

IVANHOE LIBRARY

IVANHOE CIVIC PRECINCT



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PEER REVIEW OF THE
IVANHOE LIBRARY
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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PREAMBLE

This report was commissioned by Banyule City Council. The purpose of this document is to provide a peer review of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment', which was prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in July 2011. This draft of the peer review is to be presented to Heritage Victoria for review, and from that review a final peer review is to be prepared. The earlier heritage assessment was commissioned by Banyule City Council, as part of preliminary work for a future master plan for the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct, within which this library is situated.

This peer review has assessed each section of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011). Comments in regard to the contents in that report are listed in this peer review under the following headings:

- Sources of Information
- History
- Description
- Analysis
- Conclusion

These headings are broadly consistent with those found in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011). However, as there is an overlap in much of the information in sections 6, 7 & 8 (Comparative Analysis, Significance, and Discussion) of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011), these have all been addressed in the Analysis section of this peer review.

In addition to a review of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011), an inspection of the interior and exterior of the library, as well its environs, was undertaken.

This report has been prepared with regard to the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (1999), which is the recognised standard of conservation practice in Australia. The cultural significance of the library is assessed against the HERCON criteria.

Peter Andrew Barrett, architectural historian and conservation consultant, is the author of this peer review of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011). A summary of my qualifications and experience is attached to the end of this report.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The key findings of this peer review of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in July 2011 are:

- The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) was prepared by Bryce Raworth, an architectural historian and heritage consultant, who is appropriately qualified and has considerable experience in the heritage assessment of buildings and other elements;
- The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) is balanced in its analysis;
- The few errors and omissions in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) are relatively minor in nature, and would not impact upon, or change, its conclusions and recommendations;
- Additional research into the history of the Ivanhoe Library, undertaken as part of this peer review, has not uncovered any material that increases the level of heritage significance of the subject building;
- The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) identified the library to be of some local heritage interest. This peer review of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) found this to be an accurate assessment of its heritage value.

Having reviewed the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011), and some additional sources in relation to the building and its history, I concur with Mr Raworth that the building is only of local interest, and is not of a significant level of heritage value to be added to *Victorian Heritage Register* or to be individually listed in the Heritage Overlay Schedule of the *Banyule Planning Scheme*.

Providing that a suitable development proposal was put forward, the library could be removed without detriment to the heritage value of the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct. However, any future development proposal would need to be sympathetic to the Heidelberg Town Hall, and would be subject to the approval of Heritage Victoria.



PEER REVIEW COMMENTS

Sources of Information

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) has sourced reference documents including citations and heritage studies, which discuss the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct. Some architectural drawings of the library have also been sourced in the preparation of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011).

During the preparation of this peer review, some other historical sources were located. These additional sources have varying degrees of relevance to the Ivanhoe Library, however the information contained within them do not impact upon the heritage value, or elevate the level of significance, of the Ivanhoe Library.

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) contains a 1968 plan of the building, which was obtained from the Public Record Office Victoria. The 1964 architectural drawings of the Ivanhoe Library are also held by the Public Record Office Victoria. These drawings show a greater level of detail than the 1968 plan. However, from my review of the drawings, nothing in them affects the conclusion or recommendations of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011).

A conservation management plan was prepared for the Heidelberg Town Hall in 2002, by Falkinger Andronas Pty Ltd (now trading as Andronas Conservation Architecture Pty Ltd). Absent in this conservation management plan is any detailed discussion or analysis of the library, and this, most probably, explains its omission from the list of sources in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011). However, the history in the Falkinger Andronas Pty Ltd conservation management plan provides a detailed historical account of the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct, which may have provided more background to the significance of the broader site.

In 2008, Heritage Victoria commissioned the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One'. The survey identified over 500 Post-war places of potential State heritage significance. The survey was prepared by Heritage Alliance. Volume 2 of the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One' contains citations for each of the 500 buildings that were reviewed. Seven libraries are identified, including the Ivanhoe Library. The brief citation for the Ivanhoe Library states:

A particularly notable (and substantially intact) example of a municipal library in the post-war modernist tradition, expressed as a rectilinear volume with a fully glazed side wall, enclosing a double-height reading room with mezzanine level. The north side of the building incorporated a loading dock for the mobile library, which may have been a unique feature at the time.

Other libraries identified in the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage One' include two wings of the State Library of Victoria, which, in addition to aesthetic and architectural considerations, are also of historical and social value to the State. Other suburban libraries in the survey are the St Kilda Public Library, Toorak/South Yarra Public Library, Springvale Library and Eltham Library.

The survey notes that the Toorak/South Yarra Public Library is included on the Royal Australian Institute of Architects 'Twentieth Century Building Register'. It is also noted in the survey that the Eltham Library, designed by the eminent Australian architect Gregory Burgess, has received international acclaim.

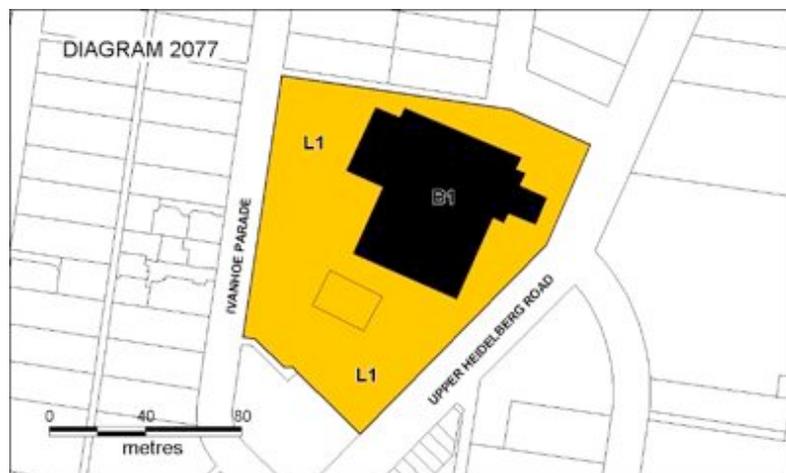
A second part of the survey, 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Part 2', was prepared by Simon Reeves (Built Heritage). A very detailed history, description and comparative analysis of the Ivanhoe Library was prepared as part of this second stage. Reeves did not recommend that the Ivanhoe Library be added to the *Victorian Heritage Register*. Reeves thorough analysis of the Ivanhoe Library in the context of other Post-war libraries is discussed further in the Analysis section of this report.

Due to its conclusion that the library is of local significance, the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Part 2' recommended that the Ivanhoe Library be included on the heritage overlay schedule of the *Banyule Planning Scheme*. The Ivanhoe Library is currently included in the extent of the heritage overlay HO77 Former Heidelberg Town Hall in the *Banyule Planning Scheme* (for further discussion of other listings and heritage controls see the next section of this report)

Listings and Controls

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) identifies the relevant listings and statutory controls at a Local, State and National level. While the description of the extent of registration by Heritage Victoria is accurate, the map of the extent of registration that is illustrated on page 2 of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) is incorrect. The map shown, dated December 2005, was subsequently amended in January 2006 to show the outline of the Ivanhoe Library. I am advised by Heritage Victoria that the mapping amendment does not alter the heritage status of the library, which is still excluded from registration.

Amended plan of the extent of registration issued by Heritage Victoria in January 2006, showing the same extent of registration as the plan issued in December 2005, but the outline of the Ivanhoe Library is shown



Original plan of the extent of registration issued by Heritage Victoria in December 2005 without the Ivanhoe Library shown.



The extent of the Heritage Victoria registration includes a broad curtilage around the town hall, which indicates this setting is considered to contribute to its significance.

History

The history of the library in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) is brief. Given that the Ivanhoe Library is the primary focus of the assessment, the building is deserving of a more detailed history.

Although 'Wiki' sites are being relied upon more and more in research, they should be approached with some caution. I note that much of the historical information in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) is sourced from WikiNorthia. Adopting an *all care and no responsibility* approach, WikiNorthia states in its conditions that:

- *Information provided on the Website is general in nature;*
- *Neither WikiNorthia nor any related parties of WikiNorthia warrant or guarantee the timeliness, accuracy or completeness of any information on the Website.*

There is scope for additional historical research; firstly to verify the WikiNorthia history of the library, and secondly to supplement it. The 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Part 2' prepared by Simon Reeves of Built Heritage provides a more detailed historical narrative on the Ivanhoe Library. It also gives a contextual history of library services in the former City of Heidelberg. Other sources, including the previously mentioned Heidelberg Town Hall Conservation Management Plan, provide details of the history of this civic precinct.

I have reviewed these histories in the preparation of this peer review and they do not reveal any historical information that would affect the findings of the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011). The historical sources that I have reviewed in the preparation of this report are listed in the bibliography at the end of this document.

Description

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) provides a relatively detailed written description of the building. The description could discuss the building in a broader context including its grouping with other civic and public buildings at the highest point in the municipality. However, overall the description adequately describes the construction, form and planning of the library.

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) identifies the brick paved forecourt of the library adjacent to Upper Heidelberg Road. Although raised planter beds and some eucalypts trees conceal the library, this forecourt does provide some views to both the town hall and library from Upper Heidelberg Road. Any future development of the site should consider how it would impact upon these views to the town hall.

The building is difficult to photograph because landscape elements and parked motor vehicles, in its environs, conceal many parts of the building. If possible, some additional photographs of each elevation would complement the written description. The only interior photograph is blurred (Figure 9). Some additional photographs of the major spaces and interior details, particularly those mentioned in the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Part 2', would also be beneficial to the reader.

Analysis

The library is correctly identified in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) as an example of International-style Modernism of the mid-late twentieth century. The heritage assessment compares the building with several other libraries designed in this style in Melbourne between the late 1950s and early 1970s. However, it is the South Yarra Library and the Baillieu Library, discussed in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011), that would be considered exemplars of the International-style.

In the instance of the South Yarra Library its heritage value is reflected in its site-specific heritage overlay in the local planning scheme. It is that library, and not the Ivanhoe library, that Simon Reeves in the 'Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria' recommends for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Another library that is currently protected by the planning scheme, which Reeves recommends for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register, is the St Kilda Library. This library, designed by the Italian architect Enrico Taglietti, is organic in its expression, as opposed to the cubist form of the International-style Ivanhoe Library. It demonstrates a higher degree of sophistication in its construction, materials, planning, and architectural expression than the Ivanhoe Library.

Reeves believes the St Kilda Library to be "indisputably the most distinctive and remarkable municipal library to have been erected in Victoria since the Second World War". Reeves continues "its opening in 1973 marked the end of a decade of relatively unremarkable municipal library buildings in Victoria". Resonating with the architectural character of the Ivanhoe Library, he cites these earlier libraries as "invariably designed in a utilitarian modernist idiom, with flat roofs, brick walls and full-height glazing..."

It is an accurate observation by Reeves that the St Kilda Library ushered in a new generation of library buildings, which displayed a higher degree of architectural sophistication, and innovation, than earlier municipal library buildings. Reeves notes the Ivanhoe Library did incorporate some innovative features including the book mobile dock and a book lift, but these elements cannot be regarded to be of such significance to elevate the building's heritage value. The bookmobile service, believed to be the first in Victoria,¹ pre-dates the library by a decade. It is the bookmobile service, rather than its dock, that is of significance to Banyule.

The comparative analysis in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) also provides some background on Leith & Bartlett, the architects of the Ivanhoe Library. A list of their work in the 1930s is particularly focused on their municipal buildings. Also worthy of inclusion in their list of projects in the 1930s is the Casterton Town Hall, opened in the same year as the Heidelberg Town Hall. Although it is designed in another style (Moderne), the Casterton Town Hall is a work of Leith & Bartlett that is significant, as it was designed as both a town hall and cinema. However, it should be noted that this combination of uses was not uncommon on rural town halls in Western Victoria. The firm also undertook a number of alterations and additions to town halls in the Inter-war period including works to Preston and Collingwood town halls.

After World War II Leith and Bartlett were involved in a diverse range of projects. The firm designed one of the first Modernist multi-storey buildings in Melbourne in the Post-war period. The Allied Insurance Building (1952-57) in Collins Street, Melbourne is cited in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) as one of the earliest designs of a curtain wall office building in the city. However there are earlier examples, including Barnett's Building at 164-166 Bourke Street, Melbourne designed by the eminent Modernist architects, Seabrook and Fildes, c1937.

Leith & Bartlett's significant 'first' in the Post-war period is the Burwood Skyline, which was Melbourne's first drive-in theatre. It was designed by Leith & Bartlett in conjunction with the Australian division of RCA (Radio Corporation of America). The drive-in, which opened in 1954, is now demolished.

A partner(s) in the firm were also instrumental in the establishment of the Housing Commission of Victoria's Holmesglen plant for the manufacture of pre-cast concrete panels. These panels were used on its villas, walk-up flats and high-rise towers built from the 1940s through to the 1970s. Pre-cast concrete panels were also supplied to other government agencies including the Public Works Department and the Country Roads Board.

The firm may have also built prefabricated timber frame houses for the Housing Commission of Victoria immediately after the war. A photograph held by the Picture Collection of the State Library of Victoria, with an erroneous caption referring to prefabricated concrete houses, shows workmen assembling timber frame weatherboard houses in a factory. The designs of these timber houses are credited in the caption to Leith & Bartlett.

The conclusion reached in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) is that Leith & Bartlett were 'prolific and competent' architects, but their work was not particularly groundbreaking. Apart from the drive-in and their work with the Housing Commission of Victoria, it is accurate to say that the firm was not particularly innovative, or at the forefront of design, during the mid-twentieth century when compared with other architectural firms of this era. Bryce Raworth is correct to say that other firms of this period including Yuncken Freeman, and Bates Smart McCutcheon are more highly regarded and better known.

While the Ivanhoe Library may have served the needs of the community at the time of its opening, changes in technology, building regulations and community expectations have rendered the current facility obsolete. An example of this is that access between levels within the library is limited to stairs. This significantly impacts upon the access to the facility, particularly for the elderly and disabled.

Christine MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer of the Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries, has noted that access is a problem for the library. She believes that it has inadequate facilities for a modern library complex and many of its mechanical services are in need of replacement. In terms of space she believed the current library provided 30% of the space needed to function properly.

Noticeably absent in previous heritage assessments and studies of the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct, is any discussion and even, in some cases, mention of the library. This is also noted in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011), which concludes that the library is only of modest local interest. Unlike the Heidelberg Town Hall, which is valued by the community for its aesthetic value and functional value, the library is mostly of heritage value for its function as a library – a function that could equally be served by a new building on this site. Similarly, the expansive views across the district, which are currently appreciated from the library reading room, could be achieved in a new building built upon this site.

The 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) does not include an assessment of the library against the Heritage Council criteria for the assessment of cultural significance. These criteria are:

Criterion A:

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

The Ivanhoe Library does not demonstrate importance to the course, or pattern, of the development of municipal libraries in Victoria in the Post-war period. As previously discussed, the St Kilda Library is identified as the most distinct and remarkable municipal library building erected in the Post War period in Victoria. The Ivanhoe Library is of local interest to Banyule in the history of the provision of a purpose-built municipal library for the former City of Heidelberg.

Criterion B:

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

The Ivanhoe Library does not possess any significant uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history, nor Banyule's cultural history, particularly in relation to municipal libraries.

Criterion C:

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

The Ivanhoe Library does not yield any known information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history. It is of local interest in the history of the provision of a purpose-built municipal library in the former City of Heidelberg.

Criterion D:

Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

The Ivanhoe Library does not demonstrate, to any significant level, principal characteristics of this class of cultural place to warrant State significance. Rather, the Ivanhoe Library is of local interest in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a purpose-built municipal library in the former City of Heidelberg.

Criterion E:

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

The Ivanhoe Library does not exhibit any particular Modernist aesthetic characteristics to warrant State significance. Other libraries in Victoria, including the South Yarra Library and the Baillieu Library, are considered better examples of this style. The Ivanhoe Library is of local interest as an example of a Modernist style building in Banyule.

Criterion F:

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

The Ivanhoe Library does not demonstrate a high degree of creative or technical achievement in Post-war period municipal library design. Two features of the library, the book mobile dock and a book lift, cannot be regarded to be of such significance to elevate the building's heritage value to a State level. It is of local interest as a building designed for the provision of a local library, including the garaging of a mobile book library.

Criterion G:

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

The Ivanhoe Library is a local library facility in Banyule. It holds no strong or special association to any particular community or cultural group for social or cultural reasons outside of Banyule to warrant a State level of significance.

Criterion H:

Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

The Ivanhoe Library is one of several works undertaken by the architectural firm Leith & Bartlett in the Post-war period. Compared with other work this firm undertook after World War II, it is of a lower level of significance, and cannot be deemed to meet this criterion at a State level. It is of local interest as a work of the architectural firm of Leith & Bartlett in Banyule.

For a place to be included on the *Victorian Heritage Register* it must meet at least one of these criteria. The Ivanhoe Library does not meet any of these criteria, to any significant level, that would warrant its inclusion on the *Victorian Heritage Register*. However it does meet some of the criteria at a local level, but only to consider that the building is of local interest. To be of local significance, the library would need to demonstrate that it met, to a greater degree, this criteria.

It is reasonable to say that the level of heritage value that the library has, is not of a sufficient level to justify its retention; especially in preference of a responsive new development proposal for this site. However, it is important to acknowledge and continue the history of this site, and any new building should have a community focus. I agree with Mr Raworth in the 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Assessment' (July 2011) that retention of the library could prove detrimental to the broader Ivanhoe Civic Precinct, by proving to be a significant constraint on its future use.



CONCLUSION

The library is of some modest local heritage interest. This heritage value relates to its function as a library. However, this function could equally be served, or better served, by a new building that is responsive to this site, particularly the adjacent Heidelberg Town Hall.

The retention of this building, which is of limited heritage value, will place unnecessary constraints on the future use and development of the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct. Therefore, I concur with Bryce Raworth that the existing library can be removed from the site without a detrimental effect on the Ivanhoe Civic Precinct.

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- Heritage Council (Victoria), 'Heritage Council Criteria for the Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance', 2008;
- Louise Honman, Director, Context Pty Ltd, pers com to Brian Tseng [Peter Andrew Barrett] on 28 August 2011;
- Klover Kane, Strategic Planner, Banyule City Council, pers com to Peter Barrett, various dates;
- Leith and Bartlett, 'Heidelberg Municipal Library', architectural drawings, dated 1964, held by the Public Record Office Victoria [VA695 Department of Health, VPRS 8044/P3 Unit 193, PB 13743, Plan 458];
- Leith and Bartlett, 'Heidelberg Municipal Library', architectural drawings, dated 1968, held by the Public Record Office Victoria [VA695 Department of Health, VPRS 7882/P1 Unit 1627];
- Miles Lewis, 'Architectural Index', held by the State Library of Victoria;

Christine MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries, pers com to Peter Barrett on 12 January 2012. MacKenzie advised that the building's functional deficiencies and other problems were outlined in a report she prepared for Banyule Council on 4 July 2011;

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Detail Plan No 2593, State Library of Victoria Map Collection;

Ian Morrison, 'Libraries and Archives', in *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Melbourne 2005;

Liz Pidgeon, 'The Novel Idea of a Library: the history of library services in the City of Heidelberg and Banyule, in *Heidelberg Historian*, No 246, June 2008;

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 'Ivanhoe Library Heritage Review', 2011;

Graeme Speers, Heidelberg Historical Society, pers com to Brian Tseng [Peter Andrew Barrett]. Mr Speers, a former librarian, made the comment that the building is not suitable for a library; it does not provide lifts to cater for the needs of library patrons, particularly the elderly and disabled;

State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection, photograph titled (erroneously) 'Prefabricated concrete houses designed by Leith & Bartlett for the Housing Commission of Victoria, Ashburton Estate', dated 15 December 1948. The photograph shows men assembling prefabricated timber frame houses in an unidentified factory;

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QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

I am a qualified architectural historian and heritage consultant. I have a Masters Degree in Architectural History and Conservation from the University of Melbourne. I also have architectural and other heritage related qualifications from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and the University of Melbourne.

I have been involved in a broad range of heritage projects in Australia including conservation management plans and heritage assessments of residential, commercial, industrial and public buildings. I have appeared as an expert witness on heritage matters at VCAT, Panel Hearings for matters before the Minister for Planning, and in other forums.

I have also been involved in heritage projects overseas including cultural resources studies of districts of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Other projects in California include the heritage assessment of proposed retrofit works to the Bank of America building in downtown Los Angeles.

I have written published architectural histories for the Public Record Office of Victoria, the City Museum and for the *Melbourne Design Guide*. I have also been commissioned to write histories for several commercial and residential buildings in Melbourne.

The University of Melbourne, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and other educational institutions engage me, from time-to-time, as a tutor and lecturer in architectural history and design. I have also been retained by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to assess postgraduate-level architectural theses.

Educational organizations, as well as heritage groups and the media, regularly ask me to speak, or to comment, on architectural history and heritage matters. Recently, I was invited to join a panel of speakers and to give a paper on heritage at the California Preservation Conference in Santa Monica, California in May 2011.

I have been associated with a number of architectural exhibitions. In 2008, I was the curator of an exhibition at the City Museum in Melbourne called *The Impermanent City*. Other exhibitions that I have worked on include *Re Built Environment* in 2006, also at the City Museum.

I am a member of Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and adhere to its *Burra Charter* (1999). I am a member of the Pacific Heritage Reference Group, whose purpose is to provide advice to the President and the Executive Committee of Australia ICOMOS on cultural heritage matters in the Pacific region. Other architectural affiliations that I have are membership of the Australian Architecture Association and the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia and New Zealand.