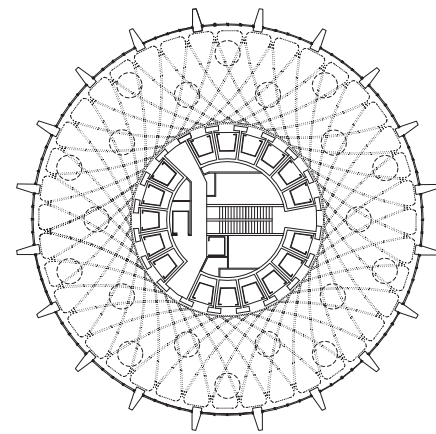
Max Dupain (Architect, vol. 2, no. 4, July/August 1968)

- 1 A review of this project proposes that: "emerging from the lift, the exhibition seemed almost non-existent." "Squares in the Round", *Architect*, vol. 2, no. 4, July/August 1968, p. 19
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 That of the 'charged void' is a notion consistently discussed by Alison and Peter Smithson in relation to the state of potentiality. It is emblematic that these architects, to whom Boyd refers extensively in an arguably empathetic way (see also texts in this thesis for the Domain Park Flats, p. 268; the Wright House, note no. 2, p. 317; and the Featherston House, notes no. 2 and 3, p. 457), have ultimately documented their entire work and theoretical approach in two books that carry the term 'charged void' in the title: Alison and Peter Smithson, *The Charged Void: Architecture*, The Monacelli Press, New York, 2001; and *The Charged Void: Urbanism*, The Monacelli Press, New York, 2005. The Smithsons have also continuously used the term 'charged void' and various related expressions to describe the work of other architects – among others, a project by Mies van der Rohe is discussed in this way: "A building today is interesting only if it is more than itself; if it *charges* the space around it with connective possibilities...The ideal of a calm, open-space-structured urban pattern as realised at Lafayette Park, Detroit...is a place full of *potential*". Alison and Peter Smithson, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, Artemis, London, 1994, pp. 16, 19 (my italics)
- 4 Some baroque projects come to mind – among others, the ribbed ceilings of the following two works can be read as evocative references: the Re Magi Chapel (1660 and following years), by Francesco Borromini, College of the Propaganda Fide, Rome; and San Lorenzo Church's Dome (1668 and following years), by Guarino Guarini, Turin. The structural solutions of both these examples are highly decorative in their expressiveness
- 5 Kenneth Frampton, Philip Drew, *Harry Seidler. Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 1992, p. 112
- 6 Among others, the RAI Pavilion (for the Italian Radio and Television Company) designed by Achille Castiglioni and Enzo Mari at the 1965 Milan Fair. See Paolo Ferrari, *Achille Castiglioni*, Electa, Milan, 1984, pp. 199, 200; and Sergio Polano, *Achille Castiglioni – Tutte le Opere, 1938 – 2000*, Electa, Milan, 2001, pp. 217-219



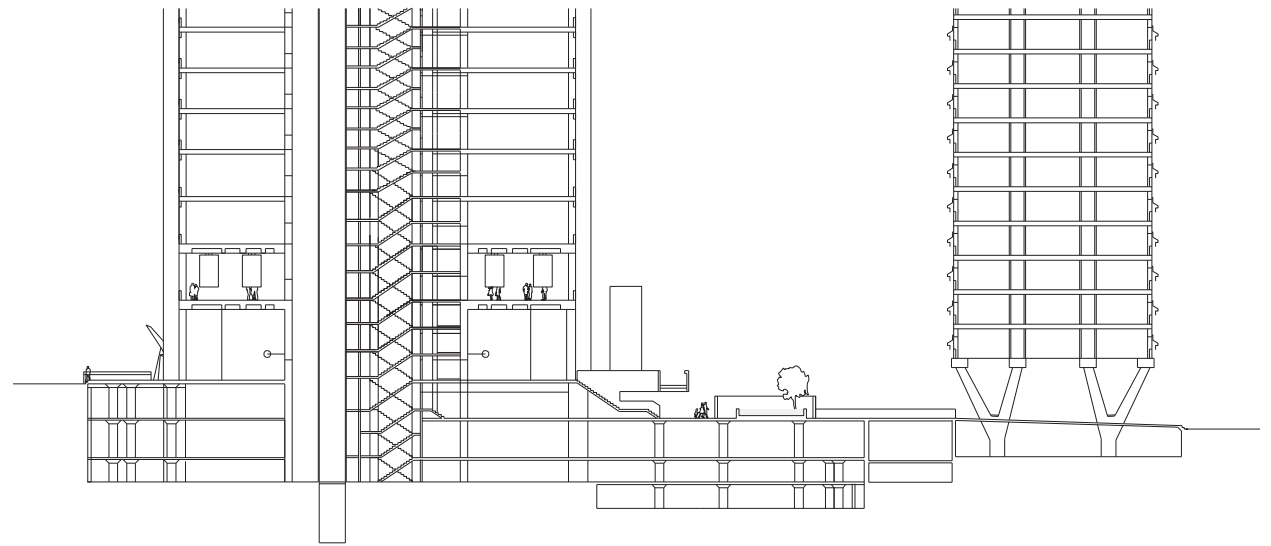
First floor

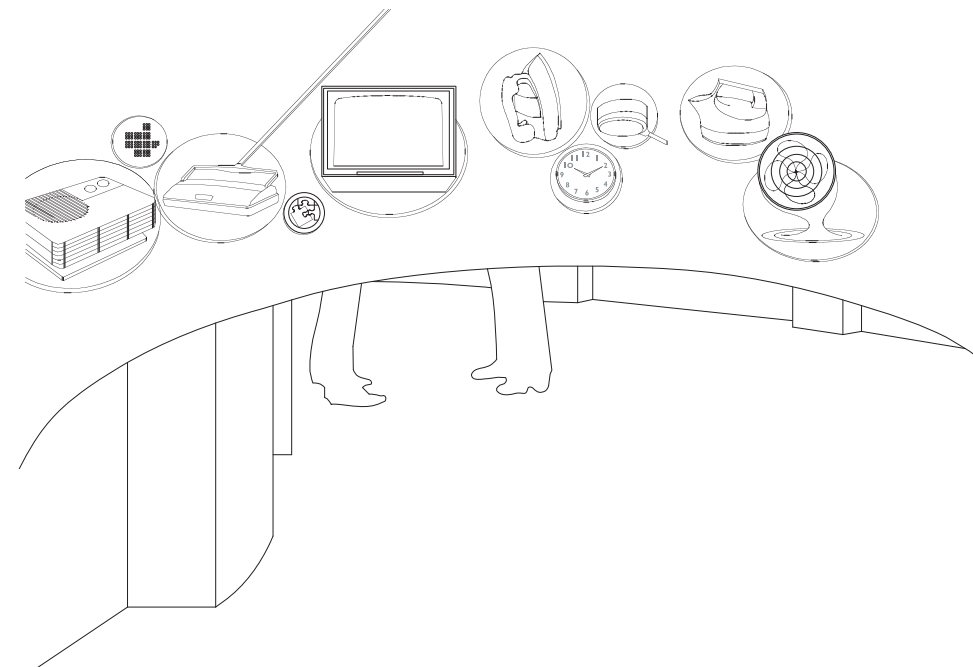
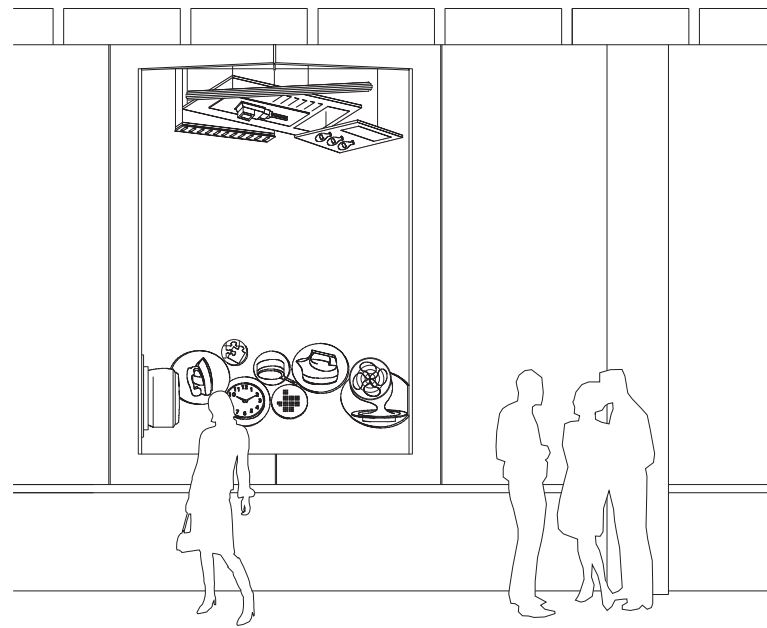
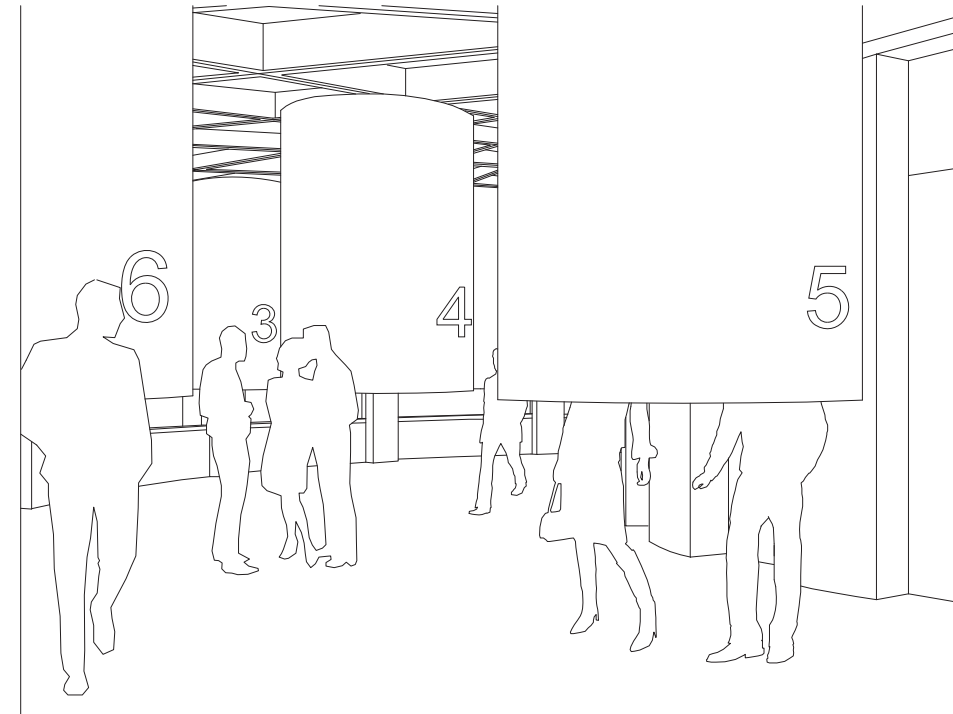
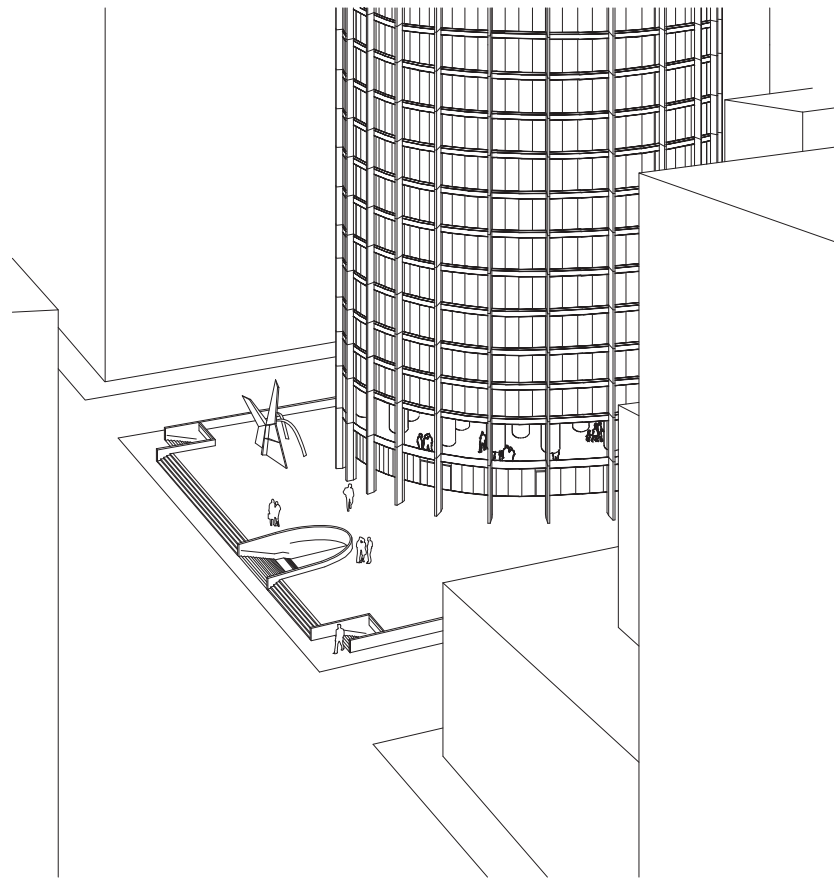
1:750



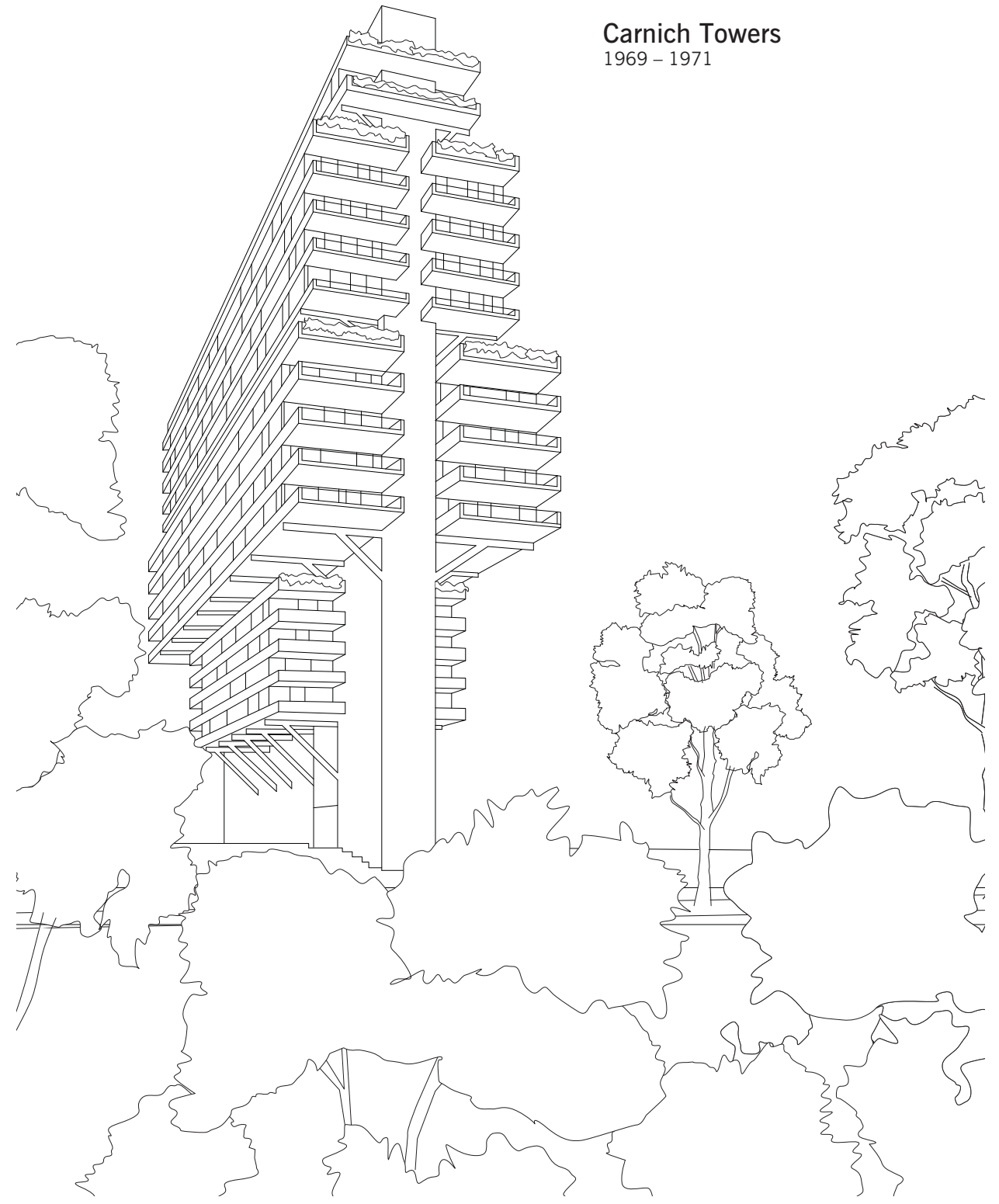
Ground floor

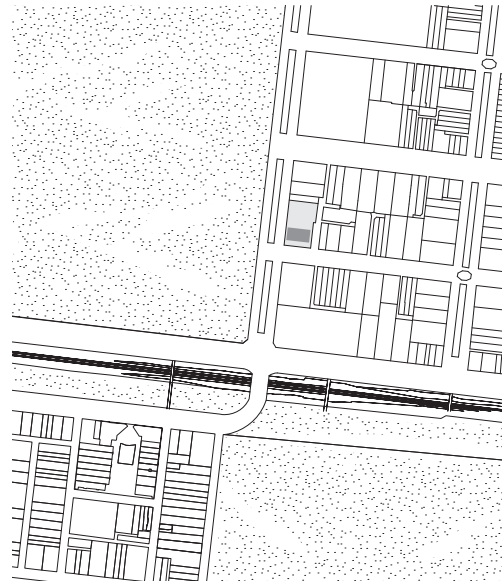
1:750



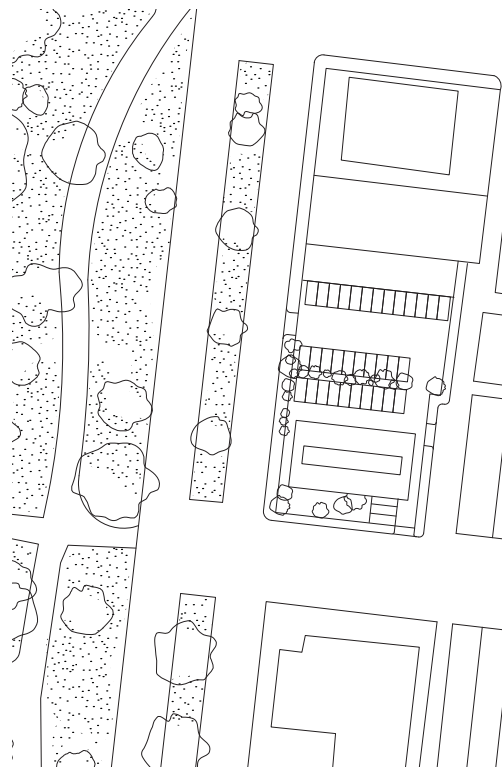


Carnich Towers
1969 – 1971





1:10 000



1:2000

The unbuilt proposal for the Carnich Towers is one of Boyd's last works. According to architectural historian Conrad Hamann, this project is part of a series of large scale investigations that the Melbourne architect was undertaking at the time of his sudden and unexpected death; this occurred during the difficult period when he had been attempting to change the character and size of the commissions – generally small residential – that his office had been receiving.¹ Envisaged to be located in the inner suburb of East Melbourne, along the east edge of the Fitzroy Gardens, less than 1 kilometre from the city grid, this highrise scheme perfectly addresses Boyd's idea of urban densification, according to which residential fabric in close proximities to public open space and parkland should not be spread out, but, instead, compacted in multistorey residential buildings.²

Numerous variants were developed for this project; the original proposal with two towers was gradually modified and eventually restricted to one single building. Different versions of the latter were tested, shifting progressively from a considerable number of floors to a more restrained height. Some sketches and shadow diagrams of early studies investigate various options to accommodate different floor/flat combinations: 21 floors/31 flats, 17 floors/25 flats, 13 floors/20 flats, 10 floors/12 flats, and 7 floors/7 flats, among others. The many options developed throughout the design process are not all included here; the diverse solutions illustrated in these pages are however essentially reflective of the conceptual qualities of this project and the changes which were continuously applied to its form and scale.

The single tower version has been selected here to exemplify the project and all its variants.³ The architectural concept, consistently reiterated in all various formal and dimensional shifts, is represented by the combination of a central vertical core and numerous horizontal planes cantilevering from it – the former includes common areas and services (staircases, lifts and various storage rooms), the latter accommodates free plan residential volumes that hover in the air and, like branches of a tree, are connected to the trunk at one end. Each flat is provided with servicing rooms – a kitchen, laundry area, storage space and two toilets – which are spatially contained within the core's footprint, with the remaining spaces – a large living and dining area, a study, and two bedrooms – connected by a hall and located aside from the central spine, on either the north or south side, depending on the position of each individual apartment. Each flat is also supplied with two balconies; carved at the short sides of the cantilevering blocks so as to erode both the west and east ends of each flat's volume, these voids emphasize the sense of suspension that pervasively informs the idea of this project: an assemblage of floating horizontal planes.

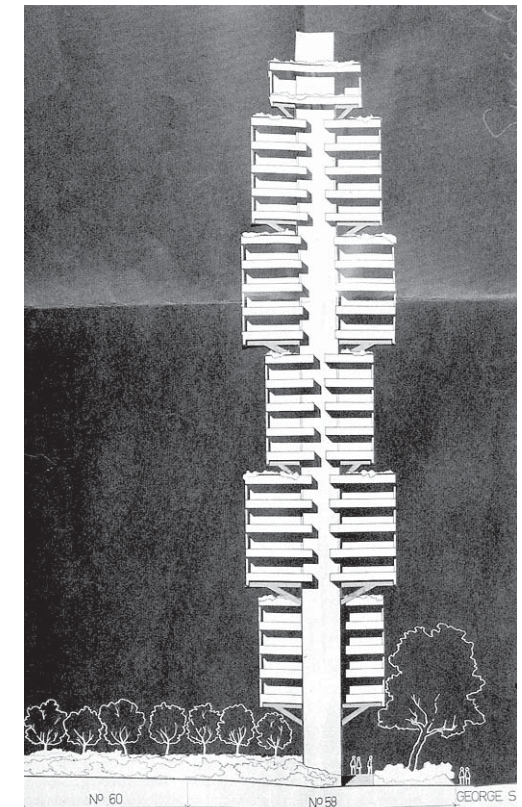
The common rooftops inserted between the flats contribute to the state of volumetric dematerialization of the building. Conceived as open spaces to be shared by the residents, they are a sophisticated reinterpretation of the typical Australian backyard – this recurrent and highly favoured suburban element is here indeed equally equipped with green landscaped areas and

'shed-like' storage spaces. These 'backyards in the air'⁴ enable the residents to fix their bikes, take care of their plants, read a book, sunbake, have a view of Fitzroy Gardens and the city beyond, bump into each other, have a chat, socialize, enjoy a barbeque, and the myriad of other activities through which it is possible to engage with the close skyline of the city from a space of suburban reminiscence. The park across the road, directly related to the building and its residents, is effectively 'their garden', a natural extension of the shared rooftop areas.

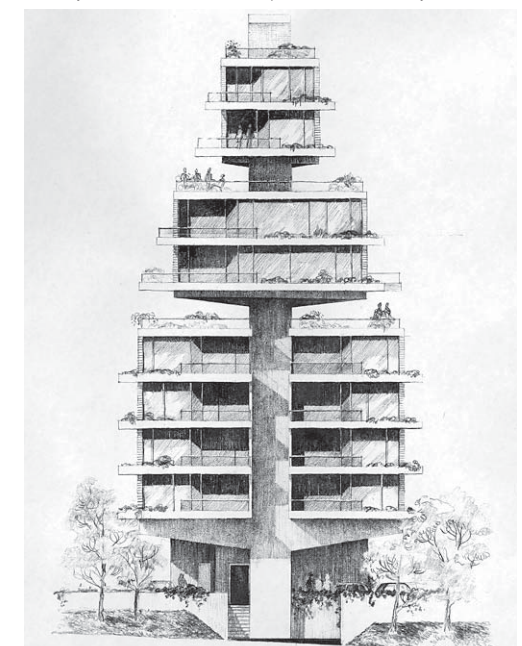
This project reveals clear resonances of the brutalist and metabolist architecture that Boyd had the opportunity to visit in Japan and enthusiastically describe, throughout the pages of two books devoted to these works,⁵ as examples of "a three-dimensional network of beam-buildings...proposed to levitate crisscross, on service masts, leaving a continuous open cityscape below".⁶

The Carnich Towers are similarly inclined to an undefinable sense of spatial continuity between their architecture, landscape, infrastructure and the surrounding urban context, despite being visibly and tangibly a solid brutalist presence.

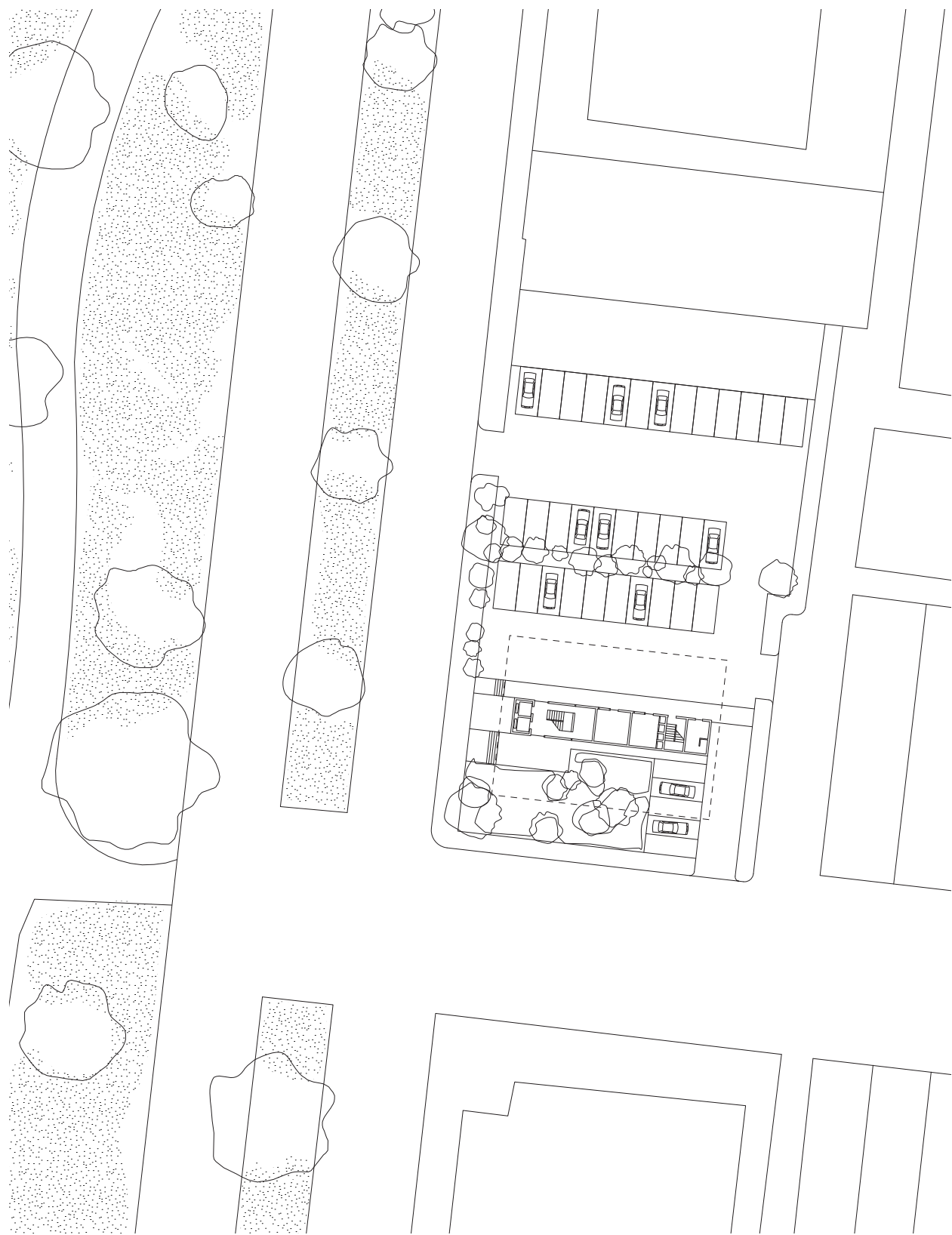
- 1 See Conrad Hamann, 'Envoie 1962-71', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, pp. 108-117
- 2 See text for the Domain Park Flats in this thesis, first paragraph, p. 268
- 3 The single tower version is here represented by more drawings than the other versions. These include the 3-D drawing on the cover page (p. 475), the context and site plans next to the text (p. 476), the plans on p. 478 and p. 479, and the diagrammatic section (p. 480, bottom). In addition to this some other versions are included in these pages: the original scheme with two towers (p. 480, top), a single tall tower (p. 477, top; and p. 480, middle) and one of the final solutions, a single tower made up of 8 enclosed floors and 3 open rooftops (p. 477, bottom)
- 4 Alison and Peter Smithson's concept of 'streets-in-the-air' has been previously discussed in this thesis as referential to Boyd's architecture; see text for the Wright House, passage related to note no. 2, p. 317
- 5 See Robin Boyd, *Kenzo Tange*, George Braziller, New York, 1962; and Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, George Braziller, New York, 1968
- 6 This description is specifically referred to Kenzo Tange's project for the Tsukiji Area in Tokyo, 1960; see Robin Boyd, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, op. cit., p. 111. Among other works discussed in this book, also the Yamanashi Press and Radio Center in Kofu (p. 110), and the Shizuoka building in Ginza (p. 115), both by Kenzo Tange and both dated 1967, are seminal references; from the same book also some early projects of Arata Isozaki (*Space City*, 1962, p. 67) and Noriaki Kurokawa (*Helix City*, 1962, p. 18) are decisively influential. The latter is the architect of the iconic Nagakin Tower designed in Tokyo in 1971 as a central core with cantilevering capsules.



Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria

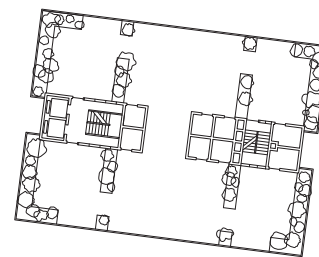
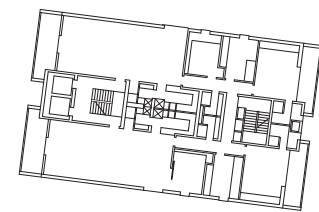


Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria



1:750

478



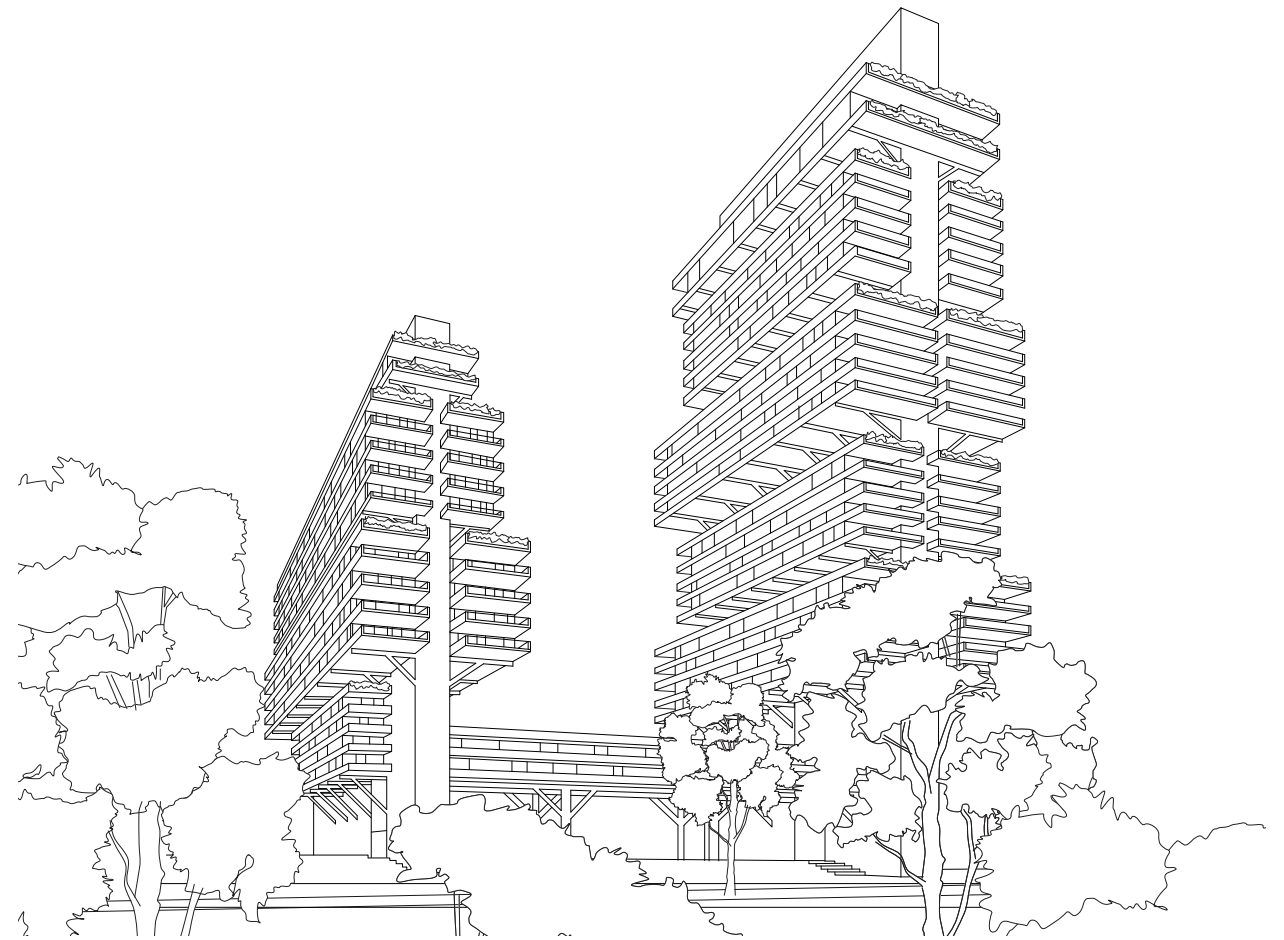
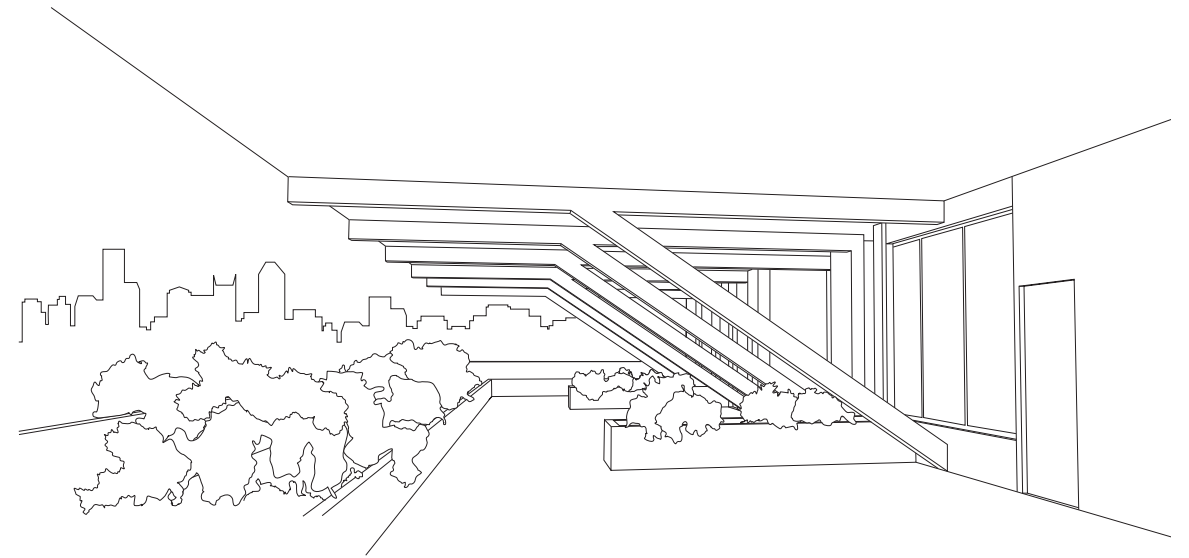
1:750

479



1:2000

480



481

Hegarty House
1969 – 1972



Charina Coronado



1:10 000

Located in the outer suburb of Ringwood East, approximately 30 kilometres east of the city, Hegarty House sits on a steep sloping site. Descending from west to east along its longitudinal axis, the rectangular block visually embraces the horizon of the Dandenong Ranges, with Mount Dandenong as the focal point.

The shape of the house is the direct consequence of this condition; a linear cascade of spaces and volumes is distributed on different levels under two inclined roofs, gradually stretching from both west to east and south to north, in order to open themselves respectively to the view of Mount Dandenong and direct sun-light. The three levels of the day-time areas, under the larger and lower of the two roofs, are all spatially interconnected and yet individually differentiated through flights of steps. The levels visually interrelate as a whole continuous space in absence of partitions; a couple of low walls next to the steps allow spatial and visual continuity, but also a useful degree of functional separation between the kitchen on the top, dining and study in the intermediate level and living area aside of the entry hall at the bottom. The external deck on top of the garage, further down from the entry and living areas, and from the latter separated by a free standing glazed wall, reiterates the gradual stepping down of the building, which eventually ends on the street level, with the 'negative' hidden presence of the garage, the volume of which is effectively embedded in the ground and concealed behind a large tilt-up door. Together with the deck balustrade on its top, and a retaining wall on its side to accommodate the initial flight of the staircase ascending to the entry, this blank panel stands as a simple and restrained face to the streetscape.

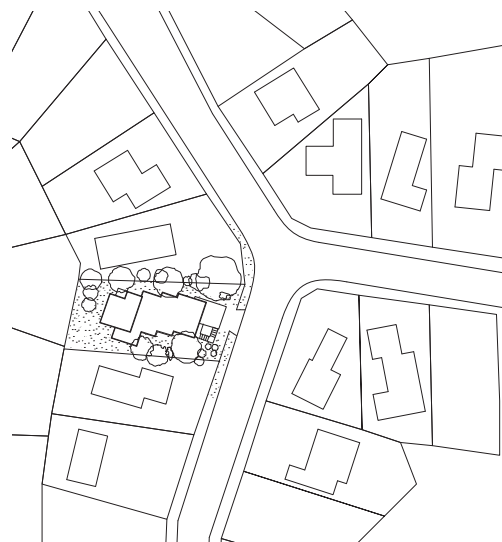
The three bedrooms, on top of the block at the opposite end, sit above a generous laundry area adjacent to the kitchen and an excavated storage room located at the back of the house. Differently from the spaces below, all interrelated and opened at once to the view of the east and the light of the north, these rooms are individual spaces with their own individual openings. The main double bedroom is exposed to the east view through a long continuous window that is sandwiched between the two roofs, resting on the top of a built-in cupboard; this room is directly linked to a walk-in-robe area and ensuite, and through the latter to an external 'deck/court' located on the north side and provided with an outdoor shower. The two single bedrooms have one window each, facing respectively north and west.

The house is sided by two long and narrow outdoor sloping spaces, both characterised by the presence of continuous steps and dense vegetation. The steps on the south border accompany a severe, almost blank, white façade of rendered bricks; the ones on the north edge run along an open façade made up of timber walls with large continuous windows. The southern edge is effectively used as a service lane, while the northern one directly participates in the sense of wholeness that characterises the day-time areas of the house, allowing the indoor space to visually and spatially leak outside.

The circulation between the open space of the three internal levels spills out through the deck adjacent to the kitchen and from there

it can move in a circular fashion. It can either go up towards a 'wild' secluded upper back garden (at the back of the storage room) and then turn back down into the fly of steps along the south façade, or go down towards the domesticated landscape of the deck/terrace that sits on top of the garage, and from here, through a link to the outdoor staircase ascending from the street, back up to the house and the stepped lane on the south edge. Surrounded by a continuous bench along its balustrade, the deck/terrace on the garage's roof is concealed from the street. It is an 'outdoor room with a view' (to Mount Dandenong) that hinges the 'back' and 'front' – the fenced private north outdoor spaces and the unfenced introductory ascending path – of the house, therefore enabling the continuous flow of the circulation towards either down to the street, or up to the house and its outdoor spaces.

This is the last work over which Boyd would see the completion; he was able to enjoy some celebratory drinks with the original owner Patrick Hegarty only a few weeks before unexpectedly dying in October 1971.



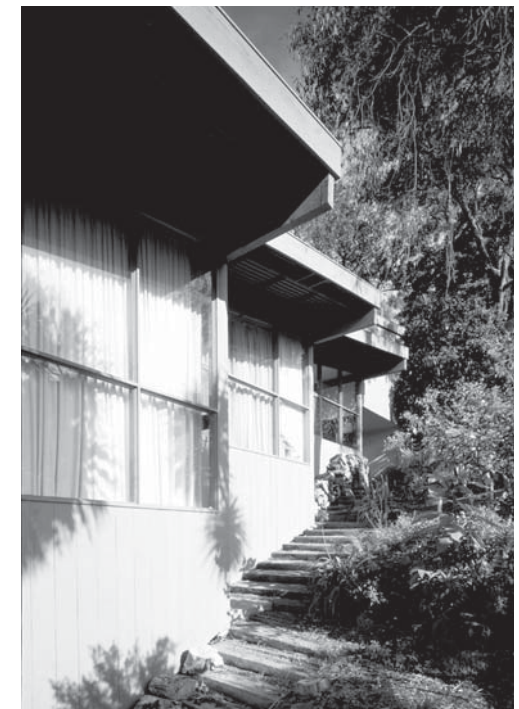
1:2000



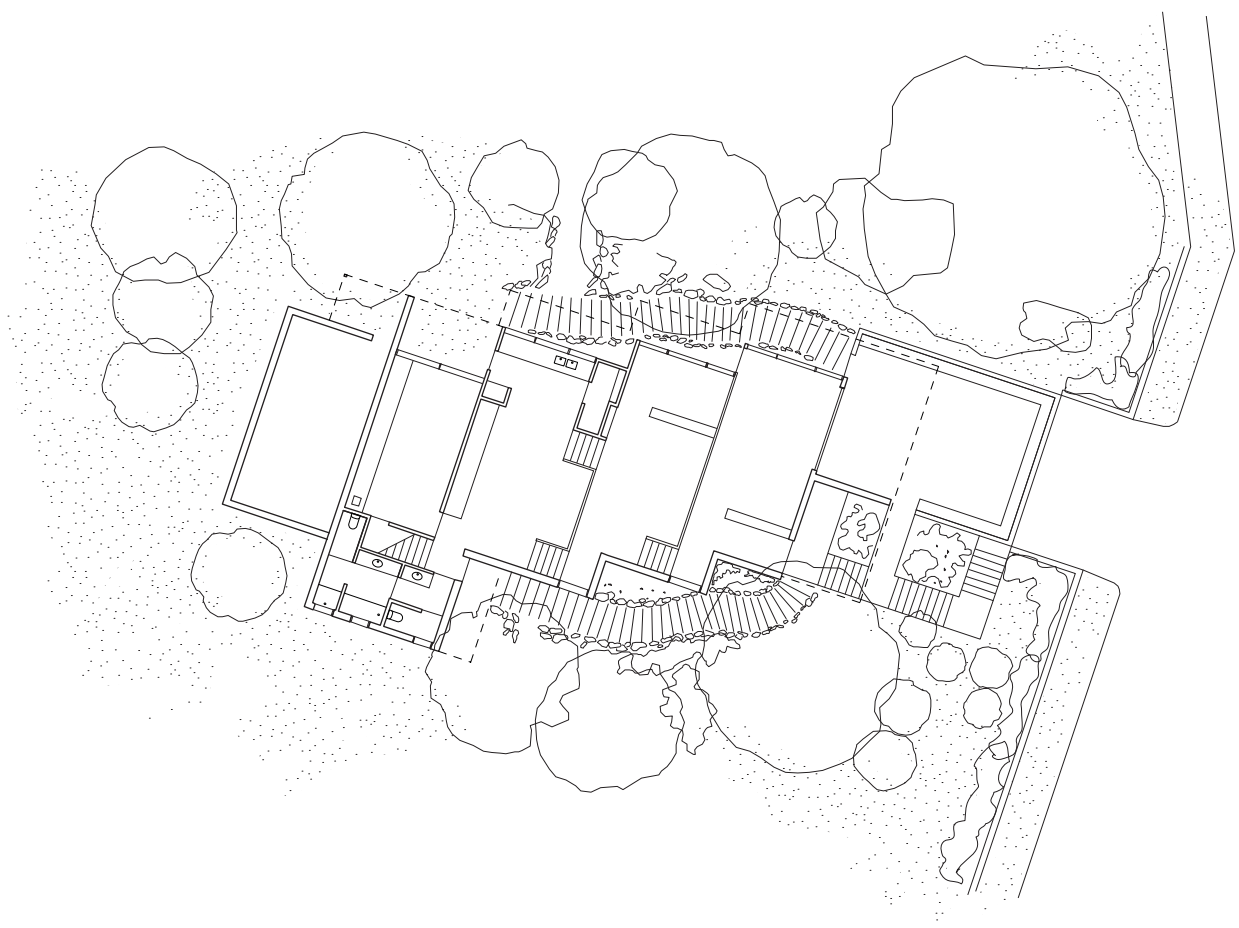
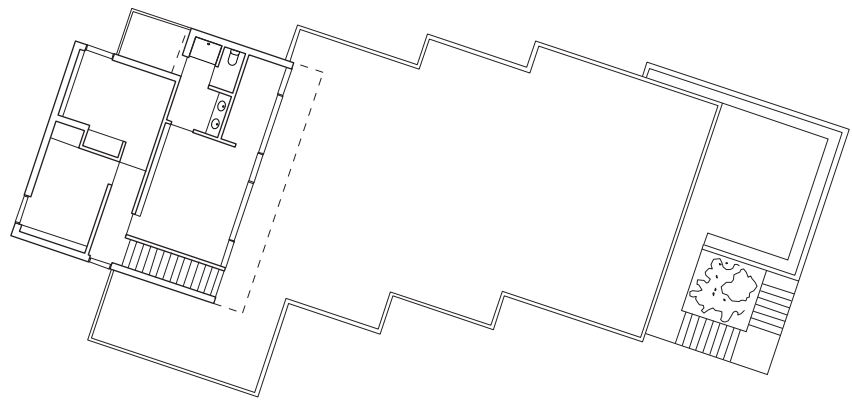
Aaron Pocock



AA - Architecture in Australia, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973

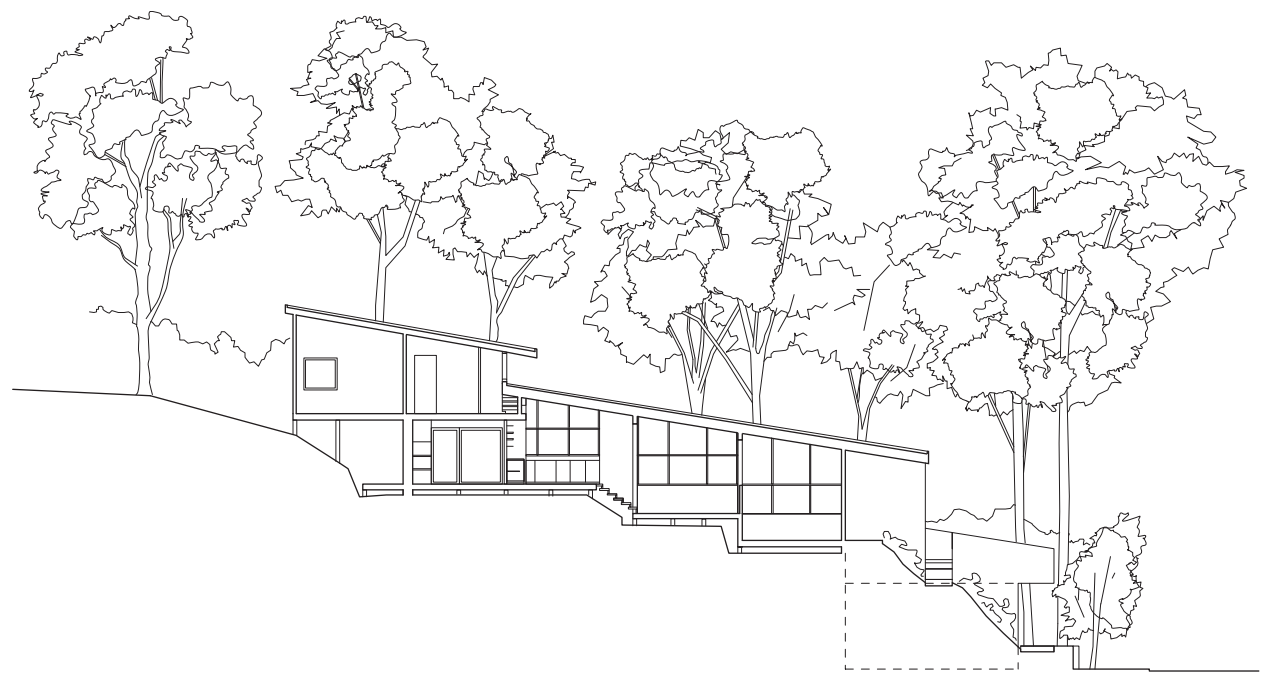


Aaron Pocock



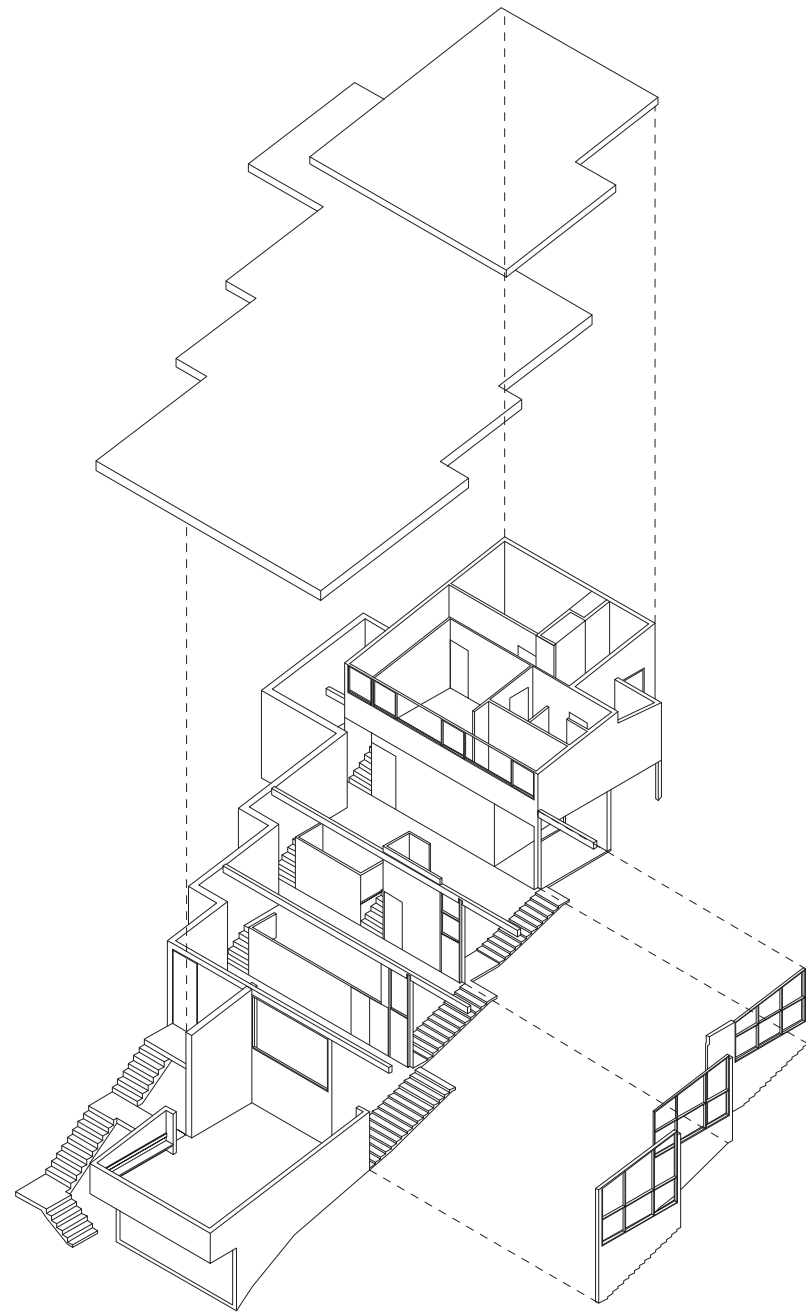
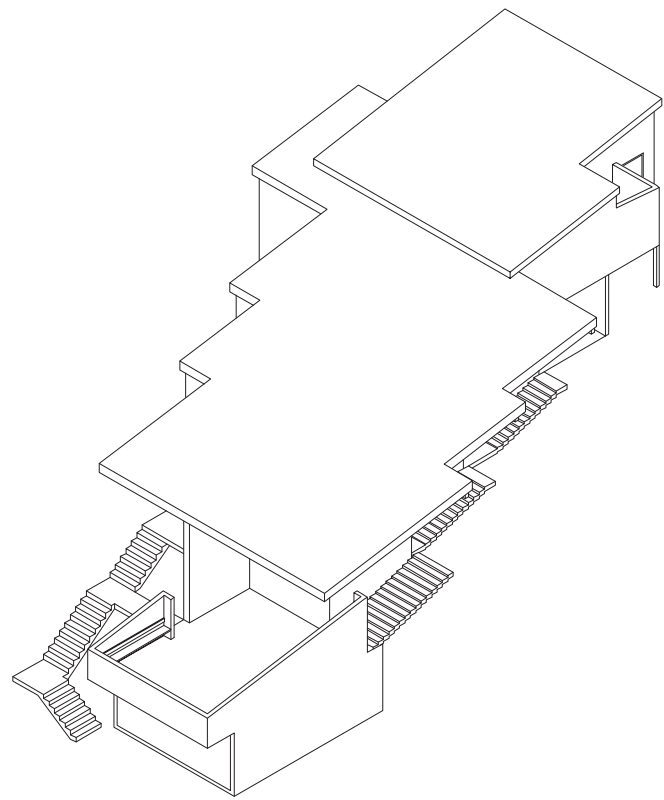
1:300

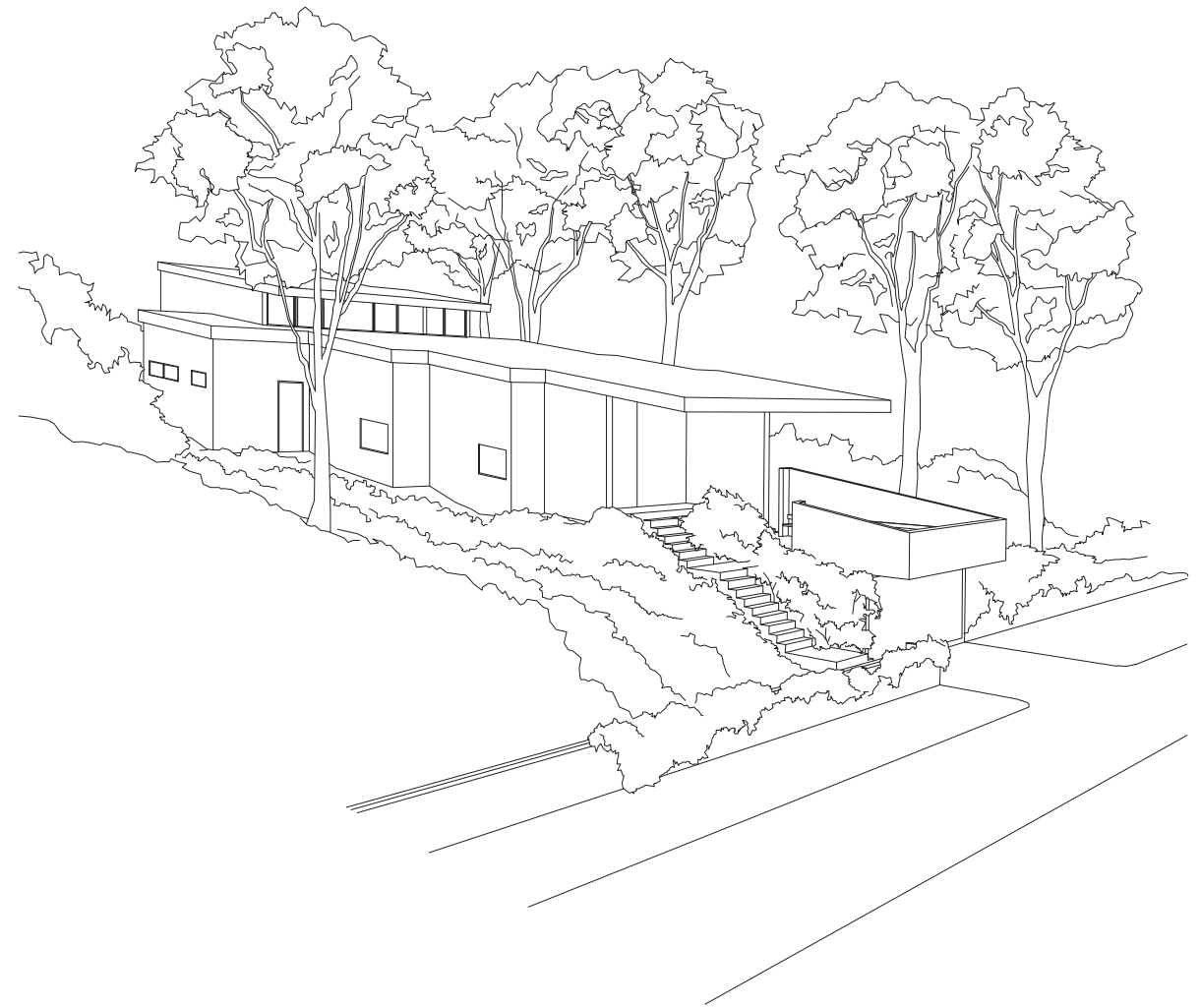
486



1:300

487







Aaron Pocock



Mauro Baracco



Mauro Baracco



Aaron Pocock



Charina Coronado

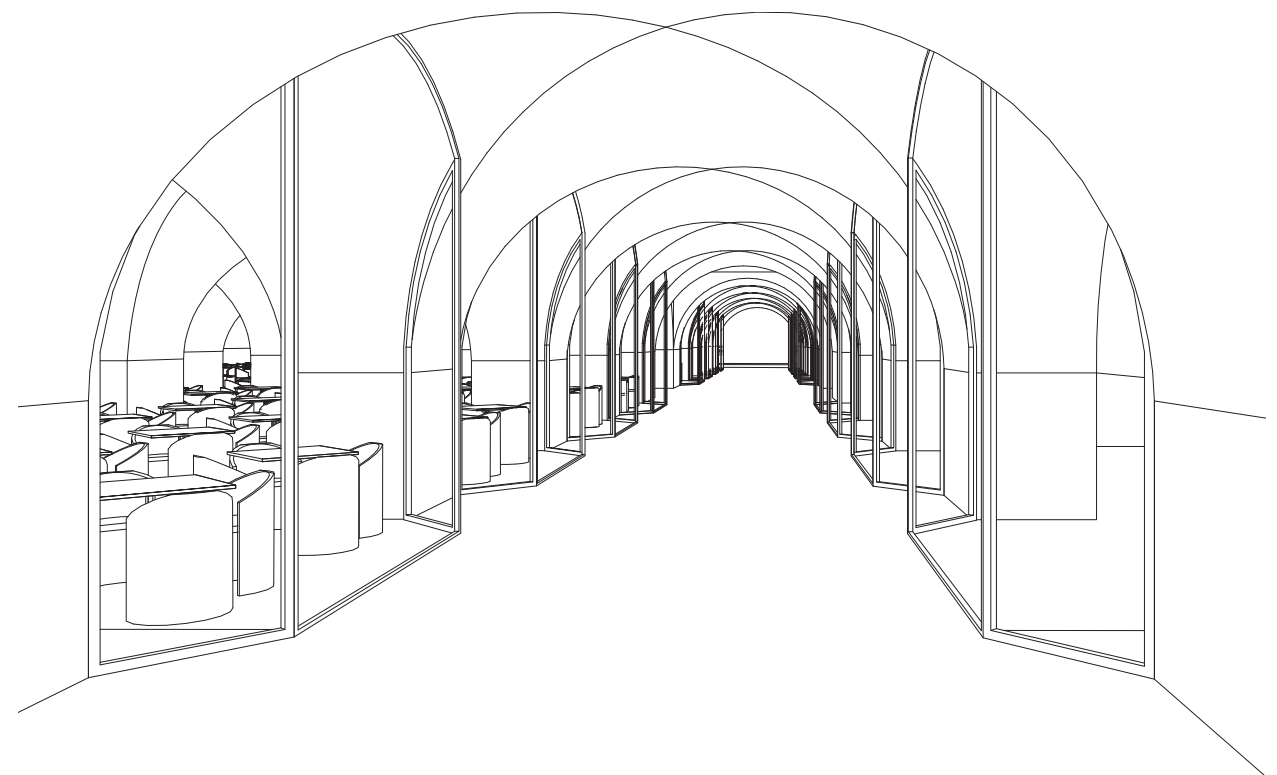


Charina Coronado



Charina Coronado

Flinders Vaults
1971 - 1972





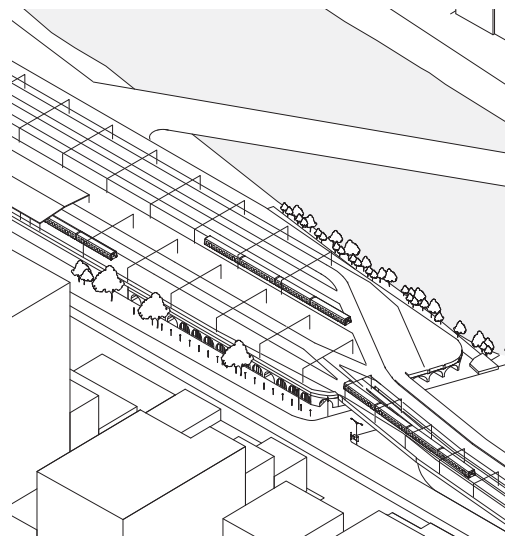
1:10 000

The unbuilt proposal for the reshaping of an existing space along Flinders Street, in the immediate proximity of Flinders Street Station at the south end of Melbourne's central district, was completed in January 1972, three months after Boyd's death, as one of the last projects designed by the Romberg and Boyd Architects firm.¹ The existing building, a large volume beneath the railway line and therefore filled with structural vaulted spaces (suggesting the project's title), abuts the railway station along its east side, remaining free towards the other three: a public walkway along the Yarra River on the south, a wide footpath along Flinders Street on the north, and a footpath along a road with the railway bridge above on the west.

The project seeks to transform the building into a retail mall, including 26 shops, a restaurant/cafeteria, and 4 kiosks – the latter are located in the south-west corner, facing the external footpath along the road. Four entries lead to internal arcades – one runs continuously from north to south, separating the restaurant/cafeteria from the shops; two shorter ones provide access from respectively the north side and the south-west corner next to the back of the kiosks; another one, the widest of all, cuts the mall in two halves, running longitudinally in the centre and connecting with all the others. The majority of the shops are long and tunnel-like, stretching from front to front (one towards the exterior, the other towards the central arcade) in the barrel vaulted spaces that span between the structural partition walls. Sitting next to each other, these vaulted spaces modulate the entire mall into a grid of repeated elongated elements. The three entering arcades are lined up with bow windows; protruding from the lateral fronts of some shops and the long continuous west side of the restaurant/cafeteria, these delicate presences somehow refine the severe brutalism of the mall and its accentuated linearity through the glittering of their display and the gentle inflections of their profile.

It is a project of simple and essential components. Relying on the site conditions – the vaults as the structural means to support the railway line – the proposal enhances them by using their structural and formal possibilities in different types: barrel vaults for the shops, dome vaults in the restaurant/cafeteria, arches along the central arcade. The 'vault-ness', quintessential nature and common denominator of all these diverse solutions, clearly emerges through the smoothness of the walls and ceilings, which all rigorously consist of blank surfaces and unadorned profiles, with no ribs, lozenges or any other additional – potentially decorative – components.

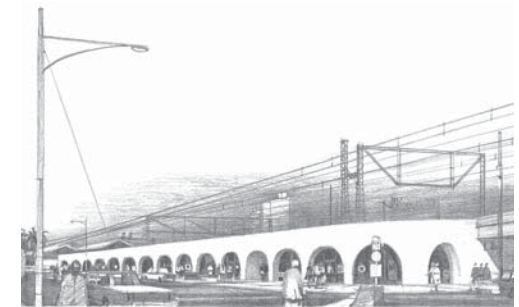
The expressive restraint and sense of formal relentlessness of this work is intriguingly in empathy with some of the utopian experimentations that from the 1960s are produced in the context of the Radical Architecture movement. The boundlessness of Archizoom's *No-Stop City* and the formal neutrality of Superstudio's *Continuous Monument* – both projects informed by a sense of spatial indeterminateness critical of the objectification that is pursued by many Modernist positions in the name of reason and logic² – are respectively evoked by the repetitive grid of Flinders Vaults' plan and the blank expression of its exterior, an unremitting and undescriptive white volume reminiscent of *Continuous Monument's* mute perpetual motion.



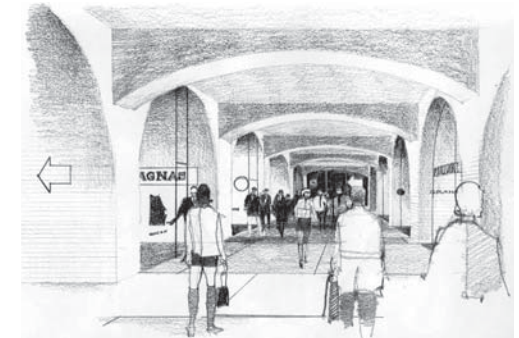
496

The spatial indefiniteness of this project is 'released' to rationality and irrationality at once. Like the infinite superstructures of Archizoom and Superstudio, the relentless modularity of this project opens to questions rather than answers, to states of wondering rather than objective determinations, to inexplicable dimensions of 'con-fusion' – rather than quantifiable distinctions – between spatial entities. This late work, paradigmatic of Boyd's scepticism towards rational forms of correspondence between idea and form, is in fact deeply postmodernist in instigating an aporia by paradoxically absorbing and overcoming a conventionally precise/mathematical model – the grid – into a means for a vague/poetic state of 'con-fusion'. We could relate Boyd's approach to Sol LeWitt's art through some observations of Rosalind Krauss in relation to the grids and other modular systems: "aporia is a far more legitimate model for LeWitt's art than Mind, if only because aporia is a *dilemma* rather than a *thing*."³ In this and others of Boyd's projects based on modular schemes, analogously to the work of the American artist, "what we find is the 'system' of compulsion, of the obsessional's unwavering ritual, with its precision, its neatness, its finicky exactitude, covering over an abyss of irrationality. It is in that sense design without reason, design spinning out of control".⁴

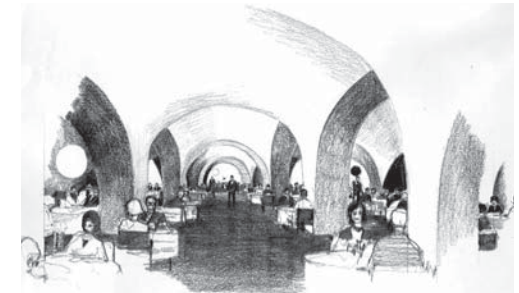
- 1 The set of final drawings related to this project is dated "January 1972" and signed by "Romberg and Boyd Pty. Ltd. Architects", Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Officially included among Boyd's works dated 1971 (see 'Chronological list of works by Robin Boyd', compiled by Vanessa Bird, Helen Stuckey, Conrad Hamann, Philip Goad and Neil Clerehan, *Transition*, no. 38, 1992, p. 238), the degree of involvement with the finalization of this project and the preparation of its final drawings is not precisely known following Boyd's sudden and unexpected death on the 16th October 1971
- 2 These two utopian projects, and in general the theoretical positions of Archizoom and Superstudio, widely and internationally published in the second half of the 1960s (therefore possibly known by Boyd although there is no direct evidence that he referred to them), call for indeterminate – thus unmeasurable – superstructures as a means for the re-emergence of individualism, reacting against the accentuated sense of determinism and objectification that is encouraged by many Modernist positions. Among the extensive bibliography on Radical Architecture, see Gianni Pottena (ed.), *Radicals – Design and Architecture 1960/75*, Il Ventilabro, Firenze, 1996 (catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, VI International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 15 September-17 November 1996), in which *No-Stop City*, dated 1970/72, is described by Archizoom as "a project for a city which is amoral and without particular qualities... (in which) the individual can realize his own habitat as a freed creative act" (p. 69), and *Continuous Monument*, dated 1969, is described by Superstudio as "an architecture all equally emergent in one: the earth made homogeneous through technique, culture and all other imperialism" (p. 209). More references to Superstudio's *Continuous Monument* are proposed in relation to the Menzies College project in this thesis; see text for this project, p. 383
- 3 Rosalind E. Krauss, 'LeWitt in Progress', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1986, p. 258
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 254



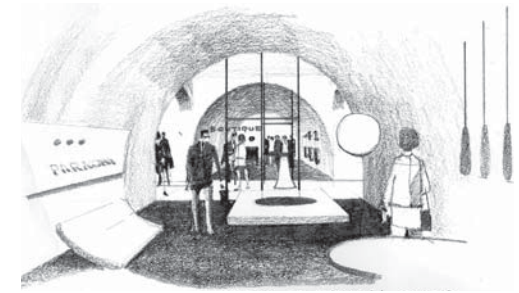
Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria



Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria

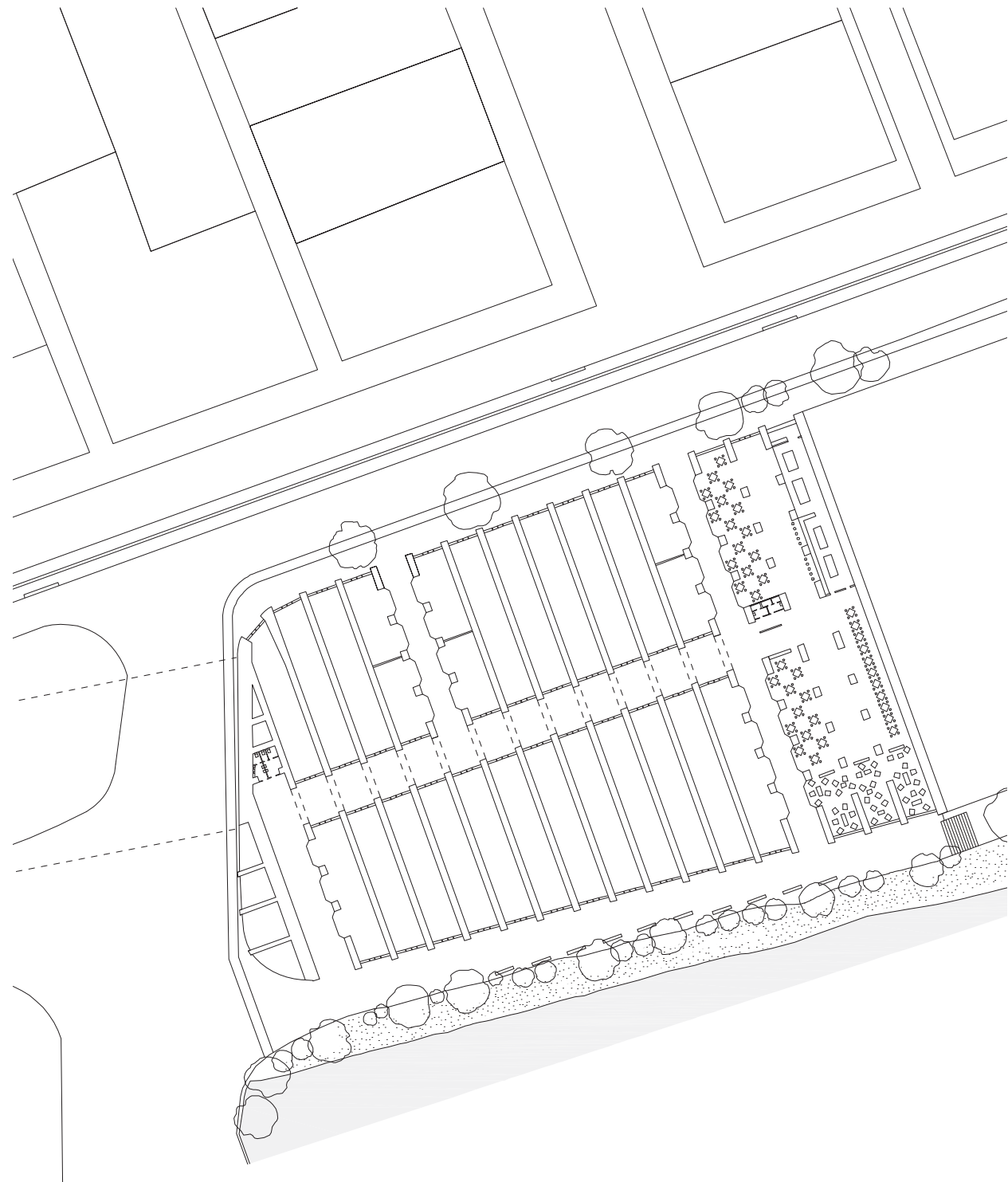


Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria



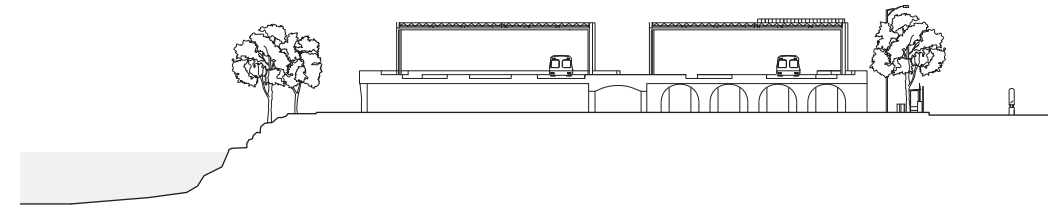
Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria

497



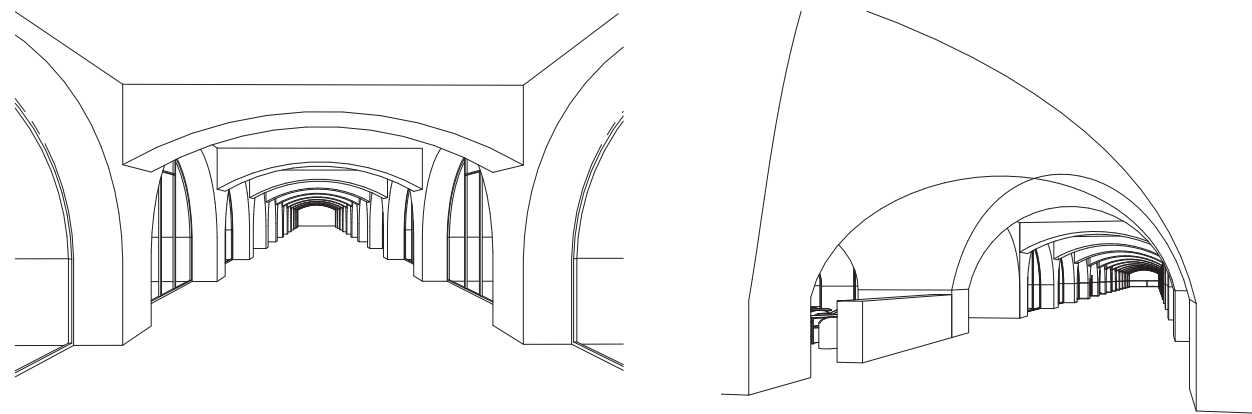
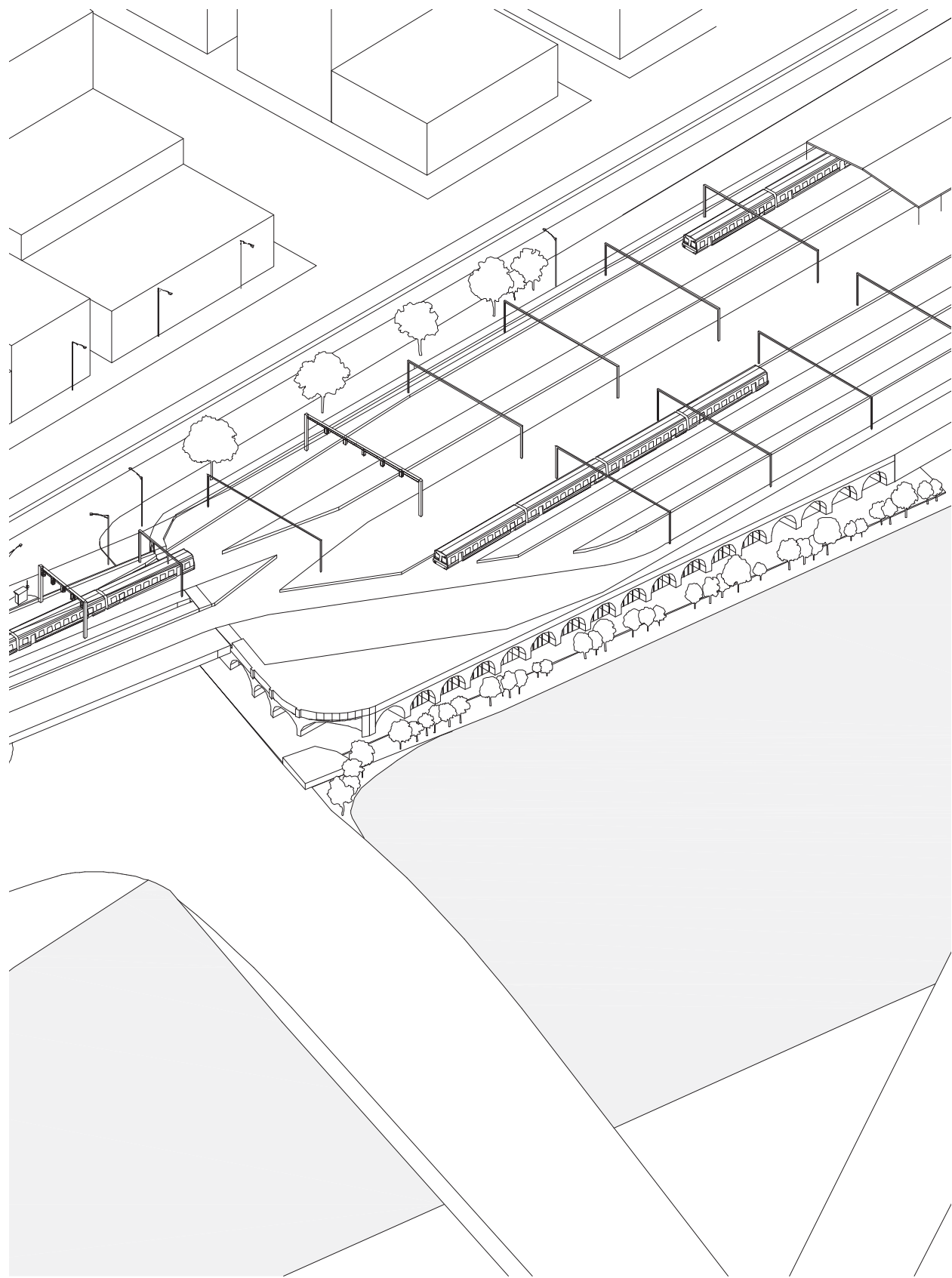
1:1000

498



1:1000

499



Conclusion

In this thesis I argued an alternative reading of Robin Boyd's theory and design in its relationship to a Heideggerian philosophy. In so doing I also developed the further application of Heideggerian philosophy to architecture.

The argument was discussed theoretically in the main essay. I did this by relating some of Boyd's more theoretical writings with Heidegger's own writings, writings about Heidegger and some writings which I position within a Heideggerian trajectory. Also, in the second part of the thesis, I examined Boyd's design work through and against Heideggerian philosophy.

My argument focuses on the discussion of ontological relativity in how we determine forms of truth. This was expanded to the application to space, and explores notions such as 'spatial continuity', 'co-belongingness of space', 'spatial con-fusion', 'non-hierarchy of spaces' and 'spatial oneness' among others, and indirectly the question, intrinsically related to all these spatial conditions, of *where do we apply the limitations to space?*

This involved an exploration particularly of how the condition of "being present"¹ that originally informs Western thought and the associated state of supremacy that is increasingly assigned throughout modern cultures to values such as rationality and technology, have informed our reading of the world as made up of distinctive objects instead of 'con-fused' entities that co-belong in states of spatial indivisibility.

I explore this by arguing that Boyd maintains an openness – a dimension of indeterminateness, ambivalence, comprehension, indeed 'con-fusion' – not only through the embracement of numerous different aspects of his multidisciplinary approach in architectural practice – as a writer, invited university teacher, practising architect, public commentator, committee member, representative member of the Institute of Architects, and so on – but also through his particular style of writings – often contradictory – and the nature of his designed work – being consistently non-hierarchical and informed by a continuity and 'con-fusion' of space.

In applying Heideggerian philosophy to Robin Boyd's work, I argued primarily that the work resists the objective form of determination by being open and in states of spatial continuity and non-hierarchy. I resisted discussing the work through couplings (between idea and form) and literal symbolism. I argued that in his projects he approaches the dimension of openness/ness/con-fusion through design that employs a non-hierarchy between inside, outside, landscape, built and voids, designed or natural landscape, etc., and

1 According to Martin Heidegger, "in all metaphysics from the beginning of Western thought, Being means being present"; Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1968 (original ed., *Was Heisst Denken?*, 1954), p. 102. This passage is already quoted earlier in this thesis – see text related to note no. 9 in the Introduction

yet at the same time cannot escape the rational determination of all these parts as individual entities.

One of the limitations, but also a contribution, of this argument is that it is in its nature paradoxical. Aligned to the paradoxical way through which other contemporary philosophers have approached and interpreted Heidegger – Massimo Cacciari's way is one of the most seminal references – I have here placed Boyd in this same trajectory of interpretation. Acknowledging that human beings are inevitably, intrinsically, informed by their quintessential conditions of rationality and irrationality, and that therefore they are also constantly engaged, at the same time, with both the determination of explicable states of rational definiteness and the search for inexplicable states of irrational oneness, the Heideggerian perspective that guides this thesis is supportive of a state of ambivalence, ambiguity, 'wondering' (in Heideggerian terms), 'con-fusion' (a key term proposed by this thesis) in relation to our general way of thinking – "meditating" as Heidegger would say² – about our being-in-the-world, including all the related questions that concern space, and therefore also architectural/urban/landscape space.

These themes were further investigated by re-documenting a selection of projects through photographing, redrawing and drawing anew this work in a more comprehensive way than has been done in the past, both for the documentation of the original drawings that are available in the Archive of Boyd's office held in the State Library of Victoria, and the illustration of articles and books that have been published so far in regard to Boyd's work. In its turn this act contributes to the body of knowledge of Robin Boyd's architecture. This process visualized the spatial resolutions that inform the reading of Boyd's designs in relation to a Heideggerian philosophy. It released the presentation of the projects from their time of production, further supporting a non-historical, but spatial focus.

I recognize however some limitations in regard to the graphic style that has been applied to represent the projects: the abstraction of the line drawings, which was adopted as a non over-expressive device – a neutral, impartial means – to resist determining forms of hierarchy between different parts/spaces of the projects, is nonetheless inevitably condemned to be 'representative', informed by the 'intention' to test, and hopefully reveal, the conditions of continuity and non-hierarchy of space – conditions that, according to some arguments of this thesis in relation to Boyd's and other architects' work, would be achieved in absence of intentionality.

The contributions of this thesis are not often developed in combination. They are the particular outcome of a combination of a practising architect who is also involved with the fields of philosophical and historical theories rather than an architectural historian. This condition offered particular insights not often found when argued from the focus of one of these positions. As a practising architect I used my experience in thinking spatially, to apply ontological relativity to Boyd's works. This approach is concerned with what architecture is in the world, rather than the historical or symbolic application of theory and philosophy to the artifact. In this way I could position my reading of Boyd's work as universally valid and significant to the culture and architecture of any time.

The premise of this thesis established through initial reflection of some of Boyd's work along Heideggerian lines, became more and

more interrelated through the investigative process of the thesis. The development of my thesis deepened through the process of visiting, measuring, documenting and comprehensively redrawing the works. When only actually in the spaces, and later reflecting on them through the documentation, could I grasp the relationship between Heideggerian philosophy and the built work themselves.

The 36 projects chosen do contain some unbuilt and demolished or dismantled works, and this selection is discussed in the introduction to the projects; a limitation of this choice was that I was unable to be in these spaces and experience their actual contextual relationships and spatial qualities. In these instances I used my experience as an architect in thinking spatially and imagining space from the drawings and archive photos (the latter in case the buildings were demolished or dismantled).

A limit to the thesis was the choice of a certain number of works to test the theoretical framework. Boyd's body of work is extensive and further research into more work could reveal different trajectories of this argument. More projects could have been re-documented as adequate examples to extend and further test the field of investigation and related hypotheses, in particular the conditions of spatial oneness and continuity, but also make this study more completed and inclusive in relation to the overall work designed by Boyd.

Another limit of this thesis is the thesis itself as a final medium – a document that is determined and ordered in a rather hierarchical and logical way – to demonstrate the validity of its research; although the argument of this thesis is that we are intrinsically informed by both the simultaneous conditions of a rational/logical/explicable process of objective determination and the search for an irrational/illogical/inexplicable state of oneness, this thesis ultimately becomes a defining/determining type of document that is indeed informed by a physical and conceptual state of objectivity – in its form of both a document as a physical object and a document that contributes to knowledge through its own additional 'truth'; a document that appears to be more 'rational', 'present' and 'explicable' than any of the 'irrational', 'invisible' and 'inexplicable' dimensions which are argued in this same thesis as conditions that are equally intrinsic of our being-in-the-world.

A further limit, but also a contribution, of the thesis is that the argument is inevitably a logically put together product – indeed 'produced' and determined – by me as a rational being, from my subjective point of view; it is a determined and logically argued type of formulation that however – and this is where I can see it as a contribution – can hopefully instigate other further commentators to wonder, disagree, reformulate alternative readings, by indeed encouraging to "dwell on (it as) what lies close and meditate on (it as) what is closest... (as) that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now".³

There are different levels for possible future developments from this thesis. More possible studies on the relationship between the notion of sustainable architecture and Boyd's design and theoretical approach could certainly be investigated. This point, which has been evoked more than thoroughly discussed among the various texts of the thesis, is nonetheless consistently suggested as a fundamental quality of Boyd's approach. It is not surprising that also considerable aspects of Heidegger's philosophical approach have been associated with the fields of care and conservation of the earth and the environment.

² Heidegger encourages human beings to meditate "because man is a *thinking*, that is, a *meditating* being". Martin Heidegger, 'Memorial Address', in *Discourse on Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1966 (original ed., *Gelassenheit*, 1959), p. 47 – this notion and various related implications are consistently discussed throughout the thesis

³ *Ibid.*, p. 47

Many contemporary philosophers and theoreticians have discussed Heidegger's critique of the imposing and objectifying nature of Western thought, and a related empathy with Zen Buddhism and Daoism among other Eastern ways of thinking, as an approach that in light of its engagement with the sense of relativity that is related to invisible and inexplicable states such as those of impermanence and oneness of time and space, goes hand in hand with issues regarding nature, ecology, environmental ethics and the sustainable use of, and engagement with, the land.⁴

Furthermore, the application of this philosophical framework to actual design works invites research that provides validation for such an approach to the built environment at large. These philosophical positions could be further tested and expanded by investigating more and different architectural works and approaches that similarly to those undertaken by Boyd are engaged with a dimension of continuity and reciprocal co-belongingness of space between architectural, landscape (both designed and natural landscapes), urban and territorial contexts.

4 Among the extensive bibliographic background related to these issues, see the two following contributions: Ladelle McWhorter, Gail Stenstad (eds.), *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2009; Eric S. Nelson, 'Responding to Heaven and Earth: Daoism, Heidegger and Ecology', *Environmental Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 2004, pp. 65-74

Bibliography

- Bachelard, Gaston, *The poetics of space*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1994 (original ed., *La poétique de l'espace*, 1958; first translated in English, 1964)
- Banham, Reyner 'The New Brutalism', *The Architectural Review*, no. 118, December 1955
- Banham, Reyner, 'Neoliberty. The Italian Retreat from Modern Architecture', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 125, no. 747, April 1959
- Banham, Reyner, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, The Architectural Press, London, 1982 (original ed., 1960)
- Banham, Reyner, *The New Brutalism*, The Architectural Press, London, 1966
- Banham, Reyner, *The Architecture of the Well-tempered Environment*, The Architectural Press, London, and The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1969
- Baracco, Mauro; Wright, Louise, 'Boyd in Melbourne', *Domus*, no. 808, October 1998
- Baracco, Mauro, 'Between Sicily and Melbourne'; brief notes on the privileged condition of marginality', *Transition*, no. 61/62, 2000
- Baracco, Mauro, 'The fit-out for Pause Exhibition; a project of my tradition', in Murphy, Catherine, (ed.), *Pause*, RMIT University Press, Melbourne, 2001
- Baracco, Mauro, 'Young Australian architects. For a "resisting" architecture, beyond the relation local/global. Four projects in Melbourne', *Casabella*, no. 688, April 2001
- Baracco, Mauro, 'Completed Yet Unconcluded: The Poetic Resistance of Some Melbourne Architecture', in van Schaik, Leon, (ed.), *Poetics in Architecture*, a monographic issue of *Architectural Design*, vol. 72, no. 2, March 2002
- Baracco, Mauro, ' "Idiocy" and marginality ', in Giriodi, Sisto, *A Piedmontese Atlas*, Celid, Torino, 2001
- Barrett, William; Aiken, Henry D., (eds.), *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, Random House, New York, 1962

Beilharz, Peter, *Imagining the antipodes: culture, theory and the visual in the work of Bernard Smith*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1997

Benedetti, Carla, *Pasolini contro Calvino*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1998

Bernasconi, Robert, *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing*, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1993

Bertoletti, Ilario, *Massimo Cacciari. Filosofia come a-teismo*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 2008

Boyd, Robin, *Victorian Modern: One hundred and eleven years of modern architecture in Victoria, Australia*, Architectural Students' Society of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, Melbourne, 1947

Boyd, Robin, 'Mornington Peninsula', *Architecture*, vol. 38, no. 4, October-December 1950

Boyd, Robin, 'The Vanishing Gumtree: Have you ever tried to find one in the suburbs?', *The Age*, 5 April 1950

Boyd, Robin, 'The New International', *Architecture*, vol. 39, no. 2, April-June 1951

Boyd, Robin, 'A New Eclecticism?', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 110, no. 657, September 1951

Boyd, Robin, *Australia's Home*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1968 (original ed., Melbourne University Press, 1952)

Boyd, Robin 'The Functional Neurosis', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 119, no. 710, February 1956

Boyd, Robin, 'The search for pleasingness', *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 38, no. 4, April 1957

Boyd, Robin, 'Engineering of Excitement', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 124, no. 742, November 1958

Boyd, Robin, *The Australian Ugliness*, F. W. Chesire, Melbourne, 1960

Boyd, Robin, a response to 'Six Questions on Italian Architecture', in *Quindici anni di architettura italiana (Fifteen years of Italian architecture)*, a monographic issue of *Casabella*, no. 261, May 1961

Boyd, Robin, *Kenzo Tange*, George Braziller, New York, 1962

Boyd, Robin, *The Walls Around Us: The Story of Australian Architecture*, F. W. Chesire, Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, 1962

Boyd, Robin, *The new architecture*, Longmans, Melbourne, 1963

Boyd, Robin, 'Under Tension', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 134, no. 801, November 1963

Boyd, Robin, *The Puzzle of Architecture*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965

Boyd, Robin, 'The state of Australian architecture', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 56, no. 3, June 1967

Boyd, Robin, 'The Sad End of New Brutalism', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 142, no. 845, July 1967

Boyd, Robin, 'Germany' (a review of the German Pavilion at the 1967 Montreal International Exposition), *The Architectural Review*, vol. 142, no. 846, August 1967

Boyd, Robin, *Artificial Australia, The Boyer Lectures 1967*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1968

Boyd, Robin, *New Directions in Japanese Architecture*, George Braziller, New York, 1968

Boyd, Robin, 'The Nineteen-sixties in Focus', in Button, John, (ed.), *Look Here! Considering the Australian Environment*, F. W. Chesire, Melbourne, 1968

Boyd, Robin, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970

Boyd, Robin, 'The Neighbourhood', in McKay, Ian; Boyd, Robin; Stretton, Hugh; Mant, John, *Living and Partly Living*, Thomas Nelson (Australia), Melbourne, 1971

Brack, John, *Four Contemporary Australian Landscape Painters*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1968

Burns, Karen; Edquist, Harriet, (eds.), *Robin Boyd: the architect as critic*, Transition Publishing, Melbourne, 1989

Button, John, (ed.), *Look Here! Considering the Australian Environment*, F. W. Chesire, Melbourne, 1968

Cacciari, Massimo, 'Eupalinos or Architecture', *Oppositions*, no. 21, Summer 1980

Cacciari, Massimo, *Dell'Inizio*, Adelphi, Milano, 1990

Cacciari, Massimo, *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993

Cacciari, Massimo, *Geo-filosofia dell'Europa*, Adelphi, Milano, 1994

Cacciari, Massimo, 'Res aedificatoria. Il "classico" di Mies van der Rohe', *Casabella*, no. 629, December 1995, (originally published in *Paradosso*, no. 9, 1994)

Cacciari, Massimo, *L'Arcipelago*, Adelphi, Milano, 1997

Cacciari, Massimo, 'To Dwell, to Think', *Casabella*, no. 662/663, December 1998/January 1999

Cacciari, Massimo; Dona, Massimo, *Arte, tragedia, tecnica*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2000

Cacciari, Massimo, 'The Shards of the All', *Casabella*, no. 684/685, December 2000/January 2001

Cacciari, Massimo, 'Nomads in prison', *Casabella*, no. 705, November 2002

Cacciari, Massimo, *La città*, Pazzini Editore, Villa Verucchio (Rimini), 2006 (original ed., 2004)

Callister, Winsome, 'The dialectic of desire and disappointment: Robin Boyd and Australian architecture', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992

Calvino, Italo, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Vintage, London, 1996 (original ed., *Lezioni Americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio*, 1988; first translated in English, 1992)

Cervantes Saavedra de, Michel, *The Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, André Deutsch, London, 1986 (original ed., *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, 1605 [part 1] and 1615 [part 2]; first translated in English as *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote*, 1755)

Clark, Deborah, *John Brack: inside and outside*, catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, National Gallery of Australia, 27 February – 14 June 1999

Cowen, Zelman, 'Homage to Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973

De Carlo, Andrea, *Pura Vita*, Mondadori, Milano, 2001

Dodge, Alan R., (ed.), *Eugen von Guérard*, catalogue of the homonymous travelling exhibition, Australian Gallery Directors Council and Australian National Gallery, 1980

Dostoevsky, Fyodor, *The Idiot*, Heinemann, London, 1913 (originally published in instalments by the journal *Russkij vestnik*, 1868-1869)

Eco, Umberto, *The Open Work*, Hutchinson Radius, London, 1989 (original ed., *Opera Aperta*, 1962)

Eco, Umberto, *The Name of the Rose*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, California, 1984 (original ed., *Il Nome della Rosa*, 1980)

Edquist, Harriet, (ed.), *Robin Boyd*, a monographic issue of *Transition*, no. 38, 1992

Edquist, Harriet, (ed.), *Frederick Romberg: The Architecture of Migration*, RMIT University Press, Melbourne, 2000

Evans, Doug, *Indistinct. Pierre Bourdieu and the Field of Architectural Production*, PhD Thesis, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, 2002

Evans, Robin, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 2000 (original ed., 1995)

Evans, Robin, *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*, Architectural Association, London, 1997

Farrell Krell, David, (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Ferrari, Paolo, *Achille Castiglioni*, Electa, Milan, 1984

Ferry, Luc; Renaut, Alain, *Heidegger and Modernity*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1990 (original ed., Heidegger et les Modernes, 1988)

Foster, Hal, (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991 (original ed., 1983)

Foster, Hal, *The Return of the Real*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1996

Frampton, Kenneth, *Modern Architecture: a critical history*, Thames and Hudson, London 1992 (original ed., 1980)

Frampton, Kenneth, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance', in Foster, Hal, (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991 (original ed., 1983)

Frampton, Kenneth; Drew Philip, *Harry Seidler. Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 1992

Frampton, Kenneth, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1995

Franzini, Elio, 'Estetica. Teoria della Formatività' (review of Luigi Pareyson's book *Estetica. Teoria della Formatività*), *Domus*, no. 795, July/August 1997

Freeland, J. M., 'Elizabeth Farm New South Wales', in *Historic Homesteads of Australia*, Australian Council of National Trust, Cassell Australia Limited, Melbourne, 1969

Giedion, Sigfried, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1980 (original ed., 1941)

Goad, Philip, 'Pamphlets at the Frontier. Robin Boyd and the Will to Incite an Australian Architectural Culture', in Burns, Karen; Edquist, Harriet, (eds.), *Robin Boyd: the architect as critic*, Transition Publishing, Melbourne, 1989

Goad, Philip, 'Robin Boyd and the Design of the House, 1959-1971. New Eclecticism: Ethic and Aesthetic', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992

Goad, Philip, *Melbourne Architecture*, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 1999

Greer, Germaine, 'Whitefella jump up. The Shortest Way to Nationhood', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 11, Black Inc. Publishing, Melbourne, 2003

Gregotti, Vittorio, 'La mimesi della ragione', *Rassegna*, no. 31/3, Year IX, September 1987

Gregotti, Vittorio, *New Directions in Italian Architecture*, George Braziller, New York, 1968

Grishin, Sasha, *The Art of John Brack*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1990

Gropius, Walter, *Scope of Total Architecture*, Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, 1955

Habermas, Jürgen, 'Modernity – an Incomplete Project', in Foster, Hal, (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991 (original ed., 1983)

Halliburton, David, *Poetic Thinking. An Approach to Heidegger*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981

Hamann, Conrad, *Modern Architecture in Melbourne. The Architecture of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, 1927-1971*, PhD Thesis, Visual Art Department, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, July 1978

Hamann, Conrad; Hamann, Chris, 'Anger and the New Order: some aspects of Robin Boyd's career', *Transition*, vol. 2, no. 3/4, September/December 1981; later republished in *Transition*, no. 38, 1992

Hamann, Conrad, 'Against the Dying of the Light: Robin Boyd and Australian Architecture', *Transition*, no. 29, 1989

Hamann, Conrad, 'Envoie 1962-71', *Transition*, no. 38, 1992

Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford UK, 1980

Heathcote, Christopher, *A quiet revolution: the rise of Australian art 1946-1968*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne, 1995

Heidegger, Martin, *The Concept of Time* (paper first delivered in July 1924), translated by William McNeill, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK and Cambridge, USA, 1992 (original ed., *Der Begriff der Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1989)

Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1996 (original ed., *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1927)

Heidegger, Martin, *The Question of Being*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1958 (original ed., Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1956)

Heidegger, Martin, *What Is Called Thinking?*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1968 (original ed., *Was Heisst Denken?*, 1954)

Heidegger, Martin, *Nietzsche. Volumes One: The Will to Power as Art. Volume Two: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, translated from the German by David Farrell Krell, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 1991 (original ed. of Volume One, in *Nietzsche, Erster Band*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1961; original ed. of Volume Two, in *Nietzsche, Erster Band*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1961, and in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1954)

Heidegger, Martin, 'Overcoming Metaphysics', in *The End of Philosophy*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1973 (original ed., in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1954)

Heidegger, Martin, *Identity and Difference*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1969 (original ed., *Identität und Differenz*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1957)

Heidegger, Martin, *Discourse on Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1966 (original ed., *Gelassenheit*, 1959)

Heidegger, Martin, 'Art and Space' (paper first delivered on the 3rd October 1964; original ed., *Die Kunst und der Raum*, 1969), in Leach, Neil, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997

Heidegger, Martin, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, 'What are Poets For?' (paper first delivered on the 29th December 1926), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (paper first delivered on the 13th November 1935, and further re-elaborated in following papers delivered in 1936), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, 'The Thing' (paper first delivered on the 6th June 1950; first published in 1951), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (paper first delivered on the 5th August 1951), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, '...Poetically Man Dwells...' (paper first delivered on the 6th October 1951; first published in 1954), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1971

Heidegger, Martin, *Early Greek Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1975

Heidegger, Martin, 'Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)' (paper first delivered on the 4th May 1951; original ed., in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen, 1954), in *Early Greek Thinking*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1975

Heidegger, Martin, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Heidegger, Martin, 'The Age of the World Picture' (paper first delivered on the 9th June 1938), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Heidegger, Martin, 'Science and Reflection' (paper first delivered on the 4th August 1953), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Heidegger, Martin, 'The Question Concerning Technology' (paper first delivered on the 18th November 1953), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Heidegger, Martin, 'Letter on Humanism' (original ed., *Brief über den Humanismus*, 1947), in Farrell Krell, David, (ed.), *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1977

Heidegger, Martin, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, translated by Theodore Kisiel, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1985 (original ed., *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1979)

Heynen, Hilde, *Architecture and Modernity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1999

Holl, Steven, *Anchoring*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1989

Holtzman, Harry; James, Martin S., (eds), *The new art, the new life – The Collected Writings of Piet Mondrian*, G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1986

Kaufman, Walter, (ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, Meridian Books, New York, 1956

Kierkegaard, Søren, *Fear and Trembling and The Sickness unto Death*, translated with introductions and notes by Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1941

Kierkegaard, Søren, *The Sickness unto Death*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1980 (original ed., *Sygdommen til Døden*, Copenhagen, 1849)

Krauss, Rosalind E., *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1986

Krauss, Rosalind E., 'LeWitt in Progress', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1986

Lang, Peter; Menking, William, *Superstudio. Life Without Objects*, Skira, Milano, 2003

Leach, Neil, *Rethinking Architecture*, Routledge, London, 1997

McAuley, James, *The End of Modernity: Essays on Literature, Art and Culture*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1959

McKay, Ian; Boyd, Robin; Stretton, Hugh; Mant, John, *Living and Partly Living*, Thomas Nelson (Australia), Melbourne, 1971

McWhorter, Ladelle; Stenstad, Gail, (eds.), *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 2009

Metcalf, Andrew, *Canberra Architecture*, The Watermark Press, Sydney, 2003

Musil, Robert, *The Man Without Qualities*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1967 (original ed., *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1930 [volumes 1 and 2] and 1942 [volume 3])

Nelson, Eric S., 'Responding to Heaven and Earth: Daoism, Heidegger and Ecology', *Environmental Philosophy*, vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 2004

Neuhart, John; Neuhart, Marilyn; Eames, Ray, *Eames design*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1989

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Dover Publications, Mineola, N.Y., 1995 (original ed., 1872)

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Daybreak*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982 (original ed., 1881)

Pareyson, Luigi, *Estetica. Teoria della Formatività*, Bompiani, Milano, 1988

Persico, Edoardo, 'Punto ed a capo per l'architettura', in Veronesi, Giulia, (ed.), *Edoardo Persico – Scritti d'architettura (1927/1935)*, Vallecchi Editori, Firenze, 1968 (originally published in *Domus*, November 1934)

Pettina, Gianni, (ed.), *Radicals – Design and Architecture 1960/75*, Il Ventilabro, Firenze 1996 (catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, VI International Architecture Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 15 September-17 November 1996)

Polano, Sergio, *Achille Castiglioni – Tutte le Opere, 1938 – 2000*, Electa, Milan, 2001

Rieser, Max, 'Estetica. Teoria della Formatività' (review of Luigi Pareyson's book *Estetica. Teoria della Formatività*), *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Summer 1962)

Rogers, Ernesto Nathan, 'Continuity or Crisis?', *Casabella*, no. 215, April/May 1957

Rogers, Ernesto Nathan, *Esperienza dell'architettura*, (edited by Luca Molinari), Skira, Milano, 1997 (original ed., Giulio Einaudi editore, 1958)

Rogers, Ernesto Nathan, 'The Next Step', *Casabella*, no. 261, May 1961

Rogers, Ernesto Nathan, *Il senso della storia/The Sense of History*, (with an essay by Luciano Semerani), Edizioni Unicopli, Milano, 1999

Rogers, Ernesto Nathan, *Lettere di Ernesto a Ernesto e viceversa*, (edited by Luca Molinari), Archinto, Milano, 2000

Rowland, Mark, *The Philosopher and the Wolf*, Granta, London, 2009 (original ed., 2008)

Sartre, Jean Paul, 'Existentialism Is a Humanism' (paper first delivered in 1945; original ed., *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*, Nagel, Paris, 1946), in Kaufman, Walter, (ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, Meridian Books, New York, 1956

Saunders, David, 'Afterword', in Boyd, Robin, *Living in Australia*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1970

Saunders, David, 'Retrospective – Robin Boyd', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 61, no. 1, February 1972

Scott, Geoffrey, *The Architecture of Humanism: A Study in the History of Taste*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 1999 (original ed., 1914)

Serle, Geoffrey, *Robin Boyd. A Life*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995

Smith, Bernard, *Place, Taste and Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979 (original ed., Ure Smith, Sydney, 1945)

Smith, Bernard, 'The arts', *Arts Festival of the Olympic Games Committee* (Melbourne, Olympic Committee, 1956)

Smith, Bernard, 'The Antipodean Manifesto', (first published as a foreword to 'The Antipodeans' Exhibition, Melbourne, 1959), in Smith, Bernard, *The Antipodean Manifesto. Essays in Art and History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1976

Smith, Bernard, *Australian Painting 1788-1960*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1962

Smith, Bernard, *European vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850. A study in the history of art and ideas*, Oxford University Press, London, 1960

Smith, Bernard, *The Antipodean Manifesto. Essays in Art and History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1976

Smith, Bernard, *Imagining the Pacific. In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton (Melbourne), 1992

Smith, Bernard, *Modernism's history. A study in twentieth-century art and ideas*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1998

Smith, Bernard, with Smith, Terry and Heathcote, Christopher, *Australian Painting 1788-2000*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001

Smithson, Alison, (ed.), *Team 10 Primer*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1968

Smithson, Alison; Smithson, Peter, *The Shift*, a monographic issue of *Architectural Monographs*, no. 7, Academy Editions, London, 1982

Smithson, Alison; Smithson, Peter, *Italian Thoughts*, A. + P. Smithson, London (printed in Sweden), 1993

Smithson, Alison; Smithson, Peter, *Changing the Art of Inhabitation*, Artemis, London, 1994

Smithson, Alison; Smithson, Peter, *The Charged Void: Architecture*, The Monacelli Press, New York, 2001

Smithson, Alison; Smithson, Peter, *The Charged Void: Urbanism*, The Monacelli Press, New York, 2005

de Solà Morales, Ignasi, 'Arquitectura Débil/Weak Architecture', *Quaderns d'Arquitectura i Urbanisme*, no. 175, October/December 1987

Stephen, Ann; Goad Philip; McNamara, Andrew, *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, in association with Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney, 2008 (catalogue of the homonymous exhibition, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 8 August-15 February 2009; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 23 March-6 July 2009; State Library of Queensland, Brisbane, 24 July-18 October 2009)

Stuckey, Helen, 'Robin Boyd and the Revolt against Suburbia', *Imaginary Australia*, *B* Architectural Magazine, no. 52/53, 1995/96

Tafuri, Manfredo, *Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1976 (original ed., *Progetto e utopia*, 1973)

Tafuri, Manfredo; Dal Co, Francesco, *Modern Architecture*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1979 (original ed., *Architettura Contemporanea*, 1976)

Tafuri, Manfredo, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1995 (original ed., *La sfera e il labirinto. Avanguardia e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70*, 1980; first translated in English, 1987)

Tafuri, Manfredo, 'Introduction: The Historical 'Project'', in Tafuri, Manfredo, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1995 (original ed., *La sfera e il labirinto. Avanguardia e architettura da Piranesi agli anni '70*, 1980; first translated in English, 1987)

Teyssot, George; Henninger, Paul, 'One Portrait of Tafuri', in *Being Manfredo Tafuri – Wickedness, Anxiety, Disenchantment*, a monographic issue of *Any*, no. 25/26, 2000

Tomatis, Francesco, 'La negazione del tempo in Nietzsche', in *Il Pensiero*, Nuova serie, vol. XXXIV, 1995/1

Tomatis, Francesco, *Ontologia del Male: l'ermeneutica di Pareyson*, Citta' Nuova Editrice, Roma, 1995

Tomatis, Francesco, *Escatologia della Negazione*, Citta' Nuova Editrice, Roma, 1999

Tomatis, Francesco, *Come leggere Nietzsche*, Tascabili Bompiani, Milano, 2006

Transition's editors; Dance, Sue, 'Interview with Manfredo Tafuri', *Transition*, vol. 2, no 3/4, September/December 1981

van Schaik, Leon, (ed.), *Poetics in Architecture*, a monographic issue of *Architectural Design*, vol. 72, no. 2, March 2002

Vattimo, Gianni; Rovatti, Pier Aldo, (eds.), *Il Pensiero Debole*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 1983

Vattimo, Gianni, *The End of Modernity. Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-Modern Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge UK, 1988 (original ed., *La fine della modernità*, 1985)

Vattimo, Gianni, *Tecnica ed esistenza. Una mappa filosofica del Novecento*, Paravia, Torino, 1997

Veronesi, Giulia, (ed.), *Edoardo Persico – Scritti d'architettura (1927/1935)*, Vallecchi Editori, Firenze, 1968

Vitiello, Vincenzo, *Elogio dello Spazio*, Bompiani, Milano, 1994

Webster, Helena, (ed.), *Modernism Without Rhetoric: Essays on the work of Alison and Peter Smithson*, Academy Editions, London, 1997

Wigley, Mark, 'Post-Operative History', in *Being Manfredo Tafuri – Wickedness, Anxiety, Disenchantment*, a monographic issue of *Any*, no. 25/26, 2000

Wigley, Mark, untitled unpublished paper presented at *Formulation Fabrication. The Architecture of History*, 17th annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ), Wellington, New Zealand, 16 November 2000

Unnamed author: monographic journals, magazines and magazine's sections on Robin Boyd

Architecture and Arts, no. 13, August 1954

Architecture and Arts, no. 60, October 1958

Architect, vol. 3, no. 17, November/December 1971 (edited by Neil Cleheran, titled: *Robin Boyd 1919-1971*)

Building Ideas, vol. 5, no. 5, March 1973 (titled: *Robin Boyd: Visions of living*)

Architecture in Australia, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973

Architect, June/July 1989, pp. 3-23

Named and unnamed author: articles, reviews and publications on Boyd's individual projects

Lyell, Peter, 'Walled-in for peace and space', *Woman's Day and Home*, 4 April 1955

'House near Melbourne', *The Architectural Review*, vol. 108, no. 647, November 1950

'House at Camberwell', *Architecture and Arts*, no. 13, August 1954
'House on the Beach Road, Black Rock', *Architecture and Arts*, August 1954

'The Southgate Fountain', *Architecture and Arts*, August 1960

'Motor Inn in Melbourne', *Architecture and Arts*, vol. 11, no. 2, February 1963

'John Batman Motor Inn', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 53, no. 1, March 1964

'House in South Yarra, Victoria', *The Australian Journal of Architecture and Arts*, no. 86, December 1960

'McCaughey Court, Ormond College, University of Melbourne', *Architect*, vol. 2, no. 3, May/June 1968

'Squares in the round', *Architect*, vol. 2, no. 4, July/August 1968

'Robin Boyd, Original Sketches', *Architecture in Australia*, vol. 62, no. 2, April 1973

Allenby, Guy, (ed.), 'The Iris House then and now', *Architectural Review Australia*, no. 60, Winter 1997

Creighton, Trevor; Freeman, Peter; Russell, Roslyn, *Manning Clark House: Reflections*, Manning Clark House, Forrest, ACT, 2002

Archives/Collections of Robin Boyd's work

Robin Boyd Collection, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne

Dictionaries

Italian-Ancient Greek/Ancient Greek-Italian Dictionary, Avallardi, Milano, 1984

Il Nuovo Zingarelli, Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana (Dictionary of the Italian Language), Zanichelli, 1988

Soanes, Catherine; Waite, Maurice; Hawker, Sara, (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary, Thesaurus, and Wordpower Guide*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001

