Mining the Continuum: Architecture Without Beginning or End

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Architecture and Design).

Timothy Roger Greer

B.Arch

FRAIA

School of Architecture and Design

College of Design and Social Context

RMIT University

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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.

Timothy Roger Greer

03/02/2016
jointly and severally
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dedication
To Linley M Hindmarsh
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introduction
Representing the blended and collaborative work of an architectural practice requires a degree of simplification and separation that may not accurately reflect the real disorder of life, and this is true of the current set of studies that make up the dissertations of Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin. Whilst these dissertations are individual research projects, we have together researched our collective practice as this is our working milieu, the setting and the producer of our architectural endeavours.

In a very simplified way, the title of the combined study signals the structure of the dissertations. “Jointly and Severally” is the over-arching title selected by the authors and in essence the Joint aspects are covered in this Volume Two, whilst the separate volumes of Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin contain the several elements that are more particular to their individual work and architectural approach. The separate dissertations’ Volume One, contain an essay by Peter Tonkin and an essay by Tim Greer.

The question is clearly raised – “where is the third ‘several’ volume – that of Brian Zulaikha?” Brian commenced the doctorate, but withdrew during 2014. The work he had completed is contained in the ‘Joint’ Volume Two of each submission. This will be discussed later in this introduction.

This volume is set out to introduce the reader to the work of the practice through a brief timeline setting out the major events that have shaped the work since 1987 when the business was formed. This is followed by a section describing those works selected by each of us as seminal, that make up the dissertations of Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin. Whilst these dissertations are individual research and separation that may not accurately reflect the real architectural interest or which never proceeded beyond an initial stage. It is arranged chronologically, with the place of the seminal works held by a single black and white image. Each entry lists the awards won by the project.

The catalogue precedes a review of the overall stance of TZG, a contextualisation of the firm’s place in the profession locally and internationally, and briefly describes the themes and concerns that are common to the work of all three partners. Many of these themes are further explored in the dissertation essays by Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin that are contained in their own respective separate volumes.

As Brian Zulaikha is integral to the practice, the place of his detailed dissertation is filled with an essay that describes his own approach to architectural work, and his ‘backstory’ which illuminates the work itself. It reviews the project selected as an exemplar, the house at Balmain, and concludes with an in depth interview conducted with the architectural and social commentator Dr Elizabeth Farrelly.

Similar interviews by Dr Farrelly with Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin are contained in their respective volumes. These interviews are valuable in providing not only an external viewpoint, but as they tease out the words of each of us, they enable a looser, more reflective approach to the concerns of practice, the impact of one’s own history, and one’s feelings about past work.

The “Jointly and Severally” title is drawn from legal phraseology and represents the liability of individuals in a partnership or other united structure. It was selected for the way it describes the way the TZG practice functions: united but at the same time separate. To a certain extent the practice is siloed, with the three partners undertaking work separately, often with little or no collaboration. The smaller the project the more likely there is to be no interaction between Brian, Tim or Peter during the design and execution of the work. Where the practice unites on all projects is at the level beneath the three partners. Headed by a junior partner who is in charge of the quality management system and contracts, is a team whose size varies with the workload, but which is fairly stable at twenty to twenty five architects, graduates and students. This is not segregated into a design team, a documentation team and a construction management team, like many practices, but rather managed so that the personnel on each project remain involved to a greater or lesser degree throughout the project from inception to completion.
This enables the junior staff to learn from the more senior, and develops in all a sense of ownership and responsibility for the project. Most importantly, no architect can design or detail with any degree of three dimensional skill without first having seen a project constructed, not just with one or two walk-arounds, but with prolonged engagement with the issues on site, with the pervading problems of structural and services integration, of ‘unbuildable’ details and unresolved clashes at junctions. This engagement also deepens the ability to manage people, the superintendents and tradespeople on site, the suppliers and, significantly, the clients, who so often see the cost increase and the quality compromised from their initial expectations.

Typically a project will be undertaken by the partner who is introduced to the job, this has been the case with few exceptions for many years. Larger projects won by Brian are slowly transferred to Tim, or more rarely Peter, either of whom remain ‘hands-on’ throughout the job. Smaller projects are the province of Brian, who relishes their more direct and less political functioning. This process is not flawless, but ensures that long-term client relationships are maintained, and that individual project expertise is recognized and enhanced. The cross-fertilisation of past work and past expertise transcends the separateness of the management stream.

The flexible team of dedicated staff, many of whom have been with T2G for a decade or more, remain the backbone of the practice. On some jobs they undertake full design work, on others they interpret the hasty sketches of Tim or Peter, or sit with Brian while he explores the solutions out loud. The cross-over at the partner level occurs on large projects, especially at competition or early design stage. There, each is there as a sounding board, a critic or a second designer for the principal in charge.

It is simplistic to couch the discussion on our projects in terms of the personal, for both the ethos of T2G and the facts of architectural production in the 21st century require a more inclusive approach, one that recognizes the input, at all levels, of the entire team. At T2G there have been a wide range of individual talents without whom everyone of the projects illustrated in these dissertations would not have been possible.

The diagram to the right, developed from a sketch made by Peter Tonkin during a meeting and redrawn more comprehensively - and comprehensibly - by Tim Greer, maps the varying roles of the architect in relation to a project.
2  history
### History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Brian Zulaikha (BZ) born, Ootacamund, India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Peter Tonkin (PT) born, Blayney, NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Tim Greer (TG) born, Christchurch, New Zealand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>BZ graduates from Sydney University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>PT graduates from Sydney University and travels to India for five months, taking up the full-time work at the Special Projects section of the Government Architect's Branch (GAB) of the NSW Department of Public Works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>PT one of three winners in the RAIA’s “Ideas Competition” for the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay (OPT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>PT resigns from the GAB and joins Lawrence Nield and Partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>BZ returns to the GAB to undertake the design management of the Circular Quay Project, the reconfiguration of the entire urban frontage of the city to Sydney Cove, comprising the Opera House forecourt and retail concourse, the upgrading of the ferry wharves and railway station, a new park formed by the closure of Pitt Street and the reconstruction of the OPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>BZ resigns from GAB and joins Wills Denoon Travis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>PT with Lawrence Nield and Partners and the GAB commissioned to undertake the refurbishment of the Terminal and the design of the new urban spaces to its north and south.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>PT resigns from LNP and commences practice in his house in Glebe, gradually expanding to three employees.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>PT joins Tonkin Zulaikha Architects, and the practice moves to its own office in Pyrmont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>The Royal Blind Society Library project, the first large complex building undertaken, commences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Byron Harford joins the practice which is renamed Tonkin Zulaikha Architects. The practice shares office space in Ultimo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>The OPT and Circular Quay projects completed. Tim Greer joins Tonkin Zulaikha Architects, and the practice moves to its own office in Pyrmont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>The Royal Blind Society Library is completed and wins the practice its first architecture award.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>TZH moves into an early 20th century former warehouse in a back lane in East Sydney. This is refurbished by the practice, including a sculpted entry door by Michael Snape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier War Memorial competition is won by TZH, designed in collaboration with artist Janet Laurence. On 11 November 1993, the Tomb was the focus of a full state funeral of the Unknown Soldier, exhumed from a World War 1 grave at Villers-Bretonneux in France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>TZH is engaged for the first stage of the Casula Powerhouse, the redevelopment of a disused 1950s power station. Following stages are completed in 1998 and 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>The Verona Cinema Complex in Paddington, designed by TG and BZ, is completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>TZH begins a long sponsorship campaign with the Griffin Theatre, a small professional company that occupies a former late 19th century salt warehouse in Kings Cross. The work includes refurbishment undertaken from 2000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With a range of specialist sub-consultants, TZG undertook the design, documentation and co-ordination of the Urban Elements Master Plan for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games site at Homebush Bay. The Olympic Plaza pylons were completed in two stages in 1999 and 2000.

1998

PT becomes an Adjunct Professor at Queensland University.

1999

PT and TG’s Sydney Customs House, a highly sustainable heritage refurbishment project, is completed as part of Sydney City’s effort to create a new gateway to the city prior to the 2000 Olympic Games.

1999

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2000

The Australian Pavilion, designed by TG, is completed for the 2000 World Expo in Hannover. This is TZG’s first significant overseas project.

2001

A competition for the New Entrance of the National Gallery of Australia is won by TZG, only to be abandoned later due to moral rights issues. TZG set up an office in Canberra for the project, dividing the previously close-knit team. This office was closed when the project was abandoned in 2003.

2001

Challis Avenue Apartments, the office’s first apartment building, designed by TG, is completed.

2001

Blackwattle Bay Glebe Apartments, the office’s first large apartment building, designed by TG and BZ completed.

2001

TZG move into larger premises in a 1930s factory and office building in Surry Hills.

2002

TG designs the Hastings Cultural Centre, Performing Arts Centre and Art Gallery, known more commonly as the Glasshouse. The building comprises a 600-seat theatre, rehearsal/performance studio, conference facilities and a large regional gallery, located in the centre of Port Macquarie.

2002

TZG wins the design Excellence Competition for a large apartment building in Clarence St Sydney. The project, headed up by TG, was a casualty of the 2007 Recession and was not realised.

2003

The Australian War Memorial is completed in London, designed by PT in collaboration with Janet Laurence. The project was completed 11 months after the competition win, requiring extraordinary levels of commitment by the design and construction teams.

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2004

TZG with Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL) enter the first stage of an open competition for the Australian National Arboretum and Gardens project in Canberra. Eventually won in 2005, the project slowly commences with siteworks and services. Substantially planted and with key facilities completed, it opened for the Canberra Centenary in 2013. It wins numerous awards, including the 2014 Landscape of the Year Award at the World Architecture Festival.

2005

‘Portico’, The Scots Church Apartment Redevelopment, designed by TG, is completed. This remains TZG’s largest and tallest city building.

2005

PT in collaboration with TCL Landscape Architects and Robert Owen complete the Hume Freeway Craigieburn Bypass in Melbourne.

2005

Newtown Silos, redevelopment of a grain silos into an apartment building. It is the office’s first commercial adaptive reuse project headed up by TG.

2005

The monograph on TZG published.

2006

TZG wins the Buttery Treatment Centre Campus competition. The rural campus designed by TG and BZ the project was not realised.

2006

The State Heritage listed Paddington Reservoir Gardens urban park conversion commences, completed in 2009. The project was designed by TG in collaboration with JMD Landscape Architects and City of Sydney.

2006

National Indigenous Development Centre in Redfern, a redevelopment of the historic former Redfern Public School engaged by the Indigenous Land Corporation, commences. The project is headed by PT and opened by Kevin Rudd in 2010.

2006

0

2006

2006

2006

1998

1999

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006
2007
Anna Schwartz Commercial Gallery at the Carriageworks opens headed up by TG.

2007
Carriageworks at Eveleigh Contemporary Performing Arts Centre, designed by TG, is completed. The building would go on to win nine awards and stand out as one of TZG’s most distinct projects to date.

2007
The Kensington Precinct Project sees TZG along with Atelier Jean Nouvel and Forster and Partners develop the Old Kent Brewery site on Broadway into a visionary new urban quarter. The project is lead by TG and is to be completed in 2015.

2008
TZG’s refurbishment of the Port Arthur Separate Prison in Tasmania is completed. This represents an in-depth collaboration with curator Peter Emmett, with whom the practice has worked on several projects, and the first example of significant and important conservation work undertaken without a collaborating conservation architect.

2009
PT begins a long collaboration with Kevin Taylor of TCL to master plan and design Victroria Square, the central square in Adelaide. Stage 1 of the project, substantially TCL’s work alone, is completed in 2014.

2009
Runner up for the UTS Podium Design competition.

2010
TZG wins the Margaret Olley Arts Centre in Lismore competition. Headed up by TG the project was not realised.

2010
TZG are engaged by Virgin Airlines Australia to redesign their airport lounges across the country. These large, complex projects, lead by TG, are completed over the next 6 years, and expand the practice’s capability and reputation.

2012
BJ, PT and TG begin the doctorate at RMIT. BJ abandons the study in 2014.

2012
TZG in collaboration with TCL and engineer Aurecon, win the competition for one of Adelaide’s most important pieces of public infrastructure, Riverbank Bridge.

2014
TG becomes an Adjunct Professor of Architecture at The University of Sydney.

2014
Oatley Rail Station Upgrade for Transport for NSW begins. The first of a series of rail projects across Sydney and NSW.

2015
TZG begin a collaboration on the masterplans for two Sydney suburban town centres, large and complex new foc for growing residential communities. These vast projects require the engagement with a new scale and level of planning for the office.

2015
Royal Mint, Melbourne. Masterplan for TZG’s first significant heritage project in Melbourne.

2015
120 Collins St Melbourne Ground Plane Reactivation competition. TZG’s first major commercial competition in Melbourne.
3 tzg in context
Our initial research identified a range of themes or lines of enquiry that seemed to underpin our architecture. We isolated each of them in an attempt to explore the different facets of our work, in order to reflect on and define what seemed important to us over the last twenty years or so.

A group of ‘enduring’ themes emerged, which could be seen in almost all of our buildings. There were many sub-themes or ideas that existed momentarily in one or two projects, but the six enduring themes, summarised below, have been focused on when dissecting our work.

**staging the civic in the urban realm**
We identified that our project briefs, whether for infrastructure, public buildings, commercial or residential projects, were all manipulated to make an urban contribution. We can acknowledge that we’ve intuitively brought our own agenda to these commissions, in examining how each of these buildings could respond and contribute to the city, their location and the generality of the public realm.

We don’t see our buildings as objects in their own right, but rather part of something greater. We feel that every building should contribute to the city no matter how simple its brief or programme. We too are part of the city, and as conscientious citizens we use our architectural skills to advocate for its improvement.

**the continuum**
Our architecture is based on historic and contemporary culture, the two being seen as connected. Our work seeks to resonate with preceding cultural values, and lies in wait - and readiness - for future values.

Much of TZG’s architecture is adaptive reuse, which involves taking someone else’s design from a previous period and adapting it to contemporary needs and interests.

The building research we have carried out for each of these projects repeatedly reveals that building function is generally the first item to be extinguished or altered, only to be replaced by another more relevant use at a later date. This observation naturally leads us to the view that a building’s symbolic value is more enduring and therefore more important than its function, beyond its role as a simple, anonymous container. This theme of Continuum is developed in greater detail and from an individual perspective in the first volumes of these dissertations by Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin.

This has contributed to our long view of architecture, that of buildings as evolving experiences, not just isolated objects.

**robustness**
In all of our work there is a preference for clear, well articulated ideas that can transcend both the tumbles and turns of the capitalist democracy in which we work, as well as the brutalities of the development and construction processes.

The entity of TZG was forged the 90’s, when architecture could be divided into either the paper architects who engaged with sophisticated architectural ideas that were not totally realizable, and the practising architects who wanted to contribute to the built environment. The paper architects operated within the architectural competition system by projecting architectural ideas, whilst the practising architects developed relationships within the building industry by taking and fulfilling briefs.

Whilst pragmatically we sat resolutely on the practising side, working within the building industry, we were also very interested in architectural ideas and the notion of architectural meaning. We realized that if we wanted to engage with ideas within the building industry they would have to be exceedingly robust, and able to be materialised without compromising cost, budget or functionality.
conversational architecture
It has become clear that our preferred working method is one of engagement and discussion, developing building projects from first principles. The emerging design ideas can be thought of as the crystallisation of numerous project conversations. Curiosity and a desire to get to the bottom of why we are doing ‘this project’ seem to out-rank any preconceived ideas we may have brought to the project.

If we engage with our clients in a meaningful way, in terms of building function and their ideals, we are more likely to create a piece of meaningful relevant architecture that will endure.

collaboration
There is a desire to search for a cross disciplinary approach to architecture, in the hope of making multivalent architecture that has the greatest possibility of resonating with its community.

Our desire to engage with multiple viewpoints during the design phase often leads to the establishment of strategic collaborations with experts in other fields. Each party is then championing an aspect of the project. This offers us glimpses beyond the confines of traditional architecture.

To some extent, our collaborators form our community of practice. We often find ourselves working with artists, landscape artists, curators, academics and other architects whom we admire and resonate with.

anti-typecasting
We are motivated by the ideas that underpin our architecture, not specifically by building types. We believe that architectural values and ideas are transferable across building types, if resilient enough.

We share a belief that buildings should reflect their community, rather than pure function.

Working in the risk averse environment of the property industry, this strategy of placing architectural ideas above building type sits counter to the methods of architectural procurement for many major buildings. When an architect is engaged, experience in the design of a particular building type seems to be the most highly prized attribute. However, by insisting that our reputation is founded on the quality of our architectural thinking, and not on building type expertise, we have amassed a very broad architectural portfolio, which this catalogue lists, creating at the same time a rich working environment. In avoiding being typecast, we are never bored with architecture, but continue to be curious and up for a challenge.
intrinsic and extrinsic values

Whilst these ideas have been expanded on, with examples of seminal projects, in Peter Tonkin and Tim Greer’s dissertations, we realised that the themes mentioned above could be further refined into a set of intrinsic and extrinsic values, which are set out below.

Such classification makes sense of the complexity in our thinking and has produced a framework to summarise our architectural position more simply.

intrinsic

‘Intrinsic’ values refer to those ideas that exist within each project. We started to think about our buildings in terms of:

architectonics

We share a desire for our projects to be strongly architectonic, with expressive massing and clearly discernible materials, all bound together within a tectonic framework.

Whether the massing is pleasing or jarring, the form is deliberate and often generated by the interior, as the inside and outside of the building are inevitably interconnected and seldom disassociated.

No conversation is complete in our office without discourse about the sense of materiality. We are fascinated by the ‘realness’ of architecture - the stuff you can rub up against, the stuff you slide along, and the stuff that makes your clothes dirty. However, there is more to materials than their physical properties: there is also a belief that materiality expresses meaning, whether by association or by memory.

The ‘glue’ for assembling the building is contemporary technology, both for producing the buildings as objects and as a way of manifesting the ‘now’ of today.

In summary what you see is what you get in a TZG building. There is a compulsion towards an architecture of reality.

art as a conceptual basis

Each project has its own conceptual framework, which becomes the monitoring instrument, a guide to all design decisions. The conceptual framework is often an amalgam of extrinsic values, which are discussed a little later.

This conceptualisation can be seen as appropriation of contemporary art practices, and is based on the need for a rigorous framework to withstand the twists and turns of building procurement, and our fascination with art as a means to communicate complex and sophisticated ideas.

As society requires larger and more complex buildings, we see conceptually strong architecture as the strategy to develop culturally relevant buildings and environments, capable of expressing meaning to whole communities.

building function

In TZG’s practice, programmes are generally organised around a ‘loose fit’ principle, where building functions can evolve over time. This conclusion comes from observing the numerous buildings that we have adapted over the years. In every case, the first thing to be extinguished from a building is its function. The building retains its symbolism, but sacrifices its original function for a new, more relevant one. We like to think that our contemporary buildings can still be as relevant in the future, with a new programme inserted into a durable, flexible shell. To us, this is true sustainability. We are now at a stage where we are adapting some of our earlier buildings and putting this theory to the test.
extrinsic

‘Extrinsic’ values refers to those ideas that exist independently of any specific project. We started to think about our ideas, namely:

physical context - place
We have become fascinated by the idea that the building’s context functions primarily as a field of interpretation, and thus that the architect’s role becomes one of continually redefining our relationship with where we are. The context should be viewed not as an absolute physical condition, but rather as an ever-changing field of interpretation, inspiration and complementation.

immediate society and culture - people
We have identified a desire to engage with multiple values in the design process, each of equal weight, leading to a cross disciplinary approach to architecture, in an attempt to make multivalent architecture that is socially and culturally relevant. Collaboration with experts in other fields becomes the natural extension of this cross disciplinary strategy. Collaborators introduce their own values, further broadening the simultaneous engagement of ideas.

As our projects have become larger and more complex, the introduction of non-hierarchical collaborative ideas into projects is seen as a vital strategy for ensuring a level of architectural richness that often lacking in large projects with short gestation periods.

This study has been invaluable in allowing us to observe the benefits of TZG collaborations, which are notably rare in our field. It has given us a framework to think about the most productive way of collaborating, as a strategy for meaningful and useful architecture.

style - time
A recurring preoccupation is the distillation of the essence of a place. What are the factors that make this place different from the next? How can we identify those relevant factors and how do we employ them in our architecture? Of course, we accept that this relies on what the architect brings to the site as much as upon the site itself. Nevertheless, this desire for the essence is one of our repeated starting points.

This goes some way to explain why we have never developed a consistent recognisable architectural style: it is always out-trumped by the search for architectural relevance, considering the building’s context.
tzg’s uniqueness / contribution / conclusion

In compiling the TZG catalogue, it has become apparent just how broad in type and unique within the architectural profession our projects are. The catalogue has drawn together a series of projects which, when considered collectively, clearly shows a range of interconnected collective architectural ideas. These, in themselves, define TZG’s position within the architecture profession, and hint at our contribution to collective architectural knowledge, as well as establishing a very useful framework for office discourse, and a platform for our on-going work.

The on-going evolution of our office has allowed us to embrace changing modes of practice, aimed at architectural opportunities as they arise. This has greatly broadened our client base, at the same time sharpening our creative enquiry and research. Rather than sticking to what we know and what we have experience with, TZG pushes outward, using one set of skills to develop another.

We embrace the nature of a continuum both linearly in terms of time in general and at one point in time, and broadly across a number disciplines and concerns.

This notion of continuum or interconnectedness is employed to explore an interest in architectural meaning, not for itself but rather in terms of place, time and especially for the people, the users, for whom we are seeking an expression.

We have deliberately practiced a form of architectural anti-typecasting, with an interest in the ideas that sit ‘under’ those of architectural type.

This philosophy makes it natural for us to engage with adaptive reuse projects whereby the use does not primarily generate a form or type, rather adapting to the given of the existing structure.

Many of the architectural notions developed in these adaptive reuse projects have found their way into new buildings, further distancing us from a typological approach to architecture.

There is a continual need to experience the realness of architecture and as such, materiality is central to every project. ‘What you see is what you get’ is working manifesto of action, not just relating to the project’s surfaces but also to its core and organization.

Whilst the ‘now’ is of up most importance to us, we yearn for the long view. This seems natural, given that so much of our work is in the public realm, where we can naturally engage with history as the long view back and landscape as the long view forward.

These notions are further investigated within Peter Tonkin and Tim Greer’s dissertations from differing viewing points.
4 seminal projects
The layering of architecture involves the creation of intersecting and interweaving clearly differentiated styles or suites of material within one building. It is a defining aspect of TIZO’s practice, with its genesis in the Barracks and developed onwards in all of our heritage projects. At the Barracks, at least one of the layers was a given, but in other projects we have invented them. Each layer has its own set of rules, often its own materiality and even function, colliding and contrasting, to enriching the entire project; each layer preserving its identity, its centre of a wholeness apart from the other layers. In many TIZO projects where the layers are defined by material and function, a durable masonry container contrasts with the other layers. In many TZG projects where the layers are defined by material and function, a durable masonry container contrasts with more ephemeral and lightweight steel and glass balustrades, fittings and services, and this approach was developed initially at the Hyde Park Barracks, for sound heritage and interpretive reasons.

The use of these layers enables the work to develop a message, over in the case of many of the museum and cultural buildings, in others less forward, where the interweaving of wholes enable the telling of genuine stories. Whilst genuine didactic historiography is not the province of architecture, buildings can be made to communicate clearly their history and use.

It is crucial in my approach to the work that each layer is developed sufficiently to be present as a whole, as a thing interwoven with the other ‘things’ of the work, able to be identified and followed. The icons of these layers needs to be rigidly controlled to ensure their autonomy, and the number of layers has to be low, simply in order for the building to achieve unity and to control the complexity of the design and construction process.

In a similar way, the heritage artefact’s presence as a layer is only successful when enough of its fabric, including its patinated finish, is retained and preserved to read as a thing whole in itself.

The Hyde Park Barracks Museum occupies an important moment in Sydney’s evolutionary thinking about how to approach heritage buildings. The prevailing philosophy, in relation to heritage ‘additions’, had been one of ‘sympathy’, whereby new work was deferential, sometimes to the point of copying the existing building.

This approach was understandable in the wake of the wholesale demolition of significant heritage buildings, but as the retention of heritage buildings became more widespread, another approach was proposed for the HPB. This approach was one based on clarity, whereby each period of construction was clearly identifiable. Just as the original Francis Greenway building was of its time, so to was the construction of the new exhibition structures.

A new reading of the building was possible, whereby the original building could be seen as originally intended. The contemporary building demonstrated the values of its time, and the two could be read together, as it commenting on each other’s generation.

For me, this project asks the fundamental question of how the relationship between new and old is defined. It has been instrumental in helping me to see a range of approaches for adaptive reuse projects. For example, the Carriageworks at Eveleigh project answered this question with the nineteenth century steel and glass roof, casting referential shadows, on the plan twenty first century concrete forms of Sydney Contemporary Performing Arts Centre. The relationship is based on the premise that the original building is exerting an influence on the new, with the daily sweep of shadows, ‘decorating’ the new forms.

The Paddington Reservoir Gardens approached this question with the premise that the concrete roof for the new uses lurks within the artefact. It is the tension between the inherited artefact and new buildings that generates the architectural expression of the Gardens. Somewhere between the two structures a third building emerges, one that you can’t quite put your finger on.

This has also led to an architectural philosophy, which could be described as ‘interpretative design’. A strategy whereby previously philosophies are reconsidered through the lens of today and our own experiences, coupled with our access to contemporary technology, as seen with the conversion of Scotts Church into the Portico Apartment building.
4 seminal projects
lilyfield house

CLIENT PRIVATE RESIDENCE
LOCATION LILLYFIELD, NSW
COMPLETED 2001
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ELLEN WOOLLEY ARCHITECT

Designed by Ellen Woolley and Peter Tonkin, this house occupies a constrained site in a built-up 19th Century inner-Sydney suburb. The 191m² site had never been developed because the extensive sandstone outcrops and a major cross-fall presented a significant challenge to the creation of a dwelling. It needed to provide acceptable levels of solar access and cooling, and computer-modelled sun catchers’, heat pump in-floor heating and cooling, and computer-modelled sun shading.

Light is brought into the lower levels of this zone through a clerestory window that captures the northern sun. The circulation zone extends beyond the house as a floating timber entry bridge and a small upper level balcony. The northern part of the house accommodates the living spaces and bedrooms, and is expressively timber framed, scaled and detailed to sympathise with the adjoining small Victorian houses. The end elevations open to the views: east towards the traffic arteries to the south, north to flow.

The house is developed from a strong in a one metre zone along this wall and is defined by thick masonry walls, articulated to form cupboards and lighting recesses. The tall southern volume terminates in a long north-facing clerestory, from which a wash of light animates the entire house. The central wall plays off solid with void. Thick sculpted piers bear three storeys of uniting concrete beams. The piers hold carefully-crafted light niches as well as storage, timber cabinets and services. The rectangular beam soars beyond the façade to celebrate its function as a gable. Aedicular versions of this push upwards, one holds a herb garden and the miniature other a spitter to the street.

The house has carefully resolved active and passive ESD systems, including enhanced natural ventilation with clerestory ‘breeze catchers’, heat pump in-floor heating and cooling, and computer-modelled sun shading.

AWARDS
2003 First Prize And Commission
2006 Australian Olive Award, Best International Project

The external wall presents a strong face to passer-by, the interior spaces powerfully delineated with thick columns and walls. The (almost) grandeur of the internal walls creates a dignity and a modulated scale, which is at once surprising, yet comforting in its enclosure. There is a sense of containment, a generosity and a wonderful feeling of comfort in the interiors, making it ideal for family living.

For me this building is about how a small house can be transported to a garden, a deck for outside living or a great view of a distant bridge. Each of the openings cleverly connects the inhabitants with light and views, from within, one can be transported to a garden, a deck for outside living or a great view of a distant bridge.

JOINTLY & SEVERALLY | PETER TONKIN & TIM GREER | RMIT 2015 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) (ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN) BY PRACTICE RESEARCH BY INVITATION

PETER OBSERVATIONS
With the building as a filter, light was a continuing obsession: caught unexpectedly, it washes through voids and across textured surfaces. The tall southern volume terminates in a long north-facing clerestory, from which a wash of light animates the entire house. The inner face of the south wall and the thick bounding wall from this circulation zone to the rooms of the house are limewashed brick, used internally and externally to simplify the interior palette and maximise daylight, as well to enhance the modulated forms of the brickwork.

A ‘carpet’ of timber - bridge, stairs, balcony, furniture - extends through the southern zone of the house, bridging between its massive walls, opened with views to allow the space and light to flow.

Light is brought into the lower levels of this zone through a clerestory window that captures the northern sun. The circulation zone extends beyond the house as a floating timber entry bridge and a small upper level balcony. The northern part of the house accommodates the living spaces and bedrooms, and is expressively timber framed, scaled and detailed to sympathise with the adjoining small Victorian houses. The end elevations open to the views: east to the dramatic city skyline, and west to a small forest of eucalypts on the site’s rocky outcrop.

The central wall plays off solid with void. Thick sculpted piers bear three storeys of uniting concrete beams. The piers hold carefully-crafted light niches as well as storage, timber cabinets and services. The rectangular beam soars beyond the façade to celebrate its function as a gable. Aedicular versions of this push upwards, one holds a herb garden and the miniature other a spitter to the street.

TIM OBSERVATIONS
For me this building is about how a small house takes its place in the city.

Close up we see a detailed brick wall of domestic architecture facing Lilyfield Road, but when seen from the distance of the other side of the Lilyfield rail corridor, the brick wall offers us an image, giving the house a civic quality. The house is simultaneously domestic and civic, like much of the TZG’s residential architecture.

Lilleyfield house, to some extent, speaks of TZG’s unique passage as an architectural practice. Many of our contemporaries, ‘cut their teeth’ on domestic architecture, before gaining public architecture opportunities. TZG has been involved in public and civic architecture from the outset, with residential architecture following.

This notion of the civic is particularly true of our apartment buildings. An apartment building commission is generally about maximising the number of dwellings for speculative sale. We have intuitively brought another agenda to these commissions, in asking how these buildings are part of the city.

BRIAN OBSERVATIONS
In my opinion, this house is a small miracle of design, an almost impossible insertion into a small, some would say (indeed, did say!) unbuildable site, adjacent a road, overlooking an expressway.

The external wall presents a strong face to passer-by, the interior spaces powerfully delineated with thick columns and walls. The (almost) grandeur of the internal walls creates a dignity and a modulated scale, which is at once surprising, yet comforting in its enclosure. There is a sense of containment, a generosity and a wonderful feeling of comfort in the interiors, making it ideal for family living.

Each of the openings cleverly connects the inhabitants with light and views, from within, one can be transported to a garden, a deck for outside living or a great view of a distant bridge.
4 seminal projects
the Australian War Memorial

CLIENT: Office of Australian War Graves + Department of Veteran Affairs Australia
LOCATION: London, England
COMPLETED: 2003
COLLABORATION: Janet Laurence

Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, in collaboration with the artist Janet Laurence, won this project through a limited competition conducted by the Australian Government. The Memorial is located on a prominent site in central London, and commemorates the efforts of the Australian Services, allied with those of Great Britain, in the two World Wars. One hundred thousand Australians fighting “in defence of freedom” were killed alongside the British during these battles.

The site, at Hyde Park Corner, is at the fulcrum of the ceremonial route through London and is shared with the Wellington Arch and the Ionic Screen by Decimus Burton, both classical 18th Century monuments by Decimus Burton, built from Portland stone. The Australian Memorial unites the green space at this critical intersection, and has been designed as a respectful gesture to both the existing historic monuments and the eloquent landform itself.

The Memorial’s iconography is key to the symbolism of the design, and comprises a layering of two sets of texts: the larger letters are formed by bolding the smaller type, a method designed to emphasise the relationship of the individual to the wider forces of war and society. The smaller type-face lists 24,000 towns, the birthplaces of the Australian service men and women. Significantly, many of these places are in the UK or Europe, and several are repeated in the large text type. The places named in the larger text are a section of 47 significant battlegrounds where the Australians fought alongside the British.

A major water feature was a requirement of the brief, and this has been designed as a random wash of water over successive panels of text, symbolically refreshing memories and cleansing the pain of suffering and loss. The Memorial was designed and constructed in under twelve months, and was dedicated by HM the Queen and by the Australian and British Prime Ministers on Remembrance Day, 2003.

AWARDS
2003 First Prize And Commission
2003 Australian Stone Award, Best International Project

PETER OBSERVATIONS
Like all of the other TZG memorials, the material palette is highly considered and strictly limited – a deliberate restriction leading to unity and simplicity. Here the material, apart from some bronze elements, is entirely one stone: a green granite from Albany in Western Australia, contrasting with the whiteness of the other memorials. This emphasises its relation to the earth – “of” and not “on” – and its Australian-ness. Over the upper vertical surfaces, the polished finish carries the lettering, whilst being washed by the briefed “wall of water”.

Other stone surfaces are rough sawn or have a matt hone, dramatising both the form and the material.

This Australian-ness was a brief requirement, and was expressed in these “post-hoc” washes of form and image as being associated with a series of iconic Australian landforms, but really for me was conveyed by the sweeping profile and the gum leaf-colour of the stone.

The form is detailed as a controlled assembly of single stone pieces, uniting to make up the landform, prefabricated over a hidden structure with extensive hydraulics, as shown by the design sketches and by this photo of one of many models built to test the forms during documentation. This project tested my own, and the office’s control of geometry, where the complex plan is developed from several arcs radiating from different centres, allied to a constantly changing section in three dimensions. It was worked out stone by stone, prefabricated from our CAD model and enviado without error – a testament to the CAD program itself and the skill of TZG’s modellers, led by Neil MacKenzie.

TIM OBSERVATIONS
For me this memorial is about how to be part of one place, but to speak of another.

Located at the centre of the Commonwealth, the wall naturally completes Hyde Park Corner, whilst the architectural text which adorns the memorial simultaneously denotes the Australian soldiers birth places and the great battles in which they fought.

To the convex exterior, the wall makes a polite urban gesture of completeness to its London setting, whilst to the concave interior, the “fractured” stones evoke the unspeakable violence of war; in defence of the Commonwealth somewhere else.

BRIAN OBSERVATIONS
The Australian War Memorial sits on an incredibly busy traffic island at Hyde Park Corner. It is confounding that in such a confused location, the memorial wall gives a sense of containment and successfully excludes the confusion of the surrounding traffic, creating a relatively peaceful and contemplative space.

The ingenious inscription of words – the names of places / towns / suburbs that the vets came from, with the names of battles fought in a larger font, encourage visitors to spend quiet time reflecting or ruminating on the history of wars fought.
seminal projects
The 120m² site for the house is very exposed, facing south onto Sydney Harbour. The challenge was to create a comfortable dwelling that could be made liveable in all weather conditions, transforming the mundane architecture of the old gunpowder store on which it had been built.

The house is designed to enable a close connection with the outdoors and the view at all times. The detailing was driven by this connectivity. As far as possible, all windows and doors slide out of view. The interior uses various timbers expressively to reveal the structure, which when perceived from the exterior reveal the skeletal. The interior and the exterior are “equal” to accentuate their connectivity.

The beauty and intricacy of the completed result is as much evidence of the process undertaken as it is of the “traditional” idea of an architect’s role creative vision. Brian drew in many of us, to talk over and sketch details, casting wide the net of inspiration. With the original brutely direct and encaustic bunker partly complete as a kitchen, the remaining spaces grew and developed as a very particular response to the needs of two generous and highly social individuals, where a flowing and non-specific space could transcend the segregation that characterises most houses.

The house has a richly developed quality of detail that could only have come from its process: where even the plans were drawn only after the work was substantially complete. Materials and details were selected and developed on site, with the builders crowded around Drew and Brian, demonstrating with pieces of wood and carpenter’s pencils how to make something beautiful. But this does not mean that it was an ad-hoc creation, or that its qualities are serendipitous; rather that the designing in the real world as distinct from its natural expression of Japanese architecture: there is an air of unpredictability. The entry sequence plays with our conventions of inside and outside, and the scale of the house, when seen from the water, shifts from civic to domestic like an Escher drawing (really? Which one?).

In watching this house grow, I observed the joy of evolving architecture when the shackles of a lump sum contract are removed. An organic design process was established, with key design decisions suspended until the construction process necessitated them. This allowed time to take every opportunity to improve and enhance. Brian’s house shows us the skill of the architect as curator, establishing as he does a relationship with his tradesmen that embraces their traditional skills, as opposed to the producing conventional and dogmatic contract drawings and specifications. In short, drawings were replaced with personal relationships.

BRIAN OBSERVATIONS

Drew Heath is a very talented architect and builder. Having Drew by my side relieved me of the need to do exact detailed drawings. His setting-out skills were and are extraordinary.

John Chesterman worked in my office and gave invaluable construction advice. I think he may have also made the crazy suggestion for using a compactus for my wardrobe. This has turned into one of the most talked of features in the house.

Janet Laurence is my life partner. She is on this lot only because she would be disappointed not to be. She was not in any real sense a collaborator or even a committed client. The principal area where she got involved was when I finally committed her to carry out an “artwork”, that is to paint the glass doors upstairs between the living / bedroom and the balcony space.

Peter Tonkin gave me a couple of great suggestions, which I used. One was the reworking of the location of the shed and steps at the entry; the other was a detail to bridge the small void at the top level, between the staircase and the living room.

Neil Mackenzie, Paul Roffe and Trina Day: All three worked in the office and made various, excellent suggestions. In the end I don’t believe I was able to use any, but it was all part of the process (stirring the pot).

If (as I believe) the core act of design is to establish new relationships, then the process and product of this act is bound to generate a certain intimacy and awareness of a larger collective dynamic, however unimaginable the actual forms.

PETE OBSERVATIONS

This house connected me to the tradition of Sydney modernist domestic architecture and its collective interest in Japanese architecture - something I found totally fascinating. For some reason my education seemed to have bypassed this begetting architectural tradition, or maybe I just missed that lecture.

Here, I see the discipline of elegantly setting out natural materials, their qualities being revealed in their relationship with each other, and the skill of laying space to allow the house to be both grand and intimate at the same time.

There is, however, more to this house than an extension of Japanese architecture: there is an air of unpredictability. The entry sequence plays with our conventions of inside and outside, and the scale of the house, when seen from the water, shifts from civic to domestic like an Escher drawing (really? Which one?).

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In short, this exquisite house is the perfect reflection of Brian – charming, sophisticated and a little unpredictable.

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5 seminal projects
Carriageworks is a unique home for contemporary arts in Sydney. Developed by the NSW State Government through Arts NSW, the former 1888 Carriage Workshops building at Eveleigh have been transformed into an innovative centre committed to the conception, development and presentation of a wide spectrum of performance. Tzogo's adaptive reuse of the building embraces the building's past whilst providing it with a bold new future.

Three fully serviced, flexible theatre spaces - small, medium and large - rehearsal rooms, administrative offices, workshop spaces and amenities are housed in discrete concrete boxes. These are clearly articulated from the heritage fabric, retaining its patina of age and use and the remaining industrial artefacts.

The new forms stand free of the rows of original cast iron columns, creating circulation routes in the interstitial spaces with views through the building. The foyer spans the entire width of the building. The linear entry structures to each of the theatre spaces are like 'ghosts' of the carriage that once moved through the space. The front of house is divided by glass doors from the back of house activities, which are located adjacent to the railway tracks. Bay 17, the large performance space, is designed for experimental and physical theatre, requiring removal of a portion of the original wrought iron framed roof to achieve the desired height. The new, elevated roof echoes the rhythm of the original roof monitors and reads as a glowing beacon. The original trusses are reused as a sculptural entry structure, located on Wilson Street, heralding the building's new use.

**AWARDS**
- 2008: AIA NSW Greenway Award for Heritage
- 2008: Council Winner, Ironbark Interior Design Excellence Awards
- 2008: AIA NSW Resene Exterior Award
- 2008: AIA NSW Public Architecture Award
- 2008: Australian Property Institute, Officer of the Valuer General Heritage Award.
- 2008: National Trust Heritage Award for Adaptive Reuse - Corp / Gov.
- 2008: Design Institute of Australia Award, Commendation Public Institutional Interior

**PAUL OBSERVATIONS**

Two things stand out in this project for me, and I think have contributed greatly to the real acceptance as a venue that the building has found, despite its tucked-away location.

One is the rigour and clarity of the original plan diagram, with the enclosed prisms that make up the main performance spaces surrounded by space that is genuinely free – of enclosure and largely of determinant program. This space makes for many of the building’s qualities – the conservation of its flowing factory volumes, complete with all the remaining bits of engineering, the generosity and real functionality of its huge foyer, the hint of activity visible back stage, and the ability to restore the original daylight from the roof. The placement of the enclosed volumes is finely tuned to the original factory, with the long paired lines of fat cast iron columns marching down the spaces in between, dramatising the access to the theatres and even the toilets.

The second is the excitement to be had from the contrast of plain surfaces of new material with the rich textures of retained heritage, where the surface retains its patina of use, damage and modification. This clear separation of ‘layers’ is an approach that goes back the Hyde Park Barracks, but in none of our projects does it have the impact it does at Carriageworks, a result of the huge scale of the building, the play of shadow on the unadorned concrete, and the wonder! direct detailing of the Victorian iron work and - Vanbrughian brickwork.

**TIM OBSERVATIONS**

For the duration of the Carriageworks project, there was a continual search for the relationship between inherited and proposed buildings, and a series of approaches were established throughout the design period, operating at a number of levels. The factory floor ordering system was used as the starting point for the non-hierarchical ‘anti theatre’. The shadows cast by the original Carriageworks onto the new structure of the performing arts centre created a relationship between one generation and another. Disused roof trusses were stood on end to form an entry marker, which heralded the new theatrical use of the arts centre by anthropomorphising these historic elements.

The spatial hierarchy of the original Carriageworks was even and democratic, orderly and with little emphasis upon one space over another. The plan in effect was a series of co-ordinates across which different factory activity had taken place at different times of the factory’s history. The plan was orthogonal and, as with any grid, lent itself to a strong navigational strategy for its new use as a set of theatres. The clarity, all with backgrounds in street theatre, physical dance and contemporary circus, did not want the theatre to be like a theatre. They spoke of an anti-theatre. Using non-hierarchical coordinates as an ordering system seemed to fit with the notion of freedom in the plan.

If a new building is placed inside an old building, how does the inherited building shape the proposed building, and the proposed shape the perception of the inherited? By drawing connections between the two, I would find a variety of ways occupants and visitors could interpret the building.
PETER OBSERVATIONS

This is one of the practice's rather rare stand-alone new buildings, although in this case its site at the centre of a regional city was context-rich and difficult. Rather than this being a constraint to the design, the location has been celebrated, creating an urban landmark building in a city of unrivalled architecture despite its long heritage. By engaging with the spaces and texture of the setting, the Glasshouse frames its reading as a separate object, strengthening the street and public square it defines.

The layers of the city, with footings from the 1820s preserved in the basement, are replicated in the layering of the building itself, as expressed in the clear direct sketch produced at design stage. This layering is articulated by the materials as they progress from earthy stone and masonry, to the steel and glass facade and the warmth of the timber inside.

As partly explained in this same sketch, the building has a Russian doll quality, behind its cool gently curved facade lies a net of increasingly rich spaces, from processional foyer, the lush timber box of the theatre, and then its surprising complex and baroque auditorium, all celebrating the timber production and craftsmanship for which the region is famous.

In the case of the Glasshouse, the finished work does not display the fraught process through which it was commissioned and completed, its serenity belying the divisive politics. This again is a testament to the skill of Tim and all the TIG team, one that is seldom acknowledged in architectural criticism.

TOM OBSERVATIONS

The brief required an art gallery and Theatre to be built on the same site, so the question became how best to combine the two. Port Macquarie had no history of major public buildings and the citizens did not want an imposing building for their cultural centre, but one that was accessible, welcoming, democratic. We proposed a foyer completely transparent from the street and this is how the Glasshouse was named. The public foyer as a place of assembly runs the full length and height of the front of the building. The contents of the building – the concave form of the theatre and the concave form of the art gallery – can both be seen fully from the street.

Historic plans, dating from the Governor Macquarie period of settlement hinted at the possibility of archaeological remains on the site. This led to more in-depth research, which revealed the possibility of the existence of a group of 1817-1821 Superintendent cottages buried in the site. At some point, Clarence Street, being the north boundary and main address of the site, had been realigned, potentially positioning the cottages on a slightly shifted axis at approximately 1.5m below ground. There seemed to be an extraordinary opportunity to make a physical and cultural connection between modern Port Macquarie and its historic reason for existence: as a penal colony. By locating the foyer over the top of where we thought the cottages should be - and this was guess work - as well as elevating the foyer, we allowed an interstitial space for a possible vantage point to see the remnants of cottage footings, passing and an owl drain.

As the project proceeded, the remnants were discovered.

Port Macquarie’s primary industry was in timber after its early history as a penal area. We had hoped to reclaim timber that was at that time being removed from the Sydney Opera House and re-use it in the Glasshouse, thereby ‘bringing it home’. That idea proved impractical, so instead, a workshop was initiated that included NSW Forestry, local loggers and mV owners, local carpenters and suppliers. This process was to engender interest and meaning in the project among the community.

The Glasshouse’s architectonic technique is in consistence of materials, and variation of form.

There are two main themes in the diverse volumes of the building. The rectilinear nature of the ground floor plan relates directly to the street edge. Above and around it, the curvilinear forms of the glass facade and timber wall bringings are taken from the curves of the Hastings River a block away.

I think a lot about the perimeter of the form, how to change direction and go around corners without sacrificing the wholeness of the form. This presents functional difficulties, but, when these are overcome, architectural integrity is possible.

Whilst this building operates as a contemporary performing and visual arts centre, and is architecturally expressed as such, the archaeological remnant layer below invites visitors to engage with the site at a different level; that of Port Macquarie’s physical and cultural ancestry. In the new Glasshouse building, we have made a collective statement of where Port Macquarie is going, while deliberately not extinguishing the view of where it has come from.

BRIAN OBSERVATIONS

The Glasshouse delivers an urban quality to the coastal town of Port Macquarie, that stimulates the surrounding town fabric, bringing life into the street and providing a place that can deliver cultural experiences and community events.

The building’s form is not immediately apparent from its external form. Its dark faceted glass facade conceals the interior until early evening when internal lighting renders the glazing transparent and reveals the drama of the interior.

The timber sheel of the auditorium glows through this expansive glass facade, inviting one to enter to join the other patrons in the foyer, either for a drink or to experience one or other of the cultural areas of the Glasshouse.

The 600 seat theatre, the 100 seat black box studio and the gallery, the art lab and the convention centre within the Glasshouse all enable opportunities for the community to engage in theatre, and the visual arts, in a world class and finely tuned venue.

The curved glass facade with its array of custom pressed steel fins create the immediate recognition of its “difference”, a landmark within the town centre. It gives the building substance and simultaneously evokes imagery of a musical instrument or a wave rolling in from the sea.
seminal projects
PETER OBSERVATIONS

Tim made the most of the opportunity to engage with such a wonderful ruin, a thing so very rare in Australia. The Separate Prison1 – dark and evocative though it was, had little of the Prussian qualities of the Reservoir as it was found after 30 years of gradual collapse. The requirement at Port Arthur to recover its original machine-like spareness precluded any celebration of gothic horror. Through sheer persistence and rational argument, Tim was able to retain these qualities of textured narration and the ravages of time, talking around a client who had wanted to concrete the whole thing over. From experience comes confidence and persuasion: here is one of the true skills required of any architect who works in the public realm.

This celebration and conservation of a ruin is perhaps the most direct and striking expression in TzG’s work of the notion of “the continuum”, where one can place oneself in and against the past, drawing in the possible future of all of humankind’s works.

In the main park space, the sunken and partly open to the sky Western Chamber, is again the modulation of an originally single space to form occupiable outdoor rooms: gardens, verandahs and colonnades, an hermeneutic world separate from the busy-ness of Oxford Street. In the Eastern Chamber, still largely an enclosed volume, the richness of the new timber columns stand out beautifully from the old masonry and iron, all carefully conserved. This space, no longer deserted, has a sense of expectancy, waiting for the crowds that can fill it.

On first seeing the drawings of the curved cellular canopies, I thought they may be too decorative for the solidity of the structures below, but on completion, their airy delicacy against the sky has real magic, effectively marking the civic entrance to the Park, modulating the ordinariness of the buildings behind.

AWARDS

2011 Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence Asia Pacific.
2010 International Architecture Award, Chicago Athenaeum & The European Centre for Architecture, Art, Design & Urban Studies.
2002 President’s Award, World Architecture Festival, Old & New Category.
2000 AIW National Award for Urban Design.
2000 AIW National Award for Heritage Architecture.
2000 Lloyd Rees Award for Urban Design, AIA (NSW) Awards.
2000 Greenspace Award for Heritage, AIA (NSW) Awards.
2000 AIWA Landscape Architecture Medal.
2000 Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Awards Australia’s Premiers (Governor General).
2000 Australian Property Institute, Officer of the Valuer General Heritage Award.
2009 Landscape Architecture Medal ALA (NSW).
2009 Design Excellence Award, ALA.


BRION OBSERVATIONS

The context for Paddington Reservoir Garden is an empty space, a leftover, a site of pre-existing polluting activity, in this case a disused carpark, an abandoned reservoir.

The sense of surprise and discovery and interest evoked by the revealing of historical layers I enjoyed on first visiting the Paddington Reservoir Gardens continues undiminished with each visit. The architecture assaults our senses, as newly introduced and old materials play with historical associations and newly contrived forms.

When TZG and JMD were commissioned to convert the Paddington Reservoir into an urban park, the general expectation was that the site would be capped off and a brand new arrangement built on top. However, we were captivated by the possibilities of revealing the 19th century structures as a ruin through which members of the public could wander, taking in the dramatic spaces and play of light across the remnants of historic walls and vaults.

Listed as a site of state heritage significance, the Paddington Reservoir was originally constructed in two stages, completed in 1866 and 1878.

An accessible sunken garden and pond, surrounded by a raised precast concrete boardwalk, has been inserted within the conserved ruin of the western chamber of the former reservoir. The edges of the ruin are contained by concrete up-stands in such a way as to amplify the distinctive curved characteristics of the original brick vaults.

The eastern chamber has been conserved stabilizing the brickwork and forming the base for the new landscaped park above. Lightweight roots float above the reservoir, signaling the main entry points to the Park. The lightness of the roots act as a counterpart to the solid earthiness of the masonry vault, while there is a whimsical reference to the older masonry mortar joints in the staggered pattern of the metal grid. A restricted palette of 3 materials – steel, aluminium and concrete were chosen as contemporary partners for the historic brick, cast iron and timber.

The collapse, at certain points, of the ordered and regular Reservoir structure opened up other spatial possibilities. It illuminated that the distortion or erosion of a regular structure offers design opportunities. The fragmentary nature of the ruin gives a richer spatial quality, and contributes to the spatial ordering system for the new park.

The new building work at the Paddington Reservoir is seated in the cellular structure of the original building, with new interventions shaping in contemporary material emerging from the original framework. This strategy allows for a contemporary expression of the new use, but introduces aesthetic common territory for past and present to meet. The tension between past and present generates the architectural expression of a “third building”, which you can’t quite put your finger on.

JOINTLY & SEVERALLY | PETER TONKIN & TIM GREER | RMIT 2015 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) (ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN) BY PRACTICE RESEARCH BY INVITATION

27
seminal projects
Cloudy Bay Shack establishes the connection between the image on the wine label and the direct experience of the vineyard. We shaped the building to gain vistas along the vineyards to the Richmond Ranges, whose silhouette adorns each bottle. An entry sequence has been established to deliberately dramatize the ‘Cloudy Bay’ view. On arrival, visitors face two weathered steel walls, reminding someone holding their arms out to welcome an old friend. When the door is opened, a warm timber interior is revealed and the view is obscured by a series of confronting timber panels. As guests enter, the view is revealed by degrees until they walk down three steps to the entertaining level where the full view of the receding vines and Richmond Ranges are presented.

Bedrooms and bathrooms are focused on the same view, with the added benefit that the visitors can be concealed behind their personal timber screen or gain the view directly by opening the screen.

The exterior is composed of materials typical of the region: weathered steel and timber, evocative of rustic buildings seen nestled in the pastoral landscape. This ensures that the building as an object sits comfortably in its environment. To provide unexpected contrast, the interior is tamed in well detailed, sophisticated timber and stone.

PETER OBSERVATIONS
This project, along with the Baillie Lodges, are more difficult to talk about – they are known to me only from drawings and photographs. The Shack, as it is known, presents as a perfected villa, Palladian in its symmetry and in the way it is placed directly and simply on the ground. Its folding and unfolding planar wade have something of the same quality as the Palladian portico, changing in their relationship to the viewer as one moves around the building. Palladian too is the way its axes are oriented to the long views through the beautifully managed and fruitful estate of the winery.

We have done many cor-ten buildings, the rich earth colour, naturally varied surface and durability of the material are all valued; this simple contained villa allows the material to its best, with a relationship to the timber of the interior and the landscape around. It is like a sea shell with its rougher, harder exterior and a soft richer occupied interior.

I recognise the detail input of Paul Rolfe, who collaborated on this project with Tim and with whom I had worked on the Bayview house, the Wellington Memorial and other projects.

TIM OBSERVATIONS
This project was a direct confrontation of my memories of growing up in New Zealand. The pre-archetypal of the landscape over all sites. In reaction to that, I thought about a space/ connection to the landscape that would place the human experience at the heart of it.

The project’s starting point was the memory of the original Cloudy Bay wineyard residence, a humble building, colloquially known as “The Shack”, which previously occupied the site. ‘Shack’ was briefed as an exotic guesthouse for European guests, but it is located in a country where the overwhelming architectural characteristic is a lack of pretension, a value deeply rooted in the NZ psyche.

I was fascinated to use humble materials, executed in a sophisticated manner, which led to an ironic approach of ‘humble sophistication’, speaking of the beginnings of Cloudy Bay and the International Brand LVMH’s aspirations.

The brief directed us to look for ways to strengthen the client’s branding of their wine. So we looked at a series of interconnected relationships: the relationship of the wine label to the landscape; the relationship of the visitor to the landscape; the relationship of the visitor to the label. This led us to situate the building in a particular attitude to the landscape, with particular views. It was a reversal of the process normally expected of representation – the marketing image preceded the subject of the image, and brought that image into being.

BRAIN OBSERVATIONS
Unfortunately, I haven’t visited Cloudy Bay, and know well that a visit can disappoint or enhance an opinion. My view is therefore formed by photographs as well as an unresolved “trust” in Tim’s architecture, as well as with the local architect Paul Rolfe.

The plan is unusual in being first of all symmetrical, and of a formal arrangement. Knowing Tim’s work for many years, these two elements took me by surprise. It appears to be a perfectly formed position; four splayed cor-ten steel walls symmetrically frame the entry space with the main circulation entry space traversing the plan. One enters through what seems a very tight, enclosing space, but from the moment one enters there is no sense of confinement - one immediately sees spaces that open and close to the views and one another.

One can really appreciate the luxury of the interiors, the handsome detailing of the plywood and timber detailing, the spaciousness and the interconnectedness to the views throughout. The circulation corridor is particularly beautiful, closing and opening to both contain and reveal spaces beyond.

JOINTLY & SEVERALLY | PETER TONKIN & TIM GREER | RMIT 2015 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) (ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN) BY PRACTICE RESEARCH BY INVITATION

4 seminal projects
seminal projects
Bailies Sydney is being developed as the third property in the Bailies Lodges portfolio of exceptional luxury lodges. Intimate, rarefied and bespoke, Bailies Sydney will provide a level of experiential accommodation new to Sydney. A unique blend of heritage melded with contemporary Australian design, first name hosted service and a quintessential location will afford status as an iconic hotel establishment in Sydney’s historic Rocks precinct.

Bailies Sydney will herald a new and exciting addition to the fabric of The Rocks, enhancing the area’s reputation as a premium experience for the high and traveller.

**PETER OBSERVATIONS**

The appreciation of all unbuilt schemes require the particular skill of constructing spaces and surfaces in the mind, imagining a completed architecture with all its texture and light, movement and contrast.

Here the richness of the scheme lies in the way the lovely mid-nineteenth century stone houses have been ‘colonised’ as the hotel rooms, the private realm, with the interstitial space becoming the public spaces, the streets and squares of this contained and luxurious town. The ‘poche’, the spaces between the four rectilinear but angled townhouses, retains its awkwardness, but is interiorised and modulated into a series of spaces on different levels that connect and house the required engineering and kitchens, a clear, almost modernist differentiation of served and service zones.

The defining material of the new work, in contrast to the carefully conserved heritage buildings, is the sculpted net that screens these interstitial ‘public’ spaces. Intended to be made of bronze, it reached the stage of a series of prototypes that demonstrated the effect of the material used sculpturally in the way. The weaving, repeated grid has a direct relationship to the ceiling array in the series of airport lounges Tim has recently completed, as is the façade screen used in his new Kensington Street student housing blocks. Philosophically, it is related to the notion of continuum – the endless repeated grid sectioned and folded as required for the particular building. Whilst superficially recalling the cellular screens of such visionaries as Edward Durrell Stone, these nets are fundamentally different, in the way they are endless and unbounded, folded and inflecting, they have a strength and singularity that goes beyond Stone’s contained nefs.

At The Rocks, the net had a similar indirect function as at the airport lounge ceilings – its iconic and instantly recognizable quality would have served as a branding tool, setting this luxury hotel apart from others, a landmark in the city and in the media.

The fascination with shadows, evident here and in other projects, speaks of the temporality of existence, the chances of place and time against the ‘permanence’ of structure, of masonry, recalled in the image of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and again the play of light on the sheer concrete of Carriageworks.

**TIM OBSERVATIONS**

As the new hotel’s surroundings were searched for an understanding of its context, I became fascinated by the idea that the building’s context is no more than a field of interpretation, and that the architect’s role becomes one of continually redefining our relationship with where we are. The context should not be viewed as an absolute ‘physical’ condition, but rather an ever-changing field of interpretation.

Our client was the great-granddaughter of Harold Cazneaux, who relentlessly photographed the Harbour Bridge during its construction and afterwards. These photos had a major bearing on our view of the historic Sydney Rocks, (the location of the hotel, especially as the Harbour Bridge towers over the area). This cultural connection broadened our view of the site to the harbour’s edge and the giant structure of the Bridge.

These photos became the starting point for the new building. The more I looked at Cazneaux’s Harbour Bridge photos, the more they seemed to be about the seemingly irregular shadow cast by a determinately rational structure.

The hotel was the gateway for wealthy tourists, visiting the sights of Australia. The client had identified the ‘big sky’ and the ‘bright light’ of Australia as unique characteristics of any trip to Australia. The photos spoke of the importance of light and shadow and the ‘bright-light’ of Australia.

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**BRIAN OBSERVATIONS**

This project, inserting a new building into a complex of historical buildings in the Rocks area of Sydney, had far more than its fair share of hurdles. An unbuilt project – I don’t know if it’s just me, but to write on an unbuilt project seems a daunting task! I was, however, privy to overtheard conversations and concerns expressed by Tim, Julie Mackenzie and others involved in the day-to-day design and management, so in a way can appreciate the difficulties, first of all posed by their client, then the approval by City Council and heritage authorities.

Tim hit upon a strategy – one partner in the client couple had a grandfather who famously photographed the Harbour Bridge – and the new hotel sits at the base of the bridge, with views capturing it. So taking as its cue the complex web of fabricated steel, Tim designed a gorgeous screen of bronze. This richly designed element could relate in colour and materiality with the historical buildings or at least with the idea of the historical association.

Supported strongly by staff at the Heritage Commission, yet denied by the newly appointed chair of that same commission, the design of this screen was always going to be a risk. Regardless, Tim had a prototype constructed and was able to prove that the cost was manageable. The project finally won the support of all the authorities before being cancelled by the client, unfortunately not by proceed...
TZG, in association with landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean, won an Australian competition for the National Arboretum, on a 290ha site of bushfire-damaged land north of Canberra’s Lake Burley Griffin. The Arboretum is a collection of 100 forests, each home to a single internationally-endangered species. The species are chosen from the many thousands that are threatened worldwide, and curated according to colour of foliage, scent and texture, and suitability to local growth conditions.

A simple formal geometry, developed from Griffin’s water axis, interacts with a project with uncertain funding and a high probability of changing political ‘ownership’. Simple, easily comprehended and defended, able to be constructed in any combination of large and small stages, and relating well to the presence or absence of built infrastructure. This is a very conscious awareness of the concept of durability: the resilience of architectural ideas, a crucially-important aspect in public realm projects with multiple stakeholders, and one that has been increasingly conscious of in the face of the failure of a number of large projects.

A further sense of durability in relation to the design of the Arboretum, as well as many of our other buildings, is an engagement with the certainty that they will change in the future, and that the architectural concept must survive these changes with as little loss of clarity and quality as possible. The landscape of the Arboretum will change significantly over time, whilst its funding and future development remain as uncertain as they were throughout the design and construction. I do however believe that the principles have been soundly established on site, and that the durability of the underlying idea and the actual design will carry the forests through.

AWARDS
2014 Landscape of the Year, World Architecture Festival
2014 Arboretum, Canberra Medalion, ACT AIA Awards
2014 Sir John Qurain Award for Urban Design, ACT AIA Awards
2013 Excellence in the Use of Timber Products: Engineered Timber Products, Australian Timber Design Awards
2013 Excellence in the Use of Timber Products: Australian Certified Timber, Australian Timber Design Awards
2013 Best Central Region (ACT ANSRL), Australian Timber Design Awards
2013 Excellence in Timber Design Award: Public or Commercial Buildings, Australian Timber Design Awards
2013 Rammed Earth Award for Public Architecture, AIA ACT Awards
2011 The Victoria Medal for Landscape Architecture, AILA Victoria Awards
2005 Winner: ACT Government ‘Shaping Our Territory’ Competition

PETER OBSERVATIONS
The grid of separate forests with its overlaid pattern of roads and open spaces was further envisaged as a highly effective strategy for a project with uncertain funding and a high probability of changing political ‘ownership’. Simple, easily comprehended and defended, able to be constructed in any combination of large and small stages, and relating well to the presence or absence of built infrastructure. This is a very conscious awareness of the concept of durability: the resilience of architectural ideas, a crucially-important aspect in public realm projects with multiple stakeholders, and one that has been increasingly conscious of in the face of the failure of a number of large projects.

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TREVOR OBSERVATIONS
While this project is a highly successful collaboration of many hands, it occurred to me that Peter’s fascination with landscape is a perfect mirror to his interest in history. History offers us a long view back through time, an evolution that we can unravel, working backwards from our own reference point in time. Landscape offers the mirror view, whereby we can project forward from our moment in time.

Unlike a building, which is finite when completed, a landscape is a schema that will evolve with time. Principles are established and literally scratched out in the ground, to evolve as the seasons decide. History can then be thought of as the long view backwards in time and landscape the long view forward.

TIM OBSERVATIONS
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BRIAN OBSERVATIONS
This project is a celebration of landscape in time, marking a place in history. TZG conceptualized the winning competition in collaboration with Taylor Cullity Lethlean and the idea to create 100 forests of endangered tree species, enabling a seed-bank for each of those species is so powerful, it places in its shadow the aspirations of landscape architecture or architecture.

The “Village Centre” at the arboretum has been designed as a response to landscape. It sits proudly, crossing its site, an organic form straddling the central hill; it encloses a hall of concrete “trees”, supporting beautiful timber trusses, giving man made form to the larger world of the arboretum.

The voluminous interior space, a contemporary hypostyle forest of concrete and timber opens expansively to the broad view of Canberra. The entry walk, lined with superbly crafted stone connects the village centre to the landscape.
seminal projects
5 catalogue
Under the role of consultant architect, Brian Zulaikha was responsible for project coordination of five firms of architectural consultants and their various subconsultants, the organisation of the public information programme involving market research, and the production of exhibitions, brochures, videos, and film programmes to explain the project to the public. He liaised with the seven client organisations and the thirty three unions with representation at the site.

The selection and briefing of restaurant and retail tenancies around the Quay were also coordinated under Brian’s direction. The project involved a complex procurement with a number of design construct opportunities.

| CLIENT | THE NSW DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS |
| LOCATION | SYDNEY, NSW |
| COMPLETED | 1988 |

**AWARDS**
1983: First Prize and Commission
1988: RAIA Merit Award, Category 1
1988: RAIA Lloyd Rees Urban Design Award

**circular quay**
Peter Tonkin's competition-winning design for the Overseas Passenger Terminal at Circular Quay, undertaken with Lawrence Nield + Partners and the NSW Department of Public Works, transformed an obsolete eyesore into a major urban design focus at Sydney’s ‘front door’.

The work included the conception and design of the new waterfront urban spaces to the north and south and the major reconstruction of the building itself. The new square has been a major part of the life of the city since its creation, notably being the scene of the party which celebrated the announcement of the Sydney 2000 Olympic bid. Shipping operations were carefully studied and the design tailored to the needs of the cruise ships which comprise the majority of traffic at the Terminal.
This programmatically complex building was constructed under the constraints of a very limited budget for a specialised client. It is a major insertion into the existing facilities of the Blind Society and was designed to link and compliment its original buildings. The new building includes broadcast-quality sound studios, an audiotape production unit, a reference library, and lending and production facilities for both talking and Braille books.

The Library required detailed briefing and specialised design to take account of the needs of sight-impaired and blind workers and visitors. Signage, colours, textured finishes and natural and artificial lighting, as well as more conventional accessibility considerations, were developed to orientate users and distinguish the various spaces.

AWARDS
1993 Metal Building Award
1991 RAIA Merit Award, Category 1 For Outstanding Architecture
Designed in collaboration with leading Australian sculptor Ken Unsworth AM, the National Memorial to the Australian Vietnam Forces on Anzac parade, was completed in October 1992, following an Australia-wide competition.

Dedicated to all those who served, suffered and died, the Vietnam Memorial resolves the occasionally conflicting needs of public interpretation of this contentious war, and the more private commemoration of the war veterans.

The memorial incorporates text, representational artwork and sculpture in an organic unified whole. A surrounding moat of water defines the solemn contemplative centre; this domed 'island', linked to Anzac Parade by a broad ramp, is the focus of the rotated triangular composition.

The ring of granite stones suspended between the three nine metre high concrete 'stelae' contains a roll of names of those killed in the war, and symbolises the journey from earth to heaven. The focus of the memorial is a 1967 photograph of Australian servicemen at Phouc Tuy in Vietnam, sandblasted into 200 triangular polished granite slabs, each a different size. A second stelae wall shows a selection of contemporary quotations, spelled out in stainless steel letters set into the concrete. The third wall, behind the focal monolithic granite 'altar' is blank.

Constructed of high-quality off-form concrete, black granite and stainless steel, the project required sophisticated 3D modelling for the detailing of its complex curved surfaces.

CLIENT  NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING AUTHORITY
LOCATION  CANBERRA, ACT
COMPLETED  1992

AWARDS
1990  First Prize and Commission
1993  Master Builders Aenoss Merit Award
1993  Concrete Institute Australia Merit Award
1993  RAIA Architects Merit Award for Outstanding Architecture

national memorial to the australian vietnam forces
The Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier, at the symbolic centre of the Hall of Memory in the Australian War Memorial, was designed in collaboration with artist Janet Laurence. The design is the focus of the War Memorial and was won through a limited competition. It addresses the relationship between war and society and the contemporary relevance of the commemoration of war. It represents a major commitment by the War Memorial to continuing the nation’s recognition of its service men and women.

The design responds to the symbolically powerful Napier Waller mosaics and figurative windows that line the domed Hall. The Tomb itself takes the form of an excavated tumulus, in red Rosso Daniel marble. Four 11m tall freestanding pillars are placed in the adjoining niche, each symmetrical with the mosaic-clad mullions of the three major stained glass windows. These pillars represent, in material form, the four Platonic elements – glass for water, stone for earth, nickel silver for fire and jarrah timber for air.

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The Rocks Square

The Rocks Square unites three underused buildings as a two level boutique retail centre focused on a new urban square and below four residential apartments. It is located in the heart of The Rocks, Sydney’s leading tourist and heritage precinct, and accommodates 60 specialist retail shops and cafes.

The conservation and refurbishment of the 1918 Penrhyn House, and the reconstruction of the adjoining 1970s car park into a mixed-use facility created a civic focus for The Rocks.

New facades, deeply modelled and carefully-articulated, envelop the 1970s building, and relate to adjoining large-scale Colonial and Victorian warehouses. Both levels have multiple entrances from the surrounding streets and lanes. A glass-roofed portico provides a major covered public gallery facing onto the Square.

Birchgrove House

Built on a very limited budget, this project added a second floor to a small 1920’s single storey fibre-cement cottage, taking advantage of harbour views. The house is located between much larger Victorian houses in a gentrified harbour-side suburb.

The design retains the surfaces and details of the original house, adding a simple new layer of timber and metal to differentiate the new from the old. Detailing is direct and deliberately raw.

The arc of the roof, supported by curved steel beams, encloses a timber-lined open plan living space. Bedrooms and work areas are located on both levels.

The War Memorial Gallery

The War Memorial Gallery occupies a heritage-listed “Bridge of Sighs” in the main quadrangle at Sydney University.

In 1995, TZG undertook a full refurbishment of the space to accommodate the University’s highly important collection of art works. Full conservation-standard services, a purpose-designed exhibition system and quality finishes enhance the space and highlight its original architecture.

The Affordable Housing Project

The Affordable Housing Project is a five storey group of 33 low-cost public housing apartments, designed in association with Sydney architect Rod Simpson, and undertaken by a government development corporation (City West) to provide subsidised housing in one of Sydney’s most densely built-up areas. The project pioneered the use of environmentally sustainable principles for a medium-rise residential project in an urban environment.

The project was constructed on a limited budget and designed as two parallel blocks, separated by a private communal courtyard that takes advantage of the northern sun.

The client-initiated brief was for public housing with ‘robust and ecologically superior’ design solutions. The design team utilised materials with low toxicity, low energy-use and minimal processing. These materials, in combination with passive solar design, solar heating and water recycling, created a significant early ‘green’ project.

Bondi House

This project involved the transformation of the “back end” of a Bondi semi-detached house. A series of small, dim lean-tos were replaced by a generous and sunny living and entertaining area with two bedrooms, a dressing room and a bathroom above. This configuration was achieved within a strict height limit and a moderate budget. Decks to both levels capitalise on the northern sun and view.

The problem of insufficient sunlight penetrating the centre of the plan, universal to semi-detached houses, has been resolved with the insertion of a well-lit stairwell, glazed by a skylight at the top and a screened, high-level, north window.

The two new rear storeys are built in a lightweight construction. Each material has been selected as appropriate to its location and function. Vertical privacy screens are Western Red Cedar; floors are recycled blackbutt; horizontal screens are aluminium.
A four-screen cinema complex with restaurant, office and retail components, the Verona utilises a disposed two storey brick and concrete industrial building on Oxford Street, Paddington. Verona was a significant catalyst to the resurgence of a previously inactive part of a well-known commercial street.

A cinema complex of 730 seats was placed on the roof of the building, with retail and other functions below. The auditoria are articulated as a series of metal-clad boxes, with an attached glass foyer overlooking the city and the Harbour. A promenade staircase was developed as a sculptural link to the various levels, lit by an elevated glass roof lantern, which marks the street corner.

Internally, the original concrete structure of the building is left exposed, a contrast to the site.

Located on a generous waterfront site in the northern suburb of Sydney, Bayview house required flexible planning for occupancy by a couple or a large extended family.

The 850m² house has five bedrooms and extensive formal and informal living spaces. All rooms take full advantage of the established landscaped gardens and northerly views of Pittwater. The house is arranged as a sequence of three parallel gabled pavilions, with linking flat roofed galleries. The pantiled roofs are raised above the thickened masonry walls, allowing natural light and ventilation, while the thick walls accommodate sliding screens and storage.

The house relies on passive environmental control in both summer and winter, and has minimum reliance on mechanical systems. Natural materials appropriate to the site’s context have been used in the construction of the house, including timber floors, brick and sandstone walls, and terracotta roofing.

The footprint of the house was carefully resolved to conserve the mature garden, notably an established grapevine that was retrained onto the new redwood pergola.

Perched on the edge of an escarpment overlooking northeast to the ocean, the house embraces the curve of Whale Beach and the distant headlands.

The house appears from street level as two towers linked by a sheltered entry deck and a modulating ground plane. Ascending the stairs, the scale of the building shifts to reveal two interlocking forms – one private and one public. The living areas pivot around the deck and are unified under a curved roof. This roof falls towards the view of the sea and rises to the hill behind, to create a dramatic relationship with the setting.

In contrast, the two-storey bedroom tower is a solid form expressing the smaller private spaces. It has an opposing rising roof that opens towards the view and allows intimacy in the more private spaces to the rear. The stalled timber bays, between the ground and the main entry deck, anchors the house firmly to the site.

The house is entirely clad in durable hardwood, which as weathered to a soft grey. In the living room, the windows slide downwards so that the interior becomes an open veranda pavilion overlooking the sea.

In 1998, TZX were engaged by The Sydney Ports Corporation to undertake feasibility studies and schematic design for the $25m refurbishment to update its shipping facilities and incorporate a major ‘destination retail’ facility.

This work included detailed consultation with cruise ship operators, maritime unions and the Port administration. It identified significant commercial opportunities for the building leading to its refurbishment for the 2000 millennium and Olympic celebrations.

This master planning design competition was designed to assess the long term opportunities of the Canal and its surrounding area.

A strategy was required for the decontamination of the canal and the long term solution for the prevention of recontamination.

Tonkin Zulaikha Greer and Anton James Design proposed a Biological Plug – an earth plug located in the canal to re-mediate the upstream contaminated sediment through the use of micro-organisms and selected planting.

The plug is progressively moved down the length of the canal. In conjunction with this water tank, bridges are part of an on going water cleaning system which were connected into a new park system bounded by interlaided light/high-tech industrial buildings.

The design scheme was awarded a High Commendation.
The refurbishment of the historic Customs House at Circular Quay was completed as the major tourism gateway to the City of Sydney prior to the Olympic Games. The six level building houses cultural facilities including a city planning model, galleries, a museum, a number of bars and cafes and a restaurant. The project also includes major performance/exhibition spaces with specialised access and acoustic needs.

Customs House is a significant heritage building dating from 1845. It was built in successive stages in a variety of differing Classical styles. The significant 19th Century sandstone fabric was extensively conserved, and unsympathetic additions removed to reveal as much as possible of the original courtyard space. The most important interior spaces were also restored, while other areas were left flexibly serviced for a variety of future cultural uses. Escalators and new glass lifts created a vertical public promenade, catching unexpected views of the surrounding city through the fully glazed new south wall.

A significant element of the project was the reworking of the Customs House Square. This was the location of the pre 1848 shoreline of Sydney Cove, where European settlers first landed in Australia. The paving of the Square marks this line using the intersection of the building’s axial geometry with that of the adjoining streets.

**AWARDS**

2000  RAA Merit Award, Commendation for Conservation
1999  Property Council NSW ‘Development of the Year’
TZG worked with the Hargreaves Associates’ Masterplan for the Olympic Plaza to design the Lighting towers for the Sydney 2000 Olympic games.

The 1.6km long Olympic Plaza is the centre of the open space network for the Olympic site and provides access to the main stadium, railway station, indoor stadium and small halls. The Towers are a series of 19 pylons, each 30m tall, which unite many functions on a very small footprint to facilitate crowd flows.

Large-scale photovoltaic solar collection is coupled with sophisticated lighting and structure to create functional public sculpture. At their base, the Towers house all the services required for events in the Plaza, including high and low voltage power, communications, water and drainage. A 5m² faceted mirror, designed with Barry Webb & Associates, has sophisticated photometrics, which reflect area lighting indirectly onto the Plaza, providing a unique, glare-free night time ambiance. 1150m² of photovoltaic collectors are arranged six metres above the paving, to provide areas of shade in the Plaza at key locations. These dramatic floating louvered shades are self-coloured and have been designed to provide easy event and maintenance access. At the time of completion the photovoltaics provided one of the largest public solar collectors in the world, and continue to generate a net surplus of power.

The Towers have precast concrete bases, providing volumes to house services and seating. The shafts are angled to true north, away from the large masses of the stadia and towards the Olympic Boulevard, uniting the separate Towers into a cohesive group.

**AZARDS**

- 1999 Institute of Lighting Engineers Merit Award
- 1999 ACEA Engineering Excellence Award
- 2000 RAIA Merit Award, Urban Design
- 2000 RAIA Architects Environment Award

**CLIENT**

Olympic Coordination Authority

**LOCATION**

Homebush, NSW

**COMPLETED**

1999

**AWARDS**

1999 Institute of Lighting Engineers Merit Award
1999 ACEA Engineering Excellence Award
2000 RAIA Merit Award, Urban Design
2000 RAIA Architects Environment Award
A beach house that deliberately feels like the beach – open, unforced, a true shift from the city – for shared use by two families. The scheme developed as a tall timber framed ‘castle’, piled up along a straight stair. Its robust forms are cantilevered and interlocking, sheltered under a single plane of roof whose slope matches the tree canopy.

The plan inflects to retain huge sandstone boulders, which stabilise and define the steep site. The building’s junction with the ground is carefully controlled to respect the fragile surface of the 45° slope and remnant lush bushland. An earlier garage and studio on the street frontage were reconstructed to conform with the architecture of the main house.

A restrained palette of surfaces and detail were selected with long-life, simple materials; treated timber poles, durable hardwood, zinc, with unpainted fibre cement walls, roof, gutters and ceilings. All relax, grey and uncoated, into the bush setting.
A new pavilion containing a glass kitchen was added to the back of a grand, handsome but neglected Victorian house in the inner west of Sydney.

It is conceived as a linear room addressing the garden. The scenario is a wonderful long dining table set formally on the grass – the guests, usually including at least one celebrity chef (Tony Bilson and Tetsuya Wakuda were consulted on the equipment) and the show on offer being the theatre of preparation of the meal.

The room is a simple glazed element. The details are careful, meeting without matching the existing house. A strict requirement was to preserve a number of plants along the kitchen’s garden wall, requiring the glazing to subtly shift to miss the roots.

The Entertainment Quarter uses the heritage-listed former Sydney Showgrounds for film production studios, entertainment and retail spaces, with a combination of new and refurbished buildings. This project was developed within an overall master plan, conceived in liaison with government and community groups.

Four newly built two storey retail buildings by TZG surround the major open space of the Showgrounds’ former Parade Ring. They replace demolished mid 20th Century grandstands, and have been designed to address both the Ring and the curving pedestrian street located behind them. The new buildings accommodate a mix of restaurant and general retail, and integrate with large areas of public open space. The forms of the buildings relate to the adjoining historic grandstands, and to the pedestrian routes that were retained or created on the site.

This low-cost demountable structure was temporarily located in Centennial Park as a millennium gift to the city of Sydney and the state of NSW from the Brahma Kumaris Yoga Centres Incorporated. It has since been re-erected elsewhere.

The pavilion, looking north across the Duck Pond, comprises an exhibition area and a meditation space. The floor level is set above the grass level to form a generous seat in the park.

Supported by steel structure, the floor and roof have each been developed as timber ‘leaves’ held apart by translucent resin and weathering steel pods which present texts and dedications.

The roof is a multiple layering of timber screening and translucent sheeting, casting reflective shadows across the timber planes and vertical surfaces of the Pavilion.
The Australian Expo Pavilion was conceived as a demonstrative open container, to encourage visits to the exhibition within. Walls are designed to separate and unfurl onto the major place to the east, so that the building reveals its contents to the crowds of visitors in the queuing area and to the major promenade beyond.

The theme of ‘openness’ is expressed in the ambiguous relationship between the interior and the exterior. The walls are made from two layers of recycled plastic fabric spaced two metres apart. The outer layer of the Pavilion is partially transparent while the inner layer is a burnt red colour, and these are tautly wrapped around the Pavilion below a large floating roof plane.

Exhibition displays shift in and out of the space between the two layers of wall, which symbolically identify the mobility and transparency of the Australian political, social and geographical landscape. The roof, a ‘thermal pillow’, floats like a giant screen above the Pavilion. Illuminated from the walls below, it displays different configurations of light and colours throughout the day and night.
Located in a constricted commercial setting with excellent westward views over parkland to the city, the building has six apartments on three storeys, with retail on the ground floor. Bellevue Hill Apartments facilitate a transition between the differing scales of the two neighbouring buildings, sensitively integrating a contemporary structure into a complex and established streetscape. The apartments are arranged to maximise views and privacy, and each apartment runs through the depth of the building to provide cross ventilation. The landscaped roof of the car park enhances the outlook to the north.

The building was constructed efficiently with straightforward detailing, and develops the logic of simple precast concrete construction. It capitalises upon the raw expressive combination of natural materials and a simple bold form, with high-quality internal finishes.

TZO, with a range of specialist sub-consultants, undertook the design, documentation and co-ordination of the Urban Elements for the 2000 Olympic Games site at Homebush Bay for the Olympic Coordination Authority. The Urban Elements – paving, signage, street furniture and lighting – represent a unifying and consistent fabric across all the precincts of this complex extended site.

The work, undertaken to strict timetables and under a rigorous environmental management plan, set new standards for accessibility and utilised leading Australian design and technology.

The Elements include nine lighting pole types, ranging from modest pedestrian area lighting standards to large Olympic Plaza Pylons, and twenty three styles and sizes of signs including way-finding and identification signage, with LED and other dynamic event markers.

AWARDS
2000 RAIA Environment Award
2000 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects President’s Award
2000 International RICS Award for Conservation
TZO were invited to submit a scheme for this prestigious competition, to upgrade this severely degraded building in the Sydney CBD, improving its public amenity and urban design presentation.

The scheme provided an extensive and completely public environment by opening the site up from Pitt Street through to George Street. By refacing the tower, wintergarden spaces were added to each guest room.

Designed for informal living, the house is located on the southern peninsula of Pearl Beach, north of Sydney, and enjoys sweeping views of the beach through a stand of eucalyptus trees. The house has been designed as a comfortable retreat for a family that will eventually spend more time away from their house in the city.

Formed as two adjoining gabled pavilions, the building sits firmly on a solid brick base with a lighter timber and glass structure above. The interior has a flow of space from the upper level entrance to the ground level, where the living rooms open to the view and the sun.

A six-storey apartment building designed to integrate with the streetscape and existing qualities of Australia’s densest residential precinct. The six apartments, with retail on the ground floor, are arranged not only to maximise views, cross ventilation and privacy but also to generate a form that acts as a transition of scale between two neighbouring historic buildings.

The façade, which can be likened to a mask, is clad in thin copper tiles, which will acquire a patina over time. The double-height apartments have steel bridges connecting the second bedroom with an outdoor balcony, and full-height garage-style operable glass doors provide a valuable extension of the interior to the north. A rooftop glass pavilion accommodates a penthouse.
Pavilions on the Bay is a nine-storey group of 46 waterfront apartments, built as two wings. The taller wing directly addresses Glebe Point Road, forming an articulate streetscape edge to this broad avenue of Victorian houses and shops, while the lower eastern pavilion mediates the scale of the development to the harbour-side public park. The project relates both to Glebe’s heritage precinct and to Sydney Harbour, creating a significant new waterfront public space and a sizeable interior courtyard area to the use of residents.

Materials – sandstone, copper, concrete, brickwork and timber – were selected to preserve the memory of the site’s former timber industrial buildings. The new structure is built using reinforced concrete, externally expressed as an articulated framework to identify the various apartments. Sandstone is used to create street and garden walls.

Each apartment has a defined and individual plan, with extensive private outdoor space and generous indoor accommodation. Living spaces, both indoor and outdoor, are developed as glass or open pavilions floating in shallow pools, which articulate their volumes and visually connect the apartments with the expanse of the harbour.
This design was developed to enable the University to plan for the redevelopment of their major entry at the corner of Herring Road and Waterloo Road, with links to the new railway station now under construction.

Over 50,000m² of new accommodation was planned in four medium-rise buildings, with uses ranging from commercial office space to new facilities for the University.

The project has a symbolic role to signal the University’s presence with four glass beacon towers, recalling Macquarie’s shining lighthouse which is the badge of the University.

Around the buildings are highly developed landscaped courtyards, each relating to specific public uses.

The core of this project is an intact 1880s house, formerly the Director’s Residence for the adjacent former Blind Institute. The Darlington Centre accommodates new conference, function and dining facilities for the University of Sydney.

The house itself has been conserved and adapted as lounge areas, office and small meeting rooms. The major spaces of the Centre are accommodated in a new addition, designed as two wings on a single-level. The clear separation of the three main building forms, articulated with landscaped courts, is in accordance with the conservation plan and provides a sense of openness and light.

One wing, a masonry structure, has twin adaptable meeting rooms, a catering kitchen and bar. The other, designed as a lightweight, steel-framed garden pavilion, is a 150 seat dining room. Defined by an integral floating curved timber canopy, the dining room opens to the northern verandah and gardens beyond. The simple steel and glass architecture of this new pavilion contrasts with the enclosed masonry of the old House.

TZG, in collaboration with LFA Pacific Architects, designed this apartment complex in Victoria Park, Sydney. It is the successful second stage of the Victoria Park Landcom development. The project comprises 58 apartments, 5 townhouses, a café and several retail spaces. The residential component features a range of one to three bedroom apartments, including two level cross-over units and a record breaking two storey penthouse marking the entry to Victoria Park.

Like other buildings in Victoria Park, it has been designed to incorporate energy management and sustainability principles. Cross flow ventilation is a key element in achieving these principles, and for this reason the installation of air-conditioners is not permitted under the building’s by-laws. It was the first apartment complex in Sydney to achieve a five star Nathers rating.

TZG has undertaken a series of projects for the nation’s premier gallery. The first phase, following a national selection competition, saw the completion of the 25 year masterplan for the development of the NGA/High Court “Campus” of the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra.

The final phase of work was a large scale refurbishment of the major galleries, including mechanical and fire services, waterproofing, window repair and new automated sunscreens. The removal of an unsympathetic recent fit-out restored the architectural significance of this important modernist icon. This work was completed for the 25th anniversary of the opening of the building.
Refer to Seminal Projects.

Tenterfield is located high in the Great Dividing Range in far northern NSW. The School of Arts is a complex of buildings built in seven stages, the earliest dating from 1870. Sir Henry Parkes, then Premier of NSW, delivered the famous ‘Tenterfield Oration’ in the Original Hall in 1889, one of the key events leading to the 1901 Federation of the Australian States. The building is also significant in that it was the first property acquired by the National Trust in NSW.

As part of the Centenary of Federation, the School of Arts has been conserved, refurbished and extended. The project includes cultural and community facilities for the town of Tenterfield. A new library occupies the 1912 Billiard Room, and includes a new wing accommodating library book-stacks and offices.

TZG have completed the design and site master planning for this integrated education development. The project includes a prestigious three-level advanced Secondary School, with integrated dining, music and sport facilities, and a separate major leisure and sporting Aquatic Centre with restaurant and function rooms.

The overall project unites sensitive site and water management with low-energy passive ventilation design and straightforward detailing.

**AWARDS**

2002 National Trust NSW Heritage Award, Built Work Category
2003 National Trust NSW Heritage Award, Built Work Category for the Cinema

This project involved the upgrade of the heritage-listed headquarters of the Reserve Bank, a pioneering multi-storey building in Martin Place, Sydney. The work included a project to accommodate a museum of currency on the ground floor, disabled access to both sides of the split-level foyer and new security and reception facilities.

The work was designed using premium materials including original Wombeyan marble, and was detailed in accordance with the building’s Conservation Management Plan. An important aspect of the work was the requirement to maintain full building security and staff and tenant access at all hours, with no dust, noise or vibration impacts.
Sound walls and road furniture for a new 32km stretch of freeway linking the Hume Highway with the Melbourne Ring Road were designed in association with Landscape Architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean. Artist Robert Owen was also creatively involved in the concept design and modelling of all elements.

The project was designed to be experienced at a freeway speed of 110km p/h. It includes a series of sculptural sound walls, a pedestrian bridge and a set of design parameters for road bridges, crash barriers and retaining structures.

The main series of walls by TZG, total over 2km in length, and are made from faceted austenitic steel sheets modelled in simple concave and convex folds to produce a gently undulating wave of steel floating on a recessed dark concrete base.

A second series of walls by TCL, are translucent and transparent, preserving light and views from residential areas. These are edge-lit acrylic, sandblasted with a digital pattern and overlaid with coloured precast concrete blades.

The third series, by TZG, build on the existing landform with dramatic earth sculpting. The use of gabions and heavily planted earth berms achieve the required sound control.

A major element of the work was a new pedestrian bridge, which was designed as a gateway to the distant city of Melbourne, visible on the horizon. The bridge, a complex curve in plan and elevation, is a tubular steel truss faced with the same austenitic steel as the main sound walls, which at this point appear to leap over the road in a gesture of welcome or farewell.
In collaboration with local architects Stevens Lawson, were a competition finalist for the adaption of Auckland’s historic Queens wharf structures and buildings into a precinct comprising a cruise ship terminal; significant waterfront public open space showcasing Auckland’s industrial maritime heritage and Pacific culture; as well as a live site venue for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

No winner was announced as there was insufficient time to complete the cruise ship facility prior to the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

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Reinforcing connections between Japan and Australia, the design of the Pavilion is developed from the Expo theme of “Nature’s Wisdom / Nature’s Matrix” and presents the nation as a contemporary place of sophistication, complexity and depth. The entire Pavilion is in the form of an open Matrix, a complex three dimensional construction of repeated rectangular modules. The building becomes an inside-out structure, open to Japan and to the world, a seemingly endless unfolding of space and surface, accommodating display graphics, showcases and multimedia.

At the centre of the building, the Matrix is opened out to form a celebration space, a multipurpose area for live entertainment and trade gatherings. The Matrix would be formed of surfaces and textures both virtual and real, with spaces for experimental installations and temporary displays. It is designed to be entirely prefabricated in Australia, and shipped to Japan for fast and economical erection.

Externally, a glass-enclosed swimming pool forms an event icon, reflecting the Pavilion’s display theme of water, expressed internally as a progression through Australia environments from dry inland to wet coast.

On an undulating site set into a landscaped golf course near the Bowral town centre, this accessible development of 17 semi-detached houses seeks to capitalise on landscaped views and Northern solar access whilst maximising private outdoor areas.

Living spaces and a master bedroom suite typically open onto a private North facing courtyard, which in turn addresses the landscape. A reduced first floor plate houses extra bedrooms and is positioned to minimise overshadowing, modulate the massing and capture distant views.

A simple, varied palate of forms and traditional materials was developed to create a modern interpretation of the vernacular buildings of the area. Variations in detail and colour as well as modulation of building mass in both plan and section are employed to impart individuality and interest to the carefully landscaped public zones.

Joining together with the award winning architectural practices Lahz Nimmo and Marsh Cashman Koolloos, RLD Design (interior designers) and Spackman Mossop (landscape architects), this projects aimed to provide a uniquely experienced consortium for the Willoughby Market Gardens project. The brief required the design and masterplanning of 80 houses, 15 of which would be accessible.

The union of the three practices provides an in-built strategy to achieve a desirable level of diversity, with Tonkin Zulaikha Greer as managing architects.

Landscape was considered an important aspect of the design to better integrate the development into the established neighbouring streetscape and to draw on the Burley Griffin urban planning of nearby Castlecrag with narrow streets and verge treatments and roadways shared with pedestrians. A series of typical house designs provided increased urban densities whilst maintaining environmental and privacy standards for each household.
The Crago Mill’s landmark structures are significant heritage survivors of a period when flour milling was dominated by large city mills alongside railway lines. This project converted the concrete silos and a tall complex of timber storage bins, originally used for the storage of grain, into residential use with associated open space. A new lower-rise structure provides additional apartments alongside. All new work is clearly articulated whilst forming a coherent and functional whole.

The project has been developed to retain the industrial qualities, scale and aesthetics of the existing complex. The three buildings accommodate 59 apartments over 14 levels. The existing ground-level bases of the historic silos and bins have architecturally impressive timber and concrete structural forms, and have been designed as the two main foyers for the new building. At the top of the silos, a new 3-storey metal-clad ‘crown’ provides penthouse accommodation. The Silos take advantage of the circular plan forms to create unusual but rational room shapes, reconciling southern views with northern sunlight access. Throughout the development, original unfinished wall surfaces have been retained, linking the past to the building’s present use.

AWARDS
2005 Marrickville Council Medal for Conservation
2006 National Trust of Australia (NSW) Conservation – Energy Management Award
2006 National Trust of Australia (NSW) Adaptive Reuse Award

CLIENT ANGUS DEVELOPMENTS + GRANT SAMUELS
LOCATION NEWTOWN, NSW
COMPLETED 2005
portico - the scots church apartments

The winning scheme in a City of Sydney (CoS) Design Excellence Competition, this project involved the redevelopment of the disused, heritage-listed Scots Church in Sydney’s CBD.

The ‘Portico’ Apartments are the result of the conversion of the former church building and its airspace into residential units with some commercial uses at lower levels. A stratum containing the original church auditorium has been retained and restored in a separate commission.

The tower forms of the new building utilise sandstone colours that relate to the restored stone base, as well as expanses of seamed zinc and glazing. The interplay of solid and light, zinc and glass, the irregular rhythm of coloured glazing panels, blinds and shutters, creates an urban elevation that reflects both its residential use and relationship to the heritage building below.

Filling in the valuable space between the top of the towers and the recession plane are a series of follies, maximizing the site’s floor space. The follies negate the forceful diagonal geometry of the CoS recession plane.

The developer wanted the maximum number of high quality apartments. To achieve this a system of two-level units was developed by arranging corridors and lift access at every second floor.

Economy was obtained by reusing most of the original structure and finishes, compact and efficient planning, thermal façade systems, a detailing system suitable for commercial contracting, and a mechanical carstacker.

AWARDS
2000  First Prize and Commission
2007  RAIA NSW Multiple Housing Award

CLIENT  WESTPOINT CORPORATION
LOCATION  SYDNEY, NSW
COMPLETED  2005
CLIENT  GOLDEN BEACH HOTEL CO
LOCATION  QING DAO, CHINA
PROJECT  2006

For a private client, a cluster of beachside villas were designed as part of a wider 6* resort including a hotel tower and 300 large apartments. The development occupies the site of a 1960s hotel, in Qing Dao on the Yellow Sea. The villas are individually occupied, but can be serviced from the hotel for ultimate lifestyle choice.

Taking advantage of their unparalleled ocean-front location in China’s premium seaside resort city, the villas create complete contemporary environments, with intensive landscape and detailed interior design. Each house has three to four levels, with over 1200m^2 of internal space as well as extensive terraces and roof gardens. Each house is an individual interpretation, responding to the feng-shui of the setting, open to the bay in front but protected by wooded hills behind.

Constructed in premium materials throughout, the houses have been designed to achieve China’s target 40% reduction in energy use, through the use of high-tech glazing, thermal mass, and controlled natural lighting and ventilation. Active site-wide energy systems complement the strategy, providing comfort conditions in a climate with extreme variations in temperature.

AWARDS
2002 First Prize and Commission

Refer to Seminal Projects.

CLIENT  WESTFIELD
LOCATION  SYDNEY, NSW
PROJECT  2006

In 2006 TZG were invited, with five other locally and internationally renowned architecture firms, to enter a design excellence competition for the redevelopment of Westfield’s Centrepoint and Imperial Arcade retail centres, the reworking of 100 Market Street and the design of a new tower.

The design integrates retail and commercial development, based on the creation of a podium design which accommodates high-exposure tenants, maximises street front legibility and activity, and creates positive relationships to the surrounding context of both heritage and newer buildings.

In order to create a “world retail icon”, TZG’s design focused on the analysis of context and the site. The proposal achieved architectural resolution in its complex shifts of form and scale, by the creative ordering of its parts and the integration of complementary architectural “orders”. The proposal synthesises four ordering systems, each of which is suited to the scale of the different forms of the building.

In 2008 TZG were invited, with five other locally and internationally renowned architecture firms, to enter a design excellence competition for the redevelopment of Westfield’s Centrepoint and Imperial Arcade retail centres, the reworking of 100 Market Street and the design of a new tower. The design integrates retail and commercial development, based on the creation of a podium design which accommodates high-exposure tenants, maximises street front legibility and activity, and creates positive relationships to the surrounding context of both heritage and newer buildings.

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In 2002 TZG participated in this invited Design Excellence Competition. TZG’s work concentrated on the unification of this significant complex of 19th century buildings around a new “urban room” in the heart of Perth. This innovative public square linked the conserved heritage buildings and major new development to adjoining streets and public spaces.

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Located on an irregular city block this project, won in a design excellence competition, includes 106 apartments over 26 levels. Ground floor tenancy spaces and a public garden link Clarence and Kent Streets.

The project consists of a tower and a low-rise podium. The podium, with stacked two-storey apartments, retains the warehouse character of its midtown location while the tower responds to the various aspects of the void spaces surrounding the site. The brick and glass podium façade relates to the scale of Clarence Street while the Western copper-clad façade establishes a relationship with the heritage warehouses of Kent Street.

The defining element of the plan is the ‘Ravine’, a full height open space that runs through the entire section of the building providing sunlight, ventilation and city and harbour views to the North. The base of the ‘Ravine’, a substantial boulder left by the retreating ice age glaciers, symbolises the common quest for the unifying all in a tangible gesture which participates in the management and operation of the community.

The design incorporates five residences, each accommodating up to twelve people, a central community facility and administration building. The complex of buildings cascade down the gentle north-facing slope, using a network of paths that traverse the site and connect the buildings as a series of meeting places, allowing privacy while encouraging interaction. The paths connect the residents’ communal living and recreation areas, the staff quarters and the rural environment, unifying all in a tangible gesture which symbolises the common quest for the residents’ recovery of a normal life.

The design is environmentally sensitive, employing a narrow linear layout of rooms to allow solar heating to the floors, passive cross-ventilation and rainwater collection via the roofs. It caters to disabled residents and is organised so that the residents may readily participate in the management and operation of the community.

The site of this unique mountain development is a South-facing slope with spectacular views of Lake Wakatipu and the ranges, wrapping around a substantial boulder left by the retreating ice age glaciers.

Terraced units are distributed across the sloping site, hugging the land contours like an alpine hill town. The relationship of the houses to each other is generated by the ridges and folds of the land. In this way, the buildings describe the contours of the land, as a glove fits a hand.

The traditional stone-clad terraced units have been loosely organised into four ‘columns’ or clusters, each one crowned by a lightweight alpine form. Such a composition presents forms we angled three walls to march towards the surrounding area.

References to Seminal Projects.

For the Buttery Inc, a registered charity operating as a therapeutic program for Buttery Inc, a Northern NSW for the Residential Treatment of Addictions Program for Buttery Inc, a development of a rural property in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Over the years, this inter-war Portuguese rendered Bondi house had become almost totally built out by its neighbours. The house needed another floor on top and complete reconfiguring inside to take advantage of its magnificent views.

Beneath saw tooth roof forms we angled three walls to march towards Bondi Beach and turned another toward Hastings Parade and the ocean. Beach and ocean views are now seen from every new room, and the sun flows throughout.

A beach and boat theme is used everywhere, in the use of natural stone in the bathrooms, timber floors and trim. The joinery lining the stair is ‘sea foam’ coloured polyurethane, and the white walls give a reflective open-air shimmer to the place.
This design proposal was developed to create a building that is timeless, durable and inspiring, a worthy successor to the historic Church destroyed by fire in 2005. With a primary focus on the Worship Space, the design aims to achieve a unified and functional whole on this constrained site, signalling the broader outreach of St Barnabas with its progressive young congregation and nationally significant history.

The Worship Space is conceived as a regular square plan, able to accommodate a wide range of seating configurations and suited to large and small congregations, with a tall volume framed in masonry and full of glass and light. It is a ‘lantern building’ symbolic of the Light of God – shining outwards from the heavens. The design uses contemporary forms and materials but is not experimental or overtly complex, to contain costs and reduce risk. It uses timeless and well-tested materials and details to achieve a balance between the past and future, a true landmark and signal for the Church.

T2G were invited to design a new five star boutique hotel on the site of the former St Peter’s Uniting Church in Parramatta. The proposal includes the addition of 50 hotel rooms on the eastern end of the site, and a ground floor foyer leading to a restaurant/bar in the original church. An urban form has been established that complements the immediate neighbourhood and opens up the view to the eastern end of the St Peters hotel foyer.

To resonate with St Peter’s stained glass windows and add colour and elegance to this corner of Parramatta, the proposed slender glass tower will appear subtly coloured and patterned by internal blinds which are part of the façade’s environmental performance system. Such environmental devices offer a more pleasant atmosphere inside the building.

A slender, streamlined tower is suspended above the refurbished Wanchai Markets, like a sculpture on its plinth. The new tower takes its design cues from the Art Deco base, but with a contemporary expression and pure geometry. The deep recesses required to light bathrooms and kitchens are formalised to create an expressive and memorable urban form.

Opened in February 2008, the Anna Schwartz Gallery is situated at one end of the Carriageworks building in the former Eveleigh Railway Workshops precinct. The vast 55m x 15m gallery comprises three spaces – an entrance, the gallery and a backroom storage area – that are connected through the use of one continuous white wall weaving through the area.

This commission involved the design of a $175m holistic environmental housing development stitching 270 houses, a range of community buildings and an aged care facility into a working dairy farm. The housing, built predominantly from local stone, is organised in fingers along the gentle ridges stretching out from the farmstead, which in turn allow the fields to come into the development. The houses are slightly elevated above the fields, fencing in the dairy herd and creating views of the fields from the houses.

At the centre of the development, the original homestead has become the nucleus of the community uses built around a new town square, including health spa, swimming pool, Inn, restaurant, library, shops and administration. Closely connected to the community buildings are the farms commercial enterprises of bail, ice-creamery, dairy and commercial kitchen.

Energy, water and material conservation is at the heart of this development which generates a range of housing types from apartments (Silo apartments), to terraces (Barn houses) to free standing houses.
The Casula Powerhouse combines a large regional gallery with arts production and performance spaces, within a heritage-listed disused power station on the Georges River. An extensive process of community consultation and workshops has been undertaken to guide the design of the conversion as a multi-use cultural centre for Liverpool City Council.

The first two stages, incorporating gallery, studio, office and rehearsal spaces and the theatre shell, were opened in October 1994 and incorporate a range of commissioned public artworks. A small third stage followed in 1998.

The major fourth stage, completed in 2008, comprises a fully conditioned regional gallery, art store, workshop, bookshop, office space and a 350 seat theatre. Each stage of work was designed to a very constrained budget and a carefully managed approach to major services upgrading.

The heritage fabric of the building, including remnant equipment, is almost entirely conserved, with new facilities fitted into its existing, large-scale spaces. The major volume, the Turbine Hall, is a multi-use space for large-scale functions, activities and exhibitions, as well as being the major foyer and orientation space for the building. The Powerhouse serves a range of professional and community groups in the region as well as accommodating touring productions by professional companies, specially curated exhibitions and major one-off events, and has achieved an Australia-wide reputation for innovation and excellence.

**AWARDS**
- 1996: RAIA National Presidents Award for Recycled Buildings
- 1996: RAIA Merit Award for Recycled Buildings
- 1996: RAIA National Access Citation

**EXISTING**
- **STACK**
- **CLIMATE**
- **CONTROLLED**
- **GALLERY**
- **GREEN**
- **ROOM**
- **DRESSING**
- **STAGE**
- **BACK STAGE**
- **TURBINE**
- **HALL**
- **B**
- **ELOW**
- **G**
- **ALLERY**
- **AUSTRALIAN**
- **POWERHOUSE**
- **CASA**
- **L**
- **NEW**
roseville college

**CLIENT** ROSEVILLE COLLEGE + THE SYDNEY ANGLICAN SCHOOLS CORPORATION
**LOCATION** ROSEVILLE, NSW
**COMPLETED** 2009

The Old Tamenary, a stout brick factory style edifice built for the training of tanners in the 1930s, enjoys no official heritage status. Our client viewed it differently - Kane Constructions are a building company that pursues unusual and inventive building projects and they wanted their Sydney office building to reflect this.

The original two-storey main building is a robust ironbark trabeated structure with exposed bearers, joists and timber cross bracing, and handsome Oregon trusses.

The brief required the use of the original building for offices, print room and reception, which are located on the ground and first floors, and meeting rooms, two of which are housed on a new mezzanine floor.

**AWARDS**

Refer to Seminal Projects.

sydney metro

CLIENT TRANSPORT FOR NEW SOUTH WALES
**LOCATION** PYRMONT, NSW
**PROJECT** 2009

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**AWARDS**

Refer to Seminal Projects.

black theatre site

**CLIENT** THE INDIGENOUS LAND CORPORATION
**LOCATION** REDFERN, NSW
**COMPLETED** 2009

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) is a Commonwealth Statutory Authority that assists Indigenous Australians to acquire and manage land in a sustainable way providing cultural, social, economic or environmental benefits for themselves and future generations. In 2006 the ILC asked TZG to design a three-storey office building on a site in Redfern commonly known as the Black Theatre Site. The site holds many memories for the Redfern Aboriginal community and had been vacant for a number of years.

The new building accommodates the offices and broadcasting studios of Gadigal Information Services (Koori Radio), National Indigenous Television (NITV) as well as other Indigenous organisations.

The site has a principal facade to the West on to Cope Street, three-stories high and approximately 16m wide. The facade is clad in perforated louvre panels that provide sun shading and a canvas to showcase a significant commissioned indigenous artwork.

This strategy of cladding the building with an artwork, by Indigenous Artist Adam Hill, provides a proud Indigenous statement, sense of ownership and identity for the Redfern community. The artwork provides a vehicle by which to promote the new building and the area engendering a sense of optimism about the future for this vital inner-city community.

kane constructions headquarters

**CLIENT** KANE CONSTRUCTIONS
**LOCATION** WATERLOO, NSW
**COMPLETED** 2009

TZG were the winners of a design competition for the Joy Yeo Performing Arts Centre at the heart of Roseville College. The building is the centerpiece of the masterplan for the site, creating a unified campus following the redevelopment of much of the school.

The complex brief for the building accommodates a wide range of functions to foster the growing music and drama program at the school, within a highly constrained, steeply sloping site. The budget was modest at the school, within a highly constrained, steeply sloping site. The budget was modest.

A spacious glass Foyer flows onto a new Multi-Purpose Hall, creating a unified indoor-outdoor for the College.

The Tonkin Zulaikha Greer design proposal was developed to create a building that is timeless, durable and inspiring, a worthy successor to the historic Church destroyed by fire in 2006.

With a primary focus on the Worship Space, the design aims to achieve a unified and functional whole on this constrained site, signaling the broader outreach of the heavens. The design uses contemporary forms and materials but is not experimental or overly complex, to contain costs and reduce risk. It uses timeless and well-tested materials and details to achieve a balance between the past and future, a true landmark and signal for the Church.

The Worship Space is conceived as a regular square plan, able to accommodate a wide range of seating configurations and suited to large and small congregations, with a tall volume framed in masonry and full of glass and light. It is a ‘lantern building’ symbolic of the Light of God – shining outwards from the heavens. The design uses contemporary and light. It is a ‘lantern building’ symbolic of the Light of God – shining outwards from the heavens. The design uses contemporary.

The glasshouse

**CLIENT** PORT MACQUARIE COUNCIL
**LOCATION** PORT MACQUARIE, NSW
**COMPLETED** 2009

The Glasshouse was developed to create a building that is timeless, durable and inspiring, a worthy successor to the historic Church destroyed by fire in 2005.

The Glasshouse is a robust ironbark trabeated structure with exposed bearers, joists and timber cross bracing, and handsome Oregon trusses.

The site has a principal facade to the West on to Cope Street, three-stories high and approximately 16m wide. The facade is clad in perforated louvre panels that provide sun shading and a canvas to showcase a significant commissioned indigenous artwork.

This strategy of cladding the building with an artwork, by Indigenous Artist Adam Hill, provides a proud Indigenous statement, sense of ownership and identity for the Redfern community. The artwork provides a vehicle by which to promote the new building and the area engendering a sense of optimism about the future for this vital inner-city community.

**AWARDS**

Refer to Seminal Projects.
The 1849 Separate Prison is chilling evidence of the 19th century’s moral phobias and experimental initiatives. Based on Quaker principles of penitence brought about by silence and control, it was a strict machine to subdue convicts.

Ruined by bushfires in 1895, the Prison has had a series of confusing, ad-hoc conservation measures. The stonework was in poor condition and the small range of original timber and iron elements was overlaid with reconstructions from the 1970s.

TZG, Peter Emmett and X-Squared worked with PAHSMA to complete a Master Plan for the Prison, creating a defined sequence of reconstructed, interpreted and conserved spaces. Completed Stage 1 includes extensive stonework conservation and reconstruction of the perimeter wall, entry, central hall and one of the cell block wings, recreating the full machinery of control of the operational Prison. At Stage 2, a second wing, less intact, will be used to interpret significant themes. The 3rd is left as an evocative ruin – the condition of the entire building for 100 years.

The project is a benchmark for the conservation of convict structures in Australia, and is central to the experience and understanding of the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Port Arthur site.

AWARDS
2011 Henry Hunter Triennial Award, Tasmanian Architecture Awards.
2011 Gold Award to a project more than $20,000, Interpretation Australia Awards.
2009 IA-H (Tas) Heritage Award.
norton street cinemas

Located in the busy Italian stronghold of Leichhardt, the Norton Street Cinemas are a four-screen art houses cinema complex, with a large book shop, restaurant and car parking, all fitted within a 1970s portal framed warehouse.

The design respects the ad-hoc manner in which Norton Street has developed, with a strong regional character and an intensity of commercial activity. An expressive functionalist approach was adopted, where the face of the building is composed from the uses found within. The tenancies push forward to display their contents to the street.

The composition is strengthened by the use of light to describe solid forms, with a backlit fibreglass parapet and a series of glowing fins over the entrance. The exterior appears both rugged and refined, a design strategy that was carried throughout the building to satisfy the limited budget. This approach also offered scope for purposeful detailing and higher levels of finish in critical public locations.
Tonkin Zulaikha Greer have been involved in several projects for the Bundanon Art Trust, including the Artist in Residence studios and public facilities and the conversion of a machinery shed into dance studios. Most recently TZG were commissioned to document the ten year masterplanning of the Bundanon Trust’s extended sites Bundanon, Riversdale and Eearie Park. The site included new facilities for the service of food and beverages as well as catering equipment allowing for a diverse program of events. Through the refurbishment of the heritage buildings, new spaces for collection and study as well as catering equipment were added. An artist in residence studio provides the opportunity for a continuum of work and the practice of art throughout the year.

Tonkin Zulaikha Greer worked with HBO+EMTB and Tanner Architects to design and document the refurbishment of the historic Brisbane City Hall. The original 1930s building is the largest town hall in Australia. The project aims to give the centrepiece of the city an active relevant new life after 80 years. The refurbishment is designed to house major performance, event and meeting facilities, Council Offices and a new and enlarged Museum of Brisbane. An extensive new kitchen was excavated into the basement to serve state-of-the-art conference and event facilities including the 1500 seat Grand Auditorium with its conserved organ. A significant aspect is the upgrading of the structure and services to meet contemporary safety and operational standards. The exterior is enhanced by the reconstruction of decades of additions on the roof, whilst the significant heritage interiors are conserved and enhanced. Access and circulation is improved throughout the building, as will the acoustic performance of the major spaces. The entire project was designed to achieve 5* Greenstar rating with a pilot Public Buildings rating tool developed specially for the project.

This commission developed a resort, two zones of holiday units and holiday apartments for the planned 5* Eco Tourism Development in Musselroe Bay, Tasmania. The aim of the project was to develop the unique environment of this coastal region while providing a luxury tourist and leisure experience. The Musselroe brief called for a design that achieves a level of luxury with a special focus - here is not the luxury of vast space and expense, but rather the luxury of careful design to meet every need, responsibly and responsibly.

Luxury comes from being able to immerse oneself in a unique natural setting, in complete comfort and privacy, with an unequalled range of facilities and experiences at hand.

The project is an indivisible whole, a well-managed union of land, flora, fauna, architecture and engineering, to create a world-wide profile as a Tasmanian icon, an instantly recognised brand, a destination. The clusters sit into the site with comfort and ease, but constantly involve and interest the occupant through the subtlety of their articulation and the quality of their materials.
The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence is the redevelopment of the historic former Redfern Public School by the Indigenous Land Corporation as a multi-use residential, training and education facility catering for both the local community and rural and interstate groups.

The significant heritage buildings and vacant areas of the site have been integrated and developed for five major activities, each supporting the role of the centre. The Eora Campus provides dormitory accommodation for visiting educational and sporting groups of up to 100 people, with associated sleeping, dining, classroom and recreational areas. This activity uses three of the refurbished buildings of the former Redfern Public School. A high-quality football training field, chiefly for use by the Eora Campus facility is located on the western playground of the former school, facing Cape Street. The YMCA operated Eora Sports, Arts and Recreation Centre, a purpose-built three level multi-use sporting complex, includes indoor sports halls and activity rooms, a heated 25m pool and associated change and storage areas.

Gadigal House’s flexible space, leased for office accommodation for tenants with a relationship to the primary sporting/educational uses of the site, and to the Indigenous educational group The Exodus Foundation, occupies the fourth building of the former School. The design was extensively workshoped with a range of stakeholders. A full Heritage Assessment and Impact Study were prepared by TZG as part of the work. NCIE was officially opened by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in March 2010.

**AWARDS**
- 2011: Lloyd Rees Award for Urban Design, AIA NSW Awards.
The Yanga Conservation Management Plan was prepared for the Hay Office of the NSW Parks and Wildlife Group of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water to guide the future conservation of Yanga National Park and Yanga State Conservation Area.

The site is extensive with significant Aboriginal and pastoral sites throughout the property. Much of the site remains unsuitable for practical visitor use. However some portions of the site were made accessible for recreation. These include the Homestead and Woolshed precincts and the Willows. Social significance is an important aspect of the site.

The CMP analyses the history and surviving physical fabric and landscape elements of the Yanga Reserves. GIS maps were produced that locate specific items on the site. Maps, photographs and diagrams inform the historical and physical description of the site when it was a pastoral station. From the historical and physical analysis, and through community consultation and oral histories undertaken in the preparation of the “Flooded Country” that highlighted the strong social values for the site, a Statement of Cultural Significance was produced and was used as the basis for developing policies. Building One’s brutalist glacier forms are fragmented at the street edge into shards of translucent civic space. The intellectual pursuit of fresh insight, cleaving from the iconic mass of established knowledge, is showcased here on Broadway.

The University’s many-faceted edge advances over the public way, engaging passer-by in its displays. Elevated and luminous, the Display Case invites exploration through its boldly incised entrance. A recollection between the tower and smaller, well-loved areas is achieved by new human-scaled spaces between the Tower Fragments. The iconic Building One is preserved and emulated in the new Podium’s geometrical plan and use of unadorned materials.

Unified by existing stairs and lifts, the new lends vitality to the old, and fresh life is breathed into the old Podium from the Alumni Green. The weight of the tower is alleviated by the lightness and uplift of the new forms. Plants and trees give a cool, conservatory atmosphere to the Display Case. Controlled sunshine, filtered fresh air and thousands of tonnes of retained building material are included in our ESD strategy for the new building.

This new expressway provides connection through the northern suburbs of Adelaide to the interstate road network and serves as a gateway to the city from the adjoining states. Nearly 20km of roadway with nine multi-level interchanges crosses the northern plains of the city reaching up to the Hills. TZG were commissioned to undertake the Reference Design for this major state infrastructure by TCL, and worked with the DPTI engineering and urban design team to refine the design of the nine bridges and approach roads as well as the freeway corridor. Major gateway statements were briefed at the southern and northern ends, and approach roads as well as the freeway corridor. Major gateway statements were briefed at the southern and northern ends, to signal the approach to the city and the entry into the city zone. Following the tender process, TZG continued their involvement with the detailed design including earthworks and material selections.

Factory Building has a single minded architecture, organised around the processing of its material, in this case flour. This pragmatic strategy creates sculptural building forms, dramatic spaces and unique structures, all evident in the original Edwin Davey Flour Mill. In the spirit of industrial architecture TZG proposed a bold contemporary structure embracing 21st Century Sydney, and the contemporary desire for expansive views and good internal amenity.

The base of the proposed building relates to a 19th Century Pymont, while the elevated ‘lantern’ relates to 21st Century Sydney, establishing an informative dialogue of past and present. The complete composition interprets the site’s rich industrial history; the remnant masonry walls treated as evocative ruins, the rebuilt southern wings are clad in sun and acoustic screens conceived as stacks of flour sacks, and the new suspended ‘lantern’ clad in white glass, evoking the pureness of flour.

The earthquakes of Tohoku and Miyagi, Japan and Christchurch, New Zealand this year caused more than physical devastation. On visits to Canterbury, we observed the psychological havoc wreaked on people who had lost everything that was certain in their lives: the Japanese people would suffer similarly and in far greater numbers.

Aftershock is a resilient lightweight timber structural system, designed to endure multiple aftershocks that follow major earthquakes. The floor and roof arrive in the field as a “flat pack” and concertina out to form instantaneous waffle structures with inherent rigidity. The two planes are held apart by fold-out “V” plywood columns. This structural system can be covered in a range of cladding types, either as displayed in our prototype, or as found on site. Our choice of timber as core material was for ease of delivery and speed of construction, but also for the warmth of its colour and feel, offering some sense of homelessness and permanence during the wait for re-building.

AWARDS
2011 AILA SA Award for Design
2010 AILA Award for Excellence in Planning

2015 DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) (ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN) BY PRACTICE RESEARCH BY INVITATION

LOCATION YANGA NATIONAL PARK, NSW
PROJECT 2010

CLIENT GOVERNMENT OF SA, DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE
LOCATION ADELAIDE, SA
COLLABORATION TAYLOR DULLITY LETHLEAN + ROBERT OWEN ARCHITECTS

LOCATION BROADWAY, NSW
PROJECT 2010

LOCATION CIRCULAR QUAY, NSW
PROJECT 2011

LOCATION PYRMONT, NSW
PROJECT 2011

LOCATION BROADWAY, NSW
PROJECT 2010

LOCATION CIRCULAR QUAY, NSW
PROJECT 2011

PROJECT 2010

PROJECT 2011

LOCATION  BROADWAY, NSW
CLIENT   UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
PROJECT   2010

LOCATION   CIRCULAR QUAY, NSW
CLIENT   EMERGENCY SHELTER EXHIBITION
LOCATION   PYRMONT, NSW
PROJECT   2011

LOCATION   BROADWAY, NSW
CLIENT   UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
TZG approached this design competition by exploring the following conditions: An active, connective ground plane, designed on the principles of ‘Loose- fit, long life’, the ground plane is an organic landscape of indoor and outdoor spaces through which the community life of the school can flow; eddies of activity and pockets of calm co-existing.

A simple sheltering enclosure; the envelope is straightforwardly rectilinear. Conventional construction using commonly-available materials; glass, timber, steel - produces a tall, shaded, cool and light-filled interior, and an exterior that will complement and invigorate the entire school.

Strategic levels & circulation; floor levels in the new buildings have been determined to achieve easy connections to existing and new school functions. Circulation paths have been reinforced so the school can reclaim its heart. Conserving facilities for the future; the work has been effectively planned to retain classroom blocks for future development, conserving resources and opportunities. It embodies sustainable principles from passive solar and natural ventilation to innovative technology.

Like a still life in a park setting, the Margaret Olley Arts Centre was composed as a set of engaged elements, built of carefully selected natural materials and tilted above the flood plane. The ground floor foyer is open to the public forum, addressing Keen Street with a clear sightline connection. This connection is at the heart of the design concept: to be a welcoming building and a favourite Lismore destination. The form and scale of the building complement the historic Conservatorium and Library.

To make a showcase of Lismore’s timber industry heritage, the first floor gallery ‘container’ is clad in locally sourced Australian hardwood, reducing embodied energy.

Some of the world’s more memorable and enjoyable landscapes resonate in the public consciousness because they honestly and elegantly convey their function. This is not a gloomy underpass, but instead a pathway that defines a sculptured topography, one that visually extends and unifies a once-divided landscape. The pathway that momentarily-pauses under a long, slender bridge. This pathway is not another Canberra feature, but instead a beautiful connector creating a memorable journey, embraced by its landscape context and responsive to a wider Canberra story.

This is a simple and refined response, comprising an elegant arcing pathway flanked by a textured stone wall that defines and enhances a circular lawn and looks out to a central functioning wetland, leading to a delightful waterfront grove, a defined resting place on the Lake. The unconstrained vistas on every part of the path ensure safety whilst embracing the beauty of the Canberra landscape. The proposal is open and accessible, an immersive people place where the impact of the traffic is ameliorated and the landscape enhanced.

As part of an expert consultant team, TZG completed the final study phase for the Blacktown Showgrounds and Francis Park Masterplan. The Masterplan was designed to accommodate the different zoning and permitted uses of the six parcels of land on the 16Ha Showgrounds site.

Three main geometries define the plan, producing a robust but flexible structure to accommodate development over the life of the Masterplan. The design aims to create a “Park in the City” and comprises buildings and open space elements through an ‘Arts and Culture’ cluster and a ‘recreation and events’ cluster.

The Arts and Culture cluster includes an 800m² theatre with rehearsal and recording facilities, artist in residence studios and galleries. The Recreation and Events cluster includes an events centre with large function rooms, an arena and large open spaces to accommodate multipurpose outdoor performance spaces. Beach, parkland and community gardens encourage social activity and community gatherings to reflect a multicultural Blacktown.

The proposed Faculty of Science building comfortably fits into the set of new, screened buildings, whilst offering an idiomatic expression for its own faculty. By evoking the cutting-edge, experimental and investigative the design offers an architectural expression for the specific and cross-disciplinary research carried out inside the Science Research Building. The aesthetic concept investigates the behaviour and make-up of light, the basis of much research and an essential building requirement. In the building’s façade, the components of light will be separated into a coloured array, distributed in parcels of intense hue through the building’s sun screening elements.

Internal spaces can be readily reconfigured over time, providing optimal flexibility across the 15,450m² floor plan. In addition, wall construction types can be altered inside the glazed baguette screen, with time and new usage requirement, whilst leaving the strength of the building’s identity undiminished. The colonnade shelters from inclement weather and opens to the ground floor. It also offers a series of undercover outdoor student learning and relaxing spaces.
Conceived as a community or urban village, Breathe is a residential development of 88 dwellings that set the scene for all kinds of lifestyles and all kinds of people of all ages. Breathe responds to its context with a hybrid (part individual houses, part apartment building) building type, which is intended to spark off regrowth in the earthquake ravaged Christchurch area.

In the city’s tradition as the Garden City, Breathe draws from the landscape and blooms in the city’s tradition as the Garden City, capable of becoming a compelling model for the rebuilding of Christchurch.

The 120 Bourke Street project involves the conservation of the remaining original fabric of a car showroom and two 1880’s heritage listed terrace houses. The terrace houses become the historic feature of the new development, conserved for future generations. The development houses retail on the ground floor with lettable strata studios on the second and third floor. The side elevations of the terraces are revealed, allowing interpretation of the heritage items. The new elements are set back to match the ridge line of the terraces creating an entry and balcony.

Internally, historic features of the former terrace houses such as skirtings, cornices and architraves are replaced to match existing. The detracting, inappropriate facades of the existing neighbouring buildings are removed and replaced by more sympathetic facades. The scale of the new work is broken down at the Bourke Street façade into a series of vertical louvres, modulated to respect the scale of the adjacent terrace houses.

As part of an extensive landform to house a variety of play experiences, TZG designed a kiosk as part of a greater playground designed by JMD Design. The form of the kiosk takes its queue from the sculptured JMD landscape, with a playful curving steel and tension fabric “paté” roof to provide shelter from the sun and rain, soaring over a timber batten clad, vandal resistant box at its centre.

Conceived of as a place of rest and recharge, the Kiosk provides refreshments and a quieter zone adjacent to the energetic play area. Winding concrete plots connect the Kiosk to the playground, reflecting the geometry of the landscape, and affording seating for larger groups and families alike.

Set amongst an urban forest in the inner suburb of Pyrmont, this urban renewal project comprises 43 one, two and three-bedroom apartments. The project reinvigorates a prominent industrial heritage site adjacent to the landmark Anzac Bridge.

It is one of the first Green Star-rated multiple unit residential projects in NSW, made possible by the careful organisation of apartments and fully researched selection of building materials. This was done by allowing a direct connection between each apartment front door and the street and pairing the apartments on each floor with a common stair that also has a view to the street. Strengthening the indoor and outdoor connection, the loggia style balconies are innovative for this scale of building.

The design of the building reflects its industrial heritage through the use of industrial forms and materials such as rust weathered steel cladding. Such cladding is a direct response to the site: it echoes the site’s industrial aesthetic, associates the building to the Eastern Knoll sandstone cutting by use of tone and colour, and expresses the steel as part of a conservation area, was conserved externally, with a new contemporary glass entry façade and eaves, signalling the forward-looking approach of the Church. Internally, a new Auditorium was created on the upper level, reached by a lift and stairs to a glass atrium, and other functions planned over the remaining levels.

A simple design and maximum daylight reinforce the Church’s spiritual message, with contemporary detail and extensive use of natural- finished timber complementing the use. A central courtyard has been landscaped for outdoor gatherings.
This scheme for the 2-25 Commonwealth Street Design Excellence Competition saw an urban form generated that complements the existing surroundings. It comprised of a podium that engages with the public domain and a slender tower that reconciles visual conflicts of neighbouring development.

The existing public domain is energised and improved by the arrangement of key components such as cafes and restaurants, the gym and apartment building entrance as a series of building forms that each open directly out to address the surrounding streets. A path weaves its way from Commonwealth Street past the restaurants, up to the roof terrace, and then on up to the gym. The roof terrace doubles as a sheltered outdoor dining level and the launching pad for a climbing wall.

A 5-star Greenstar was proposed that involved employing cross ventilation strategies at the tower apartments, reducing plant and running costs for the building. The common foyer would be naturally lit and ventilated, with street and district views.

Alumni Park is a 21st century garden that will be viewed as one celebrates a vibrant campus life. The garden brings the science and humanities together in an artistic union that reminds us of the uniqueness of what we have in Sydney and differentiates UNSW from its Global counterparts.

An integral part of the Park is the Alumni Pavilion and Belvedere. The concept for the Pavilion is to allow the public open space to flow over it to maximise the direct connection from the upper campus to the new Alumni Park. The large ‘black box’ volumes and theatre related uses are wedged into the slope of the land and the landscape itself dominates. The Alumni Belvedere, a light filled glazed structure rising above the Park, provides access to the venue and an observation platform. The Belvedere is a landmark to recognise the University’s alumni, and will be infused with an artistic representation and interpretation of the past and future alumni.

As a counterpoint to the Belvedere, a second form embedded in the ground establishes the front edge of the Pavilion’s Reception Auditorium and Exhibition Space. These two structures are bound together by the landmark of the Alumni Park, appearing as dramatic icons in the landscape.

As part of an expert consultant team, TZG completed the Masterplan for the ACT Southern Memorial Park. The 76Ha site is situated in degraded natural bushland.

The Masterplan aims to minimise the visual and physical impacts of the development on the site, advocating the use of water sensitive and renewable energy design strategies for the whole site, including the potential to reuse all site water.

An integral part of the project involves the development of strategies to promote ecological sustainability by establishing planting corridors for wildlife habitats and movement and preserving significant flora. This was achieved by establishing an endemic planting policy, where possible, in order to restate the site’s past vegetation types.

The project team explored an appropriate sequence of burial sites, relating the topography of the site to the sequence of vistas and landscape experiences for visitors. The siting of built elements are designed to complement the landscape and provide appropriate focal points and wayfinding paramount to the masterplan’s success.
eternity playhouse

CLIENT   CITY OF SYDNEY
LOCATION   DARLINGHURST, NSW
COMPLETED  2013

The heritage-listed 1887 Burton Street Tabernacle was purchased by the Sydney City Council and externally conserved before 2009, when TZG was commissioned to adapt the building as an intimate 200 seat theatre for a rapidly-growing professional company specialising in new drama.

The complex and detailed requirements of the brief strained the capacity of the building, requiring the 1930s rear wing to be replaced by a totally-new four-level addition, containing back-stage facilities, dressing rooms, administration and plant, linked by a glass foyer with a sculpted steel stair and lift.

The main entry uses the original church entry to Burton Street, where original arched openings have been restored. A generous new stair descends to the lower level where the old dark space is now daylit and open, accommodating the foyer, café bar and box office. The new rake of the seating, lined with the reused timber from the church floor, forms a lively ceiling to this space.

The theatre, with excellent sightlines, a large stage and extensive acoustic treatment to control noise breakout, is reached by a matching steel stair and a public lift. Internally and externally, original finishes have been conserved intact, and new elements reuse salvaged material where possible.

AWARDS
2014  Lachlan Macquarie Award for Heritage, AIA National Awards.
2014  AIA-NSW Greensdale Award for Heritage Architecture Creative Adaption.
2014  Master Builders Association NSW - Adaptive Re-use of an Historic Building (Construction $5M - $10M).
2014  Adaptive Re-use Award (NSW) National Heritage Trust.
T2G were commissioned by the Sydney City Council to breathe new life into this grand and elaborate 1880s building, acquired when the suburb of Glebe was amalgamated with the City. Years of neglected water penetration required a new slate roof and extensive reconstruction of the failing cement finials and parapets, as well as extensive repair of the rendered façade decoration. Internally, damp walls required refinishing and salt removal, whilst much of the elaborate cedar joinery and ceilings had been painted.

The requirements of code-compliant public use were met by enclosing a void at the rear of the building, previously an ad-hoc collection of additions, to create new lift and fire stair connection to the complex interior levels of the building, and provide a new light-filled focus for circulation and access to the three grand halls within.

The halls are fitted out for events, music, gallery and other functions, with sound control, new services and a commercial kitchen. An Early Childhood Centre, administrative offices and small community meeting rooms, as well as craft studios and support facilities complete the program.

Careful investigation has allowed the reconstruction and restoration of the original paint and fain-marble internal wall finishes in the major spaces, and the joinery has been stripped and french polished. The new Stair Hall is simply detailed in steel and glass, concrete and timber with an applied pattern on the glass to provide privacy for the adjoining house. The use of several species of plantation hardwood in the new timberwork recalls the patterned pine and cedar of the original ceilings.

The former natural ventilation system was decommissioned many years ago and has been reinstated, using new zinc roof ventilators, reopened wall vents, enhanced with automated fan assistance.

**AWARDS**

2014 The Office of the Valuer General Heritage Award.

2014 Australian Property Institute NSW Excellence in Property Awards.

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**glebe town hall**

CLIENT: CITY OF SYDNEY  
LOCATION: GLEBE, NSW  
COMPLETED: 2013
In collaboration with engineers and urban designers Aurecon and landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean, TZG won the competition for this significant public infrastructure in 2012.

The project is the first part of the implementation of the Riverbank Masterplan, a strategic approach to connecting and enlivening the city’s arc of waterfront parkland. The eight-metre-wide bridge will link the redeveloped Adelaide Oval to the city, spanning nearly 75m over the River Torrens through the nationally heritage-listed Adelaide Parklands. Using the new bridge, pedestrians can access the Festival Centre, Adelaide Railway Station and new Convention Centre.

The elegant curve of the bridge will sweep lightly through this iconic setting, complementing the adjoining structures and having minimal impact on the green spaces. It has been designed with maximum lightness and simplicity, its faceted profile, clad in white glass, reflecting the water and greenery, supported on dramatically angled V columns.

The project’s vision is to create not only the bridge, but also a series of new ‘people spaces’ on the waterfront, each with its own character and amenity.

To the north, the curve of the bridge encloses a new informal amphitheatre as well as a plaza linking to the Oval’s redeveloped forecourt. The termination of the bridge is a dramatic Belvedere, hovering above the river, where a new water wall will aerate and cleanse the lake.

To the south, expanded facilities for the Festival Centre include a new restaurant and offices, outdoor relaxation and event spaces, and a new civic-scaled stairway to the riverfront. This generous stepped outdoor space includes a major water cascade and significant planting.

AWARDS
2015 - The City of Adelaide Prize, SA AIA Awards
2015 - Urban Design Commendation, SA AIA Awards

CLIENT
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DEPT PLANNING TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE
LOCATION
ADELAIDE, SA
COMPLETED
2014
COLLABORATION
AURECON + TAYLOR CULLITY LETHLEAN
TZG were engaged by the Sydney Anglican Schools Corporation to design the addition of a new primary arts and gymnasium building at St Lukes Grammar School in Dee Why. Internally, the addition includes five classrooms, two artrooms, a gymnasium, a PE and teachers office as well as a kiln room and small computer room.

Exterionally, on a constrained site, the building gives the school a new basketball court on the roof of the building, connecting directly to the oval. Further recreation areas are provided by "external rooms" adjacent the classrooms.

A subtly coloured pattern of louvres of anodised aluminium enlivens the external facade, acting also as a balustrade.

The building is designed for flexibility, created on a simple grid plan determined by the lower level parking lot, the walls can be moved for future needs.

In late 2009 Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects were awarded the job of principle consultant to design and document a new cultural centre for Wyong Shire to be located in Wyong and accommodate a 450 seat theatre, 150 seat studio and associated spaces including a 100 seat restaurant.

The Memorial, won in a Design Excellence tender in conjunction with artist adviser, Janet Laurence, is a ‘landform’ of Australian red sandstone, forming an iconic and appropriate place of memory and reflection. It embodies the Australian character and responding to the urban and heritage qualities of the site.

The Memorial comprises 15 columns, each six metres tall and arranged in an open array on a surface of red sandstone and dark grey basalt. The columns form an open backdrop to the ceremonial plaza facing the New Zealand National War Memorial, with its civic steps, raised Tomb and tall Carillon. Each of the columns relates in form to the Carillon, repeating its volume at a smaller scale, creating strong connections without mimicry.

The shaping of the array and the landscape of the Memorial Park defines the new Ceremonial Plaza and continues the sweep of the planned Memorial Terraces.

The columns are constructed of rugged red sandstone, instantly recognisable as an image of Australia. The Columns each have an inset panel of reflective polished black granite, carrying a curated program of interpretation. Amongst the Columns is a series of plinths providing a focus for large and small ceremonies and wreath-laying.

**AWARDS**
2010 First Prize and Commission
Located on the Eastern side of Kensington Street, the precinct is designed around the adaptive reuse and making accessible of a series of small warehouses and terraces with contemporary infill buildings. Retail will occupy the ground floor with restaurants and bars on the upper floors.

A series of interconnected courtyards will allow visitors to wander through an eclectic series of spaces, interweaving a mixture of old and new. Externally entry is signified by a series of glass lantern-like entrances.

Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, along with Turf Design, Foster and Partners from London and Atelier Jean Nouvel from Paris, are developing the "Old Kent Brewery" site on Broadway into a visionary new urban quarter. T2O’s role involves the design and documentation of the Kensington Precinct comprising three major projects: a 60 Room Boutique Hotel including 4 signature restaurants; 10,000 m² student accommodation; as well as 3,000 m² of bars, restaurant and street retail, all based around a narrow 19th century lane.

This complex project involves the retention and adaptive reuse of heritage sites as well as new buildings. Approximately 18,000 m² of space both new-build and refurbished will create a vibrant new retail, entertainment, dining precinct, "Off Broadway", focused on a characterful urban mix of buildings.

The project offers an outstanding opportunity for urban renewal that reflects the eclectic, historic and dynamic character of the inner city.
As part of the Kensington Street Precinct of the Frasers Broadway development, TZG are designing a 271 bed student housing building, within located walking distance from both the University of Technology and the University of Sydney.

Historically a laneway, the student housing will become a link building in the precinct with student accommodation above and retail recessed on the ground floor.

Internally, a decorative stair case runs through the building, connecting it’s hubs. Externally the building is clad in a patterned steel grille facade that plays with textural density from different optical points of view.

The scale and framework for the building are conceived from the geometric modules of the historic Clare Hotel and the CUB Administration Building to create a gentle rhythm undulating along Kensington Street.

An exciting and dramatic foyer is formed around the internalisation of the former laneway and creates a rich hierarchy of public and private spaces.

The Old Clare Hotel, part of Frasers Broadway’s Kensington Street Precinct, involves the adaptive reuse of the former Carlton United Brewery Administration Building and the original Clare Hotel. The 4600m² boutique hotel will contain 62 rooms and will include four signature restaurants and a rooftop swimming pool.

CLIENT: FRASERS PROPERTY
LOCATION: BROADWAY, NSW
COMPLETED: 2015

The Old Clare Hotel & Student Housing
Central Park Sydney

CLIENT: UNLISTED COLLECTION
LOCATION: BROADWAY, NSW
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An airport can be perceived as a place of movement - movement of planes, luggage and people. This is the underlying architectural theme for the Virgin Australia Interiors, allowing guests to glide from one space to another, avoiding the clumsiness and confusion of travel.

The upgrades of the Virgin Australia traveller interfaces have been conceived as the next step in domestic air travel, a pleasurable experience rivaling the glamour days of air travel.

The spaces provide all of the requirements of the modern traveller: working hubs, internet hook-ups, relaxing libraries, dining and drinking places, short stays for a quick bite, and 'verandahs' to watch the world fly by.

The lounges are designed as a set of loosely interconnected spaces all visually held together by the 'net' ceiling, which establishes the organic geometry for the entire space. The recesses between the interconnecting ceiling panels conceal the myriad of required services.

**AWARDS**

- 2014  Commendation for Interior Architecture, AIA NSW Awards.
- 2014  Commendation for Interior Architecture, AIA ACT Awards.
The vision for the Victoria Square is: “To be an accessible and vibrant public space that is internationally recognised as a symbol of South Australia’s unique culture and lifestyle.”

The Regeneration Masterplan seeks to provide a comprehensive design vision for this important space within the City of Adelaide. In achieving this aim, the masterplan sets “The Square” within its precinct and greater city context and identifies placemaking initiatives to improve access, connectivity, environmental, economic and social benefits beyond the boundaries of the Square.

The Regeneration Masterplan was developed following an extensive process of consultation including the 2008 Community Ideas Competition.

AWARDS
2015 The Gavin Walkley Award for Urban Design, SA AIA Awards
2011 Excellence in Urban Design Award, AILA Awards SA
2010 Commendation for Planning Excellence for Urban Design.

CLIENT ADELAIDE CITY COUNCIL + SA GOVERNMENT
LOCATION ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA
COMPLETED ONGOING
COLLABORATION TAYLOR CULLITY LETHLEAN

tmndanyangga victoria square
Existing on the site is a single storey detached dwelling with a pitched roof and a single garage adjacent to the western boundary.

The project aims to demolish part of the dwelling’s rear and in providing the opportunity to construct a new two storey contemporary addition. On the ground level, the existing main entry, two bedrooms and lounge are to be retained at the front whilst the modified addition will accommodate an open plan kitchen, dining and living area, library, bathroom, storage and utility rooms on the ground level.

The first floor will accommodate a master bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite, and the addition of a fourth bedroom. Each bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite will have access to a sun-filled deck along the north-western elevation.

The project aims to demolish part of the eastern boundary and extends into the north-western boundary. A new 2m x 20m lap pool sits adjacent to the existing main entry, two bedrooms and lounge. A minor scale of steel plates and flats form the safety screen to the bridge has botanic references laser cut into sheet aluminium, and the coursed brickwork of the adjacent Mulga Road to the West.

As part of Transport for New South Wales’ Oatley Station accessibility upgrade, a new curved steel truss bridge spans the railway corridor, reminiscent of the Sydney rail network’s 19th century steel bridges.

A new approach to education is developing across the world – one harnessing interaction, both physical and digital, one that values informal collaboration and the contribution of all. The quality of the designed space can foster this new spirit, with key aspects of flexibility, multi-use, acoustics and services joining the less measurable quality of “feeling” to create places for successful learning and experience.

A new 2m x 20m lap pool sits adjacent to the western boundary and extends into the rear setback.

T2G recently upgraded the interior of the Ryan Auditorium for Australian Catholic University’s North Sydney Campus. The scope included replacement of seating, finishes and materials. The contemporary design features a draped timber ceiling to enhance the auditoriums acoustic performance.

As part of Transport for New South Wales’ Oatley Station accessibility upgrade, a new curved steel truss bridge spans the railway corridor, reminiscent of the Sydney rail network’s 19th century steel bridges.

Stair and lift elements, providing much needed equitable access to the platform, are carefully stitched into the varying landscape conditions of Oatley Parade to the east and Mulga Road to the West.

These new structurally rigid and fire resistant elements are made of horizontally ribbed precast concrete, echoing the historic horizontal timber boarded platform building and the coursed brickwork of the adjacent River Road rail bridge.

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The uses have been organised around a new walkway connecting Collins Street to Little Collins Street, as well as a new square off Russell Street, which further improves access to the tower and gives much needed space between St Michael’s Church and the new retail building.

The alterations and additions have been carefully stitched into the existing tower so as not to undermine the recognition of the 80’s icon. The additions are visually linked with a flowing glazed form that speaks of glamorous fashion and ease movement through the site.

This project sees the redevelopment of a former 13,000m² paint factory into 17,000m² of creative production space with associated retail as well as 16,000m² or residential apartments.

The master planning involves the selective removal of intrusive industrial elements, in order to stitch the reinvigorated precinct into the existing street pattern as well as creating a neighbourhood centre.

The project aims to demolish part of the eastern boundary and extends into the north-western boundary. A new 2m x 20m lap pool sits adjacent to the existing main entry, two bedrooms and lounge. A minor scale of steel plates and flats form the safety screen to the bridge.
Within the iconic Utzon space of the Sydney Opera House’s two southern shells, the new Bennelong Restaurant is positioned across three levels, each offering a different dining experience and direction of view. The long familiar layered precast concrete stair plinth on which the Bennelong shells sit are continued but reinterpreted in softer form as layers of grey felt in the fitout, shaped in rectilinear forms to relate to the famous podium. Acting as giant acoustic absorbers, the forms are trimmed with aged brass, in acknowledgement of the original brass used throughout the Opera House.

Several possibilities for this site were prepared and studied, which were finally condensed into three scenarios. These range from a park upgrade – a reuse of existing facilities - to a more extensive legacy project for Crows Nest with purpose-built sports facility, cinema complex and high quality park with a childcare facility above and parking below. The latter proposal shows an undulating ground plane keyed into the surrounding streets with a plaza extension to Willoughby Road connected to the local restaurants.

1-9 William St is a low-rise apartment building articulated by a series of ‘urban erosions’ - landscape spaces pressing in from the street to create entries and communal spaces. The surfaces of the erosions are highly glazed to reflect and amplify the sense of the landscape.

This strategy was used to address the City of Sydney urban design objectives and the SEPP 85 (Residential Flat Code) compliance requirements.

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60 Martin Place is a 40,000m² sensuous and elegant tower, comfortably taking its place in the Sydney skyline. The building forms a natural fulcrum at the junction of Macquarie St and Martin Place, Sydney’s most important civic and commercial streets. The building speaks of its time, and is classically composed in three parts with an activated urban podium, a commercially desirable tower and an identifiable crown.

The podium is composed of a series of transparent street activating ‘buildings’ or ‘pods’, compatible in scale with the historically significant Macquarie St civic buildings. Eight entrances lead into a grand civic room, lined in sandstone, naturally lit with north light from above St Stephens Uniting Church, which flanks the northern edge of the site. The centrepiece of this urban room is a series of curvilinear glass lift shafts, visibly whisking people skyward, adding to the urban theatre of the space.

The tower floor plate comprises a series of interconnected curving bay windows, pushing out into and maximizing the view. The sensuous and elegant tower plan assures floor flexibility, with the avoidance of corners, and the introduction of the panoramic view to the entire floor plate.

This large scale project includes a town centre of retail, office space, residential, university and public domain. TZG Architects were assigned the design project for the university and public domain, which is set on an inclined ground plane [was this part of the existing landscape or did you introduce this inclined ground as part of your concept?]?

This north facing landscaped surface strengthens the Sydney Olympic Park’s legacy of high quality public open space and is used here to integrate all of the uses in a vertical as well as horizontal direction. The public domain must balance legibility of and navigation through the built environment with a sense of playful exploration of the myriad public spaces.

The university, merging the notion of a traditional courtyard campus with the more recent urban style of vertical campus, is simultaneously ‘cut’ into the inclined elevated ground plane and built above it.
In the Learning and Performing Arts Centre project we sought to arrive at an elegant response to two equally crucial questions. The first is: what is the most stimulating but also useful architectural form that can be created for the young talented people who will be learning there? The second is: given that the City of Sydney Heritage Specialist and the Heritage Council must also be inspired by the proposed architecture, how do we best connect the LPAC to its heritage surroundings and seat it sympathetically in the landscape of the Main Building? These two aspirations formed the basis of our proposal – a contemporary building in a heritage setting.

For nearly 70 years the Bondi Pavilion has been both a landmark and a well-used facility for Sydney’s world-famous beach. Now it’s time to bring it up to date, so it can service the complex needs of a growing community, generations of beach-goers and the increasingly sophisticated tourists.

The Australian National Botanic Gardens Master Plan sets out guiding principles for the site over the next period, with a prioritised sequence of works to improve visitation and the visitor experience, increase revenue and facilitate the conservation and expansion of the Gardens’ collection – its living plants and seed bank.

The Master Plan provides a framework for the Gardens’ projected infrastructure to support enhanced visitor experiences, horticulture and research capabilities over the next 20 years. This long-term vision will ensure that the Gardens remain at the forefront of contemporary gardens world-wide.
6 brian zulaikha essay
This essay is an exploration of my relationship with architecture. It will examine my understanding of architecture as a community of people and ideas, and my contributions in this way to Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects (TZG) as a joint practice. To this end, I have used two particular projects as exemplars: the Circular Quay Bicentennial renewal (1984–87) and my own house, the Zulaikha Laurence House, Balmain (2004–07).

Further, this essay started life as an inwardly looking start to a Practice PhD, however that has been now shelved and this essay, incomplete as it will remain, will simply now be included in one of the documents which will form part of the Practice PhD of both Tim Greer and Peter Tonkin.

Although these projects are very different in scale and complexity, they offer an excellent comparative analysis for my particular practice methodology. It should be understood, however, that in terms of my architectural development they do not stand alone, but rather as major milestones along the way.

I have therefore constructed this essay as a narrative. It begins with my personal back-story, proceeding as a continuum through the experiences that lead me to start TZG and so on. I have included images of paintings, architecture and drawings necessary to illustrate my point. In the main I have excluded projects with which my association was close but not intimate; and have attempted to make explicit those instances where I may have crossed this divide.

From a very early age I painted under the tutelage of Lloyd Rees. My painting developed from copies of early Australian paintings to figurative landscapes and eventually to abstraction.

Painting gave me a good grounding in continual refinement and exploration. It’s important to recognise when one has reached the end of a painting, when the work has reached a perceived point of “perfection”.

The last 45 years of work have seen a number of changes. From being a painter, then an architect responsible for building design, I have gradually transitioned to a role where I make a contribution, which for me is much more difficult to describe. Should I separate my work designing buildings, from my role as a “supportive” partner in TZG?

For many years my role has been in that area of practice loosely called management, represented as “The Foundation” on the diagram* (insert?). What we have called the Foundation is a many-headed beast. It connects everything and encompasses all the tasks necessary to ensure the office enters into the most beneficial relationships and makes the most sensible commercial decisions.

The foundation has to be strong. It must choreograph connections and dialogues, the management of awards, publicity, and historical documentation, not for it’s own sake – but with a purpose to always strive towards the Facilitation of Design Excellence. This will recur later in the course of this essay.

Involvement in the Foundation has suited my character. Not having a huge confidence in my own design abilities I am in practice with a couple of highly talented architects who reliably approach a project with conceptual freshness and in a way that gives a meaningful enhancement to the client’s ideals and program.

Peter and Tim are very different. Each is at different times consultative or not, even within the office. I find I always keep this in mind, because with most clients they need to know you’re around, at least for a time. I also have a history of working closely with Peter, prior to TZG, whilst my history of working since TZG’s formation has mostly been with Tim.

And yet, for all that, the sense of a continual quest for perfection that developed in me as a young painter has I think stayed with me, forming many of my current preoccupations.

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backstory

I was born in India into a Sephardic Jewish family from Iraq. We immigrated to Australia when I was four years old but, even so, my life as a child was relatively exotic. I have strong childhood memories of curiosities and customs that were alien to my parallel upbringing as an Australian. I was not encouraged to learn the Arabic that my parents spoke at home but I could certainly understand what was going on. I did learn to read and write Hebrew, though strangely not to understand it. I was brought up to value commercial endeavour over education; pragmatism over idealism. My father was by any measure an extremely successful businessman and these values are so strongly stitched into my fabric that my becoming an architect surprises me even now. In our family a ‘job’ implied an income, not a calling. Yet, although I may have begun with that credo, I seem to have made an unwitting u-turn. I now see that my work process, my love of art and my response to life have all, I believe, been more intuitive than rational.

early years: education

Painting was my first love. I began to paint at an early age. Somehow, miraculously, the joy I received from this was not considered a threat to my future. I painted everything - still lifes, landscapes. But I think my parents must have had little idea what art meant to me – neither encouraging nor discouraging my needs in this regard.

Due to my parents’ overwhelmingly commercial concerns, I was the first family member to finish school, let alone go on to tertiary studies. And yet, by some accident I found myself in 1962 at architecture school.

At Sydney University I came under the tutelage of landscape greats like Roland Wakelin, John Santry and (most importantly) Lloyd Rees, who introduced me to the then current American expressionists. Abstract expressionism, then dominating the contemporary galleries of Sydney, became my obsession. I remember the wonderful rush of discovery, something akin to solving an architectural riddle.

Although I was studying architecture at university, art was easily my best subject. My parents gave me a linoleum floored studio separate from the house and I remember the large sheets of Masonite onto which I poured and dribbled various pigmented concoctions, more Jackson Pollock, by this time, than anything that could be called figurative. Not long before graduation I had a one-man exhibition – and seriously considered a career as an artist.

I have never separated art from “architecture as art”. My interests have always been split about 50:50 between both disciplines. This may be due to some extent to my partner Janet Laurence, a successful visual artist. (Equally, anyone familiar with her work might remark that her interest in architecture might reflect my influence on her practice).

My love of architecture began in my second year of study and has flourished unabated ever since.

Yet my deep sense of obligation to my parents for their forbearance in allowing me to attend University gave me an enduring need to prove that my architectural studies were indeed a reasonable investment.
early work 1967-69

Perhaps this commercial emphasis is why my first move, upon graduation was to join with five classmates in starting a company: Bond, Korzeniewski, Malone, McClelland, Taussig and Zulaikha. We designed furniture, made architectural models and entered competitions. BKMMTZ was shortlived, lasting only two years, but those five classmates are still amongst my closest friends.

In 1968 I won with another architect Andre Heyko-Porebski, what seemed an amazing commission, designing a trendy boutique for David Jones, beside their store in Market Street, Sydney. The boutique was intended to occupy the site until they were ready to redevelop. Andre and I started a firm "Zulaikha and Heyko-Porebski" to carry out the project. We were given a sum of money for design/construct the boutique, called 'Hung On You'. It was (for them) a great commercial success and for me a great lesson in strategic economic planning. With apologies of course to Hands Hollein, for his Candle store completed in 1965.

I married young; a late sexual awakening and a necessary escape from a Jewish home. Margaret and I left Sydney almost immediately, heading first to Singapore, then London and Cambridge in the UK. I was fortunate enough to be given enormous responsibility right from the beginning, so every job I had was hugely beneficial to my experience.

There was also travel. We toured the United Kingdom, Morocco, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy. We wandered the tiny streets of Barcelona, looked at Gaudi, visited the Desert Towns in the Sahara, continually being built and re-built as fast as they deteriorated. I continually sought out contemporary works, sketched, took heaps of photos. I took great pleasure in the cathedrals of Europe - having had to draw their plans and sections whilst at University, it was revelatory to visit them again as old friends.

Zulaikha and Heyko-Porebski was short-lived – we agreed to go our separate ways in 1969, when I left Sydney with my new wife Margaret.

By the time I returned to Australia I was no longer painting. I was ready to start a career.
Returning to Sydney in late 1974, after a short stint at Allen Jack and Cottier, I worked for Douglas Gordon, a graduate of Yale. He had studied under Louis Kahn and had a good reputation for domestic architecture in and around Sydney. Douglas had a full time position teaching at Sydney University and I was his only employee. I had never worked on domestic scaled architecture and with an extraordinary patience, he gave me a wonderful introduction to scale and materiality – far different from the larger public buildings to which I had become proficient.

In the recession of 1975 he ran out of architectural work and he kept me on for several months, firstly to draw all his past work ready for publication (which I don’t believe ever eventuated) and to organise the renovation of his large terrace house in Woollahra, Sydney. I have no images of work from that period, but Douglas and I became firm friends and I will always appreciate his mentoring as a wonderful influence on me personally and in my work.

In 1979, I took leave from the NSW government Architects Office and having made a connection with Ancher Mortlock and Woolley, managed to gain a position with them as an assistant to the site architect on the Bangkok Embassy in Thailand.

For three years I worked in a commercial office, Travis Partners where I was Project Architect on two multi-storey office buildings. One, called Mayfair in Castlereagh Street, Sydney received a very complimentary and thoughtful review by John Haskell in the Sydney Morning Herald.
In 1984 I was offered an incredible opportunity within the NSW Government Architect's office, in the Department of Public Works. At the time Andrew Andersons was the Principal Architect Special Projects – he remembered me from my days on the National Herbarium – he knew I was at a bit of a loose end and he very warmly welcomed me back with promise of a great project.

The job was as Design Co-ordinator of the Australian Bicentennial project to refurbish the gateway of Sydney, Circular Quay. Naturally, I jumped at the chance. This project would dominate my life for nearly four years and set its course for many years after that.

The project was extraordinary learning experience in working with large-scale infrastructure and managing a range of public and private clients, retailers and trade unions.

By the time I started there had already been many inter-departmental reports and recommendations on Eastern Circular Quay. My job was to represent the NSW Public Works Department on the committees for Central and Western Circular Quay.

There were a number of government departments and authorities involved, each with responsibility for their own programs and a sense of “ownership” of various sections of the Quay. There were also, as I recall, 32 unions to be consulted at every stage of the work.

I was fortunate that, in order to ensure the project would be ready for the Bicentenary, I had the imprimatur of the NSW Premier, the late Neville Wran.

In this capacity I was responsible for the retail program and for managing the design of facilities right around the Quay. This involved a plethora of architects and in many cases I found myself negotiating a path between the architect, the clients, and the NSW Government, as funders of the redevelopment. All of which gave me experience in negotiation and leadership skills on which I still draw every day in practice.

As it happened, Peter Tonkin was working at this stage with Lawrence Nield and Partners as Project Architect for the Overseas Passenger Terminal (OPT) so our paths crossed once more. This time, as a government representative, I was basically Peter’s client. We collaborated on aspects of the OPT such as the landscape design of the public realm at the building’s southern end.

It was out of this experience that Peter and I joined forces to create Tonkin Zulaikha Architects. About two years later Tim Greer joined us, and a few years later we became TZG.
my thematic concerns

spirit
I am interested in the fusion of site, function and “spirit” into an architectural possibility. Sometimes this happens relatively easily, other times as a result of hard and thoughtful analysis. All architects believe they are encouraging “the human spirit” and of course most of them also want to use state-of-the-art technology. For me, “spirit” means my own spirit, or at least my personal relationship to space, materiality and form.

morality
Architecture must serve a moral purpose, both for the users and the general public. By this I mean that buildings must speak to their environment, be it urban or natural. They also have a social responsibility; they need to be interesting to engage with users and with passers-by. The days of monolithic banks and insurance companies is definitely over – just as banks have had to become user-friendly, buildings have also had to be, as far as is reasonably possible, engaging and useful.

An artist may bury himself in solitude but the architect has no such escape. He is responsible to the real world, the site and the community of users. The architect ignores his public at his peril.

Art can lay bare concerns and can convey issues of nature, politics, culture and aesthetics. Architecture must perform basic functional tasks, but also has a duty to contribute more than functionality, to endow building with “spirit” and so to provide a haven not just for the client and immediate users, but also to the broader community.

Morality can also imply “honesty” in materials and forms: a rejection of ornamentation. This, modernist interpretation is not what I wish to convey, although is definitely something I practice.

Architecture is good when the form — the result of the design — solves a problem and fits into its surroundings. It is important to have one very strong idea that brings everything else together. The details are like punctuation marks in a text. You need them to give the idea rhythm and accessibility. Without punctuation – or when there is nothing but detail – the architecture is a catastrophe, pretentious and open to misinterpretation.

equality
Public space is a signifier of democracy; the only space within cities where everyone is equal. It is therefore where authority can be challenged – think Tiananmen Square or the Vietnam moratoria.

The usurping of public space by a plethora of owners or governors of that space - urban regeneration companies, local strategic partnerships, local and or State Governments, business led initiatives – therefore defies democracy.

refinement
I have an abiding interest in refinement, at both planning and detail level. In the aesthetic and functional whole every nuance of detail is recognized. Refinement of this kind makes architecture honourable.

A concept is the beginning – the architect must be completely aware of his trade, for he must continually refine the details, both the planning and the details of the architecture. Every nuance of detail is recognized in the whole - in the aesthetic and functional whole. It is the architects’ special knowledge to ascertain when to stop.

The Concept is an idea – an idea which enables the fusion of site, function and “spirit”, into an architectural possibility. This sometimes happens relatively easily, sometimes as a result of hard and thoughtful analysis.

leadership
I have two thoughts on leadership in architecture. One relates to the possibility of leadership in regional design and community stewardship.

How can the architect lead this revolution in sustainable communities?
The second is that, within the office environment, leadership is paramount. To lead is humbly to recognize others’ talents and assist them in discovering themselves in the work.

synectics

Synectics is a creative problem-solving methodology that carries participants from problem-analysis to the generation and development of new ideas. The key to it is in its name, comprising the Greek roots syn (bringing together) and ektics (diverse elements). Synectics operates on the principle that, by using the mind’s remarkable capacity to connect seemingly irrelevant elements of thought, we can spark surprising new ideas that may later be developed into feasible or even brilliant solutions.

Synectics was originally designed to exploit the diverse resources of groups, but an individual working alone can also use the process successfully. Synectics works by allowing participants to indulge in activities that are sometimes discouraged in formal situations such as school or university. Guessing, wishing, taking mental excursions, using distant and loosely coupled analogies, improvising highly speculative and approximate connections and freely employing any thought from any imaginable source, however apparently irrelevant, are all seen as fruitful activities.

Gordon’s book made a great impression on me. As a result, in collaboration with a fellow student Paul Desney, I contributed an essay on the subject to my final year thesis. Our purpose was to show that collaborative problem-solving between people from different backgrounds, ideologies and social histories will generally find solutions that are not only equal to the best that each can make, but more ingenious even than the sum of the various collaborators.

Later, in practice, I asked myself: can I perhaps extend my 1967 thesis into the realm of architecture?

lateral thinking
Lateral thinking is an allied method of creative thought. Coined by Edward de Bono in 1967, lateral thinking is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “a way of thinking which seeks the solution to intractable problems through unorthodox methods, or elements which would normally be ignored by logical thinking”.

Lateral thinking uses Provocation and Movement to change and revitalise mental habits. Edward de Bono coined the word ‘po’ to signal a provocation. Po derives from the words hypothesis, suppose, possible and poetry. These words allow us to use a statement (po) to go forward in new directions, such as “po (suppose) cars had square wheels”. When the mind is provoked it is then possible to rearrange information, creating new patterns and restructuring old ones. Provocation provides the opportunity to move laterally and generate connections that are not derived from experience.
Provocation carries out experiments in the mind and works much like humour. Humour occurs when we are moved along a main track and then deposited via the punch-line down a side-track. Being jolted, thus, into a different plane suddenly shifts our retrospective understanding of the joke in a way that is surprising and enjoyable.

Movement, as with provocation, is outside our normal thinking behaviour. Movement is an active mental process and is different from judgment, where we compare an idea to our existing patterns and experiences and move to reject or criticize it accordingly. Where judgment seeks to keep us from deviating based on the question “will it work?”, movement progresses an idea by thinking “where will it lead?” Movement is not just an absence of judgment but is rather concerned where the withholding of judgement will allow us to go.

collaboration, synectics and my role in the practice

I have been asked to explore my role, in particular the possibility of seeing myself as practice curator. I would like to explore the process of collaborative creativity in relation to architecture, and with particular regard to the subject of what is known as ‘synectics’.

The word curator seems both loaded and vague. Intrigued by the idea of myself as a curator, I ran it past a curator with whom I have worked and whom I greatly respect, Peter Emmett. Peter was extremely forthright, rejecting my description as “curator” out of hand. “No,” he declared. “You are a committed modernist, an architect with strong ideas”. His vehement opposition gave me pause. Certainly I have been the overseer of the office, but if not the curator, then what?

My second chat with Peter I recorded. His issue is that the years of training and experience that go into curating collections in museums and galleries should not be devalued by generalist labelling. On the other hand, being bastardised could make the word Curator stronger and more valuable. Perhaps if the museum industry ceased trying to take possession of something they never owned in the first place and looked at it instead as a new set of possible relationships, they would be delighted by the results.

In the end, though, and whatever we call it, my overwhelming concern within this practice (and I think my principle contribution to it) has been a multi-faceted commitment to creative collaboration in its various forms.

I have always considered that each of us works as part of larger organism (for want of a more precise word). That is, we are all - clients, managers, consultants, tradesmen - aware of being a cog in the architectural machine. What follows therefore is the hunt for the way in which this interest in creative collaboration has emerged through and affected our practice.

Historically my strength has been in forming relationships, both within and without the office: nurturing of project possibilities and potentials, keeping abreast of potential projects and being there to advise potential clients as to a good way forward.

As to what I do now: having recently taken a major sabbatical, first as President of the NSW Chapter of the AIA and then as the AIA National President, I am currently in a state of re-discovery. I am still responsible for many mundane office procedures, such as payment of all our accounts, sifting emails and passing on what might be relevant. More importantly, I have acted as a sounding board on issues of either design or ethics, the inclusion of art in projects and the issue of collaborative engagement.

I may be one third of the directorship, but I am but one thirtieth of tzg. My efforts have been always to err on the side of generosity. If we can’t do it, I will always try and find someone who can. I will often recommend another architect more suited to their problem, which has resulted in a number of excellent commissions to kick-start younger emerging practitioners.

This slight distance has also allowed me to play a commentator role within the office; an ability to comment dispassionately (when invited!) which can be taken seriously or not.

The power of collaborative thinking is allied to the humbling process of community involvement. It is important to recognize the creative spark in every area of endeavour. The architect, the scientist and the artist all know when and how those sparks should be harnessed.
the zulaikha laurence house as collaborative architecture

Admittedly, my attempt to be inclusive was not always successful. Peter Tonkin says this is because I didn’t “structure” the collaborative process, instead allowing it to happen ad-hoc. This may be so. But, I ask myself now, what was the process?

The site was on a very steep street on the water’s edge in Balmain. We had been living in this street for many years without any possibility of car access, and this site at the bottom of the street became available. It was an opportunity to design a house for myself and Janet, on an incredible site.

My first plan was to provide both car and pedestrian access. Figuring it was possible, I developed a plan for it. I didn’t keep those sketches, but the important thing is that they implied complete demolition and new-build.

Soon after moving in however, I had someone sandblast the interiors of the “bunker”. This exposed the wonderful raw concrete, which was to become the kitchen ceiling and decided me in favour of adaptive re-use, rather than a new building. I built the kitchen and Janet and I hunkered down, waiting to negotiate an approval from Council. For a while, there being little else to think about, I got distracted with pattern making, with the external treatment of the elevations.

Of course, throughout this process I consulted others, many of them outside the office. I felt a little guilty spending more than minimal time on my house in the office. (Peter, Tim and I are different in this respect. Peter, I think, mostly drew his house up in the office. Tim never would – but then he and his wife collaborated at home. Peter collaborated with his wife also, but did at least some of his drawing at his desk during the day.

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Of course, throughout this process I consulted others, many of them outside the office. I felt a little guilty spending more than minimal time on my house in the office. (Peter, Tim and I are different in this respect.

Peter Tonkin gave me a couple of great suggestions, which I used. One was the reversing of the location of the shed and steps at the entry; the other was a detail to bridge the small void at the top level, between the staircase and the living room.

Libby Metcalfe, an ex girlfriend – I separately commissioned her to detail my kitchen for which I am ever thankful.

Drew Heath is I believe a very talented architect and builder. Having Drew by my side relieved me of the need to do exact detailed drawings. His setting-out skills were and are extraordinary.

John Chesterman worked in my office and gave invaluable construction advice. I think he may have also made the crazy suggestion for using a compactus for my wardrobe. This has turned into one of the most talked of features in the house.

Janet Laurence is my life partner. She is on this list only because she would be disappointed not to be. She was not in any real sense a collaborator or even a committed client. The principal area where she got involved was when I finally committed her to carry out an “artwork”, that is to paint the glass doors upstairs between the living / bedroom and the balcony space.

Peter Tonkin gave me a couple of great suggestions, which I used. One was the reversing of the location of the shed and steps at the entry; the other was a detail to bridge the small void at the top level, between the staircase and the living room.
This house, in which I now happily live and read and cook and sleep, is a careful attempt to complete the puzzle, integrating the private realm into public space (the park).

Neil Mackenzie, Paul Rolfe and Trina Day: All three worked in the office and made various, excellent suggestions. In the end I don’t believe I was able to use any, but it was all part of the process (stirring the pot).

If (as I believe) the core act of design is to establish new relationships, then the process and product of this act is bound to generate a certain intimacy and awareness of a larger collective dynamic, however unimaginable the actual forms.

In truth, though, at least until the building process really got underway, I felt quite alone, without any real collaborative partners in the project. During construction my collaborators were the carpenters or builders – in particular Chris Sidwell, Rupert Bicknell and Gerard Murphy. At this point the project became far more fulfilling.

So what was I doing, actually? Was I garnering ideas and using whatever I considered most worthwhile? Or is the house a worthy design because it embodies new ideas generated by cross-fertilization? To be honest I have no idea.

Design is an effort to imagine the unimaginable; a struggle to balance and negotiate dichotomies including local/global, urban/non-urban, somewhere/nowhere, art/design, horizontal/vertical and utopia/site specific. In my experience it always throws up as many questions as answers.
Anna’s questions are not in a language I am comfortable with, and of course that sets up a feeling of anxiety about whether I really am an architect! My immediate thought is DO I HAVE TO to get involved?. However I have set up the next hour to at least attempt some replies, however brief. I hope they are acceptable.

1. What is the central idea of this project and how does it play out in the design?

I contend that the project does not have a central idea. Perhaps if pushed, I would admit to responding to the situation, site context, existing structure and prevailing weather conditions.


In terms of language, I used whatever seemed appropriate to the remote site and difficulty of access. This required a solution where material handling would be possible by two men carrying each element some distance.

As to origins, I had just been to Japan, where I had spent time looking at beautifully detailed timber verandahs.

And regarding intent, I wanted to the house that was weather-proof but nevertheless flexible in its relationship to the outdoors, in order to respond to changing weather.

3. Does this project continue a thread/preoccupations from previous projects in your practice? If so, what is that and which projects are relevant?

All projects are a continuum. Our practice seems to have gained some recognition in adaptive re-use and “fringe” architecture, often providing buildings with a new life beyond their traditional functions. Similarly, in this instance, there was an existing structure – in this case a disused “bunker” that had already been adapted – which formed the nucleus for the house.

TZG has produced many such projects, starting with the Hyde Park Barracks from the early 1990’s. But adaptive re-use is not really a ‘thread’, since every project responds to the specifics of site, context, client, cost and whether it involves an existing structure.

4. What is ‘house’ in the Australian context to you?

A house anywhere is a place to live. Every person has his own way of living, which requires exploration and particular response. I’m afraid I can’t answer this question without resorting to cliché. Is Australian Identity relevant? Don’t know. Probably not.

5. Who are your influences? What Architect or body of work inspires you?

An obvious answer would be Carlo Scarpa, although his is a very personal language. In replying to this question (and it has never been something on which I have dwelt!), I think of Scarpa as well as Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van de Rohe, Alvaar Aalto, Le Corbusier, Schindler, Louis Kahn, Tadao Ando, and numerous artists: James Turrell, Anselm Keiffer and Richard Serra to name three. There are so many. My work is informed by life, by architectural history and by many people’s “body of work”. I think I am very open. There are new people all the time – and many ideas.

In summary I have no specific influence. Sorry.

6. What is your favourite part/ aspect of the design? (Could be conceptual or formal).

Perhaps it is living in such an experiential way and at all times being aware of the weather. Or perhaps it is just enjoying hanging around in the house, reading or cooking. I love the materiality of it – the closeness to the plaster, the timber. None of these things is special, other than the weather, over which I have no control (ie design).
brian zulaikha interview
EF A reasonable point.

BZ Yes. Yes, if the word ‘curator’ has been bastardised, perhaps it makes it stronger and more valuable – this is me speaking now. Some of our sectors lingo is making its way beyond institutions and getting picked up by mainstream in a positive way. So I see curator now as being an overseer in a general sense of possibly the office and so I’m allowing myself to be called it.

EF So you’re happier with it now?

BZ I’m happier with it now because I’ve decided he’s up himself <laughs>

EF <laughs> That’s funny.

BZ So what I would like to do is to find aspects of my persona that assist me with my architecture and then I’ve extended those words a little bit and I think some of them should go and some might endure.

EF Let’s read those out for the record.

BZ Ok - nurturer, art lover, food lover, architecture lover, magician, dabbler, innocent, explorer, outlaw, observer, stage, ruler, traveller, reader, regular guy, creator, adventurer and leader. Some of them are a little bit superfluous I think.

EF It makes you – I mean that list I think appropriately makes you much much broader than most architects. A whole lot of that stuff comes outside the realm of what most architects do which is interesting in itself.

BZ What I’ve got from Peter on this list - and he didn’t really want to talk about it - he said “everybody loves that”.

EF Peter Emmett this is?

BZ Yes. In a way, everybody is productive and creative...

EF Well, in a way that’s true and you can see that way and there’s one of the issues with language and he’s arguing on the one hand to define curator in a very narrow and different process because he is one.

BZ He thinks a curator is someone who puts together things and collects things.

EF Which is the same way in which an architect defines the word ‘architect’.

BZ Yes probably.

EF And perhaps he is saying “this is me and if it applies to you too then it devalues it”. So that’s a kind of professional guildism if you like. Just going back for a minute, because I want to come back to this, the thing that he said first interested me when you said that he, Peter, said “no you’re a committed modernist”. In my mind that’s what’s interesting because what none of this list does and neither does the word curator, point to you as a believer in a particular kind of architecture...

BZ I don’t know that he has a right to say I’m a committed modernist because that’s another thing all together.

EF I think that the question and the difference between a curator and an architect, broadly speaking, is that a curator is a facilitator saying ‘let all flowers bloom’ in the Peter Johnson sense but you in your work do have a much more committed style. I know style is a dirty word but you do have a particular style, you do things in a particular way. You love brutality and you love certain types of architecture and you clearly always have and when you put a line on paper, it goes here rather than there because you know how it should go. So you’re an artist more than a curator arguably. That’s a question, it doesn’t sound like a question but that would be my take on you.

EF I’ll take a note if you don’t mind of that. An artist more than a curator.

BZ I agree with that.

EF Essentially they’re quite different things because a curator is more like a city planner making the rules and allowing things to happen within a framework.

BZ And I think I’ve got a problem with the word ‘modernist’. I never thought I would – I always thought I was a modernist in the true sense and then I thought if I was, I wouldn’t have wanted to keep my house. I wouldn’t have wanted to work with old things.

EF You’re not a post modernist either – in the eighties...

BZ I’ve worked with old things.

EF But there’s a sort of evolutionary modernism that’s happening isn’t there? Across the world to everybody which I would see you as part of, which has taken on some of the stuff of post modernism like the interest in history and continuity and still said with cleanliness and clarity and directional nature.

BZ I like that – that’s evolutionary modernism which includes a lot of other ‘isms’ doesn’t it?

EF Yes, well it’s learned from them. I think it’s taken stuff and kind of warmed itself up because modernism was so cold and people found its purity so cold because it rejected history and decoration and all the rest of it. So what I think of it as is warmed up modernism which sounds like an insult but it’s not. It’s a kind of modernism with a pulse if you like which has made it a lot more user friendly and loveable and also, takes it forward into a future where modernism as it was wasn’t really sustainable because no one liked it. I mean architects liked it but nobody else did.

EF I think that’s the question and the issues with language and he’s arguing – Sue Anne knows this set me back considerably – this was weeks ago.

BZ Yes. In a way, everybody is productive and loveable...

EF I mean that list I think...

BZ Sue Anne knows this set me back considerably – this was weeks ago.

EF So this was previous as well?

BZ I of course thought that in years gone by, that perhaps I’ve been the overseer of the office but if I’m not the curator then what am I? So I had another chat with Peter and I went to see him on Friday with those lovely flowers bloom’ in the Peter Johnson sense and that’s fifty years ago, so how has your view of architecture changed of what you love?

BZ Well I look at some of those older buildings and I think “god they built it just like my sketch plans” and I’m a bit disturbed by that every time I see the Court House in Singapore, I’m really disappointed - despite the fact that it’s on heritage listing over there, if I had it these days it would have been loved – it would have had detail.

EF Soften?

BZ Softer – well I think that I could see the overall intensity of the design, and I wouldn’t have wanted to reduce that.

EF Which is one of its virtues is that great sort of strength – a presence.

BZ Yes it’s a tough thing but I think I would have made it more hand-made in a way.

EF More detailed.

BZ More detailed and thought about - how the windows might have joined the walls and how the walls might be made and all this sort of thing rather than that it was just like they built a piece of cardboard really. It’s just like a cardboard model.
EF That’s interesting isn’t it because one of the notable things about Corb is the way he used to – you know all those drawings with those soft lines and all those carefully wobbled hand drawn lines so it looked soft and so the concrete looked soft.

BZ And of course he was a master but I was a student – well not really a student but just graduated. And so I drew that thing as quickly as that and then got on the next thing and they built it just like that.

EF So what would you say that you learnt from that? Is it mainly the detailing?

BZ Yes. I think it took me a long time because when I went and worked in other offices over the years. I don’t count working for Louis Kahn as an experience. That wasn’t much of an experience but working for York Rosenberg and Mardall was an experience, it was really good and I worked on big buildings there. When I came back to Australia, I worked for Allen Jack and Cottier for a short time and I didn’t put that in my story but I just sort of did. When I was working for Public Works and then I worked with Douglas Gordon who had his office in the same room.

BZ I just couldn’t come down to that scale. That took me ages. I stayed there for about six to nine months and then went and worked with Douglas Gordon who had his office in the same room.

EF Who was doing bigger stuff?

BZ No, he was doing linier stuff and...

EF Just to punish yourself.

BZ Yes but I liked him a lot and I was wanting to learn how to do it as well. So I built a house for him with my hands because we ran out of work and then I got a job with Public Works because I ran out of work. One of my jobs at Public Works was this thing called a Numbat House which I think – I don’t know if it’s in there...

EF Yes it’s in there, there’s a picture somewhere.

BZ Anyway it was handmade so I sort of got to love working...

EF So what was Numbat house exactly?

BZ It was a little pavilion for an animal called a Numbat that lives in South West Australia. (See Numbat House, pg 93).

EF So it’s in the zoo?

BZ It was in the zoo. It was demolished last year.

EF Was it? So that’s netting by the look of it? Is it that it?

BZ Yes. That’s netting but there’s a gorgeous detail which I don’t think I have a photo of but it’s just made of these upside down trusses and I’ve allowed those columns here to just form the borders so that in fact – they’re all the same as those trusses but it’s just the way they’re radiating and then there’s a glass wall on the inside. You walk through here and you look through a glass wall into that space. There’s ventilation but you can’t see it and then there’s netting above and then around it and the glass wall there, at this point, just returned slightly and there’s a netting. It’s quite nice, I did a full size detail of it, where to put holes in the glass and sewed the netting onto the glass. I felt quite comfortable about the scale finally.

EF About working at that scale?

BZ Working at that scale – and I did a lot of other stuff at that time in the Public Works department. I’m just trying to think what I did after that. So I think straight out of university I leapt into that very large scale stuff but I came back to work about five or six years later when I returned to Australia and worked on small projects and I think I was a bit of a late starter in every sense – observing, enjoying life, and I think...

EF Is this sort of escaping from family do you think?

BZ A little bit of that – you know I came back to Australia, I don’t know why the fuck I came back. It was just that my ex wife wanted to come back because she missed her family and here I am working away and I had my drawing board in the dining room which I pulled out every night and worked on projects like the National Herbarium in the Botanic Gardens and the Taronga Zoo projects and so on...

EF The Public Works...

BZ Which I was doing for Public Works but I was sort of interested in pushing it at night and so on and what else happened then? Thank god we split up.

EF You and your wife?

BZ Yes - I think it really enabled me to become a grown-up at last – I then taught myself how to cook.

EF Ok and that was important?

BZ Yes.

EF Why is that?

BZ I just like cooking and I just felt like I needed to have my own life. I married her straight out of university and left home and had a family and another family.

EF So you had children?

BZ Two children. So I taught myself how to cook, I suppose that was important – seriously taught myself how to cook. It was something that I did every night just for a while to study.

EF How did you do it?

BZ I read books and practised.

EF Was that for a particular style of cooking?

BZ Yes, mastering the art of French cooking.

EF French? Who wrote that?

BZ French? French? Who wrote that?

EF About working at that scale?

BZ To do French because I went to Thailand for a while and worked for Ken Woolley and...

EF Ok, what was Ken Woolley doing in Thailand?

BZ He was doing the Bangkok embassy and I was on site.

EF So this is for Public Works?

BZ No I took leave from Public Works while getting over my marriage break up and went to Thailand, loved the food – taught myself how to cook Thai food and worked for Ken on site for a while and then I came back to Sydney and worked for Public Works again for about two years and then left.

EF So let’s just talk about the cooking thing again because that’s...

BZ ...a bit weird isn’t it?

EF No it’s interesting. Weird is good – don’t be ashamed of weird. I’m just interested to know whether it was just a practical liberation thing, which sounds...

BZ Well I needed to look after myself.

EF Yes. But it’s just not that is it? It’s an engagement thing. It sounds a bit like the desire to build something with your own hands because it’s an aesthetic act isn’t it? Cooking?

BZ An aesthetic act, that’s right.

EF And learning to cook and doing it that way, you’re not just making poached eggs – you’re making genuine food.

EF But you don’t need French cooking to exist on your own.

BZ Well you need something.

EF But it doesn’t have to be complex.

EF And you still cook?

BZ Yes. I cook now quite well but I don’t cook all the time but if you came over for dinner I’d make you something nice probably and Janet’s a great cook...

EF Do you cook together?

BZ No, not really.

EF Well, that shows that it’s an art form because it’s something you can’t share.

BZ It’s a bit hard to do. She can never understand why I can’t help her but...

EF No, I can understand.
Anyway... so cooking... now I'm getting to the age of thirty five and I still haven't, in my opinion, done anything really so I don't think I started my – well you know I've done a few little buildings.

EF You've done more than most people have done now at that age – a lot more. You don't give yourself credit very easily.

BZ So then I think the big wake up call was when Andrew Andersons rang me and said “do you want to come back” – no straight after that...

EF After Thailand?

BZ After Thailand I went back to the Public Works for a couple of years then I went to Wills Denoon Travis Architects and I did three buildings and they were all medium High rise scale...

EF In the city?

BZ One in the city and two in North Sydney. This one still exists – it's in Castlereagh Street – Westfield is here and that's Castlereagh Street.

EF What's it called, that one?

BZ Mayfair.

EF That's very theatrical.

BZ I always kept that (the name) because it says some nice things about me.

EF And it's a nice little drawing, is that your drawing?

BZ No that was the reviewer, John Pascall.

EF Who just died.

BZ Did he?

EF Yes.

BZ He used to write all the time for the Herald.

EF I know, I used to think it was terrible. 

BZ Did you?

EF Though I wouldn't say that in public.

BZ So then I worked on Circular Quay.

EF So from Wills Denoon Travis you got called back by Andrew as assistant government architect or whatever he was, was he the assistant?

BZ No he was the head of special projects. He wasn't called the assistant government architect but he was doing all the work.

EF He was running the show.

BZ Correct. So he said come back and do Circular Quay.

EF He gave you some choice?

BZ That’s right, he gave me the choice of whether I wanted to do Macquarie Street or Circular Quay.

EF And why did you choose Circular Quay?

BZ Because that was a more interesting project.

EF More glamorous or just more complicated?

BZ More complex and more interesting – and I wouldn’t know what to do with a street like Macquarie Street. I mean it just seemed to me like it’s already there and what do you do? And so that didn’t see all that exciting and interesting.

EF It’s more decorating than anything.

BZ Yes. Whereas Circular Quay was quite challenging. The first thing I did was I worked on – I was his nominee on the committee which was all the inter departmental people run by the department of planning to look at West Circular Quay and then Central Circular Quay. I had five architects working on different parts of it, some landscape architects – we didn’t call them urban designers at the time I don’t think but landscape architects – and I used to get them all separately and together to talk to one another and to talk to me and there were thirty two unions with interest in the Quay and I can’t remember how many government departments had ownership over bits of it but there was probably a dozen.

EF There’s heaps and they’re so entrenched.

BZ Unbelievable and I used to run around the city looking for great coffee and to talk to the coffee shop owners about moving down there and fish restaurants in the middle of nowhere asking them if they’d like to move down there and all that sort of thing. So there was a huge retail story as well in that.

EF Let’s talk about your role though because that's interesting isn’t it? A lot of that, again, is outside the typical architect’s role.

BZ Yes. And that’s what I loved. I think. I really did. Going along to the meetings and presenting what our vision was for everything.

EF So what did you have in your head as a goal or as a vision?

BZ Just to do as good a job as possible.

EF No but pictorially, what were you imagining? Did you have an idea that you were working towards?

BZ Well to try and create a meaningful improvement and character to part of the city I suppose was the overall gain. I started travelling at the time, I hadn't done much travelling. I mean I did go away and work for people but I didn’t look at anything if that makes sense. I went on one trip to Italy and all I did was take thousands of photographs of paving. Not that we could do it but I wanted to understand it. So I went to all the squares in Italy and took photographs of paving.

EF Isn’t it wonderful?

BZ Unbelievable, stone, bricks and all sorts of things. So what did I have? An idea of an urbanity.

EF So, it was a picture of a street thrown in with people or shops...how did you see it?

BZ I wanted it to be alive but it was toilet blocks from one end to the other. The Quay was – if you look at it there’s the Opera House and there’s the thing here and this huge thing here, there was toilet blocks here, change rooms, toilet blocks – that’s the Oyster Bar, this was a solid wall here, absolutely solid. I've got great photos of all that stuff.

EF And there were buses all along here too weren’t there? And barbed wire and stuff.

BZ And the walk way to there was only about a metre and a half wide all the way to the Opera House. So it was a mess and it was like the front door...

EF So actually anything would have been better?

BZ Anything would have been better but the idea was to open it up as much as possible.

EF So let’s talk more about your role because that’s interesting – I mean would you call that curating?

BZ To some degree yes. I mean along with Andrew, choosing the different architects that were to work around me and then talking to each of them to see whether they would accept the vision, if you like, for what we wanted to do. We were just feeling our way. All of them were very good architects.

EF How did you choose the architects? Did you have competitions or were they just selected according to people?

BZ No we just selected them.

EF So what were your criteria?

BZ We chose here to work with Peter Tonkin because Peter had won the ideas competition for what to do with the overseas passenger terminal and Peter was working for Laurence Neilso we asked Laurence and Peter to do it.

EF And who else did you choose?

BZ We chose Peter Stroochan of Allen Jack and Cottier to do the centre and to do the walkway down to the Opera House and we chose Peter Hall to do the Opera House forecourt and Lower Concourse, Conybeare Morrison to do the landscaping.

EF Who else?

BZ Ken Woolley, the hotel opposite in Campbells Cove – that was a competition job.

EF I remember that actually.

BZ That was a competition but basically I chose the winner. It’s true because I mean I did it in Brereton’s office and we went through them all and I said “this is the one we should have”

EF One person jury <laughs>

BZ Yes, but it was unanimous.

EF But that’s interesting isn’t it because that was one of two different little forays into post modernism probably for him?

BZ That’s right.

EF Well kind of because of its curviness and...

BZ Because of that archway.
EF Yes and the use of the material or the way he uses materials and because he came from that sort of brutalist background.

BZ I think what he did was really quite charming. He created this sort of curve which accentuated the bay and the planning really worked and you could see that it was going to be a nice compliment to the Opera House as well. We haven’t really talked that much about the process of revitalising Circular Quay. I have to say I want to draw that out a lot.

EF Do you? Alright well let’s go back into that.

BZ I think we should. I don’t quite know how to do it and I don’t think I want to do it right now but I think for the purpose of the PhD I should because it was so complex and if I can – I probably need to look at all of my old diaries if I’ve got all of them to see the number of people I’ve spoken to and worked with and meetings I had and so on. I mean that will jog my memory because I don’t remember exactly – every detail had to be discussed obviously and then we had to convince the particular unions that we could do this and not affect their lives too much.

EF So you were really a sort of ring master?

BZ A bit. Yes, I think so. And that was really great and while it was under construction, I was the design ring master not the construction one.

EF It’s not a project management role.

BZ There was a project manager but I sat next to him and we communicated quite closely.

EF It’s interesting.

BZ So Peter Tonkin at the end of that process – you see Peter had worked with me at Public Works on The National Herbarium, as my assistant and then in the Circular Quay project where I was his client. Rather, I wasn’t directly his client but I was part of the client. The client was the maritime services board obviously but at the end of that he said “Look I think we should start a practice” and we did. I got him a job-first of all which was a bit naughty –

EF That’s how it works.

BZ No I got him a job doing the fit out for the bus people at the overseas passenger terminal. <laughs>

EF <laughs> So you didn’t take it with you.

BZ Yes so he got that and he went off on his own and he had a couple of little alterations to houses and things to do and he kept that going for about six months while I earned money at Public Works because I was on contract there and I can’t really remember but I think we split the money for some reason. We just decided we’d start our office but I’d subsidise it with my job and that only lasted for a few months and then I just joined him and we started the office in Ultimo. We had hardly any rent. We agreed early on that we would take on staff rather than work too hard and I think Peter wanted to work with me because he saw a chance for working on bigger projects because I don’t think he was going to get any bigger projects on his own at that time. But he already had a bit of a reputation for design. He is a very good architect – early on he worked with Andrew Andersons and Andrew still regards him as one of the best architects in Australia – don’t tell Peter but it’s true. Anyway, so very soon after we started our little practice, we tried to do a few bigger things. I don’t know what you were doing at the time because you might remember one of them but with Leo Campbell who we were sharing an office with, we put in a tender for the Shangri-La. So we made up a company called Civitas and we tendered for it and they obviously liked our design the best and we got short listed and as soon as we got short listed, we were approached by Lendlease, Multiplex – everybody. And so we enlisted the State bank of NSW and they gave us three conference rooms on three different floors and they helped us with negotiation. So we had Lendlease – I can’t remember the other companies, they’re probably all defunct now, but on different floors with the State Bank and their lawyers and their accountants – everybody, helping us to negotiate which one we should go with.

EF So you were paying them or you were giving them…?

BZ No they were just going to finance it.

EF So you wanted the best finance deal?

BZ Yes and they wanted us as architects because we had the building that was short listed. They weren’t short listed those companies so we negotiated a three million dollar success fee and a seven million dollar architectural fee to carry out the project and we signed up with Lendlease and it was really exciting stuff because we did this all at about midnight on the Friday and we had the Japanese client in the room at the same time but we didn’t sign up the Japanese client, we signed up Lendlease. And the following day, the Japanese hotel company client left Lendlease!

EF What?

BZ I had the managing director of Lendlease in the room – everything. They betrayed him and we hadn’t been smart enough to get the Japanese client signed up. Isn’t that amazing?

EF So what did they do? Why did they do it?

BZ So scrambling, “we’ve got to find another client quickly” and I said “Look I’ve got a relation in Hong Kong who owns some hotels. Why don’t we contact them and it’s the Peninsula Group – it’s a really big hotel group”.

EF So it was quite funny, we ring up my relatives, I’ve never spoken to them before, and say “Look I’m your long lost role because my mother is a Kadoori” and I went with the managing director of Lendlease and a couple of other supporters of his to Hong Kong. We were picked up at the airport and taken to the Peninsula, I was given a huge suite on the roof – they were all given little rooms underneath.

EF Fun.

BZ It was fun yes. Anyway they were very nice and they really considered it properly and we had a few days there but they decided they weren’t going to move on it – they didn’t want it. So we didn’t…

EF So it all went back in the melting pot?

BZ It all went back in the melting pot and I don’t think we actually made a submission that was really good enough in the end. Lendlease didn’t have the right people behind them. It was a disaster.

EF What happened? Who got it in the end if you don’t mind me asking?

BZ It was built by Lendlease – they weren’t the developers but they got the project to build it.

EF Who designed it though?

BZ It was Francis Jones (FJMT).

EF God.

BZ So anyway that was the beginning of our practice – we almost went broke but it was becoming very exciting and… was I with Janet at the time? Yes, I was definitely with her by then. Her father was the CEO of the Royal Blind Society and he was about to retire. I knew that there was a project there – he introduced me to the right people and so on and I got that project which was our first decent sized project and more or less just after that the Royal Blind Society, said they wouldn’t use us in the end because we didn’t have any experience and I said “well if you don’t trust us, trust Lendlease” and we got Lendlease to manage us on that project and in the end they weren’t even going to use us to document it but they did. The relationship grew little by little.

EF Did that work well?

BZ Yes really well – very happy. And then about that time we got asked to put in a submission for Hyde Park Barracks and there were three people I think invited, I can only remember one other – Bruce Eeles. We won that competition. So there we were. Hyde Park Barracks.

EF Yes and then Verona? Because they were both quite important early on weren’t they?

BZ Absolutely – I think Hyde Park Barracks is a real mix of things. The person that really deserves all the credit for the concept, for everything at Hyde Park Barracks was Peter Emmett in my opinion.
EF Yes, I remember you saying that at the time – or someone saying that at the time, it might have been Peter (Tonkin).

BZ Right and I have difficulty dissociating what he did and what the architect did in a way and I know that that’s not entirely the way we should think because the architect does all the detailing and all the structures… There’s all these beautiful structures in there and the lighting and a lot of the things, by our office in particular Peter Tonkin - and the sort of minimal touching of the existing fabric. But Peter Emmett was the conceptual person behind it – the reason it’s such an interesting series of spaces should likely be shared by Peter Tonkin and Peter Emmett. The space at the front of the building where you walk into that room and you see all the history of the building – a superb introduction to the layering of history through the Museum – well there the architecture really sits hand-in-hand with the artfulness of Peter Emmett. Here we had a curator who did all the painting, craft and so on to complete the space.

EF Did he?

BZ All of it, it’s amazing you know. All we did was detail the platform you stand on and the display box in the middle. But the whole story is Peter Emmett.

EF So on the side, is he still doing things like that?

BZ Well he keeps getting asked to do things and he keeps getting ignored by people too, so he’s a bit despondent I think regarding that side of things.

EF It’s a shame because he was doing so much good stuff with the Historic Houses Trust and I was really surprised he left because he seemed to be having so much fun and as a consultant, he was never going to be able to do that.

BZ Now he can’t do things like that, that’s right.

EF Ok so your personal role?

BZ In Hyde Park Barracks?

EF Yes.

BZ Keeping Peter Emmett happy.

EF But was it you rather than Peter Tonkin at this stage who was involved?

BZ No look it’s hard to say. Sorry my memory is not that good. Peter Tonkin had designed all those boxes and things and I suppose he kept an eye on them. Julie Mackenzie was detailing them, Geoff Clarke was building them – just a metal work man that I’d known for years. He was building them all and making mistakes and rebuilding them and doing all that sort of stuff.

EF And what were you doing?

BZ What was I doing? I was meeting every morning Peter Emmett on site and talking theoretically – when you meet Peter you’ll see that you don’t talk to him, he talks. It’s almost impossible to get your words in.

EF Really?

BZ Peter is just always ideas – presenting ideas. So I got to know what his ideas were and I’d go back and (maybe) relay what I thought would influence the architecture to either Peter or Julie. I don’t remember Byron Harford’s role. My mind is is just a blank - but I know that Peter Emmett had a lot to do with Byron at the time and I think I’ve just crossed him off my list.

EF Blanked him out.

BZ Blanked him out because I just can’t remember what he was doing. There’s one really awful detail in the Barracks and that’s mine.

EF What is it?

BZ Up on the top floor there’s some bronzy brassy looking things that have interactive screens on them and that was my mistake.

EF Why was what wrong with them?

BZ Well they’re pretty ugly.

EF Are they? I must go and have a look.

BZ <laughs> ok so I don’t remember much more of what I was doing there.

EF What about the Verona?

BZ The Verona? I know exactly, I remember it exactly there – Robert Bleakley.

EF The client?

BZ Robert bought the building, a very shrewd operator, keeps a lot of stuff to himself – you never know what’s going on with Robert. Bought the building, asked me to come over and have a look at it, very excited about doing something with it – it’s a decent sized project so it would have been great. Arrived on the site and there was another architect there and it gave me the shits.

EF Yes it would.

BZ Ivan Rijavec came up from Melbourne. And I don’t know whether he was invited by Robert or whatever…

EF You still don’t know?

BZ No well I’ve made friends with Ivan since but I didn’t like him at all for years because I thought he was interfering and coming into my turf because he didn’t know Robert.

EF So you don’t know how he got there?

BZ Well I think another fellow – probably invited by Robert - invited him.

EF A business partner or something?

BZ Not a business partner but somebody to do with management of films for Village Roadshow. We were wandering around the building working out how you could add to it or do something with it and whether you could fit cinemas into these low ceilings and whatever they were at the time.

EF What was it before?

BZ It was a printing warehouse and they used to have quite heavy loads because there’s a lot of paper in them.

EF Yes they’re massive floors.

BZ And I came up with the idea of building them on the roof and putting car parking on the first level because that was at the same level that you could drive up for parking and then shopping underneath and I did that – I don’t know how that happened.

EF Has it got parking up there?

BZ No it did in the first plans. And Tim was with me...

EF <laughs> The idea that got you the job.

BZ So the Verona then a bit of a dog of a building really because the builder went broke half way through it and we had to complete it with – do you know Phillip Bartlett? Philip was the construction manager taken on by Robert to complete it, but cheaply because they were running out of money. And the same builders at the same time were working on a thing we were doing in Ultimo called the Affordable Apartments.

EF So the Verona then a bit of a dog of a building really because the builder went broke half way through it and we had to complete it with – do you know Phillip Bartlett? Philip was the construction manager taken on by Robert to complete it, but cheaply because they were running out of money. And the same builders at the same time were working on a thing we were doing in Ultimo called the Affordable Apartments.

EF I remember those, yes.

BZ And they went broke on the same day of course so they had to be completed as well.

EF I remember them running into trouble.

BZ And that was in Sydney Council. We did that with Rod Simpson so that...
was another one where Rod came to me and it was done by me and him, so I was the project director over here and Rod was his own person. He’s a wonderful person to work with. I think we had a good time together. We documented it. What else?

It’s easy for me to remember what I did on that project because Rod really never got more involved than the sketch plans, so all the materials chosen and a great deal of the architectural expression was my input. I had a very receptive client, and I enjoyed choosing materials that hadn’t been and would never be tested, such as the two different colours of bagged brickwork.

Then I was away – when we won Customs House and I think you were very involved in Customs House weren’t you?

EF Yes.

BZ I never went to any of the meetings for Customs House, I wasn’t there. It was Peter and Tim.

EF Yes.

BZ And what do you remember about them?

EF I remember being very impressed by Tim. I mean I sort of knew Peter and I wasn’t involved in Customs House as a matter of interest?

BZ I think Tim did a lot of the design work.

EF He was so much fun to work with.

BZ Was he?

EF I just think he’s lovely to work with because he’s so smart. I mean they’re both smart of course but I loved working with Tim in particular because he’s...

BZ He’s so engaging?

EF I don’t know if it’s the New Zealand thing, I just feel as though he’s kind of family.

BZ Is that right? That’s interesting. I’m now losing track of what I might have said last time and this time but I’m going to repeat something, Tim for a long time felt a little unhappy with not being given the credit for certain things and I know what he designed at Verona.

EF And it looked like Peter?

BZ No and in Customs House – I could tell the ceiling for example, I love the ceilings in there for some reason, and I could tell they were designed by Tim because I just knew Tim very well and I could see that the towers on the outside were sort of Peter-ish. I don’t think Tim could ever do anything post modern and they were sort of a little bit post modernist. I started talking to Tim because we were doing lots of other little things at the time and Tim was always my assistant on alterations to houses that we were doing and I started talking to Tim about becoming a partner maybe five years before he became one and Peter was opposed for a long time and now they’re best buddies.

EF Where were you away on Customs House as a matter of interest?

BZ I can’t remember – just travelling. I go travelling a fair bit. Most of the travelling is to do with Art.

EF RECORD PAUSE

There appears to be a short gap in the interview, discussion leading through Carriageworks and then onto the Paddington Reservoir Gardens

BZ I don’t know whether it would have come to him (Tim) directly, the reservoir, unless he’d done Carriageworks.

EF Yes, that’s right.

BZ One thing led to another. Peter on the other hand, his incredible when he decides to win a project like the Arboretum, that was primarily – that wasn’t won on the building, the buildings a good building, but it was won on the landscape but Peter’s attitude to that submission was to help and to...

EF Enrich the landscape

BZ Enrich the landscape side of it and so he won the project and then he managed to do a great building.

EF Yes, it’s great. I must go and have a look at that actually.

BZ It’s gorgeous. It’s very handmade, you know, it’s got a beautiful quality, there’s the very beautiful stonework - it’s really, really quite special. It has a very interesting space, which is a lot bigger than it first appears to be, but it sits very nicely - it’s a good building I think.

EF Yes. I think I need time for a look. I meant to go see it ages ago, then it wasn’t finished and it was raining, but anyway...

EF RECORD PAUSE

BZ So I don’t know how to define what my role is but I do see that as a little bit like, is it?

EF It’s imagining, isn’t it? Because it’s strongly design and I mean when I, for myself, I characterised you three.

BZ Yes.

EF I put Tim as the poet and the intellectual, Peter is the phenomenologist.

BZ And I’m phenomenology.

EF Which may not be fair.

BZ Yes.

EF But he’s very experiential and very interested in that spatial engagement stuff and you I had as – I’ve got mentor/visualist because it seems to me that from the start, your interest in painting and your painting is the thing that gave you escape philosophy from your family expectations.

BZ I’ve just had a thought. When something is built slightly (or even a bit more than slightly) wrongly, I’m not disturbed by it. Whereas both Tim and Peter will fight tooth and nail for their ideas to be properly built. There’s something in me – like a huge sigh of relief that it was built at all. I may be exaggerating a little, but essentially I think I’m happy to have an overall impression of some sort, rather than a specific detailed one.

EF But throughout, even when you’re doing an abstract role, it’s very strongly visual and you say it when you say you go travelling for art, you know, it’s really interesting so I don’t know whether there’s a contradiction between your love of visual and aesthetic things generally and your work role or whether it’s just that you’re underplaying the extent to which you’re doing that.

BZ I don’t know.

EF Having visual input or design input into stuff.

BZ But see, I don’t want to interfere with Peter and Tim in their designing stuff.

EF But you do that front end stuff very strongly, don’t you?

BZ Front end?

EF Okay. Conceptualising, don’t you think?

BZ I do – when asked or when it’s appropriate.

EF I don’t want to put words into your mouth but that’s the impression that I’m getting, that it is a kind of imagining that you’re doing. It’s a storyboard but you do it with talk and as you said to me before, you do design with talk like on your house, you do it through talk, so it’s not necessarily so evident to people that you’re doing it.

EF Designing talk.

BZ Yes. I mean it’s interesting and it sounds contradictory but I think it’s...

EF It is contradictory and I can’t quite understand it myself.

BZ Yes. But you’re clearly playing an important role.

EF I think Tim would understand it, Peter will never, he thinks you have to draw - and of course you do. Yes, I can see why people need to draw.

EF Yes. But you’re feeding people, feeding people’s imaginations across this entire network of not just people in your office but all the clients, aren’t you? Is that right on the money? That’s the impression that I get.

EF Yes. I think so.

EF Feeding ideas into the process and nourishing the process, I mean I don’t know if there’s a word for it, Imagining springs to mind because it’s...

BZ You know, it’s just a continuous search. I’m becoming more educated as I get older and I think as I said before, I’m a late starter so suddenly I’m interested in things that I didn’t know I’d be interested in like Irving Yalom for example, reading all of his books.

EF Yes.
EF I don’t think that Peter’s chosen any, I don’t think he has.

EF So it’s not about the – there’s no art, is there?

BZ You talk a little bit about a phenomenological thing, it is totally extraordinary. It’s – there’s an artist as well, it was Nishizawa and someone.

EF It’s essentially a Serpentine Pavilion?

BZ Yes. EF It’s just there to be beautiful?

BZ Yes.

EF So the light varies because of the holes in the roof and the way these move just catches on the water?

BZ They all congregate at the end of the day and disappear.

EF Isn’t that incredible? Because the reason it reminds me of the Ando Museum, there are number of water exhibits in the museum and they’re all breathtaking but one of them had a number of machines, including some moving surfaces which had droplets fed onto them which did things, played games and had exactly that quality, almost like droplets of mercury.

BZ Yes, a bit like Mercury.

EF Lovely. Isn’t that lovely? I’ll have to go there, I’d love to travel around Japan but I’ve only been to Tokyo. Anyway, look, I want to come back to this thing about beauty and the visual thing because you’re clearly strongly visually driven.

BZ Yes.

EF And you won’t...

BZ Well, you know, I love it all, how do I bring that into the work?

EF And do you bring it into your work?

BZ Janet thinks I’m very intuitive.

EF Yes.

BZ And its sort of – and she says “You’re not philosophical”!

EF No, you don’t introspect, that’s one of the reasons it’s difficult for you to articulate.

BZ Yes, so I don’t articulate very well but she says “You’re very intuitive” I can walk into a show and I can see what I like almost immediately and I can see that I’m not interested and she’ll stay there for half an hour, she’ll come out and we’ll agree. You know?

EF Yes. Do you do the same with people?

BZ Intuitively, yes I suppose so. If I’m interviewing somebody, Actually, I was thinking about that. I’ve chosen nearly everybody who works in this company except for a few, that Tim’s chosen, I’m just trying to think whether Peter’s chosen any, I don’t think he has.

EF Why would that be?

BZ I don’t know, I don’t know. But he chose me.

EF Yes. That’s interesting, isn’t it?

BZ Yes. I don’t know that Peter – he’d love to think that he relates to everybody as a mate in the office in a way and he is terrific when there’s a party going on or something but I think he’s a little bit of an outsider. I think he’s got his own life. Peter very strongly has his own – what did you call him? A phenomenologist? Experiential?
EF Yes.
BZ And that’s true I think, very much so but I think he’s also very, very strongly connected with his family.
EF Yes?
BZ And they’re much more important than probably the people in the office.
EF Yes?
BZ And when he’s working here, he’s so closed.
EF Really?
BZ Very hard to interrupt because he’s working, he’s really thinking and he knows how to apportion his time brilliantly, he doesn’t do anything that distracts him.
EF He works smart?
BZ Yes.
EF Yes and being open and responsive and porous doesn’t sit very easily.
BZ No.
EF Tell me again, we talked a little bit last time.
BZ I’m always available, that’s the other thing.
EF Yes, so your time disappears?
BZ Yes, I’m always available to anybody.
EF So do people talk to you about personal stuff as well as work stuff?
BZ Yes, a fair bit. I notice they do with Tim as well.
EF Yes. You and Tim are probably quite similar in the way that you operate the office.
BZ He’s a genius, I’m not. He’s a seriously amazing designer, he can come up with an idea for a problem and solution to it and I think it’s always interesting and it’s always a bit fresh.
EF I remember him doing that on Customs House, I remember him, he could think on his feet and if he’d say, this is the problem, he’d go “Well maybe you could do this?” and that was why it was so much fun to work with him I think.
BZ So where were we?
EF Yes. So the question of recapping, you told me last time about how from the beginning you said I think “I employed people that I liked or that I thought would fit in, would be good people to work with rather assess their skills - and I think you said you never looked at their drawings or their work that much
BZ Well, you’d look at their drawings a little bit.
EF But they weren’t really important?
BZ But they would be less important...
EF The crucial thing?
BZ Less important than character, how I perceive their character to be I suppose. Whether they had energy, I think I’ve always thought energy was the most important thing. That they have a glint in their eyes or something.
EF So they project something?
BZ It just seems to me that you can connect with people better if they are not shy, some of them are shy but if they’re more social, I mean that’s not fair, but if somebody’s really introverted, I find it very hard to have much to do with them.
EF Because they won’t...
BZ They don’t come out.
EF Give of their energy?
BZ Yes. I’m just trying to think of – I’m sure we’ve had introverted people here, sometimes you feel sorry for people, give them a job.
EF Yes?
BZ You brought it up. I don’t know, I can’t remember now, but I think the family in the office is really very important.
EF Yes. And your role in...
BZ ...in generating that?
EF Alright.
BZ I don’t know what they’ll do without me because I’m getting old.
EF Are you going to retire?
BZ Not yet.
AF No. Sometime.
BZ But I get the feeling that the boys would like to see me go at some stage.
EF Do you?
BZ Well Peter particularly, he – well I think I can understand the frustration because of those six years or so that I was distracted by the Institute, and coming back and he was saying “Well you better go and get some work...” and then we’re talking about bringing some new people in but we’re not talking about selling any of Peter or Tim’s shares, we’re talking about selling some of mine.
EF Whose idea was that?
BZ Well I guess I’ve been pushed into it I suppose. Whether they had energy. I think I’ve always thought energy was the most important thing. That they have a glint in their eyes or something.
EF So do you project something?
BZ It is what it is, I think my energy is still there, it’s not as much as I used to have, but I think I’m still a vibrant person.
EF Yes?
BZ Well I’ve been pushed into it I suppose. Whether they had energy. I think I’ve always thought energy was the most important thing. That they have a glint in their eyes or something.
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EF Yes?
BZ You brought it up. I don’t know, I can’t remember now, but I think the family in the office is really very important.
EF Yes. And your role in...
BZ ...in generating that?
EF Alright.
BZ I don’t know what they’ll do without me because I’m getting old.
EF Are you going to retire?
BZ Not yet.
AF No. Sometime.
BZ But I get the feeling that the boys would like to see me go at some stage.
EF Do you?
BZ Well Peter particularly, he – well I think I can understand the frustration because of those six years or so that I was distracted by the Institute, and coming back and he was saying “Well you better go and get some work...” and then we’re talking about bringing some new people in but we’re not talking about selling any of Peter or Tim’s shares, we’re talking about selling some of mine.
EF Whose idea was that?
BZ Well I guess I’ve been pushed into it I suppose. Whether they had energy. I think I’ve always thought energy was the most important thing. That they have a glint in their eyes or something.
EF So do you project something?
BZ It just seems to me that you can connect with people better if they are not shy, some of them are shy but if they’re more social, I mean that’s not fair, but if somebody’s really introverted, I find it very hard to have much to do with them.
EF Because they won’t...
BZ They don’t come out.
EF Give of their energy?
BZ Yes. I’m just trying to think of – I’m sure we’ve had introverted people here, sometimes you feel sorry for people, give them a job.
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BZ You should see some of my photographs of food.

EF Well there you go. So I think what you ask yourself is is my food self the same as my painting self? Is that the same thing?

BZ It is a bit the same, isn’t it?

EF Yes, I would think so, that that was the same part of you, so then you have images which illustrate which you love with that part of yourself, you know, so that there’s gorgeous pictures of food and gorgeous pictures of I don’t know, paintings, either yours or someone else’s, maybe some of your travelling images from art travels so that’s one self, so each one is a self and you’re giving a clear – but then –

BZ That’s very interesting. I can’t – yes, that’s really interesting. I’ll forget what you’ve said unfortunately.

EF It’s on the tape.

BZ …to that.

EF Either the same – like if that’s a building.

BZ Well let’s talk about that for a moment.

EF Have them relate to the building and the idea, so that you might say “This is the role I played with regard to Paddington Reservoir and these are some of the images that it was pulling out”, so that there’s a familial – so that each one’s making a point, each of these are X minute long and if you’ve–

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BZ Yes. It’s hard to know, isn’t it, because – are they all the same thing?
BZ So I’m going to parties and I’m meeting people.
EF Yes. Like those two Iranian trips you made.
BZ Yes.
EF That’s not something you do deliberately but it is something that you do and you do it well.
BZ Right. So it’s – a lot of people would just say that’s – what’s the word?
EF Luck?
BZ No, no I was thinking more of – exposing your acts of – I’ve got the wrong PR.
EF Yes.
BZ Yes.
EF Well if you do it, I mean some people do that professionally.
BZ I don’t think I do it professionally.
EF You don’t do that. That’s really different. You just –you’re that kind of person, you become – I mean you might call it a lightning rod, you attract people, don’t you, you said they picked you up these girls, I mean young girls don’t pick up men like you as a rule, it’s not standard.
BZ They didn’t pick me up for sex or anything.
EF No.
BZ Or I would have probably responded differently in exactly the same way.
EF But you clearly, you attract people who are interested in you for some reason and who talk to you like you’re – and so that becomes part of the way that you are creative about
BZ And I love it.
EF Yes, and you love doing it.
BZ And I love meeting.
EF That’s right. And when you talk about Iran –
BZ That’s the thing.
EF You were really animated and it’s rounded it out, the way that was happening.
BZ So maybe Iran, because it’s a recent thing, can be part of my story?
EF I mean these don’t have to be the same parts as these, you don’t have to be different selves, one of the might be Iran, you might actually decide this is just – that Iran is a symbol that stands for –
BZ And suddenly I’m home again or something.
EF Yes, I can see it on your face. Yes, you love it. I mean thinkin of things that you love is another good cue to this stuff, what is it that you actually love? You get that feeling in your heart that’s warm?
EF Yes.
BZ Elizabeth, I’ll let you go.
EF Interesting.
BZ Fantastic.
EF That was better than last time, wasn’t it?
BZ Much better. But thank you for that very much.
EF That’s a pleasure.
8 tim greer interview
interview with elizabeth farrelly

EF Okay. So, Tim. We're talking about [the NZ painter] Colin McCahon, the idea of dominant absence, and your reaction against the flat mystery-less landscapes of the Canterbury Plains. We're talking about the idea of continuum, of 'setting up' a memory where none exists, and about an oscillation between order and disorder, of architecture as 'fertilised object'. This seems almost a list of your internal drivers, is that right? Or are they objects of a more intellectual interest?

TG Yes, I think they're interests, or observations perhaps that I can't get away from. This idea of continuum, for example, is a kind of reaction to modernism. That was my education, the limitations of modernism, but I'm absolutely fascinated by it as an architecture and by how post-modernism became a dead end.

So I often wonder where post-modern thinking began.

I guess, if you go back to Aldo Rossi's The Architecture of The City, he talks about the city as a piece of architecture. Of course, it's a whole lot of architectures, by a whole lot of architects and non-architects, but it forms, if you like, a coherent cultural mass. And I find it really fascinating that in the same way culture, if you try to break it down, turns out to be in fact a continuum.

Of course, what we call culture is just the brightest light of the moment. I use the term 'culture' in a very catholic way, to include all that's happening, be it sculpture or cooking. But I have this idea that it is always in transition, and when you make a piece of architecture, especially if it's an adaptive reuse project where there's an inherited artefact, it has a consciousness and memory all its own.

Then, in adding a new use, one which is of the now, you actually create a third entity. It's kind of a third ethereal building and you can't quite put your finger on it because it's oscillating somewhere between the old and the new. And you can nuance that, doing a bit here and a bit there to actually try and make it appear not as new and old buildings together but as a continuum. So that the third, created building, becomes the dominant whole. This, I guess, is what I'm preoccupied with.

EF So it's seamless. A kind of gestalt reality.

TG I was really obsessed by this at Paddington Reservoir Gardens. I had this thing in my mind about influence. Which generation is influencing which?

And then there's the greater system. This starts off as an urbanist view, an idea of connectedness. It's really about interconnected buildings. Instead of seeing buildings as finite objects in their own right we see them as linked into a complex whole, whether it's an urban setting, a landscape or just a moment in time.

But we know if we're thinking this now, we're not going to be thinking it later. We'll be thinking something else. So then you go into 'why are we thinking about this now?' So there's a kind of a network when you start to look at the city. It's about systems of order by virtue of systems of disorder.

That oscillation between order and disorder I find absolutely fascinating. You know, when you're designing and you think okay, I could deliberately make something jar at this point. I could make everybody sit up and look. Everything's perfect and ordered and then there's this kind of jarring. You get this idea that buildings are actually just miniature cities, with the same systems of order and disorder. I like that metaphor because I never intend buildings to be complete, just as a city is never complete. If you've got incompleteness then there's the potential to tie into other things. To connect.

And for me that's one of these themes of subversion. I get to this notion of absence and incompleteness as founding ideas. It's what I used to feel about the Christchurch grid, offering this wonderful promise of an urbanity that was never delivered, even when I was a child, and since then it's gone backwards.
EF It framed the floor?

TG Yes, so when you walk in, if there's no art, all you see is the floor. You don't see the new stuff at all. Rather ironic.

EF Good floor though, isn't it?

TG Yeah, it's amazing, it's just absolutely stunning.

EF This house, though, is like you started off with a railway carriage, and then said okay I'm going to flip it around and turn it inside out.

TG And I think there's a sort of homage to Peter Bevan and Miles Warren, that kind of petit Brutalism of Christchurch.

EF Peti Brutalism, that's sweet.

TG Yes they were Brutalist and their work was so small.

EF Like the Dorset Street flats, which I still love?

TG Yes. The scale gives them a human quality. In some ways I think it's one of the best strands Brutalism in the world, if some what unknown.

EF And the charm, don't you think? Like Miles Warren's beautiful office building on Cambridge Terrace, which has a charm I don't think European Brutalism ever had.

TG It had that colonialist austerity, where durable materials were used efficiently, all with those New Zealand honeyed timbers.

EF And the light, and the relationship with the gardens...

TG I like the way those buildings were connected to their landscape or the grid of Christchurch. I'm particularly interested in the notion of inter-connectedness or the idea of a greater system. This was very much the basis for The Glasshouse, a regional theatre and art gallery.

EF You can see down into it?

TG No, actually, they're probably more about landform. The river comes in here, with an estuary, so they had boats and things there - but I'll put the plan in here because the original is rather beautiful. And then at some point they changed the city grid to this and no one quite knows why but the town was built with a five-degree shift.

EF So with this triangular plan, the defining sides are actually roads?

TG Pretty much, although to begin with they were paths. They just plonked those buildings there and then built that road because between the convicts and the administration. They built all the little superintendents' cottages along here and a kind of service road in here and a connector road to the church. And then the grid came.

EF But those other arms of the triangle were actually roads as well?

TG No, actually, they're probably more about landform. The river comes in here, with an estuary, so they had boats and things there - but I'll put the plan in here because the original is rather beautiful. And then at some point they changed the city grid to this and no one quite knows why but the town was built with a five-degree shift.

So this was the idea of getting into the memory of the site. And then I was also trying to work with the meaning of the site. You know, if you're putting a public building in a town that doesn't really have a history of public buildings, how do you go about it? And we began researching it. We realised, for example, that - as any bloke who was over sixty would tell you - the timber for the Sydney Opera House came from Wauchope, which is very close to Port Macquarie and went out through the river mouth.

The people in the town had this great sense of pride in the Opera House. It wasn't theirs but they would say, that's our timber. So we thought, if the Opera House is going to renovate, wouldn't it be great to get all the timber from it and bring it home, give it a sort of homecoming? We'd do all of our building out of the discarded Opera House timber.
Of course, their program didn’t match ours, so we ended up arranging a timber industry workshop. Foresters, loggers, millers, carpenters, joiners; anybody with anything to do with timber came along and they told us what species of timber to use. It was brilliant. I learned more about timber that afternoon than ever before. So although the Opera House connection didn’t work, in the end, the idea was that, when the timber went into the building, it would hold some meaning for them. In fact, in the end, one of the mills donated all of the timber floors.

EF So, to the third project.
TG I’m also interested in context, and the interpretation of context. This came about because I got myself into a disagreement last year with the new Chair of the Heritage Council where I suddenly realised that context was in fact a field of interpretation. There’s this myth that context is finite. And of course context relies as much on what you bring to the project as on what you are actually looking at. So different generations, different people see things differently of course because they’ve had a different education.

EF What is the project?
TG It was a collection of heritage buildings in the Rocks to be converted - or essentially restored, with the addition of one new building - into a bespoke hotel. Interestingly our client’s great-grandfather was Howard Cazneaux, who took all those marvellous photographs of the Rocks and the construction of the Harbour Bridge. His photos really changed our view of these things, and they’re fascinating because the more you look at them, the more you realise they’re about the shadows.

EF Did you win?
TG Yes. It’s out to tender at the moment, I suddenly realised that it’s actually just different generations seeing context differently.

EF It’s generational?
TG I suspect each generation represents a different ideology because of their teaching or education or experience. There would appear to be three generations at work at any one moment, fledgling architects, middle career ones like us and the twilight ones who become panelists because of their tremendous experience.

EF So, how does context work here?
TG Well, when you collapse down adaptive reuse, I think it’s really a technique of juxtaposition, with each somehow informing the other. Juxtaposition is the primary generator. In adaptive reuse you’ve got to hold existing elements and introduce new ones, bringing them together. It’s just the old bits come with their own consciousness and memory, so they’re a little richer than these shiny new pieces. And that becomes an architectural strategy.

EF So do you deliberately heighten the tension between the two? Is that what you mean by juxtaposition?
TG Well, I’m really conscious that some projects - like this, which is a tiny little building - are deliberately made of two disparate parts. They deliberately don’t relate to each other and that’s all about heightening the building’s presence and trying to make it like a grasshopper, trying to make it bigger. But others, like I think Cloudy Bay, are actually a series of buildings, collated but then wrapped in a way that ties the pieces together, even if they use a range of materials. This one is very much thinking about the original building which had these slots through here. And there was the City of Sydney recession plan [set-back requirement] so the towers are graduated, but each is a tower in its own right.

EF Sometimes you like awkward and sometimes you like seamless? What is the deciding factor?
TG I think it has a lot to do with context. The buildings in isolation are all trying to stand up and be big, whereas the urban projects are really trying to stitch into the broader context as seamlessly as possible.

EF So, do you think there is a commonality - a theme - to the works you’ve selected?
TG When we started this process, I didn’t think so. But now, it looks to me that they all have a sense of restlessness. They are all searching for something.

EF Like a dissenting voice?
TG Yes, there’s no reason why architecture has to support the status quo. I mean obviously it’s a large capital investment, but So it happens in different ways, but the starting point is to bring the pieces together and this can happen in an awkward way or a seamless way. I think I work between these different modes.
there’s something very relevant if the building’s slightly questioning in it’s context.

EF Okay. So let me ask you about that restlessness and dissent issue, which I think is interesting – where it comes from and how it manifests in your work.

TG Yes. I think maybe there’s a restlessness from a suburban – or maybe anti-urban - upbringing. But there’s something else too. As a young man I was – I wouldn’t have described myself as a radical but I loved counter-culture and was fascinated by the avant-garde. Yet architecture, being based on typology, is a fundamentally conservative profession. Successful architects are always typologically based, because people understand their work before it is built.

EF Does this make architecture the wrong choice for you?

TG Well, no. No, no. But I think maybe if you’re caught between a radical and a conservative you just end up being restless.

EF It’s just the condition of your life?

TG But I could shape that in a slightly different way, which is where that word continuum might come in because, whilst I was obsessed by the avant-garde I was also absolutely fascinated by history. Maybe the restlessness is generated by being caught between the avant-garde and history.

EF So do you think that leads to a struggle, or maybe a quest, to reconcile the two – history and the avant-garde? The radical and the conservative?

TG I don’t think it’s a struggle so much as a fascination. It’s a way of being awake. You fall asleep when you rely on tradition. It’s not a very good analogy but you can take it back to how you dress. You can be dressed by a brand or you can find your own way. And of course in our twenties we were all wearing our own clothes and things because we didn’t want to be dressing in brands because that was like being dressed by your mother. Brand is just mother replacement I think.

And I think this is our generation’s true fascination with big European cities, and the Pre-Roman idea of a continuum. Everything exists at once, and you can comfortably move from traditional to radical – or conservative to radical. You can push yourself out to that radical limit and retreat to the safety of the conservative. I think that’s probably a nice metaphor for how architecture works.

EF So how do you think that dynamic represents itself in your work?

TG I think I see the client as conservative and the conceptual idea as radical. So the idea becomes like an aspiration, in a way. Deep down, I think I that the building should wake people up. Take the Cloudy Bay project. One of its primary design gestures is to take a suburban form and subvert it. (Interestingly, that was the very first design I did at architecture school. You know, when you don’t actually have any architectural language? My first test was to take something I knew, a suburban house, which I hated, and invert it, or turn it inside out.)

EF What did it look like?

TG Haha. It probably looked like the house. But I think I learned that inversion was a useful device. I’ve become really interested in inversion as a device, and developed some technique around it. I found it really fascinating that by opening, like this, you could close it like that. So that’s the entry, which is enclosed by this openness to the side. That enclosing little squiggle there, and that sets up the open relationship to Cloudy Bay. So the bay comes in here, and you see that from the minute you enter.

EF It’s lovely, isn’t it?

TG And from the first floor you see the bay proper. There’s the Bay, and the river that comes down and washes through the valley, and of course that’s what makes such good wine.

EF What an incredible piece of landscape. So, what about materials?

TG Well, that’s slatted timber. That’s rusty steel, and then the rest is concrete. And then on the inside it’s just timber. There are four bedrooms upstairs, an entertaining and dining space downstairs. It’s essentially a pavilion, for Cloudy Bay to entertain their guests.

EF Did your clients like that idea?

TG Yes, they loved it. And when we talked about this idea the client said, “Oh the Kiwis, they do irony so well”.

EF Hmm. Interesting. Do you think they do?

TG “Oh, I’m not sure about that”. My father’s sense of humour was totally based around irony.

EF It’s interesting. Isn’t it because if you have this dichotomy - or dualism, or polarity - in your mental framework, there’s always a question as to whether it’s a balancing act or a tension or an oscillation, between the two, or kind of invigorating stretch.

TG That’s a nice metaphor, I think it’s more that.

EF Because you clearly value both, the radical and the conservative, the rural and the urban. And perhaps it’s the tension – the stretch - that energises you?

TG Well, I do play this game where you go back in time, and ask who was the radical and who was the conservative.

EF So let’s talk about [the painter] Colin McCahon, and his significance for you. I’m still fascinated by that connection.

TG Yeah. Well, I used this image, ‘Six Days in Nelson and Canterbury’ (1950) for Cloudy Bay because of the region. And I was starting to think about absences.

I thought about absence in the city that I grew up in, because the city hadn’t been completed. And I thought about absence at a cultural level because we studied history, but we didn’t necessarily experience it. And then – there was also this sense of absence in the landscape.

I was flicking through a Colin McCahon book and I thought, “Oh my God, this is it.” Because what he’s up to with “Six Days in Nelson and Canterbury” – or at least my reading of it – is that he’s locked the sky and the ground together so tightly, there’s no room for human habitation. There’s always there’s this intense lock between sky and land. You couldn’t put anything in there. You couldn’t put a person in there.
EF And in a way that’s how New Zealand feels, isn’t it? Like there’s no real place for humans there.

TG McCahon’s religious works didn’t speak to me the same way. I could identify I think with the landscape at an early age. The religious ones I saw more as poetry – a genre that Ralph Hotere and then John Reynolds took over. But I spent much more time with the landscapes.

EF Okay. So returning to restlessness. Shall we consider how it manifests in some of your other projects?

TG I think it’s there at Carriageworks. With adaptive re-use there’s always an inherited artefact and a new use, which sets up a similar tension. A couple of things went on in this project. There’s the duality (I always try to avoid the terms past and present, which sound a bit clichéd) and the relationship between the two.

EF Do you mean looking visually or do you mean the experience?

TG Yeah, the experience. The searching. So you start a project, you go and look at a site and a context. But all the time your memory will actually inform how you look at that site.

And then there’s what I call “sketching”, the moment of invention, that fleeting moment where you don’t quite understand how all of that has formulated into this. I found that very useful because it was sort of identifying, you know, “What is my role in this project?”

Buildings are big things. They take forever to make and we, as architects, actually have such a fleeting little moment in that process. I mean, it’s a highly influential moment but it is fleeting, with the clients and the builders and the users and so on filling in the rest. So that helped me define what it is I do as an architect and what I’m really interested in.

And then there’s thinking, which I’ve called “adjusting”. It’s really developing a design with the architects at TG, and the various consultant and engineers.

And there’s this idea of “experiencing”, which is the moment of testing. So you look at your building and you go, “Well, what was I thinking? How did that end up with this, exactly?”

EF And this is your process?

TG Yes. So the very first thing that I did on the Carriageworks, having walked around and seen this amazing light, was a little paper collage. I cut out a piece of white paper and I put some pencil lines on it. So it was making a mark on that wall. A shadow. The idea was to use a shadow cast by the inherited artefact to make a mark on the new building. So the first idea was a shadow.

And at the start I thought, “Is this idea too ethereal? Is it too esoteric?” But I liked it. Instead of the new building affecting the old, the old building affects the new, making a connection. And the idea was that the shadow would move, so it’s creates visual interest. And I thought it the end that it really works as an idea. So I used it again, and you can see how it’s gone straight into the Bailies Lodge hotel in the Rocks.

EF Yes, the use of screen and shadow…

TG It’s exactly the same idea. I think shadows are just these completely fascinating things because they bring a kind of an ethereal movement into architecture. And maybe that is the working between two things again.

EF Light and shadow, as well as old and new? Because they’re existing trusses, right? Casting shadows onto a new wall? Or a wall that you’ve simply exposed to the light? Elegant.

TG When we first went to the building, it had this amazing atmosphere with light ‘falling’ from the roof. So it was in that process of looking that we ascertained there were a whole lot of original skylights that had been covered up or removed. We reinstated the original skylights, allowing light to ‘fall’ from the roof again onto the existing roof trusses, which in turn cast their shadows on the new concrete walls.

EF Sweet. Nice image. But in the case of the hotel, the shadow casters are all new?

TG Yes, all new.

EF So it’s the same idea transposed…

TG Yeah. So that building [Baillies Lodge] is a grill with a glass form inside. And actually the roof is glass as well, which works thermally because it’s small and people don’t dwell there, they just move across. So with rather minimal air control we are able to control, but there’s always this kind of shadow. The foyer is decorated with cast shadow.

EF Like being in a forest of shadows. Or maybe, again, a clearing?

TG Yes.

EF Okay, so what about the Paddington Reservoir Gardens? Is there the same tension between dualities? Because that does shadow as well, doesn’t it?

TG Yes, Paddington is very much about that. I think after the Carriageworks I was aware of the fact that it was a collection of ideas - like that idea of cast shadow and the idea of remnant structures, And all the ideas are connected but only loosely, really.

EF The remnant structures idea is interesting. That’s a dualism, playing with the same kind of tension. The stretch.

TG Yes. So the entry structure at Carriageworks recycles leftover roof-trusses, standing them on end as a way of kind of heralding the new use.

The idea was to take inherited artefacts, anthropomorphise into the vertical and arrange them as a chorus line…

EF Yes. Because they do the can-can, really!
TG ...to signify the kind of physical theatre that the Carriageworks would specialise in: contemporary dance, that sort of thing. And that's one idea: the anthropomorphism of building material to signify something. The shadow cast by the old building onto the new building as a way of making a connection is another. So there were a whole lot of inherently disconnected ideas.

EF What are the others?

TG One of the founding ideas, which you would never actually perceive when you go there, is the notion of the anti-theatre. And (I hadn’t thought about this: again, it’s working through two things) we had this amazing group of resident performers - they were called the Key Research User Group - who came every week and gave advice to make sure we weren’t creating a white elephant. They were terribly concerned that we wouldn’t be able to make it in order to design it.

EF Is that another way of setting up a tension?

TG Well, I was thinking that if the Carriageworks was about the nexus, the crossover between worlds, between old and new architecture but also old and new mindsets, Paddington should try and take that idea a little deeper. So we designed around a strategy of narrative. And the narrative was simply that the concept for the new use lurks within the artefact. So it’s actually - it’s in there. You know, it’s like those slave sculptures that Michelangelo never finished. You get the feeling they were always in those blocks, just waiting to be freed.

EF Embedded story. Like embedded energy.

TG Yes. And I thought this would be a cohering strategy, ensuring that every design move derives from one founding principle.

EF Your ideas are actually conceptual.

TG Yeah, exactly. If you look, for example, at the curved roof screens at Paddington. They’re really pretty.

EF They're really pretty.

TG But in fact the pattern is taken from the mortar joints of the brick vaults. I mean, conceptually. You have a brick, suspended in space and it’s all glued together with mortar.

TG Yes. And the other interesting thing was how it became a way of bringing other people into the project. So we explained to Anton James [landscape architect], this notion of the concept being already in the artefact, and he came back and had this idea that we should select the plants that would have been fashionable at the time - so, between 1860 and 1890. So he proposed all these Victorian plants, including these pongs and ferns and things. It’s such a beautiful idea. And then the lighting designers were amazing too. You know, you think of engineers as engineers but these guys came up with a really fantastic idea, where they said, “This used to be full of water. If you put a red light and a blue light together, because they operate at different temperatures they’ll oscillate and you get this kind of weird visual oscillation.”
EF  Like water? The sense of being underwater? That’s interesting, because it works, doesn’t it? It does feel like that.

TG  I mean, there’s a white light overlay, obviously, for when you need to do something proper. But for night time when people just look down into the space from the street it’s got this kind of murky eerie quality, which I think was really poetic.

EF  Yeah, it’s lovely.

TG  But it’s funny. I was explaining this to some people – and they went, “Oh, we just thought it was for Mardi Gras”.

EF  Haha. That’s one reading I suppose.

TG  I mean, there’s a white light overlay, but it’s funny. I was explaining this to some people – and they went, “Oh, we just thought it was for Mardi Gras”. I could be deluded here, but there seemed to me a resonance for these vaults, or taking the saying, “this is the thing.” We’re not fetishising about vaults, or taking the formal approach to architecture. We’re saying, “there’s the brick vault, there’s the aluminium vault,” so there’s a kind of a relationship. One points to the other.

EF  I think you read it intuitively as being connected to the old structure. They’re the same profile, right?

TG  Yeah. We just took the shape and extruded it.

EF  They are lovely, aren’t they? Isn’t it incredible that 19th century engineering produced beautiful things and now produces…

TG  Yeah. The sophistication of it is extraordinary. And those beams, see how it swells in the middle? So it’s a cast iron beam that’s fatter in the middle in plan and in section because that’s where the maximum bending moment is.

EF  So they actually sort of undulate through the structure?

TG  Yeah. And of course, back then material was far more expensive than labour.

EF  If only that was still true. Isn’t that interesting how a scarcity mindset produced beauty? It was utilitarian and pragmatic but somehow still beautiful.

TG  Completely. And the material selection is also really fascinating. For example, the ironbark columns were much more resistant to degradation than the cast iron ones, which would have been their other choice. They decided to use timber because they knew it was so tough it wouldn’t rot. And then you’ve got the cast iron beams and brick vaults and then a clay pad on top of them and grass. So the whole logic of that material sequence is in itself quite beautiful.

And I guess the other thing is, labour may have been cheap but if somebody is building a platform like this piece by piece there’s a kind of labour of love. You know, like the bricklayer is really thinking about that vault. This is a very nice vault: that’s not such a good vault. You know what I mean?

EF  But that in itself is interesting, isn’t it?

TG  Yes. And another thing that I find fascinating, going back to the conservative-radical dualism, is that they change. Things that may have been fundamentally conservative in some periods are now radical. So a hand-crafted bespoke material today is – maybe radical is not the right word – but on the outer edge of what we’re supposed to be doing.

EF  Fringe.

TG  Yes. You know, we’re supposed to be designing by proprietary item and we – all of us here – continually resist that.

EF  Yes. So – let’s talk about the idea of restlessness with regard to the Glasshouse at Port Macquarie. Does it apply there as well?

TG  I think it perhaps does in that this was a seemingly new building in a newish town and we trawled back through the history – Port Macquarie, Governor Macquarie – and the fact that there was something under the ground. And we end up with a new building but with these strata beneath where all the archaeology was exposed. I guess there’s always a desire to look for something else, look beyond the obvious.

EF  It’s clearly got a dualism but it’s not evident.

TG  I think that comes from not wanting to see a site purely at a physical level. You know, you hear of architects who go, “Well, the wind’s from here and the sun is from there and the slope’s there.” That’s conventional site analysis and it’s completely valid. But I’m always fantasizing about what does this physical stuff actually mean? People came before us and they put stuff here and they must have put it there for a reason.

EF  Are you, in doing this, trying to enchant yourself?

TG  Possibly, yeah, trying to find another level of inspiration. I think it comes out of that Proustian idea that all periods exist at once. But I must say I think this can be a very distressing and irritating strategy for clients because they have to think, “Do I even want to know what’s under the ground?”

EF  Do you always tell them? Could it be just your private inspiration?

TG  When we start talking about the site, I explain; this is the natural environment, this is the built environment, and there are reasons why buildings are how they are. Not necessarily very good or profound reasons, but reasons all the same, and if you find out about those it can take you somewhere interesting.

EF  But if you have a client who doesn’t understand? Or doesn’t care?

TG  Oh, then it’s hard. I mean, on the Glasshouse project we had an amazing client group. They got it instantly. And of course, as the local council, they have a huge desire to make their new public building generate community buy-in. At the start they had an embryonic idea, but archaeology became a way of getting the community engaged. Now, the town has a heritage walk of which this is the beginning and the end.

So you come in, you get the heritage information, you go and do the walk, explore all the old bits and when you come back you go downstairs and see something physical. So that gives the building another layer of relevance. And I guess the attempt to re-use the Sydney Opera House timbers, if it had worked, would have been another layer.

EF  Which we talked about, yeah.

TG  So perhaps in some ways it is about restlessness, in that there’s got to be more to a building than just its material parts. So you agitate to find that something more. I guess the self-seeking aspect is that, if your building is relevant to its community, it’s going to be liked and looked after, so that’s a good thing. But I think the agitation for something else is, when you boil it down, to try and make our architecture relevant.

EF  But it’s also a source of inspiration - for you?

TG  Yeah, completely, yes. I mean, I was educated in that period when there was endless analysis of Modernist architecture and why it was largely unsuccessful. It didn’t fail because it was Modernist. It failed because it had no relevance to its context or its community.
EF And it was reductivist in its understanding of those things.

TG Yes. And I was lucky enough to witness the beginning of social engineering in architecture. You know. After the Modernist heroes had come and gone, the other people picking through the wreckage were actually more interesting. Ralph Erskine and people like that. I guess we all want to be relevant in some ways. So maybe it's about oscillating between being relevant and radical, I don't know.

EF You studied at Auckland Uni?

TG Yes.

EF Who was your favourite tutor? Who was your mentor?

TG Well, there were two because, I left to travel for two years after the third year, then returned to complete my degree.

EF Came back to someone else?

TG Yeah. When I left, you know, it was Claude Megson, David Mitchell, all of those guys were in charge, and then in the two years the post-structuralists came in.

EF Sarah Treadwell? Ross Jenner?

TG Ross Jenner, primarily. So, between David Mitchell and Ross Jenner, you have an amazing pair of thinkers in a way.

EF Totally different but really interesting. So who supervised your sub-thesis?

TG I did my sub-thesis with John Hunt. It was a design elective, and I did the first half with Ross Jenner, going all over the place. And the second half doing a structured design with John. I was very keen. I did it strategically because he seemed so analytical.

EF All that methodology stuff.
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EF Shall we start with your contribution to the practice, and how you see that?

PT I guess I’d like to split the practice as a collective entity from what it produces.

EF Do you normally think of those things as separate?

PT Well, one leads to the other. It would be very easy to talk about my contribution to the office in terms of this or that building, but I’m steering it a bit towards the collective of people who work together, largely happily and productively, because I think that’s a really interesting aspect of architecture. Perhaps in fact the one is necessary for the other.

EF So, the happy working environment is essential to creativity?

PT It is for me, definitely. You’d just be miserable your whole life and do miserable buildings - but some practices seem to manage to survive.

EF Some creative partnerships seem to be quite unhappy.

PT Yeah, that’s true too. But I think all three of us have worked to make sure our staff feel engaged and loved and creative and contributing, and I think that shows in the buildings. There’s a level of engagement with the detail and the process and the clients, which has, by and large, brought lots of repeat work from clients and a level of richness to the buildings themselves.

EF So, as to your contribution...?

PT Well I guess one of the reasons I started my own business was, I decided I didn’t want to work with people I didn’t like. Having done it a couple of times, I decided life’s too short. So while Brian has been by and large the person to hire staff, we clearly decided to try and find people we liked working with, who could contribute harmoniously to the whole. As to my contribution to the practice? I don’t know. I’m the one, of the three of us, who’s got a keen interest in or knowledge of history pre the modern period.

EF Do you mean history generally, or architectural history?

PT Both, but particularly architectural history. I don’t know how much it has contributed much to the practice generally, but it has certainly contributed to the bits of the practice where I’ve been working. Early on, I think it really informed our approach to heritage, and it has perhaps spread out from that base, since Tim has done as much beautiful heritage work as anybody else.

EF And is that simply an appreciation thing, or how does it become present in the work?

PT That’s one of the things that I really want to try and dig out in this PhD I’m working on, but early on I think it’s been about a way of working that hasn’t spread out of that base, since Tim has done as much beautiful heritage work as anybody else.

EF Was Freeland one of your inherited books?

PT No. That one I bought.

EF So you must have hung around bookshops - poked around, hunted them out?

PT They weren’t too hard to find.

EF A genuine obsessive. So, your neighbour Henry Kelly, who left you his architecture books. Do you think you would have been an architect otherwise? Can you tell?

PT I probably would have. It just might have taken longer to work it out. I’m certain my parents wanted me to do law, because they thought I don’t know, it just seemed a more substantial.

EF Respectable?

PT No. I don’t think respectable, just less risky. More known. But they weren’t that, it’s not as if there were any fights about it or anything. But I don’t know, how can you tell?

EF No you can’t. But, you’ve talked about the Blue Mountains and the paths and intricate spatial qualities and their effect on you. I think it’s an interesting mix, Bannister Fletcher and the Blue Mountains, probably almost unique, but in a way you can see almost a natural meeting point between those two things – don’t you think?

PT Yes. I really think there’s a PhD (by someone who isn’t me) or at least a decent study in the architecture of those paths.

EF They do sound amazing.

PT Well, it’s not just their materiality, which is slightly interesting. It’s the way they track through a wild terrain. And the choreography of that, with regards to the space.

EF And the choreography of that, with regards to the space?

PT Yes. You can tell it’s deliberate, not just, “oh you know we need to get a path out to that lookout, let’s make a path there”. Not just utilitarian.

EF It was the Picturesque in action?

PT Oh, definitely. Well, more the sublime than the picturesque I suspect.

EF Do you know much about their history?

PT Well, they started making them in the 1880s and a lot in the Depression.

EF But we don’t have particular people’s names attached to them?

PT No.
you’re here, you're seeing that and if you turn this corner, you see..."

PT Not so much that as realising that if you put a sequence of different experiences together, it will be interesting. So big and small, rough and smooth, and high and low, and in and out, and over and under. Because, I don’t think you can be as, didactic is not the right word, dictatorial is not the right word either, you can’t be...

EF Deterministic?

PT Deterministic, that’s the word, about how people move through a space. I mean the Opera House was really, I think, an amazing influence too, in the way that Utzon choreographed your route from the outside world to your seat - that is quite a deterministic route, you can determine that.

EF Because of the program.

PT Yes, because of the program. I once worked on a hospital for Lawrence Nield and I found that absolutely incredibly interesting and informative exercise. While I think the building is of no particular interest, and is all just plasterboard and vinyl inside, the whole engagement with the surgeons and the planners to work out routes into and out of operating theatres for clean and dirty and patients and everything, and the levels of control and separation, was so interesting. Just fascinating. And that was a very, very deterministic route.

EF And very technical? You didn’t resent that, or feel it as an inhibition on the architecture?

PT No. I would have thought it was more the other way round, that the architecture inhibited the technical. There’s no place in a building like that for self-indulgence.

EF But is that a good thing, or a bad thing. Or neither?

PT I think it’s value-neutral. It’s just what an operating theatre is, which is so deterministic you have to accommodate it. If it doesn’t work, nobody’s interested in the architecture. You’re not there to look at the walls. Nobody is, really at any point, except perhaps the recovery room.

EF Yes, the hospital is perhaps the ultimate utilitarian space and yet, one of the reasons I didn’t do medicine is that they’re such unpleasant environments. And I remember as a child going to my father’s laboratory and thinking, “this is horrible”.

PT It is horrible stuff. Yet to make a hospital overtly architectural is taking it too far. Pleasant is good, because there’s that whole sense of healing and your body certainly does heal better if your mind is being positive. But, I reckon about eighty percent of that is to do with natural light.

EF It reminds me of the emergency architecture argument that “even people starving in Africa need poetry.” And maybe they do. What do you think?

PT Would you rather be starving...

EF Beautifully...

PT I think we have a lot of trouble with that whole concept of beauty. We think it’s elitist and unnecessary to care about the beautiful, and yet, I think it is a fundamental human need. You look at travel posters and 90% of them are images of buildings.

EF Yes.

PT And, they are buildings which have lasted as imagery because they are extremely good works of architecture. You can go to the houses of parliament in London and you’re never disappointed. It’s a really, really, good building. Or the Parthenon, which is lumpy and ruinous and falling apart yet it still has that incredible power. And, so yes, I think architecture and beauty mean something enduring to people.

EF What is it, do you think, that they contribute?

PT This gets into serious metaphysics. I think you’ve got to believe that people have souls; that there is a spiritual level to existence, as distinct from religious. And that beauty is a pathway to that level of the human spirit. It’s not in any way formulaic. I think there are a million different ways of connecting with the human spirit, and yet beauty is quite cross-cultural.

EF That’s interesting.

PT Not absolutely cross-cultural. But we can visit a Nepalese temple and think it’s beautiful, as I’m sure the Nepalese do. Although I wonder whether a Nepalese person would find beauty in the Parthenon.

EF Yes, and I wonder what some really different cultural mindset would make of, say, the Paddington Reservoir Gardens.

PT Well I still remember an old Greek woman coming to the Hyde Park Barracks and saying “oh when are you going to fix all that plaster.”

EF So a lot of stuff about expectations and perceptions comes into it.

PT But those buildings are a bit more culturally loaded. And probably not quite so sublime. I don’t know. I think back to the 1970s when I first used to go to England and, by and large, English people would sneer at Victorian architecture “oh it’s only Victorian”. Yet now, they all love it. So there’s been this big cultural shift. Nothing is absolute, but I think no-one will go back to saying “I hate Victorian architecture” collectively. Maybe this or that example of it, but...

EF Because it’s now safely ensconced in history. But let’s go back to those Blue Mountains experiences you had as a child. We’ve talked a little bit about Henry Kelly leaving you his books, and about Bannister Fletcher, which was pretty amazing. But we haven’t included, so far, any of your wonderful descriptions of the spatial intricacy of the Blue Mountains, the paths and connections and choreographed views. So perhaps we could talk about that?

PT Well, I was lived in Forbes, in Central NSW. It was hot and dry and flat, and of course moving from there to the romantic topography of the Blue Mountains was pretty amazing.

EF At what age was that?

PT Five years. Old enough for it to make a huge difference.

EF Where in the Blue Mountains did you live?

PT Katoomba. So these amazing, dramatic views were everywhere, and we used continually to play up and down the cliffs and paths. I think that’s why the whole notion of experiencing three-dimensional space in either an orchestrated or a random way became really interesting to me.

EF It’s not just the mountains themselves, but actually the tracking-through thing, is that right? The experience of moving through this amazing topography?

PT Yes, the business of moving up and down and through on an orchestrated path, which somebody must have carefully made to give you certain visual and spatial experiences. It’s really, really clever. You could easily have just ploughed the paths through, or been a great deal less subtle in the way they reveal things.

EF Did you have particular favourite places or haunts?

PT Well, we had a kind of haunt where we always used to go, my brother and I and all our mates. We called it the cubby but we never actually built anything there, it was just this - I guess you’d call it a hanging valley, a kind of cliff with a floor in it that was well above the valley floor but opened out. It was terribly hard to get to. I’d tried as an adult I can’t believe we did it. It’s really steep.

EF It was kind of the focus, the social centre?

PT Yeah exactly, and maybe there’s not much more to be told about that. Although I also think that it instilled in me the notion that nature, as untouched by man, is ‘perfect’, and that in a way we just spoil it. This idea was in my consciousness from a young age because of the incredible richness and beauty of that environment, and when you went into the towns or the bits that had been ploughed up, they were never as nice.

EF But at the same time there’s this human intervention in the Mountain environment – the network of paths - that is especially lovely?

PT Yes. But it was done subtly and with care. And I guess, also, when the paths were new they were probably much less one with the environment. There would have been things chopped down and dumps of sand and all that stuff that you can no longer perceive.
EF So are you conscious of a way in which that experience translates or informs your work?

PT Certainly I’ve been very aware of moving through and under and around and over. And I’ve been deeply interested in natural and built landscapes on a more detailed level.

EF Well let’s bear it in mind as we talk through the buildings.

PT Here are three drawings of the three works that I’m taking as exemplars. There’s a drawing I did for Hyde Park Barracks; a plan I did on site at the London War Memorial site; and a plan I did on site at the Arboretum in Canberra. They’re partly there to show the power of initial thoughts, compared with the final thing, and partly just because I get sick of exposing things through photographs all the time.

EF Yes that is interesting. Do you want to talk more about that?

PT Sometimes, like at the Vietnam Memorial, it’s a fairly billboard surface, a surface on which you put a picture. Other times it’s much more architectural, I suppose, in approach.

EF Do you mean, more integral with the form?

PT Not necessarily. I mean you have less the sense that the image is something that’s been laid on the work and more that it’s deeply part of it. Whereas that notion of billboard implies you can take a picture off and put another one on instead. You could easily do that with the Vietnam Memorial, for instance.

EF Where do you think that comes from, your interest in using images and text? Are you consciously pursuing an idea? Or effect? Or is it just that you like it?

PT It’s partly that I like it. I mean, it started really with the Vietnam Memorial, and there it came from fulfilling the brief, because they wanted an iconic image. But to them an image meant a bronze soldier...

EF So, that’s funny - it began as a way not to have a bronze soldier?

PT Exactly, of allowing a contemporary interpretation of iconography.

EF That idea of continuity, of being part of a wider continuum.

PT Kind of a mix, a bit deeper than that. It’s more a geo-historic-political site. It’s more a geo-historic-political site. It’s more powerful and focused by reducing the amount of stuff that had to be juggled.

EF In terms of geometry, do you have a sense of where your geometry, if you like, comes from? It’s really not a classical mode. Is it modernist, do you think? Do you have a sense of its origin? Do you have a kind of pattern book or resource book in your head? A repository of geometries that you like?

PT No, not really. I’ve never been completely happy with making things funny shapes unless there’s an extremely good reason for it. Which I think is a bit dated as an approach.

EF In terms of geometry, do you have a sense of where your geometry, if you like, comes from? It’s clearly not a classical mode. Is it modernist, do you think? Do you have a sense of its origin? Do you have a kind of pattern book or resource book in your head? A repository of geometries that you like?
EF Yes, reason is definitely out of fashion.
PT Basically most buildings want to be rectilinear.
EF Still, do you think?
PT Still. Absolutely.
EF I often wonder whether, after this explosion of amorphous computer-generated forms, fashions will return to rectilinearity?
PT Well there is that very demure modern school.
EF Yes which is almost in opposition.
PT On yes absolutely. But there are people like Herzog and de Meuron, who manage to play quite successfully on both fronts. Collaboration is another interesting topic. I've always - right back from earliest work - liked working with people in and out of the office and in a very level-playing-field and stepping-outside-of-your-role kind of way.
EF When it comes to working with people, collaborating; do you share the most intimate, the most if you like sacred parts of design? When there's a kind of coal-face design exercise, do you share that stuff? Or is it more the peripheral activities?
PT No it's pretty coal-face. On a number of projects it's been sitting around a table and with bits of paper and exchanging ideas forwards and backwards, coming up with a joint solution.
EF Like brainstorming?
PT Yep, absolutely. And then, because the core is developed that way, and nobody takes particular ownership of it, then it becomes a really good platform for collaboratively developing it in an ongoing way. Because no one's saying this is my thing you're not changing it.

It was not much more than a scribble, really, and then we detailed it, talking to Janet all the time. There comes a time when an idea becomes an architectural project and from then you take it through as such. It's a bit like the National Arboretum, where the landscape became something that I consciously said, 'I've done what I can on this, it's your job, you're the landscape architect.'

EF So who is your collaboration usually with?
PT Well, with artists or sculptors or other consultants.
EF Do you have favourites, people that you love to collaborate with this way?
PT Definitely. I mean we've done a lot with Janet Laurence. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, for example. Janni and I designed it in about ten minutes – no, less - five minutes, on a napkin, while we were waiting for Brian to turn up to a meeting.

A record of design discussion by Peter Tonkin and Janet Laurence on a napkin.

EF Where was that, where you were standing?
PT On the site. There were two forests that didn't burn down; one planted in the 1920s of Portuguese cork oaks. It was just the most magical experience being in this undulating landform, with geometrically laid-out rows of trees, all of the same species; it never happens in nature.

EF So who had done those?
PT Was it Lindsay Pryor or J.S. Murdoch who planted all the trees in Canberra? Although I think it's credited actually to Burley Griffin. It was planted as an agricultural experiment to see if cork oaks could make a viable industry for Canberra.

EF That's nice. Something strictly utilitarian that just happens to be breathtakingly beautiful.
PT Yes, and it led to ideas of making the forests of biologically diverse and ecologically threatened species from all round the world, because everybody thought it was a good thing to do and also a good hook to win a competition. I was involved in the first few months in picking the trees. There was a tree committee, but I quickly realised after two meetings probably that I had nothing to say and it was pointless my being there. We'd agreed that each forest would have a different geometric pattern and again I left it up to Taylor Cullity Lethlean to do all that after the first one or two meetings. And that central sculptured valley is by Perry Lethlean. Apart from the fact that we all agreed there should be a vast open space there with an earth formed sculpture, it's entirely Perry.

EF Beautiful isn't it?
PT Really amazing.

EF All right well shall we go back to, do you want to go back to?
PT Well, perhaps to the three strands of projects, which are where I'm taking the PhD at the moment.

EF So you've chosen, essentially, one from each?
PT Yes exactly. So, there are the heritage projects and related ones where we don't have any history and we really try to invent layers, so we can put one in contradistinction to the other. The next category I call sculptures and some of them really are just purely sculptures and some of them are buildings that have become more or less sculptural.

EF What's this one?
PT That's one I'm just doing now, the Australian Memorial in Wellington, New Zealand. It's just at the drawing stage. It's directly opposite the NZ War Memorial Carillon so that's the Carillon tower, and the New Zealand Government is making a big memorial park for Anzac Day. They're doing a sequence of memorials related to international ties with New Zealand forged in war.

EF You've become the war-memorial architects of choice?
PT They're all competitions. I mean, I actually think we are over-memorialised. I have a slight issue with all of that.

EF We as a culture?
PT As a culture, yes. The trees all the way to Canberra are all memorial, every picnic spot is a war memorial and it's just too much, I think. It trivialises the whole thing.

EF It becomes a bit banal, doesn't it, as an idea? But it's good that you're able to do it in ways that most memorials don't, or can't.
PT Yes. Anyway, so there's Sculpture, and the other one I picked is this series of projects which not only are big but in a way have a city or landform relationship. These are all highly collaborative, because you can't do big things like that unless you approach them in that collaborative way. You have to become in a very in-depth way a team player, using your own skills to the best advantage. You have to recognise other people's skills and pass the ball when you have to.

EF Is that what you like about them?
PT Parly, I mean it's both good and bad, because if you've got people who are not working towards the aims of the project or have different aims, it becomes very difficult. But no, I do like it, because these projects are big and full of meaty issues, not just room data sheets and flashings and so on.

EF What sorts of big, strategic issues do you like to deal with?
PT Well, code compliance, and traffic and safety for freeways and so on can be a little dry, but not excessively, because it's all to do with movement. I think the issues in making these things legible at speed - something that you experience whizzing past in a car - has a whole different feel and set of requirements to something that you stand quietly and look at.
So there are meaning and identity issues and the desire, in the end, to make the freeway a place instead of just something that you drive through and forget. To make that experience a memorable thing and therefore make that a place. So it’s to do with place-making. And identity emerges from landscape and region, from culture and memory – which leads us back to that whole memorialisation thing of creating meaning through form.

EF So, do you think it is more fun to do it at a large scale than to create a specific monument? Or do you enjoy both?

PT Oh they’re both pretty good. Those big things are good because you can let go of them really early on in the process, since you’re not allowed to draw them up. The engineers draw them up. So you don’t have a huge team in the office churning out details and the business of managing that in the office.

EF Is that good – because you don’t have to do all the boring stuff?

PT Oh yes, it’s great that somebody else is doing the boring stuff.

EF And you trust them to do that?

PT You have to be, because that’s what the process is, and if you tried to control it you would fail.

EF But you have to be prepared to relinquish a level of design control, I guess.

PT Yeah probably. You’ve really got to roll with the punches and things will happen that you really hate. Like on this bridge we’re doing in Adelaide, essentially through a procedural stuff up. It’s a really nice pedestrian bridge going from the Adelaide Festival Centre across to the Adelaide Oval. It’s all clad in white glass, which we designed to be frameless. And it was tendered and priced and going ahead with frameless glass and of course they stuffed up the tender process so all the pieces of glass now have aluminium frames. Which there’s nothing we can do about.

EF You’re stuck with it?

PT We’re stuck with it yeah. It’s 250 metres long we’ve got to live with it.

EF And you can still smile about it? I’m impressed.

PT What’s the alternative? Do you throw in your T-square and walk away in a huff and say I’m not putting my name on that?

EF It would be an option. I suppose it depends? I think some architects would.

PT Maybe. But there’s absolutely no way we could have gone back to getting frameless glass, no way. And it happens with all big projects, absolutely every single one of them. You get these complex decisions, because there are so many people involved, they’re bureaucratic and many people along the chain are not used to dealing with layers of detail that support the overall quality of the finished work. In a freeway, no one gives a damn about whether the barrier is steel, concrete or wire rope. They just fulfil the performance requirement. So on something like this bridge, which is being built by road builders, they all think we’re wankers, worrying about having aluminium frames.

EF Yes. In fact they probably think it’s nicer that way, do they?

PT Oh some of them did, but mainly they just didn’t care whether it was nicer or not nicer. They could just see that it was more practical. When it also became a matter of having to fork out another million dollars to get rid of the frames, so not happening.

EF Understood.

PT So that’s my take. And I think it’s interesting that there aren’t many things there that you would call the sorts of ordinary buildings that architects do. I don’t know that that’s ever been a deliberate decision on my part, it’s just where things have pushed me.

EF So that’s true across your whole portfolio? It’s pretty non-standard?

PT There are buildings, but a lot of them are buildings with minimal architectural content. But no, it’s not typical. The major works of mine that have been award-winning have tended to be within these three categories, rather than stand-alone buildings of a particular this-or-that typology.

EF So that’s not something that you’ve chosen or selected?

PT That’s what I’m saying. I think it’s been quite a curious phenomenon. The fact that Customs House didn’t work functionally even back then, in the early 1990s. I think put the brakes on a bit. If everybody thought what a wonderful thing this is - instead of ‘this is something we need to change’ - I think it might have led to some more diverse public building work. But the terrible thing was the National Gallery. That really put a full stop on it.

EF Oh yes. The National Gallery. I’d completely forgotten about that. Where you won the competition...

PT Won the competition, got the job yeah it was just awful. It was in that interregnum when I was basically not getting much work, that I started pushing some of these strange things. Like we won the London memorial competition just while the National Gallery project was falling apart. In the quiet time afterwards we did the Craigieburn project, and things like that. Which we probably wouldn’t have done if...

EF They were all competitions?

PT Yeah they were all competitions. But we had time for them. Before that we’d been busy churning out work for the National Gallery.

EF And has it been a good thing in the end?

PT I think it’s interesting, I don’t know whether it’s good or bad I can’t make that call. I do keep thinking, ‘I want to do a building’. A big public building. I keep thinking one will turn up...

EF Yes, it would seem an obvious next stage.

PT Yeah. So, at the Arboretum, I like the way the building seemed to pull together these three strands. I don’t know how to fit it into this structure, but I’m happy with that building. It’s been a nice thing to do a greenfield public building from scratch.
where I had a hell of a lot of fun playing with structural steel. It was really, really, really, really fun.

**EF** Why was it so much fun?

**PT** I think partly because there are clearly rules – aesthetic rules - with putting bits of steel together but, unlike the classical Orders, they’re not codified.

**EF** So you were learning those as you went along, working them out?

**PT** I think, in a way, they’re kind of innate. But yes, you think, ‘how does this bit of steel join that bit of steel in a nice way?’ And you thrash it out with the engineers. That really informed our work on the Hyde Park Barracks. In fact one of the reasons we got the job at the Barracks was because Peter Watts liked what we’d done, using steel as an expressive medium on the OPT. He thought, ‘these guys are good with steel, we want steel in the Barracks so let’s put them...’

Using steel as a foreign medium, a device, to set out some diagrammatic ideas?

**PT** Absolutely. Well I don’t think they told us it’s got to be steel and glass. I think they, the Peters, wanted a contemporary layer that looked explicitly contemporary, and communicated to us that that was why we were on the list.

**EF** That must have been thrilling, to get a client who was sufficiently sophisticated to articulate that as a brief.

**PT** Oh well, yes, it was a great job, actually, for that reason. And all the more because it wasn’t procured in that antagonistic contractual way where the clients try to screw the builder and the builders are trying to screw the client, and everybody’s trying to screw the architecture so they make more money. We were working on site with high quality tradesmen that you could thrash things out with on the site. I think particularly Brian has kept that mode of working, so rather than designing things in his head and drawing them, he just sits there on-site and thrashes it out with the tradesmen. Which limits your field of practice, because most jobs you can’t do like that, the client’s procurement mode doesn’t allow it.

**EF** What was the relationship between you and Brian on this job?

**PT** There actually were three of us, Brian, me and Byron Harford.

**EF** Yes that’s right, I remember that.

**PT** Look it’s so long ago I’m stuffed if I can remember. I can remember going there a lot with Byron; I can’t remember going there much with Brian. I recall a lot of late night meetings where Byron and Peter [Emmett] and I were all there. But as to saying who did what? That I can’t remember it all.

**EF** Do you have a sense of who was the driving mind? Or was it essentially all five people?

**PT** I can remember definitely being the driving mind behind detailing all that steel and glass, both in the competition stage and later on. Byron did the shop drawings, almost completely. I think, I can’t think what else he did. I think that ghost stair was kind of my idea but Byron drew it up. I think this because there are bits of it I’ve always found slightly odd, and when I compare it to other parts of the job, I think that must have been someone else drawing it up. But really, it’s so long ago.

**EF** Do you think things like the Blue Mountains experience and that sense of spatial delight reappears here, in the Barracks?

**PT** The whole notion of journey certainly informs this job, but that was at least partly Peter Emmett, because he had worked out a journey through the museum, and he really wanted the architecture to respond to that.

We found we couldn’t demolish or even make a hole in the floor, which was basically Greenway boards relocated so no one felt comfortable getting rid of it. And this was an issue because Peter Emmett’s whole philosophy had been to connect the thing, spatially, through that void. So that’s how the Ghost Stair happened. It became the connecting device through the void, which allowed us to retain the ceiling. So I think Peter Emmett was the driving mind really, but he had no ability to draw or even to conceive of a physical object that fulfilled his ideas.

**EF** That sounds like almost the ideal partnership?

**PT** Absolutely, yes.

**EF** You’ve talked a lot about your interest in heritage and history, and this project clearly involves an overtly modern layering on top of that. So do you want to talk about how that works?

**PT** That modern layering was a response to the fact that, when the Powerhouse Museum and Public Works had done up the building, they’d faked-up colonial architecture everywhere, so the building was incomprehensible. So that notion of overt layering came from the Historic Houses Trust and was a client direction. I’m happy to acknowledge a debt to [Carlo] Scarpa, although it wasn’t a deliberate copy and what we produced was nowhere near as coordinated or complete a layer as Scarpa would have done. Ours was a much more piecemeal approach really.

I’ve never been interested in trying, in a modern world, to do faux-Classicism. It’s irrelevant, it’s costly, it’s impossible to do really well and anyway, it has no meaning. You wind up with a fourth-rate pastiche.

**EF** But if it were possible, would you do it?

**PT** Maybe if there was a time-machine I’d enjoy going back and doing all that fancy Classicism. We did once have a very opulent client who wanted a pair of classical houses. The office calls them Ken and Barbie. I never liked Barbie, but Ken was kind of okay. And I did the houses. But the world has moved on. It really has.

**EF** There is an authenticity argument happening there isn’t there? So would you say that you’re a Modernist, at that level?

**PT** It’s partly Modernist. Partly just being aware of contemporary society and its values. After all, there are parts of contemporary society that want to return to classical architecture but I don’t have much sympathy with that sort of Baulkham Hills nostalgia for a 1950s or Edwardian world where you could control things in a different kind of a way. I just don’t think is viable anymore.

**EF** Perhaps you’d argue that Classicism represented majority expectations in the 18th century?

**PT** Oh, yes. In Australia right into the 1960s. [Harry Ingham] Ashworth was still making people draw volutes in the 1950s.

**EF** But did Modernism ever really replace it, as a mass expectation?

**PT** I think people expect Modernism, although they don’t like it. It’s, “Oh God not another one of those”. But that’s because society is no longer cohesive. We’re not all in our place and staying there. That’s the kind of rigid social order that Classical architecture was communicating to the masses. This is your place and you’d better like it.

**EF** Which makes a perfect segue into the question of monuments, because that very lack of a cohesive visual language makes the very idea of the monument, and of public art in general, very difficult – don’t you think?

**PT** Yes, I find that really interesting. I was very conscious with the Vietnam Memorial in Canberra that this couldn’t be a monovalent thing. It couldn’t only communicate the values of the veterans, who were the client; it couldn’t have a sense of triumph or unity to it. It had to be somehow unresolved and discordant, with things crashing into one another.
The Vietnam Memorial has a sense of movement, dynamism. But otherwise no, I don’t so.

The London memorial became that in reverse, really. Instead of being convex, it’s concave. So it becomes something you go down into. But there’s a definite connection, even in the minimality of material, there’s a direct lineage. Also probably in the use of text, there’s a fairly direct step. But otherwise no, I don’t so.

The Vietnam Memorial deliberately more uplifting? If so, why?

The London memorial is a land form really. So they’re quite different. I did want it to be as quiet and reflective and immersive as possible on that site. And I guess, after all, it’s not a triumphal arch.

It was pretty clear that half the jury wanted a bronze soldier and the other half wanted a memorial deliberately more uplifting. I think all those words and what they were an array of objects, much more like the thing that we’re doing in Wellington. Not in any way the same objects or arranged similarly but that’s what we were interested in doing. It was only when I went to the site that I realised that the only thing that would work was some landform. I’d had the idea of naming the towns where each soldier was born, and Jani [Laurence] had the idea of washing those names with water before we went away. And those things stayed. That really was the hook for making sure that people engage with the memorial, and the form and the Australianness of the thing. Although of course I don’t really know whether people get it or not.

The London one is a wall of water and light. It’s a really interesting process. Before you put this guy’s bronze statue in the middle you will have won the competition. But otherwise no, I don’t so.

Because, while there isn’t much function to a memorial, there was that: a focal point to lay wreaths. And inevitably they want army, navy and air force badges stuck on them and little plaques and so on.

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They wanted a “wall of water and light” to block out the traffic clearing? And for instance, with the Vietnam Memorial, they rang up saying, “if you put this guy’s bronze statue in the middle you will have won the competition".

Is it at all a response to context – in the sense that Canberra has a very dominant datum, flat and open, a compelling reason for making a room. Whereas in London there’s quite a strong reason for making a clearing?

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EF So you had a champion in the NCA?
PT And even after that they kept on saying, "add more meaning, add more meaning". And I remember thinking, "how do we do that, add more meaning?" That wall of text, for instance, emerged because I thought, "well, everybody can read and get meaning from that, even if they can't look at a work of modern art and understand it." So that’s what I thought we’ll put text on it and people will read it.

As for the hanging rocks. They’re Ken Unsworth’s, they were originally the boulders hanging in the art gallery, and that was really why we picked Ken to work with, because I love those rocks so much. They came about because I realised we needed a ‘ceiling’, something to tie the concrete stelae together. But the Vietnam veterans hated them, because in the jungle so many things were dropping on their heads all the time. They didn’t want a memorial that made them think that. So I had to think of a way to tie those three forms together and form a roof to the room, giving just the right level of intimacy and light and shade and delicacy, to offset the gruntness of the thing. So we just tied all the stones together and made them into a circle.

EF It really works. It’s great. And it does have that lovely delicacy, compared with the Brutalism of the concrete.
PT Well it needed it, yes. And it was only when the thing was opened that the vets said, “Oh I really like that image of the helicopter rotors”, which actually I’d never thought of - it was entirely unintentional. This is the Tomb of an Unknown Australian Soldier. There have been calls over the years for the pillars to be removed, but fortunately we’ve managed to make it clear that the tomb and the pillars are a single artwork and under the Moral Rights legislation they can’t take half of it away. I think if it stays there long enough, people will start to appreciate it more, but it probably is a bit too abstract for a lot of people and a bit too intensely simple, too ruthless. It takes no quarters.

EF It’s perhaps quite un-Australian in that regard, but maybe that’s not a bad thing? I think
PT That whole space was so layered with symbol after symbol after symbol it was absolutely deliberate that we’d do this thing that was sharp and mysterious and ruthlessly clean.

EF Is that stone? On the Wellington memorial?
PT Yes, it’s red sandstone.
EF They look a bit like minmis or something, or totems, that row of soldiers, don’t they?
PT It’s automatically Australian, and it’s very un-Wellington.

EF Presumably they are reinforced, in the Shaky Isles?
PT Yeah they’ve got a steel core, post tensioned, and a zillion tonnes of concrete underneath. The biggest threat is this thing called liquefaction which – like in Christchurch - is terrifying.

EF OK. So, let’s press on to the other schemes, the strategic landscape projects.
PT I have loved being a landscape architect, even on the sidelines.
EF You’ve never actually wanted to become one?
PT Well, I nearly did a horticulture course about 20 years ago because there were no good landscape architects in Sydney. I just despared at having someone I could work with, and I thought it was a niche. But no I’ve kind of gone beyond it really. It was a phase that’s passed. But I really like working with Anton James, with Taylor Cullity Lethlean, with Macgregor Coxall and Aspect. We’ve done some great jobs. Although one thing that surprises me is that a lot of landscape architects know relatively little about horticulture. They don’t know much about gardening. What they know about is space.

EF Big space?
PT Big space, and space that is in a continual state of flux.
EF So, space within time?
PT Yes. That makes it really different. In architecture, the building looks beautiful on day one, and you expect it to look progressively worse and worse. Whereas landscape never reaches the stage of perfection. Landscape is always changing, always growing, always shifting.

EF So landscape designers need to deal consciously with that sense of flux? It’s about anticipation, as much as anything?
PT Yes, and I think that’s really great, it’s a kind of going back, another take on that sense of continuum. You drop a ball into this ocean of space and time and you’re never quite sure what’s going to happen to it. And the ripples just keep rippling. It is really interesting.

EF And this scheme, the National Arboretum in Canberra, was also a competition?
PT Yes. And I rang up TCL and said, “Do you want to go in this competition with us?” It was the first time we’d collaborated – no, the second. Craigieburn was the first. And we connected with them because my wife used to share a house in Sydney with one of their directors.

We all met on the competition site and stood in the cork oaks and really designed it in our heads. We worked out a spot for the visitors centre, and that the central valley should be clearly different, and we had that concept of a grid, of the different forests. Probably even the site for the amphitheatre was determined then.

EF Just walking around the site? That’s probably quite hard to do I imagine? Even just getting a grip of the large scale landform?
PT Yeah but I don’t even know that all landscape architects are good at that, but TCL are really good at it. Perry’s not actually very interested in detail. He leaves that for other people. He’s interested in the big gestures, and he’s very good at them.

EF So where were the two forests, there was the cork oak…?
PT And the Himalayan cedars. Cedrus deodara. They’re kind of nice, and they love Canberra’s climate. The cork oaks are further over in a little glade. It’s almost like they made a land bridge, a narrow neck in the site so you could get to them. The site has a freeway down the bottom and the cork oaks are up here. All of that’s becoming residential, but there’s a big hill there and a ridgeline across there and I think the Arboretum will also get that piece of land, which will enable us to make a road to the cork oaks, because currently you can’t really get there.

EF And how many forests are there now?
PT A hundred, well actually there’s about 102 but we always say there’s 100.

EF Just one species per forest? And they’re in that lovely patchwork pattern?
PT Yes. So these ones are a California Fan Palm that’s quite well grown. This is a forest of critically endangered endemic Sydney species, the Camden White Gum.

EF Critically endangered gums? Seriously?
PT Sure. There are lots of them and some wattles. Some are nursery garden specimens that have been grown from cultivars but they don’t have the same DNA as the wild ones. So with all of these, where we could, we got...
There’s a forest of Saharan spruce, of which there are almost none left in the wild.

EF So the Arboretum isn’t a push toward native flora?

PT No it’s a mix. The National Botanic Gardens are purely native. But here, right from the word ‘go’, said the planting was to be from round the world. There’s a really interesting forest here, which is l I think Spanish or Portuguese silver birch, of which there’s only two dozen trees left in the wild. We got a little dirty envelope of seeds and they were planted in the middle of this forest of 1000 or 1500 ordinary common garden silver birches, so there’s little patch in the middle of the rare ones. They’re taking cuttings from them and gradually ripp ing out the silver birches and expanding the forest of rare birches.

Endangered plants at the National Arboretum Canberra.

EF And eventually they’ll all be the rare ones?

PT Yes, but there won’t be a lot of genetic diversity within them because there’s only seven originals.

EF Do they get cloned?

PT Yes, but there won’t be a lot of genetic diversity within them because there’s only seven originals. This also wiped out a lot of species. So in the end about sixty of the forests are genuinely, globally endangered. About twenty are not really endangered but to some extent threatened. The rest are just pretty. But in that case they had to be in some way culturally significant, as well — although not necessarily with regard to Australian culture.

So there are things like dogwoods, and there’s a forest of Japanese cherry trees, a symbol of Japan. There’s a great big forest all the way down here of Gingkos, which are rare in Canberra and painfully slow-growing, although there are millions of them in gardens across the world. But we went back to China and got seeds of the wild Gingko. Extraordinary process.

EF Are they all planted now?

PT Pretty much. The things that aren’t planted are a forest that’s meant to go through the car park, and these two knolls between which you enter the building — one of those still needs planting. And the event terrace, which is still a dustbowl.

EF Alright. Let’s talk about the building.

PT Yes, the buildings. The site — well we built the site, really. It was just a featureless slope, so we made our own context.

EF Yes, Tim talks about that a bit.

PT So the entry from the freeway is here and then the ridge comes down about there, and you look south and east over the lake back to Canberra. We picked the site because it had the best views of the city — but not on top of a hill because you can’t build on top of hills, in Canberra they won’t let you because they want to keep the hills forested and also it’s just too windy, it becomes a terrible experience. So you build just off the edge.

EF Which is also better feng shui, right?

PT Absolutely. Much better. So the building’s site becomes part of that Central Valley. Interestingly, it wasn’t really conceptualised in one go. The amphitheatre was originally not a circle. It was the client body who said, “we want a circle.” But it was really nice because it then tied into the central valley much, much better.

So this zig-zaggy geometry became a curvy geometry and that was all TCL’s doing, which was lovely. The cutting came because they wanted this car park, and there was only one place to put it, with a ridge in between. So before the building was designed, after scheme two, we were trying to get an entrance around here but it just was too tight. So we made this blasted hole — and it’s much better.

EF Yes, and more dramatic.

PT Oh it’s fantastic. The story of the building design is that we had this design like a railway train where they could keep adding carriages as they got more money. No one was ever very happy with what we’d come up with, but it never came to the point of them saying they were unhappy. It sat there and then they’d say, “well, can you do us a new one”, and we’d do them a new one. But there was no brief, no client, no budget. All we had was a site and the name, Visitor’s Centre. Then quite suddenly it became clear that they were going to get money and the job was a goer. We were very quickly told to go away and design a visitors centre from a two-line brief that essentially said, “make it as big as you possibly can, you’ve got about ten million dollars, probably less but about that, and we want people to go ‘wow!’ when they walk in.”

That was all the brief we got. It was a great brief, really. The functional things we already knew. It has this bonsai garden, and we’d agreed it should have a covered outdoor learning area for school groups and activities, shared with this water wise garden that the water authority were paying for. We knew it had to have a restaurant, a kitchen, toilets, an exhibition space — effectively a ball room.

I basically lumped all of them into one room, because I thought there’s no way we can make all of them big enough to go ‘wow!’ It would be just this horrible mish-mash of little boxes. So I had the idea of a kind of faked layering, where you made a layer that was the earth, hidden behind stone walls, which we designed as gabions. Then draping over and beyond it all is this big canopy that became a kind of simulacrum of the hill.

And I designed all this in about an hour up in my holiday house on lots of tiny bits of scribbly paper. It was really interesting, because we actually used these scribbles as presentation drawings, after people in the office photo-shopped some colour onto them.

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Because of where the cutting was, I just put a centre at the end of the cutting and a radius that matched Perry’s radius here, and drew a series of radiating lines. They were all different lengths, measured from the centre, and I worked out that you could put an arch from that point to that point, using a different diameter arch each time you went round. Because you need three points to generate an arch, I put another mythical arch through the middle. It was a curve that established the top point, so that set the circle diameter for each. So here you can see the site sweeping around. And that’s the amphitheatre when it was square, before we worked it to being round. See how much nicer the round shape is? So the cutting goes through the gabions to brick and stone walls. We couldn’t afford stone walls everywhere and the client thought the gabions were a bit too rough and ready. They use a local stone that I always really liked.
The interior, well, I kept going through the Qantas terminal at Sydney and I didn’t want the space to feel like that, or look like it in any way, with its treeline forms. We produced a steel scheme and a timber scheme. The timber scheme looked considerably more expensive, but fortunately they all saw that the timber gave the space a resonance. Then, in order to avoid the Qantas-terminal look, I put a straight line here, working against the curves, cutting these structural elements at different angles.

So you start to get a very complex and (I think) interesting geometry. Originally, I thought it would be completely glass-roofed, but glass roofs don’t work in Canberra. It’s too hot in summer and too cold in winter and there’s too big a temperature variation so there’s too much movement. So we fingered a bit of glass in towards the south, to bring in movement. So we fingered a bit of variation so there’s too much and there’s too big a temperature hot in summer and too cold in winter roofs don’t work in Canberra. It’s too

"Wide Brown Land" artwork at the Arboretum

PT It’s a 150-seat concert venue or wedding chapel, that was deliberately a kind of counterpart, using the same materials, same geometrical inspiration, but it was designed to have glass running down through it all. It just looks a bit too much like the Opera House - it’s a bit of a one line, which I’m not crazy about. But it was given the go-ahead very late, but now it does. There’s also that little building, a little chapel, which I think was compromised by time and cost.

PT Well yes, I think it is nice and also, ten years ago, you couldn’t have done it because the technology didn’t exist, but now it does. There’s also that little building, a little chapel, which I think was compromised by time and cost.

PT Yes, that was one of the - if I go back to that plan - each forest band is 65 metres wide. And we all agreed we would separately go out to different forests and work out how big they had to be so that, if you stood in the middle, you could see only that sort of tree. We’d all go to different forests and ring each other up and say this one is this big. Sixty-five metres seemed to be the right thing, then we cut these allees through it.

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PT But yes, that’s Draecena draco, the dragons blood tree that takes a hundred years to grow. And there’s a beautiful forest of giant redwoods, seven hundred of them, which are now about two and a half metres tall.

EF Yeah, that’s lovely.

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PT Within each forest? No some of them are really tight, some much more spaced apart.

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EF Are they all planted on the same grid?

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EF Which will give a complete change of pace and feel as you move from one to the other?

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EF So, you wanted that play between the strict geometry and the loose landform?

PT So tempted to go on. But yes.
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