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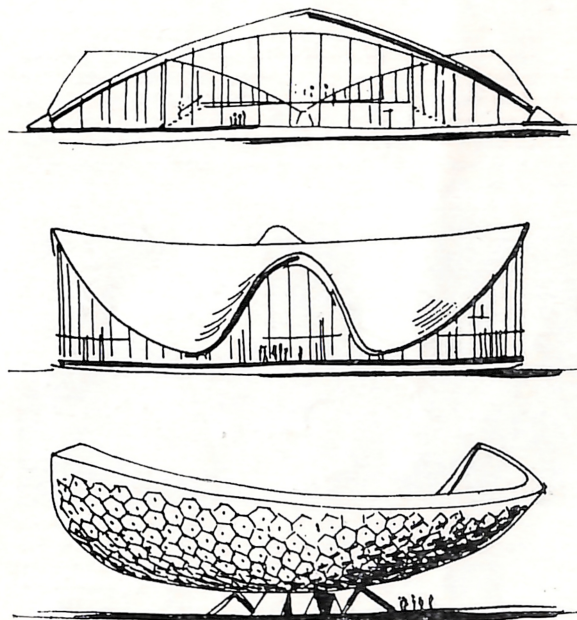


Sydney photographer Max Dupain has printed some of Burley Griffin's negatives (kindly lent by Peter Harrison), showing a panoramic view of Castlecrag after bushfires had shorn it of greenery and before habitation and planting made sense of the buildings; also a view of the Estate Agent's site office emerging smiling through the sign writing. These are being shown (at Castlecrag during anniversary celebrations) along with a lovingly photographed exhibition (by Max Dupain) of Burley Griffin houses, details, projects, etc., emphasising the nobility, pride and whole-hearted strength of a creative mind.



¶ A new book by Robin Boyd, "The Puzzle of Architecture", published by Melbourne University Press, 65 shillings, presents a hypothesis for understanding the development of modern architecture through the simple dialectic of revolution, counter-revolution and "third-phase", though the current third phase is not exactly a synthesis of the previous two. To those who have kept up with the arguments of the theorists like Banham, the Smithsons, Kahn and Team X, and the changing affectations of architects' buildings as presented photographically in the various international architectural journals, the reasoning and trend of development will not be unfamiliar. But Boyd writes, characteristically, with such imposing simplicity and terse wit, and has pin-pointed the significant moments when particular personalities or buildings have spawned a new "guide vision" with such conviction that one is led to a genuine and more thorough understanding than could be possible before this book was written. "The Functionalist style died not because it was simply functional, as its more insensitive and uncomprehending cities complained, but because it was simply not unfunctional — and was recognised as an ultimately dull, unproductive double negative. Thus the rapid reaction to the positivism of the second phase as soon as the battle was won. Expressionist Monolithic or Decorated — certainly they were no longer negative, but also often in practice they were a denial of functional principles. Yet there is a wide scope for positive action within the functional, natural code of design, and in the third phase architects are busily investigating the possibilities". "I used the term 'third-phase' frankly for convenience in describing the last evolutionary phase of twentieth century architecture. No doubt many better names could be devised for it. Better still it should be allowed to return to anonymity. The attachment of some neater or more catchy phrase might suggest, because of the architectural tradition, that it has a recognisable form. On the contrary, it is only a conviction that can lead to a thousand images or guide visions, and thus can have no name in the stylistic sense. Some of its images have suffered already. The random-pylon fashion inadvertently created by Louis Kahn spread fast and subsided predictably". The situation is of course dangerous. Architects wanting to be hip will be determined to be "third-phase" now that the condition has been pointed out to them. The minute the label appears the contents start degenerating. It is therefore conceivable that the third phase will not now be the "last revolutionary phase of the twentieth century". A fourth phase is imminent, when the consciously un-self-conscious mood of realism will have bred another, and probably more eclectic, mutant. As Boyd recognises "The hardest task of all is the perverting influence of fashion". Perhaps this too is the most serious criticism of the book: that Boyd has almost made the pursuit of architec-

ture seem as lightly determined as the fashions of Paris. The passionate convictions, the sometime fury of the sincere seekers, are, when seen in calm retrospect, reduced to mere scene-making: coutouriers with arms akimbo haggling over a tailor's dummy of mankind. "The Puzzle of Architecture" is Robin Boyd's best book yet, certainly the most profound and likely to be the most influential of all. It is beautifully printed and designed, and illustrated by the author with simple ink sketches (an example shown below) which better than photographs ever could, pursue the argument parallel with the text.



New shapes of the fifties

¶ The Capitol Theatre, in Swanston Street, Melbourne, designed by Walter Burley Griffin, will be reopened on December 27th, ceiling intact, with the seating capacity of 2,100 reduced to 850. First showing is the film "The Great Race". The opening in 1929 featured "The Ten Commandments".

¶ The final estimated cost of repairing Kings Bridge, Melbourne, is £1,004,000, double the original contract estimate.

¶ A new award has been created by the N.S.W. Chapter of the R.A.I.A. First winner of the Civic Design Award for "improvement in the quality of man-made civic environment" is the El Alamein fountain in Kings Cross (Bob Woodward of Woodward, Taranto and Wallace, architects). The 1965 Wilkinson Award, with the aim of recognising, encouraging and rewarding good house architecture, was given to Peter Johnson of McConnell, Smith and Johnson for his own house in Chatswood, Sydney (C-S No. 132). This house has been around for some time and is well known and much admired by most students and the "with it" group—official recognition long overdue. The Blackett Award for country work is for Taree Technical College, illustrated below, by the P.W.D. Govt. Architect (Michael Dysart, project architect). All these buildings, including the Sulman Award winners (C-S No. 156, Oct. '65) are very worthwhile contributions to Australian architecture, sincere, imaginative, and while making many contentions detailed statements, few serious critics would argue with this selection. The juries as well as the prizewinners are to be congratulated. Press and TV coverage were, as usual, good, but with so many buildings being illustrated nowadays, it would be better Public Relations to spread the awards out over the year.

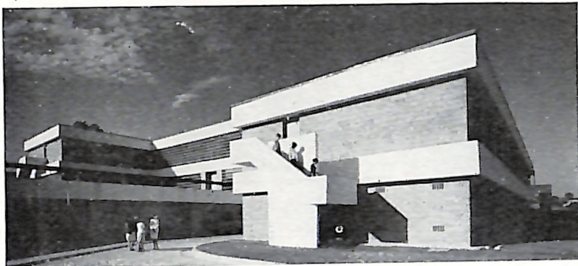


Photo: Max Dupain

Technical College, at Taree, N.S.W. Govt. Archt. P.W.D.; Michael Dysart Project Archt, Dennis Rourke, working drawings. Longworth & Mackenzie, engrs. Albert Hayter, builder. Cost £190,000. Materials: Off-form concrete, conc. blocks, tallow wood floors, aluminium window frames. Three main functions on separate levels: (a) welding and machine shop, (b) advisor and women's activities (sewing, etc.), (c) wood working with vehicle access to (b) and (c). A strong and masculine building, crisp and contrasty, low slung in the landscape following a line of adjacent hills. Deep pre-cast roof members leave work areas free of obstruction. East and West faces shaded by horizontal precast louvres. Houses tools and trade from giant lathes, power tools and oxy-welding plant to carpenters' tools and knitting needles. Plan allows free access to all departments. Exterior expresses interior without humbug.



The old Fremantle Asylum is to be restored and put to use as a Museum. This magnificent building was erected in the 1850's to house an increasing number of sub-normal convicts. It was subsequently used as an old ladies' home, around the turn of the century, and now houses certain schools of the Fremantle Technical Institute. The walls are of warm coloured limestone with deeply revealed windows and gables to the steep pitched shingle roofs, giving a distinct likeness to traditional Cotswold architecture. The West elevation illustrated has an arched colonnade, with decoration to the gables in the Dutch manner. The opposite side is at present a shambles of later outbuildings and lean-tos. The restoration to be carried out by Raymond Jones is planned to be completed in three stages of approximately £40,000 each and the ultimate development will house a historical museum, art gallery, sculpture school and cafeteria. We can only hope that this enlightened project will not fall through a lack of sufficient worthwhile exhibits.

¶ The Housing Commission of Victoria is embarking upon a redevelopment experiment in Collingwood. Thirty-six two-storeyed three-bedroomed terrace houses will occupy a 2½ acre site each with a 20 foot frontage, small backyard, and a shared central ½ acre park and playing area. The new building replaces 35 old houses. The Commission believes this type of relatively high-density development, housing 75 people/acre compared to 180 people/acre for multi-storey flats, will cater more effectively for Australian family life (C-S No. 154). This experiment of course was popular in Melbourne last century and it is to be hoped this redevelopment proves to be successful.

¶ In Tasmania, Mr. Bethune, State Opposition Leader, said the Government would have to get rid of the "dead hand of the Public Service" if it wanted to recruit more top-line professional men to its service. The Government had had to recruit 20 architects from England because of "unrealistic" wages and conditions set down by the Public Service Act. The English architects have been offered five-year contracts with fares paid home on contract expiration. £32,000 was listed for salaries in 1965-66 and £20,000 for bringing them to Tasmania. Mr. McFie observed in the L.C.: "Architects' fees for additions to the public library in Hobart alone amounted to £66,000, enough to pay the wages of 22 assisted English architects".

¶ C-S reported last issue a number of new projects awaiting approval, generated by the repeal of Schedule 7 allowing mixed development in Sydney's centre. Here are more of this city's project boom: Qantas has submitted plans to Federal Cabinet for a 30-storey tower block worth probably £10 million (the present Qantas headquarters was opened in October 1957 and is already overcrowded, moving Qantas departments to other office buildings); Stocks and Holdings Ltd. £2 million project for a 400 foot 38 storey tower block which includes commercial basement, shopping colonnade at street level, four car parking floors, and 64 one-bedroom units and 192 bachelor units. It is estimated that the value of 84 new buildings in Sydney's central area constructed in the last 10 years is over £153 million. Returning to Melbourne from an overseas tour, Mr. Arthur Leith of Leith and Bartlett, winners of the R.A.I.A. Convention competition (C.S. No. 155) rang a familiar cry, "We have to think big if we are going to stop the uneconomic sprawl of our cities". Mr. Knee, M.C.C. engineer, on his return from overseas, viewed that Melbourne is "terrifyingly backward" in city planning and redevelopment. Cr. Morgan, of City Council's building and town planning committee, noted in the V.E.F. newsletter that marketing activities which once made Melbourne a live city were fast going to the outer suburbs. The transferring of non-production and financial departments to outer areas when new factories are established he considers should be discouraged. Perhaps Melbourne should consider the simplicity of Sydney's new policy. Projects and proposals announced in Melbourne this last month concern themselves with traffic, parks, and an inevitable sprawl: Planning work on proposed £35 million Flinders Street station redevelopment has been suspended awaiting a final decision on the exact location of the city underground; the R.A.C.V. became the 184th objector to the M.C.C.'s 1964 town plan and counter-proposed a £150 million expenditure on a long-term plan for developing city streets at various levels for public and delivery vehicular traffic and private vehicular traffic, leaving open-air levels to the pedestrian, and gardens; a four-acre riverside park between Queens and Spencer St. bridges has been approved in principle; State Cabinet accepted a new plan for the eastern section of Melbourne's ring road development involving a £6.4 million first stage with a new bridge over the Yarra, to start in three years time; Frankston, over 20 miles south on the bay-shore, proposes to build a cultural centre including a theatre and library, costing £124,600 (architects Berg & Alexandra); Dandenong, over 20 miles S.E., has commenced the first stage 40 beds, of a new 350-bed hospital costing £556,000 (architects, Yuncken Freeman Pty. Ltd.); work will commence on a ten-acre shopping development at Waverley costing £750,000 (architects, Harry A. and Frank L. Norris Associates); Ringwood Council is tendering for its 14 acre, £3 million shopping centre development; Preston, the £9 million, 51 acre Northland shopping centre is well advanced in construction and will open in October, 1966. One factor likely to change the character of the sprawl is that by 1966 one flat will be completed for every two houses. This compares with one flat for every fourteen houses in 1957.

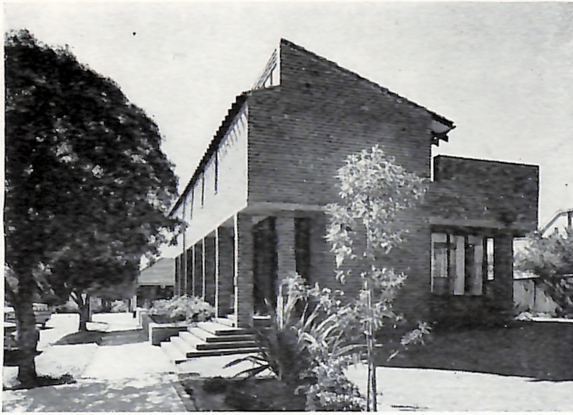


Photo: David Moore

Dental Clinic, Mosman, Sydney. Allen, Jack & Cottier, archts. Meares and Richards, builders. Cost £23,000 including air-conditioning. Materials: overburnt face bricks, swiss pattern roof tiling, hardwall plaster inside, quarry tile entrance floor, terra cotta coloured composition flooring elsewhere, wood frames painted dark green. Four dental surgeries and entrance foyer (waiting, etc.) on Ground floor, and a Flat and Roof Terrace on the top floor. The aim was to produce a solid, domestic quality with no intrusive impact in an ageing suburb, yet still provide an efficient, up-to-date workshop: all pretty successful. The hygienic qualities of a clinic are there without the conscious precision, and the only real intrusion is the sudden termination of the building at the street intersection, with a consequent unsympathetic turning of the corner — a hip roof and returned colonnade (since this is such a strong motif) might have made for a greater sense of unity. Otherwise a worthy envelope for some superbly designed dental equipment and for variously designed patients.



When so many old City buildings are being removed to make way for the new, it is refreshing to see the old Courier Mail Building rejuvenated by Colonial Mutual Life. Qantas (Queensland's very own airline) has done a first rate job at street level and shown that it is not necessary to build from scratch to maintain a "public image". The old building is Jazz Age, circa 1930, and has been painted white, and left "as found". The interiors are a different story and well designed in the Mid 60 idiom. R. F. Gibson, archt. The whole project makes it necessary for developers to re-think their usual programme of 'demolish and rebuild'.

¶ The Perth City Council's city planning officer, Paul Ritter, has been appointed council architect, and will design future council buildings and be liaison officer between the council and private architects designing council buildings.

¶ Sydney Opera House: Mr. Davis Hughes, Minister for Public Works, has taken personal control of the cost checking of the Opera House. Australian dailies have had a lovely time reporting the details of fees received by Mr. Utzon, which total nearly £500,000, being only about 5 per cent. of building costs. In concluding a series of articles in "The Australian" last month, Mr. Robin Boyd said of the Opera House: "One of the things that this building will do for Australia will be to set a new standard in meticulousness, in the most diligent attention to details. Its great consumption of money and time undoubtedly will be reflected in a polish that is rare in the modern world and hardly known here . . . " . . . By accident, unexpectedly, reluctantly, Sydney is creating one of those heart-moving, non-material ornaments of society which happen throughout history once a century or so. Although she didn't plan it this way, she has taken on the role of rich patron to a fine artist . . . "

¶ The R.A.I.A. Housing Committee (composed of members of the S.A. Chapter: Messrs. I. P. Berriman, J. S. Chappel, A. J. Gillisen, L. Ginsberg, G. Herbert, Z. Kapelis, J. N. Morphett, N. J. Platten, C. W. Pudney, B. Snowden and G. Young), constituted "to investigate ways and means of the architectural profession returning to the field of housing" has presented its report, included a revised scale of fees for repetitive houses, to Federal Council. It is hoped that the Council acts promptly and positively to implement the proposals of the committee, which in effect was carrying out the resolutions made at the Twelfth Architectural Convention in Adelaide, back in 1963.

¶ Sydney Building Information Centre reports winners of the 4th Trade & Technical Literature Competition: Group I: Single sheets (printed one or two sides), Jones & Joseph Pty. Ltd. Group II: Folder (four pages from single sheet folded once), Raymor Industries Pty. Ltd. Group III: Books and catalogues (bound publication which includes stapling, stitching, spiral binding, etc.), Rotaflex Pty. Ltd. Group IV: Technical Bulletins, Pilkington Bros. Ltd. The competition attracted 240 entries from 87 firms. The number of entries was much larger than last year, the general standard of literature submitted showed improvements. The judges placed great importance on matters such as: paper size, filing margins, index systems, identifications, subject performance, form, installation, use and maintenance, specification clauses, visual presentation of the product or service and graphics. Notable omissions in many entries were Sfb and UDC classifications, names and addresses of local distributors or agents of overseas companies, the life expectation and limitations of the use of products, sample specification clauses, maintenance instruction and purchasing details such as the cost and the date of issue of literature. Competition judges were: Mr. Brian Cassidy, A.R.A.I.A., A.R.I.B.A.; Mr. Russell C. Jack, F.R.A.I.A., A.R.I.B.A.; Mr. Peter Keys, F.R.A.I.A.; Mr. George Flammang, Centre Manager, Sydney Building Information Centre Ltd.

¶ Mr. Ikaboth Riwoe, an Indonesian architecture student at Queensland University, has won a £50 prize for his design of a new Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. The competition was open to Indonesian students in Australia and N.Z. His proposal for two-storey concrete office and residence buildings will cost within the competition limit of £125,000. The Tasmanian Timber Association competition for a house, open to students of Melbourne University, has been won by Dennis Carter, receiving £75. Miss Yvonne von Hartel was second, £45, and Tony Bryant, third, £30. The Barrett Memorial Medal was presented by the Town and Country Planning Association of Victoria to Councillor Vincent Edward Vibert who, from 1951, pioneered a town planning scheme for the City of Shepparton.

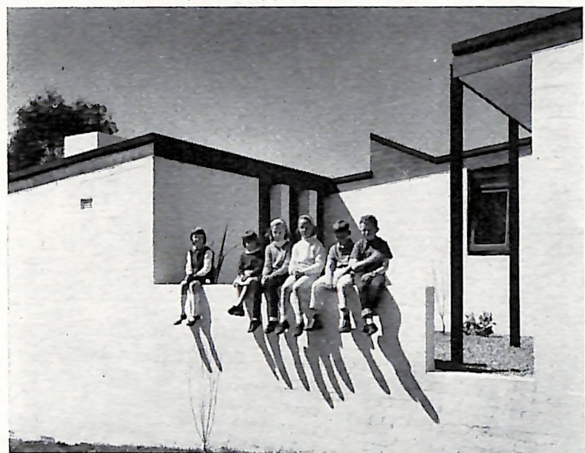


Photo: David Moore

House at Mugga Way, Canberra. Allen, Jack & Cottier, archts. W. G. Scharwarzlose, builder. Approx. 22 squares house and carport, verandahs, etc. Cost £15,000. Materials: white bagged brick, metal roof, timber fascias and windows (oiled), brick paved floors. Refreshing, simple and strong statement in the street, with a Mediterranean quality inside — light bounces around enclosed courtyard, brick paving and white walls, but the courtyards are too small — right for Paddington but wrong for Canberra.



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