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The Postmodernisms of Russell Hall: Exploring Australia's Changing Architecture Culture Through a Biographical Approach

Janina Gosseye [a] and Isabelle Doucet [b]

[a]Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands; [b]Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This paper studies the work and practice of Brisbane-based architect Russell Hall to better understand how architects in Australia negotiated the professional and formal changes that emerged in architectural culture from the 1970s. Architectural historiographies tend to discuss postmodernism as plural and multiple, while also boxing it into various branches or strands, such as ecological, traditionalist/historicist, vernacular, or pop/fun. Many of these strands, however, co-exist within the work of architects. When you study their professional biographies up close, it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to sustain these categorisations, as architectural designs often blend different interests in specific, situated ways. If broad categorisations exist about postmodern architectural forms, so too do they exist about postmodern professional practice. In the latter decades of the 20th century, it is often said, the "hired-gun-architect" and the "conglomerate architecture-building-business corporation" replaced the "gentleman-artist-architect." However, once again, on the ground, the situation is often more nuanced and multifaceted than that. This paper adopts a biographical approach to better understand how one architect, Hall, negotiated the professional and formal changes that emerged in architectural culture from the 1970s. In doing so, it seeks to improve our understanding of postmodern architectural culture in Australia—and Queensland specifically.

In Australia, as elsewhere, the 1970s was a time of change. In 1971, Australia's first Aboriginal Senator was elected; in 1972 the socially progressive Labor politician Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister; in 1973, the countercultural arts and musical festival "Aquarius" took place in

CONTACT Janina Gosseye j.gosseye@tudelft.nl Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Julianalaan 134, Delft 2628 BL, The Netherlands

Nimbin; in 1974 AC/DC released their first song; in 1975 Papua New Guinea (PNG) established its independence from Australia; in 1976, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act passed, providing recognition of Aboriginal land ownership; in 1977, a new political party, the Australian Democrats, was launched, cracking open the country's old two-party system, etc. Change was also afoot in architectural culture. In *Architecture in Australia: A History*, John Maxwell Freeland writes that by the late 1960s, "the old individual gentleman-artist-architect offering a highly personal service to his client had been dehumanized and was almost dead. The future, unknown and, as always, a cause for trepidation, appeared to belong to the impersonal, conglomerate architecture-building-business corporation."[1] Along with this shift in the way that architects engaged in professional practice also a formal shift occurred. In Australia, as elsewhere, postmodernism increasingly displaced modernism as the dominant paradigm, bringing with it a renewed appreciation for place, history, and aesthetics. In this process, architectural historians have argued, social and political ambitions were evacuated from the discipline in favour of aesthetic, economic, and performative preoccupations.

Australia's post-1970 architectural culture is an emerging field of interest. Following a spate of publications on modernism in Australia (which tend to conclude in the 1970s),[2] the contours of the country's post-1970 architectural history are now taking shape.[3] This paper contributes to this effort. To better understand how practitioners negotiated the professional and formal changes that emerged in architectural culture from the 1970s, it adopts a biographical approach.[4] The paper chronicles the work and practice of Brisbane-based architect Russell Hall, who is a friend of one of the authors of this paper. It considers the period from the mid 1970s through to the late 1990s, during which Hall's professional career expanded to include not only architecture but also furniture design, art installations, building construction, and politics.

Russell Hall, who was raised on a farm in Harrisville (Queensland), began studying architecture at the University of Queensland (UQ) in 1965—fellow students included Rex Addison, Bevan Lynch, Alexis (Lecki) Ord, Margaret West along with about fifty others—and graduated in 1974 with a degree from the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT).[5] University assignments that Hall remembers fondly include the design of a basic shelter (an assignment set by Bill Carr and Ian Sinnamon) as well as Bill Greig's exercise based on the 1948 book *Sunshine and Shade in Australasia*.[6] After failing his third year of architecture at UQ twice, Hall transferred to QIT in 1969. At that time QIT offered a part-time evening course in architecture, so Hall began working for Lund Hutton Newell Paulsen. He stayed there for only a few months before moving to the office of James Birrell & Partners, where he stayed until about 1972.[7] While working for Birrell, Hall designed a house for Sir John Thomas Gunther, then Vice Chancellor of the University of Papua and New Guinea, at

Port Moresby, among several other projects.[8] Following his time at Birrell's, Hall briefly worked for R.N. Statham, a package dealer, then Daryl Bennetts, who was developing prefab systems, and finally the Department of Housing and Construction, a Commonwealth public service department, commonly referred to as "Commonwealth Works." While working for the Department of Housing and Construction, Hall relocated to PNG in 1975. Having visited the country briefly a few times before, he was keen to stay for a longer period. PNG, however, gained independence not long after he arrived. So, when Commonwealth Works withdrew, Hall joined the PNG Housing Commission.[9] The four years that he spent there were highly productive. In 1979 he returned to Australia and one year later established his own practice, Redback Draughting Service, in Buderim, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.[10] There, Hall did some work for architects Gabriel Poole and John Mainwaring[11] alongside his own projects, including a house for himself and his family in Mons (1982) and a house for his sister, Jennifer Hall, in Wilston, Brisbane (1986). In 1986 Hall moved back to Brisbane, from where he still works today. [Figures 1 and 2]

This paper draws on texts that have been published about Hall and his work, as well as conversations and email exchanges with the architect and personal recollections written by Hall to construct a situated micro-history that variously strengthens, questions, or nuances the historiography of Australia's post-1970 architectural culture.[12] The paper is subdivided into

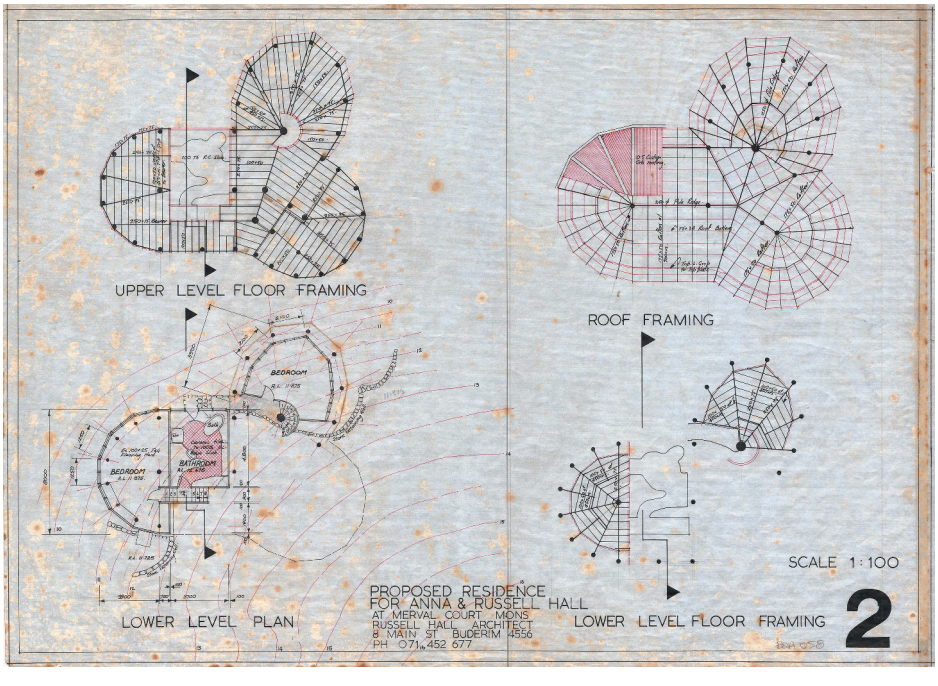

Figure 1. Mons House, plans, Russell Hall, 1982. Source: Russell Hall Papers, University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL666, Series A, File 1. © Russell Hall.

Figure 2. Carpenter Hall House, under construction, Russell Hall, photographed ca. 1985. © Michael Keniger.

two parts. The first part, "Shifting Forms," discusses Hall's work against the backdrop of emerging postmodernism in architecture in Australia, and unpacks how his work engages with various aspects of postmodernism as well as broader societal themes. In this first part, the houses that Hall designed for himself and his family in Mons and for his sister in Wilston take centre stage, because such personal projects are uniquely capable to show how architects work through changes and challenges that emerge in architectural culture in situated ways.[13] The second part, "Shifting Practice," places the postmodernisation of architectural culture within the context of a profession that, in Australia, as elsewhere, was undergoing important changes that enabled architects like Hall to adopt roles other than that of the "gentleman-artist-architect" and to explore other professional opportunities alongside architectural practice.

Shifting Forms

In *Anxious Modernisms* Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault bring to the fore a complex network of interrelated themes that emerged in postwar architectural culture: "the modern movement, popular culture/everyday life, anti-architecture, democratic freedom, *homo ludens*, primitivism, authenticity, history, regionalism/place."[14] In this family of terms, they claim, each member shares one, two, or more features with the other. Goldhagen and Legault argue that in most cases, "practitioners [. . .] engaged only some of these themes" and that "for each theme addressed, practitioners took individual positions and constructed individual visions."[15] In his work, Hall constructed not one but multiple "individual visions" that touched upon most (if not all) of these themes. The house that he designed for himself and his family in Mons, for instance, engages with primitivism, authenticity, regionalism, and place in multiple ways. The importance that Hall attached to place and a building's connection with (primitive) elements already comes to the fore in Hall's memories of scouting the site upon which to build:

> Immediately felt good about the site. Excitedly descended the steep bank treed with eucalyptus to a gulley. Followed the ephemeral gulley to arrive at a sandy flatter terrain abundant with the slender delicate piccabeen palms. Another gulley meets this gulley, all within the block, equally dense with palms. Ascended back to higher ground past a cleared area now heavily grassed where the bananas would have grown and then back to the road. I was struck by the wonder. [. . .] Visited the site with the family the next morning to see if ok by all. To the lower farm area on the site was an access track. Proceeded down the track, then, in front of us, a magnificent sight: a large carpet python with patterned body and wriggled length spanned the full width of the track. It was an omen. This is the site! It was the first and only site I chased up.[16]

Interactions with snakes were a regular occurrence on the farm in Harrisville where Hall grew up, and he remembers such encounters with delight. [Figure 3] His upbringing on a farm likely played a part in his desire to live a more simple, authentic life in close connection with nature. In a recent interview, he jokingly remarked: "Sometimes I wonder why I'm an architect, because I could live in a cave."[17] This desire to live and build in symbiosis with nature was an interest shared by Hall's contemporaries. In Australia, Glenn Murcutt and Richard Leplastrier developed a "regionalist" postmodernism that aspired to connect with place, signalling a new era in Australian architecture.[18] With a limited palette of building materials and techniques, such as corrugated metal, lightweight timber, adjustable and translucent screening, verandas and porches, shade and refraction, Murcutt developed an architectural language rooted in making-do, which had its origins in outback sheep stations, outbuildings and farmsteads, with more than a trace of the colonial bungalow about it. Murcutt also explicitly impelled his fellow practitioners to "touch the earth lightly."[19] Leplastrier's designs, such as the

Figure 3. Russell Hall and his siblings, holding a snake on the farm in Harrisville, ca. 1950s. © Russell Hall.

Palm Garden House at Bilgola Beach (1976) and the house in Bellingen (1984), provided architects with convincing examples of how one might design (for living) in a more authentic, place-related manner. In Queensland, where Hall was active, Rex Addison's work—think, for instance, of his house at Taringa (1974)[20]—belongs to this "regionalist" strand of postmodernism and found a precursor in the work of John Dalton.[21]

The Mons house gave Hall an opportunity to test how he might achieve a symbiosis between architecture and nature. Built largely out of timber, corrugated metal, and glass louvres, and raised above the ground on stumps —to "touch the earth lightly"—the house enabled him and his family to live in close contact with nature. [Figure 4] The bathroom, for instance, was fully open to the exterior on one side. While, as a wet room, Hall thought it rather functional to keep this space open, allowing plants to grow in the same space, this decision was informed explicitly by a desire to connect with nature: "the bathroom was definitely based on an idea where you could just lie in the bath and look out in the forest."[22] [Figure 5] This atmospheric sensation was reinforced by the use of tree trunks as functional objects in the bathroom: some hold up the basin, others function as towel racks and support for the shower head.

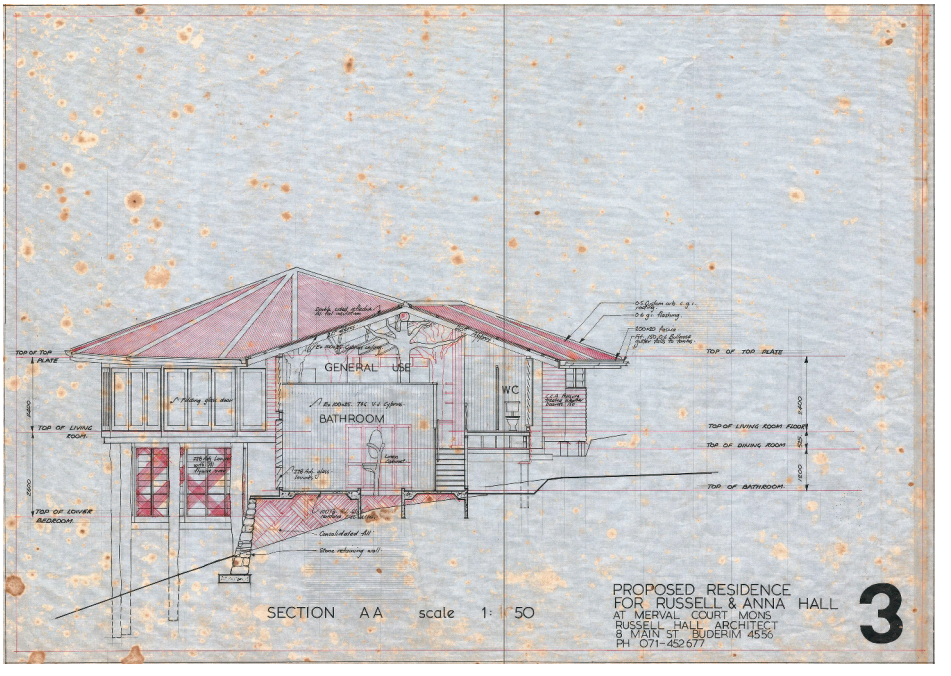

Figure 4. Mons House, section, Russell Hall, 1982. Source: Russell Hall Papers, University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL666, Series A, File 1. © Russell Hall.

Figure 5. Mons House, bathroom, Russell Hall, ca. 1985. © Russell Hall.

If the Mons House reveals a "light" architectural aesthetic akin to that of Murcutt, Leplastrier, and Addison, some of Hall's earlier experiments to achieve a symbiosis with nature bring to mind the "arcological" experiments

that Paolo Soleri embarked upon in the United States from the late 1960s as well as Michael Reynolds's Earthships, which promoted a sustainable architecture that made use of recycled and materials indigenous to, or disregarded by, the local area, and construction methods suited to the local climate.[23] The residence that Hall designed in the early 1970s—while employed by James Birrell—for Neil and Merle Thornton at the Boulder Valley Farm in Upper Brookfield, for instance, was organic in shape; its walls were constructed heavy rock, with infills of recycled bottles; it was equipped with two large concrete tanks, each capable of collecting and storing 5000 gallons of rain water; and the building was covered with a thick undulating green roof. [Figure 6] Interestingly, Hall's conceptualisation of this "ecological" house (which was only partially built) paralleled educational experiments taking place at the University of Sydney under the aegis of Colin James; most notably, the construction of the Sydney Autonomous House (1974–78),[24] and the off-grid ecological living experiments of the Bodhi Farm, under the guidance of Peter Hamilton.[25] The 1973 oil crisis, of course, played an important role in such experiments that sought to limit energy consumption,[26] as it buoyed the growing consciousness of the limits to growth.[27] Hall, however, credits an entirely different,

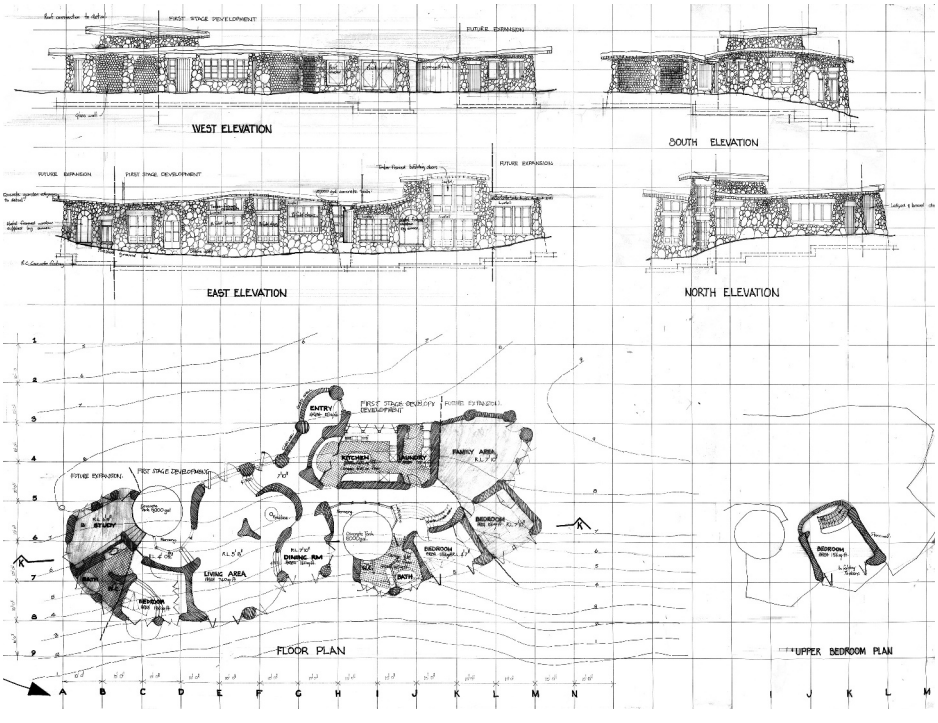

Figure 6. Proposed residence at Boulder Valley Farm for Neil and Merle Thornton, Upper Brookfield, Brisbane, designed by Russell Hall (working for James Birrell), 1973. Source: James Birrell Papers, University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL117, Series A, Subseries 24.

much earlier, inspiration for such work: "Gaudí immediately comes to mind. The Casa Batlló, in the courtyard has narrower windows and a darker tile density at the more sun-drenched top floor. On descent to the lower floors there is a decrease in the density of dark tiles and increase in the dimensions of the windows."[28] Gaudí was, of course, a pioneer in the reuse and recycling of building waste from scrap or demolition. He was known for reusing building materials and ensuring no material was wasted. In his work, he frequently used broken ceramic pieces, while on the exterior wall of Casa Batlló, he applied pieces of recycled glass.

Hall became interested in the work of Gaudí early in his architectural studies but claims that at that time the Catalan architect was viewed by most as a "fantasy land curiosity."[29] Interestingly, in the first edition of *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977) Charles Jencks (who visited Australia in 1974) drew links between contemporary pluralism and the early 1900s work of Gaudí. His second edition (1979), however, cut these correspondences back to renewals of the classical tradition.[30] According to architectural historian Conrad Hamann Jencks's perspective shifted postmodernism from a pluralist regionalism to a universalist fusion of classical forms that brought together two approaches: a "high" (understandable to architects) and a "popular" (grasped by most people). This iteration of postmodernism can be observed in the later work of Hall; particularly in his Varimitos Building refurbishment (1996–1998), which is discussed later in the paper.

The environmental awareness that Hall gleaned in Gaudí's work, as well as the Catalan architect's penchant for biomimicry—the reliance on nature to offer answers to design questions—is clearly present in the design of the Mons House. The most remarkable feature of this building is undoubtedly the use of upturned tree trunks as columns with their root systems functioning as capitals. [Figure 7] In using the trees as columns without cutting out what he called "modernist squared pieces," Hall made a critical statement regarding reuse: "This is not waste to be destroyed, the tree is beautiful."[31] Hall had rescued the trees from a nearby clearance area, where they were piled up, ready to be burnt. Hall was upset with this wasteful process: "Humans incinerate these beauties of nature as waste. This unnecessary wanton destruction occurs because of a lack of respect for the offerings of nature, and a view of human beings as a sustainable species whose immediate needs must be met by all forms of life."[32]

Apart from the work of Gaudí, Hall credits his upbringing for fuelling his environmental consciousness:

> My mum and dad are children of the depression era [. . .] they had definitely come up with that, you don't waste things at all in that frame of mind. [. . .] Dad being a farmer, we kind of didn't have it, if it didn't come from an auction [. . .] Old useless fence posts

Figure 7. (left) Mons House, interior, Russell Hall, 1982. © Russell Hall; (right) Mons House, under construction, Russell Hall, ca. 1981. © Russell Hall.

> ended up as firewood for the stove; that was the last use of the timber. There wasn't a lot of waste. . . . Mum made our clothes too [. . .] we had geese and ducks, and flour used to come in little calico bags in those days, so when we'd kill the geese or the ducks, we'd take all the down feathers, and Mum would sew them into the calico bags [. . .] and then that would be the quilt for the bed.[33]

The use of the upturned trees in the Mons House was also informed by the growth in appreciation for history in architectural culture. Hall made a remarkable reference to the Greek orders when describing these trees. He called them "a new Australian order."[34] For Hall, most important was an understanding of local building traditions. In Queensland, changing attitudes of the profession towards history received a major impetus in 1963 when the National Trust of Queensland was established,[35] which aimed to promote "the preservation and maintenance [. . .] of lands, buildings, furniture, pictures and other chattels of beauty or of national, historic, scientific, artistic or architectural interest."[36] The establishment of the Trust heightened architects' interest for the domestic architecture that Queensland had produced in the hundred years since free settlement. These "Queenslanders," as they are locally known, are high-set single skin timber buildings with exposed studs, "tin" roofs (these are actually corrugated iron), and exterior verandas that wrap around the house.

The growing appreciation for Queensland's "timber and tin" tradition is clearly legible in the Carpenter Hall House that Hall designed for his sister. This five-storey timber tower built on the slopes of Eildon Hill, was raised on timber stumps, and had single-skin walls with exposed studs, all wrapped in diagonal sunshades of galvanised steel.[37] [Figure 8] When construction on this house started, Hall was disappointed to discover that by then most carpenters were no longer using stud framing techniques that relied on mortice and tenon joints. Instead, in the interest of saving time, they used

Figure 8. Carpenter Hall House, exterior studding and sunshades, photographed in 2018. © Janina Gosseye.

skewnailed abutted pieces of timber. Convinced that this construction method would negatively affect the building's structural stability, he instead adopted (and adapted) a technique common to the construction of roof trusses for the wall-frames of the Carpenter Hall House, which relied on machine-pressed nailplates gang-nailed to the studs to establish strong timber-to-timber connections.[38] Australian architect Robert Riddel, a contemporary of Hall, lauded the design for "[. . .] its further development of the Queensland regional idiom" and for blending "the latest technology with the traditional elements of timber poles as stumps, exposed cross-braced hardwood frames, single skin cladding, galvanised-iron roofing and a verandah with timber battens and balustrades."[39]

Like Riddel, British-Australian architect and critic Michael Keniger also places Hall's work within this regional Queensland timber tradition. According to Keniger, Hall's interest in this regional tradition was informed not by nostalgic or pictorial values but rather by his consideration of the Queenslander as an outcome of a constructional system that was simple, efficient, and effective.[40] Indeed, contrary to many of his contemporaries

who focused more on appearance and symbolism in their "postmodern" designs, Hall aspired to gain a deeper understanding of historical references, and to draw useful lessons from the past for the present. However, in the work that he did for the PNG Housing Commission between 1976 and 1979, and in some of his later projects (undertaken in the 1990s) one can detect a more visual approach to the way in which his designs reference architectural history.

Hall moved to PNG in 1975. At that time, it was not uncommon for Queensland architects to undertake work in PNG, or even open a practice there. James Birrell, for instance, opened an office in Port Moresby in the 1960s, and the same year that Hall moved to PNG, Rex Addison, a former classmate of Hall's, was working on the 8th Halls of Residences (1975) at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology at Lae for Goodsir Baker Wilde. This experience encouraged Addison to set up his own office in Lae circa 1979, around the time that Hall returned to Queensland. As Hall moved to PNG only shortly before the country established its independence from Australia—prompting the Australian Department of Housing and Construction to withdraw from the territories—he joined the PNG Housing Commission soon after his arrival. During the 1970s, PNG experienced rapid urban growth, especially in urban centres such as Port Moresby, placing the provision of affordable housing and public services at the centre of attention.[41] Accordingly, while there, Hall studied and developed experimental design solutions for optimising housing prototypes, including a standard 56 m^2 three-bedroom house (1976) and the "L36" economic prototype house (1977). This building used local and recycled materials and maximised the living area by using the spaces underneath the house (between the stumps) for serviced areas like toilets and bathrooms.[42] [Figure 9] Hall topped the L36 with an expressive hyperbolic paraboloid roof of corrugated iron. While this design gesture was informed by his his fascination with the twisted planes of Gaudí and Spanish-Mexican architect Felix Candela,[43] Hall also credits his desire to make these small houses more visually striking so they would "have some pride."[44] It is interesting to relate these experiments to the criticism that the housing commission received for imposing unattainable high standards for buildings, standards that were believed to be attuned to an Australian context, and not workable in PNG.[45] And yet, calls for self-reliance and for using locally produced building materials, as geographer Jenny J. Bryant has argued, also clashed with the residents' beliefs that imported materials were more prestigious ("status") and more suitable for permanent structures.[46]

In 1977–78 Hall designed the Air Niugini Staff Housing together with Desmond Collins, an architect who had trained in Dublin (Ireland).[47] This housing took the form of barrel-shaped townhouses that drew on indigenous structures that Hall had gleaned in the island state.[48] [Figure 10]

Figure 9. L36 Standard House designed by Russell Hall for the Papua New Guinea Housing Commission, 1977. © Russell Hall.

Another example of such a pictorial approach to the region's architectural history is the Boroko office/commercial complex that Hall designed together with fellow architect Graham Davis in Port Moresby in the late 1970s. Figure 11 this building's structure as well as its tall and slender shape derived from the "Haus Tamburan," a traditional ancestral worship house of the Sepik Tribes, as well as from traditional longhouses that were indigenous to the country.[49] Like the Air Niugini Staff Housing, the Boroko office complex was deliberately not air conditioned. The climatic performance of these designs relied on their shape, as well as on the provision of ample shade and ventilation. In the Boroko offices, this was achieved through

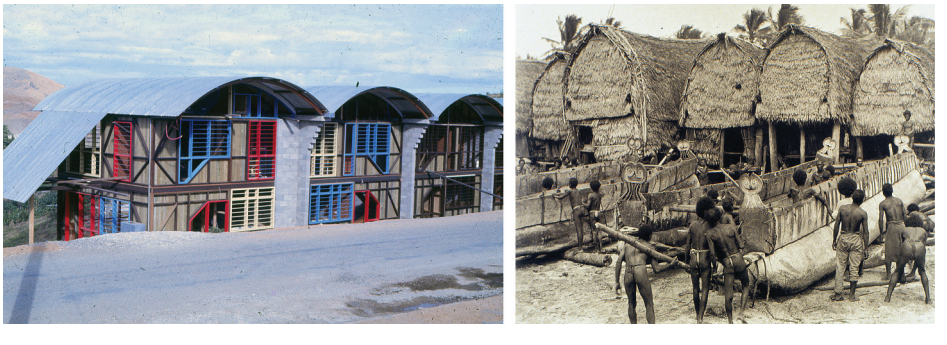

Figure 10. (left) Air Niugini Staff Housing designed by Russell Hall and Desmond Collins, 1977-1978. © Russell Hall; (right) Barrel-shaped indigenous structures in PNG that inspired Hall to design the Air Niugini Staff Housing © Russell Hall.

Figure 11. Office and Shops Boroko designed by Russell Hall and Graham Davis, 1978. © Russell Hall.

curved corrugated iron awnings that peeled off the building's elevations and that had fly wire openings underneath to allow plentiful air movement. On April 3rd, 1979, an article appeared in the local newspaper headlined "Port Moresby's Getting Uglier." The piece took direct aim at the new complex which, the author contended, had been "designed by comedians and approved by fools." They wrote: "In this, the architectural profession reveals its absolute contempt for the people's feeling by this excrescence from a mind suffering permanent morning-after-a-terrible-night feeling."[50] In 1990, Hall commented that his tradition-imbued approach to this building —and particularly the absence of air conditioning—had made "the captive clientele of public servants" who had to work in the offices feel like second class citizens, certainly when compared to those enjoying the air conditioned environments of the "amorphous hermetically sealed neighbours."[51]

In 1994, Hall's climatic enhancement of a shade structure that he designed for a park in Morayfield similarly caused a stir. On top of the roof, Hall had placed a big black cube, which was in fact a folded metal ventilator designed to evacuate hot air from the roof. This sculptural

element was not shown on the plans that the Caboolture Shire Council had approved, and led to a dispute with the council, who had received complaints from dismayed locals who called to have it removed. Hall, however, vigorously defended this sculptural architectural flourish in the local newspaper, saying: "It's the expressive part of the whole design. It's a matter of having fun [. . .] People seem to think they cannot have fun in their building, or allow eccentricities to exist."[52]

While hinting at the "fun" factor of postmodernism, Hall also believed that aesthetics and eccentricities could have functional value. He did not limit himself to one register of postmodernism. If the houses that he designed for himself and his sister show a strong affinity with Australia's "regionalist" strand of postmodernism, other projects revel in the more visual "pomo" variant which, in Australia, is often associated with the 1980s work of, for instance, Edmond and Corrigan, Norman Day and Gregory Burgess.[53] Their designs for the Ministry of Housing—e.g. Edmond and Corrigan's Kay Street Housing (1983), Gregory Burgess's Station Street Housing (1983) and Norman Day's Fitzroy House (1983)—augmented and celebrated the "featurism" of Australian suburbia, which Robin Boyd had once derided in *The Australian Ugliness*.[54]

Comparable more colourful and fun "pomo" brick and rendered designs made an appearance in Brisbane and its suburbs from the 1980s as well.[55] Addison's Hill House in Spring Hill (1988-89) and Donald Watson and Frank Spork's Southpoint Offices (1983) in South Brisbane come to mind. However, spanning the crown in "fun" and "featurism" is undoubtedly Hall's Varimitos project (1996-98), the refurbishment of commercial edifice on the corner of Vulture and Boundary streets in West End (Brisbane). This refurbishment dramatically changed the appearance of the rather austere looking 1950s building that for many years had been the home of the architectural practice of Theo Thynne & Associates (who employed talented local architects such as Gabriel Poole and Robin Gibson). Its beige palette was replaced with bright purple, violet and yellow tones, its simple horizontal band fascia extruded to form a series of Greek Ionic pediments along Boundary Street, and its canopy converted into a terrace with wavy balustrades. Undoubtedly the most eye-catching feature of the whole refurbishment was the sequence of curvy Ionic columns placed along the edge of the footpath to support the conversion of the canopy into a terrace. [Figure 12] Hall admits that the refurbishment was intended as a comment on modernism: "That is pulling my pants down thoroughly [at] [. . .] a few of these people who became the modernist [architectural establishment of Brisbane]. I wanted to make a remark about [. . .] the elitist attitude and the righteousness of modernism that

Figure 12. Varimitos Buildings refurbishment of a 1950s commercial building in West End (Brisbane), Russell Hall, ca. 1980s. © Russell Hall.

[suggested that] anything else and the neoclassical line was wrong [. . .] So it was a neoclassical do-over of a modernist building. [. . .] It is good fun!"[56] Following the project's completion, someone took it upon themselves to spray paint: "Russell Halll (sic.) has taste up his arse. Why is West End looking like a circus?" on the wall of a nearby underpass. Hall revels in the controversy that ensued the refurbishment. In a recent interview, he smilingly emphasises the function of its aesthetics: "When you get into retail commercial, tastelessness is functional in that people want to know that is their address. 'Where's your shop?' 'I'm in that weird-looking building with the ionic columns.' 'Oh yeah, I know the one, right in the corner.' You don't even have to tell them the number."[57]

As with his ecological sensitivities, Hall claims that his approach to aesthetics in design—including his love for the aesthetics of the ordinary and the beauty of the colonial vernacular—was influenced by his upbringing. On the farm in Harrisville, he found that "buildings were functional events as their names signified: pig-sty, hayshed, silo, work-shop, tractor-shed, dairy, chook house and so on."[58] Hall understood that functionality did not necessarily mean formal simplicity:

> The older farms had complexes of delightful buildings with various forms. Barrel silos with conical roofs, small square separator sheds with large overhanging pyramidical roofs, haysheds with roofs of gables and hips supported by a hyperstyle hall of stump columns, chook houses of rusty tanks cut in half and simple skillion low roofed sties scaled to the size of the pigs.[59]

Nevertheless, Hall's designs, including their unconventional aesthetics, can easily be placed within the professional architectural culture that prevailed at the time that he was practicing.[60] From the 1960s, the boundaries and relevance of architecture—including its aesthetic

norms—were expanded. Noteworthy in this regard is Austrian architect Hans Hollein's provocation that "everything is architecture"[61] as well as the publication of *Architecture without Architects*[62] and *Learning from Las Vegas*.[63] If *Architecture Without Architects* exalted the aesthetic and functional richness of vernacular, "non-pedigreed" architecture (thus collapsing the terms "architecture" and "building"), *Learning from Las Vegas* challenged the elitist cultural tastes of architects in favour of embracing the popular aesthetics of the users of buildings and cities. In Queensland, such an expanded appreciation of architecture was instigated by Hall's generation. In May 1965, for instance, the Queensland Architectural Student Association had launched a magazine called *Scarab*, which in its inaugural issue included an article entitled "Rude Forefathers and Non-Pedigree Architecture."[64] If this article launched a plea for a simple architecture that drew on Queensland's vernacular "timber and tin" building tradition, other contributions in this issue celebrated Australia's post-war tradition of brick-veneer bungalows, along with all the signs and symbols—flower pots, garden gnomes, ornate fountains and fences—that accompanied them. This generation of Queensland architects, who entered the profession in the 1970s, increasingly questioned not only the boundaries of the term "architecture," but also the role of the architect in society and what might be understood as architectural "practice."[65]

Shifting Practice

Paralleling the changes that from the 1970s occurred in architectural form and aesthetics were changes in how the professional practice of architecture was conducted. In the conclusion of *The Making of a Profession*, a book published in 1971 documenting the history of the growth and work of the architectural institutes in Australia, John Maxwell Freeland posited that the professional practice of architecture in the country had changed significantly since British settlement:

> From the grudging hands of unwilling convicts, Australia's building passed to opportunistic but unlettered craftsmen, thence to ambitious trades-contractor-architects and eventually to the smooth hands of the professional gentlemen. The gentleman-architect became the artist-architect, who in turn became, in response to bewildering imperatives in a rapidly changing world, the technologist-businessman-architect. And much of the colour and the fun and the adventure was squeezed out of architecture as it became a serious business.[66]

The story painted by Freeland in the conclusion of his book is one of loss and devolution; a cautioning of architects to not let financial gain overtake artistry and aesthetics as a leading concern in their work.

However, it could be argued that the shift from "gentleman-architect" to "businessman-architect" had some positive (side) effects too. It is well-known that, historically speaking, architecture has been an elite profession, heavily dependent on class and cultural upbringing. As architectural theorist Gary Stevens has argued, there is a "social genesis to architectural creativity, namely that [architects'] success owes *at least* as much to their social background and to the social structures within which they are embedded as it does to their native talent."[67] At the time when Hall began studying architecture, the profession in Brisbane was still for the most part an "old boys' club" that relied on "patrons [who would meet with architects at] the Brisbane Club, or the Queensland Club if you were in money."[68] These were the places where architects were granted commissions and where working relationships were established. Coming from a farm in rural Queensland, Hall was on the outside of such patronage. Contrary to many of his contemporaries, he had no architects in his family or extended social circle. Architects were, as Hall put it, "completely non-existent within my childhood."[69] This is the reason why he claims that his "exit from the womb was not greeted by gifts of a clutch pencil, T-square and adjustable set-square."[70] Hall commenced his studies in architecture at UQ with the aid of a Commonwealth Scholarship but after a few difficult years there, transferred to QIT. Of his beginnings in architecture, he writes: "Somehow the fellas who are born grubs, never comb their hair and can't keep their shirts in past the front door, face an architectural obstacle course."[71]

Things, however, changed in the latter decades of the 20th century. As architecture inched from the "professional service" side to the "commercial business" end of the spectrum, the system of patronage and the importance of provenance and pedigree was challenged. With the advent of "hired guns," as RAIA President Peter Johnson put it in 1983,[72] established elite networks lost some of their sway. This was to the advantage of architects such as Hall who did not enjoy a middle- or upper-class upbringing customary for most architects. One might argue that this relaxing of the boundaries of the profession ensured that the "colour," "fun" and "adventure," which Freeland feared would get lost with the advent of the "businessman-architect," endured in the profession.

Also affecting Queensland's architectural profession was the 1989 election of Labor politician Wayne Goss as Premier, after thirty-two years of conservative leadership in the state. Up until the 1980s, some of Queensland's older and larger architecture firms had held a monopoly over certain (public sector) commissions. As historians Janina Gosseye and Donald Watson have pointed out, in post-war years "it was mostly

the smaller firms in Queensland that did experimental/innovative work, while the large practices—many of which had been established in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century—attracted substantial (often government) commissions."[73] By the 1980s, Conrad Gargett, for instance, a practice established in 1890, had been *the* appointed architect for the Brisbane and South Coast Hospitals Board as well as the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board for several decades. As part of his crusade to abolish the system of seniority and cronyism that had taken root in Queensland's public service under Johannes Bjelke-Petersen's premiership (1968–87), Goss also abolished such boards. As a result, the Goss government's new talent and performance-driven approach not only shook up public service departments, but also created new opportunities for those in private practice.[74]

In *The Making of a Profession* Freeland casts the "artist-architect," concerned predominantly with aesthetics, in apparent opposition to the "businessman-architect," whose interests lie mostly with economics and efficiency. Hall, however, demonstrates that in practice, these two sides of the spectrum are not necessarily at odds. In his work, he developed an aesthetic sensibility that had a very down-to-earth, functional quality, and that sometimes even served economic purposes as the story of the Varimitos building refurbishment in West End demonstrates. Hall sought (and continues to seek) beauty in the appreciation and amelioration of the functional and the everyday. He contends that "there's enormous work to change something from ordinary, or colloquial, or vernacular, and try and add beauty to the function."[75] If in the house in Mons, the trees united function (they were structural supports) and aesthetics (Hall speaks of "the beauty of the section of the tree")[76] in the house that he designed for his sister, function and aesthetics merged in several elements, such as the balustrade of the stairs. Each panel of this balustrade is different, designed to depict a rise from a mythical and natural underworld (in the partly subterranean basement)—"a type of Hades," as Hall put it[77]—to an ever more rationalised and geometrically rigid human world, in the studio at the top.[78] [Figure 13] Changing colours of glass by artist Norman Birrell reinforce the balustrade story as they depict the evolution of life from amoeba through fish, reptiles, vegetation, birds, and humans. The peak of this progression is a refraction of sunlight into all colours through an installation composed of fluid-filled prisms, designed by Hall, that sit atop the roof. [Figure 14] And yet, even here, pragmatism reigns. According to Hall: "It is reassuring that even with this density of allegorical representation the balustrade is still a balustrade, the leadlights are still windows and the skylight is still a skylight."[79]

In the business that Hall started in 1991, first called Rippleiron Curving Company and later Rippleiron, function and aesthetics, business and artistry, also came together. The company mainly produced seats and bins (out of

Figure 13. Carpenter Hall House, balustrade and colour glass windows. © Russell Hall.

Figure 14. Carpenter Hall House, fluid-filled prisms crowning the rooftop. © Russell Hall.

perforated and rolled corrugated iron) for clients such as the Queensland Railways, the Brisbane Convention Centre, the Powerhouse, etc. Although this street furniture was the mainstay of the company, Hall took visible delight in designing and fabricating other, bespoke commissions. These included a stage set for the RAIA, a lectern for BlueScope Lysaght, and sculptures, such as a large rainbow lorikeet commissioned by a land developer for the planned Rainbow Shores subdivision between Inskip Point and Rainbow Beach.[80] [Figure 15] A hand-rolled, corrugated iron chair designed and fabricated by Hall—his response to Le Corbusier's chaise longue—is in the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery.[81] [Figure 16]

Setting up other, "non-architectural" businesses, such as Hall's Rippleiron, became easier for architects from the early 1970s, after the RAIA relaxed its code of conduct. Up until 1969, the RAIA's Code

Figure 15. Rippleiron artistic output: (left) Stage set designed for the RAIA. © Russell Hall; (centre) Lectern designed for BlueScope Lysaght. © Russell Hall; (right) Rainbow lorikeet sculpture designed for the Rainbow Shores subdivision. © Russell Hall.

Figure 16. Hand-rolled, corrugated iron lounge chair designed by Russell Hall. © Russell Hall.

of Professional Conduct stipulated that "a member should not be a director of any company or principal in a business carrying on business as builders, auctioneers of houses and estate agents ... [and] a member should not carry on or act as principal, partner or manager of any firm carrying on any of the trades or businesses specified in [the previous] clause."[82] However, as the pressure that architects felt from developers and package-dealers grew, so too did the pressure that they exerted on the RAIA. Architects pushed to change the code of conduct so that they could widen their range of services and become more competitive in an increasingly crowded field. Accordingly, in 1969, the RAIA set in place a new code of conduct, which was not negative or restrictive, but general and permissive. It said "Thou shalt" instead of "Thou shalt not" and banned nothing except ostentatious publicity.[83]

Thanks to the changed code of conduct, there were no formal impediments for Hall to build a display home in Buderim in 1985. In its design, this speculative house was a continuation of the L36 house that he had designed in PNG: it was raised on stumps of sufficient height to allow future expansion to occur underneath and covered by a hyperbolic paraboloid roof. In the Buderim display home, however, a continuous ridge-vent was placed on the roof to extract hot air. Hall's 1985 display house followed earlier attempts to develop and sell standard house plans. Hall hoped that through repetitive application with building trade familiarity he could offer "appropriate houses" at a lower cost.[84] In both ventures, a key objective of Hall's was not financial gain—which *is* a common goal for most speculative builders—but rather to develop affordable house designs on such a scale that they could reverse the "tide in Queensland towards brick veneer slab on ground houses."[85] This is perhaps the reason why neither of these two ventures became very lucrative. Of the standard house design, Hall said: "Success was had a few times but generally the modifications requested constituted new designs" and although his display home in Buderim was eventually sold, "this house type did not sell like hot cakes." Reflecting on these endeavours three decades later, Hall concluded: "You have to be a bit more of a businessman and harder-nosed than I was and probably still am."[86]

Many architects in Queensland seized the opportunities that the 1969 revision of the Code of Professional Conduct afforded, by trying their hand at speculative house design,[87] or, for those who were more hard-nosed and business-minded, by specializing in larger speculative commercial and industrial design.[88] The 1969 changes to the RAIA code of conduct also meant that from then on, architects could quite

easily venture into the construction industry. Hall registered as a builder in the early 1980s. By that time, he already had some experience in this field. In the early 1970s, Hall got a job as a subcontractor to remove brick retorts from the demolition of the South Brisbane gasworks. His decision to take this commission was (once again) not only fuelled by his business acumen, but also by a genuine interest in building and buildings—in how things are made—*and* by a desire to oppose wastefulness. Accordingly, Hall did not charge a fee to remove the brick retorts but agreed that his remuneration would stem from him selling the bricks, the quality of which he much admired:

> The brickwork of the gas retorts was stunning to behold. There were extremely large lintel bricks, large flat bricks and the most stunning of all was the brickwork for the elliptical vertical retort where the coal was put and heated to extract the gas. These bricks were tongue and groove with individual code numbers stamped on every brick. [...]. I thought that these [elliptical] bricks were unbelievably interesting and that I would be able to sell them. I was totally wrong, the only bricks I ever sold were the standard brick.[89]

Hall delivered the reclaimed bricks all over Brisbane and the Gold Coast in an old Bedford tip truck. Some were purchased by fellow architect, historian, and AIA Gold Medalist Donald Watson, who used them as pavers for an entrance pathway to his historic mud-brick house in South Brisbane.

Architects responded in different ways to their changing professional landscape. According to Goldhagen and Legault many were concerned "about their continued role as elite professionals in their changing societies" and, in response, developed "an approach that might be termed anti-architecture."[90] The Italian radical architecture collective Superstudio even refused to work.[91] Others adopted a very different stance. From the 1960s, there was a growth in what one might call "activist-architects" who sought to redefine their role in society. If in the aftermath of two World Wars, the rapid pace of (re)building and the need for mass housing gave rise to a kind of technocratic "social engineer-architect" who designed *for* others in a rather paternalising, top-down manner (often in service of town planning departments), from the 1960s, and certainly following May '68 the use of architecture as a tool to challenge societal ailments was reconsidered, as was the role of architects in society: instead of designing *for* others, they were to design *with* others, for example through participatory processes and community design.[92] Conrad Hamann recognises this drive for a more inclusive architecture in Australia—which Hamann claims were introduced to the country through the work of British-Swedish architect

Ralph Erskine and his advocacy of user participation—in Hall's work: "[. . .] the inclusive view enabled the raffish festivity of Russell Hall's Brisbane house in its cranked spiral and Gabriel Poole's tent house east of Eumundi."[93]

Hall harnessed these changes in the profession to carve out his own path in architecture. While his down-to-earth upbringing gave him affinities with the "businessman-architect," it equally awakened the "activist-architect" in him. These different characters not only come to the fore in his built works—for instance through architectural designs that blend ecology and economy—but can also be understood through the decisions he took in his professional career. Later in his career Hall, for instance, ran for Lord Mayor of Brisbane, as an independent. Although his mayoral ambition came to naught and his political career was short-lived, he has remained a vocal critic of how legislation issued by politicians and enacted by planning departments can negatively affect not only the quality of architecture and the built environment, but also people's lives. Hall has voiced (and continues to voice) such critiques through cartoons produced in collaboration with his son, Josh Hall, an animator illustrator. One such cartoon takes aim at the socio-economic toll that the indiscriminate application of heritage legislation can take, while another heckles the council's poor aesthetic judgement, as it rejects an application to build Fallingwater because it does not fit in with the dwellings that surround it. [Figures 17 and 18] Like Hall's architectural work, these cartoons clearly show how for him aesthetics and politics; social consciousness and entrepreneurialism; and "artist-architect," "businessman-architect" and "activist-architect" are not antonyms but go hand in hand. Interestingly, as this paper is going to press, Hall is about to embark on yet another adventure in his professional career. Late in 2023, he was elected president of the Queensland Institute of Architects. Anticipating his term in office, he says:

> The run of the mill activities must be done. However, I am most looking forward to the opportunity of having an undeniable chair at the table to say my piece. As an individual from the back blocks of Moorooka, it is very easy for the establishment to treat you as persona non grata. Bare arse glass buildings from the arctic to the equator are definitely going to publicly cop it. I will have to reflect upon the radical iconoclastic idea that the best place to collect excrement in the best condition for agricultural purposes would be to have composting toilets in high rise buildings where the most bums are per square metre. This could be fun![94]

Figure 17. Cartoon produced by Russell and Josh Hall criticizing heritage legislation. Source: Russell Hall Papers, University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL666, Series C. © Russell Hall and Josh Hall.

Figure 18. Cartoon produced by Russell and Josh Hall criticizing the council's aesthetics judgement. Source: Russell Hall Papers, University of Queensland Fryer Library, UQFL666, Series C. © Russell Hall and Josh Hall.

Conclusions

Through a close reading of Russell Hall's work, this paper offers insights in the workings of postmodernism on-the-ground and situated within the specific context of Australia. Prompting reflections on not just the historiography of postmodern architecture, but also changes to the organisation of the profession, it demonstrates how through situated micro-histories a fuller and more nuanced picture of postmodern architectural culture can be painted; not only in Australia, but also beyond.

Hall's work offers a cautious reminder that easy categorisations, branches, and binaries that historiography tends to serve up, rarely apply. While this is the case for all history writing, it is particularly the case when applied to postmodernism, characterised by a multiplicity of manifestations. Hall's work cuts across various strands of postmodernism, blending ecological responses with appreciations of vernacular architecture, a sense of place, fun elements and irony, and everyday life experiences including personal trajectories. Any specific branch of postmodernism would quickly fall short.[95] This is even more the case when considering the impact of changes to the architecture profession that were happening alongside postmodernism, facilitating new kinds of roles and trajectories for architects. Looking at Hall's work, it quickly becomes clear that suggestions that the professional trajectory of architects in the latter decades prompted work that is devoid of fun and colour, that someone who is concerned with business cannot be interested in aesthetics or art, or that postmodernism announced

the demise of architecture's social and political ambitions, are untenable. Hall's work demonstrates that fun and aesthetics do not necessarily exclude functionality, that ecological critiques can go hand-in hand with aesthetic statements, that architects can also be builders, and that the architect-as-professional and the architect-as-activist can co-exist. His work also shows how the choice for local materials and construction methods is rooted in regionalist tendencies but also in his personal experiences having been brought up on a farm where economy of means and waste avoidance were second nature. Just like Hall, architects have, more generally, adopted various postmodern tenets throughout their career, making it very difficult to classify postmodern architects as either ecologists, or regionalists, traditionalists, and so on. The story of Hall shows us that rather than working in such "boxes," architects were working through, and coming to grips with, the changes that were happening in architectural culture in Australia from the early 1970s.

Set in a settler nation, Hall's architecture prompts moreover a careful and critical unpacking of the categories and branches used to describe postmodern architecture. In Australia, postmodernism's popularisation of the everyday, the vernacular, and popular taste, is indeed complicated in that it informed a growing appreciation for colonial history, such as the Queensland house, a building type that was commonly not designed by architects,[96] but also a rise in research into Aboriginal settlements, with the scholarship of Paul Memmott being noteworthy in this respect.[97] Postmodernism's rekindling with history therefore cannot be disconnected from the question: *Whose* history? And: *Whose* vernacular? That of the coloniser/settler (Queenslander) or Indigenous peoples (in Australia, in PNG)? It also means to acknowledge the tensions that exist between architects' celebrations of the vernacular (whether colonial or Indigenous) and the ways in which vernacular traditions are, even in post-colonial times, often still imbued in colonial depictions of Indigenous architecture as primitive, lacking in social status and technological performance. One should be wary of such depictions of the vernacular, as the editors of *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture* warn: "To define Indigenous architecture as vernacular architecture can become a further form of segregation or othering."[98] Such depictions are moreover locked in unhelpful divisions between nature and culture, primitivism and sophistication, natural and built environment, and at odds with Indigenous worldviews valuing "natural" landscapes and "cultural" constructions as part of the same continuum, and considering people, animals, plants, and places, as actors in and authors of our world; and the knowledge they produce as, always, relational.[99]

For all its pragmatism, quirkiness, wit, and economic-environmental awareness, Hall's work shows how postmodernism, on the ground, found

traction in multifarious ways, inviting architects to find a voice at the crossroads of (international and local) intellectual-cultural developments within architecture and a profession that, too, was undergoing substantial changes. Against the backdrop of a rapidly changing political, socio-economic, and environmental climate, architects like Hall, could thus seek out roles and ways of working that allowed them to explore the many faces of postmodernism.

Notes

1. John Maxwell Freeland, *Architecture in Australia: A History* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire Publishing, 1970) (first published 1968), 314.
2. Examples include Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara and Philip Goad, *Modernism & Australia: Documents on Art, Design and Architecture 1917–1967* (Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2006); Ann Stephen, Philip Goad and Andrew McNamara, eds., *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia* (Carlton: The Miegunyah Press, 2008); Hannah Lewi and David Nichols, eds., *Community: Building Modern Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010); Judith O'Callaghan and Charles Pickett, eds., *Designer Suburbs: Architects and Affordable Homes in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2012); Lee Stickells, "'And Everywhere Those Strange Polygonal Igloos:' Framing a History of Australian Countercultural Architecture," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 30, Open, vol. 2*, eds. Alexandra Brown and Andrew Leach (Gold Coast: SAHANZ, 2013), 555–68; Paul Hogben and Judith O'Callaghan, eds., *Leisure Space: The Transformation of Sydney 1945–1970* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2014); John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaat, Janina Gosseye and Andrew Wilson, eds., *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture 1945–1975* (London: Artifice Books, 2015); Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad, eds., *Australia Modern: Architecture, Landscape & Design* (Melbourne: Thames & Hudson Australia, 2019).
3. Including research on countercultures in Australia e.g. Lee Stickells, "Negotiating Off-Grid: Counterculture, Conflict and Autonomous Architecture in Australia's Rainbow Region," *Fabrications: The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* 25, no. 1 (2015): 104–29; on architecture firms e.g. Robert Riddel, ed., *Conrad Gargett 1890–2015* (Brisbane: Conrad Gargett, 2017); and on a select number of practitioners with name and fame e.g. Paul Walker, *John Andrews: Architect of Uncommon Sense* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2023) and the Australian Research Council (ARC) funded research project at The University of Sydney (Principal researcher Cameron Logan), dedicated to Romaldo Giurgola, architect of the Australian Parliament House.
4. Hans Renders, Binne de Haan and Jonne Harmsma, "The Biographical Turn: Biography as Critical Method in the Humanities and in Society," in *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History*, eds. Hans Renders, Binne de Haan and Jonne Harmsma (London: Routledge, 2017), 3–11; Simone Lässig, "Introduction: Biography in Modern History – Modern Historiography in Biography," in *Biography Between Structure and Agency: Central European Lives in International Historiography*, eds. Volker Berghahn and Simone Lässig (New York/London: Berghahn, 2008), 1–26.

5. Russell Hall, interview by Janina Gosseye and Donald Watson, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, September 20, 2013, audio, https://qldarch.net/architect/interview/2515?architectId=77; Judy Vulker, Michael Keniger and Mark Roehrs, eds., *Australian Architects: Rex Addison, Lindsay Clare & Russell Hall* (Manuka: Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 1990), 66–68.
6. R.O. Philips, *Sunshine and Shade in Australasia* (Sydney: Commonwealth Experimental Building Station, 1948).
7. Andrew Wilson and John Macarthur, eds., *Birrell: Work from the Office of James Birrell* (Melbourne: NMBW Publications, 1997).
8. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson; H.N. Nelson, "Sir John Thomas Gunther (1910–1984)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, Accessed February 3, 2024. https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gunther-sir-john-thomson-12574/text22641.
9. Hall enjoyed the freedom that working for the PNG Housing Commission afforded. In a 2013 interview, he commented: "If you could think of it, you could do it." He, however, decided to leave PNG because, he said, "it is their place." Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
10. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
11. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
12. Peter Skinner "Hall, Russell," in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, eds. Philip Goad and Julie Willis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 309.
13. The paper also contributes to recent studies of architects' own homes as sites of resistance and experimentation, including Francisco Gonzáles de Canales, *Experiments with Life Itself: Radical Domestic Architectures Between 1937 and 1959* (Barcelona: Actar, 2012) and Isabelle Doucet and Janina Gosseye, eds., *Activism at Home: Architects Dwelling between Politics, Aesthetics and Resistance* (Berlin: Jovis, 2021).
14. Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault, "Introduction: Critical Themes of Postwar Modernism," in *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, eds. Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 11–23 (15).
15. Goldhagen and Legault, *Anxious Modernisms*, 15.
16. Russell Hall, email to the authors, May 3, 2022.
17. Russell Hall, interview by the authors, May 5, 2022.
18. In and around Sydney, the search for a "regionalist" architecture began in the 1960s when a group of architects, who have since become known as "The Sydney School," began opposing international modernism, developing an architectural approach that has since been called "Nuts and Berries" style.
19. Françoise Fromonot, *Glenn Murcutt: Works and Projects* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).
20. See discussion of the Addison House in "Climate and Regionalism: Visual Essay" in *Hot Modernism*, eds. Macarthur, van der Plaat, Gosseye and Wilson, 70–71; and Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, eds., *Australian Architects*, 6–35.
21. Elizabeth Musgrave, *John Dalton: Subtropical Modernism and the Turn to Environment in Australian Architecture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023). This "regionalist" strand of architecture has become very celebrated in Queensland since, as is evidenced by the 2008 exhibition "Placemakers: Contemporary Queensland Architects" held at the Brisbane Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA), which was accompanied by the exhibition catalogue by Miranda Wallace and Sarah Stutchbury, eds., *Placemakers: Contemporary Queensland Architects* (Brisbane: Queensland Art

Gallery, 2008). Interestingly, although the Carpenter Hall house is mentioned in the introduction to the book, Hall was not among the 22 architects featured in the exhibition or publication, while Rex Addison was. This may have to do with the fact that Hall's work opened architectural registers other than the celebrated timber and tin "regionalist" variant, as this paper demonstrates.

22. Hall, interview by the authors.
23. Paolo Soleri, *Arcology: The City in the Image of Man* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981); Michael E. Reynolds, *Earthships Volume 1: How to Build your Own* (Taos: Solar Survival Press, 1990).
24. Lee Stickells, "Little Living Labs: 1970s Student Design-Build Projects and the Objects of Experimental Lifestyles," in *Architectural Education Through Materiality*, eds. Elke Couchez and Rajesh Heynickx (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 127–45.
25. Lee Stickells, "Housing the Farmers of Enlightenment," in *Activism at Home*, eds. Doucet and Gosseye, 235–46; Stickells, "Negotiating Off-Grid."
26. Lee Stickells, "Exiting the Grid: Autonomous House Design in the 1970s," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 32, Architecture, Institutions and Change*, eds. Paul Hogben and Judith O'Callaghan (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015), 652–62.
27. Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers, William W.I.I.I. Behrens, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind* (New York: Universe Books, 1972).
28. Russell Hall, email to the authors, January 27, 2024.
29. Russell Hall, email to the authors, January 22, 2024.
30. Conrad Hamann, "Postmodernism," in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, eds. Goad and Willis, 554–56 (555).
31. Hall, email to the authors, May 3, 2022.
32. Russell Hall, "Hall House – Mons 1982," in Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, eds., *Australian Architects*, 78.
33. Hall, interview by the authors.
34. Hall, "Hall House – Mons 1982," 78.
35. Robert Riddel, "The Discovery of Queensland's Architectural Heritage," in *Hot Modernism*, eds. Macarthur, van der Plaat, Gosseye and Wilson, 101–15.
36. Stephen Sheaffe, "Protecting Heritage: A Short History of the National Trust of Queensland," *Queensland History Journal* 22, no. 2 (2013): 137–48.
37. Janina Gosseye, "Carpenter Hall House by Russell Hall," *Houses*, no. 125 (2018), 132–37.
38. Gosseye, "Carpenter Hall House".
39. Robert Riddel, "Design," in *The Queensland House: A Roof Over Our Heads*, eds. Rod Fisher and Brian Crozier (Brisbane: Queensland Museum, 1994), 49–62.
40. Michael Keniger, "Russell Hall," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 66–67.
41. Jenny J. Bryant, "Urbanization in Papua New Guinea: problems of Access to Housing and Services," *Pacific Viewpoint* 18, no. 1 (1976): 43–57. See also Geoffrey K. Payne, "Housing Agents in the Towns of Papua New Guinea," *Built Environment* 8, no. 2 (1982): 125–37.
42. As discussed in Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, eds. *Australian Architects*, 70–71.
43. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
44. ibid.

45. Bryant, "Urbanization in Papua New Guinea," and Payne "Housing Agents in the Towns of Papua New Guinea." PNG was argued not to have the high incomes and availability of high-quality technical skills and building materials that Australia had.
46. Discussed in Bryant, "Urbanization in Papua New Guinea," 49, 54–55.
47. The project is discussed in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 72–75.
48. Hall describing the project in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 74.
49. Keniger, "Russell Hall," 66; Robert Riddel, "Letter from Papua New Guinea," *International Architect: An International Review of Architectural Projects, Theory, Practice, and Criticism* 8, no.1 (1982): 2–3; Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
50. John Gardner, "Port Moresby's Getting Uglier . . . and More and More Unpleasant to Live In," *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier*, April 3, 1979, 2.
51. Russell Hall, "Office and Shops Boroko 1978 Project Architect Graham Davis (Queensland Trained Architect)," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 76.
52. Hall quoted in Grace Garlick, "Heat is on Shade Extras: Dim View of Black Add-On," *Sunday Mail*, May 29, 1994, 20.
53. See, for instance: Conrad Hamann, *Cities of Hope Remembered: Australian Architecture by Edmond and Corrigan 1962–2012* (Port Melbourne: Thames and Hudson Australia, 2012).
54. Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1960).
55. A noteworthy example of such "pomo" architecture that is not located in Brisbane but designed by an architectural partnership originating in Brisbane is the Lake Crackenback Resort & Spa in Australia's Snowy Mountains. The first stage of this project was delivered out of Noel Robinson's Sydney office and the second stage occurred after Noel Robinson Architects merged with Bligh Jessup Bretnall Architects (a practice originally established in 1928 in Brisbane by Arthur Bligh) in 1988. This project won the 1990 Sir John Sulman Award for Outstanding Architecture. "Lake Crackenback Resort & Spa," Noel Robinson Architects, Accessed February 10, 2024. https://www.noelrobinsonarchitects.com/project/lake-crackenback.
56. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
57. Hall, interview by the authors.
58. Russell Hall, "Architect's Statement," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 68.
59. Hall, "Architect's Statement," 68.
60. Despite prompts (e.g. Hall, interview by the authors; Russell Hall, interview by Janina Gosseye, January 26, 2024), Hall evades questions with regards to how developments occurring in national and international architectural culture influenced his work. He does, however, credit influences from other, often-overlooked sources such as the solar solutions that fellow students Paul Smith developed for a design assignment at university.
61. Hans Hollein, "Alles Ist Architektur," *Bau*, April 1968.
62. Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1964).
63. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1972).
64. Peter Newell, "Rude Forefathers and Non-Pedigree Architecture," *Scarab* 1, no. 1 (1965), n.p.

65. For more information on how from the mid-1960s Queensland students rallied for an expanded understanding of architecture, see Janina Gosseye and John Macarthur, "Angry Young Architects: Counterculture and the Critique of Modernism in Brisbane, 1967–1972," in *Hot Modernism*, eds. Macarthur, van der Plaat, Gosseye and Wilson, 31–45.
66. John Maxwell Freeland, *The Making of a Profession: A History of the Growth and Work of the Architectural Institutes in Australia* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971), 246–47.
67. Garry Stevens, *The Favored Circle: The Social Foundations of Architectural Distinction* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1998), 2.
68. David Lane, interview by Janina Gosseye, July 27, 2019.
69. Hall, "Architect's Statement," 68.
70. ibid., 68.
71. ibid., 68.
72. "'Hired Guns and Messiahs' in Australia," *RIBA Journal* 90, no. 8 (August 1983): 8.
73. Janina Gosseye and Donald Watson, "Architectural Practice in Post-War Queensland," in *Hot Modernism*, eds. Macarthur, van der Plaat, Gosseye, and Wilson, 70–71; and Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, eds., *Australian Architects*, 166–81 (175).
74. Brian Head and Linda Colley, "Senior Executive Service Case Study – Queensland," *ANZSOG Research Insights 11* (Carlton, Victoria: Australia and New Zealand School of Government, 2021), 8–11.
75. Hall, interview by the authors.
76. ibid.
77. Russell Hall, "Lambert House Brisbane 1986," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 86–90, 89.
78. Before these perforated panels were installed in the Carpenter Hall house, Hall had already used such panels as ceiling vents for the Judge House on Camp Island (1987): "it dawned, that the island had an enormous supply of patterns, especially in the coral. These patterns were pillaged, and became the basis for ceiling vent designs." Russell Hall, "Judge House, Camp Island 1987," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 92–93 (92).
79. Hall, "Lambert House Brisbane 1986," 89.
80. This sculpture, which was to be six metres high, was designed in collaboration with Francesca Perani, an Italian exchange student. Although the commission never went ahead, Hall did fabricate some smaller versions. One of these is installed at the entrance to Jennifer Hall's house. Source: Russell Hall, email to the authors, August 29, 2023.
81. Skinner "Hall, Russell".
82. Janina Gosseye and Don Watson, "From IB74 to US Patent 4438616: The (re)making of a Profession," *Architectural Histories* 13, no. 1 (2022): 1–37.
83. Freeland, *The Making of a Profession*, 194.
84. Russell Hall, "Standard House Designs," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 81.
85. Hall, "Standard House Designs;" Russell Hall, "Display Home Buderim, 1985," in *Australian Architects*, eds. Vulker, Keniger and Roehrs, 84.
86. Hall, interview by Gosseye and Watson.
87. In 1978, for instance, a group of seven architects, including Graham Burke, Edwin Codd & Partners, D.W. Hastie, Fergus Johnston, P.J. Locke, Noel Robinson, and Ken

Walker & Associate designed and built a group of display houses at Centenary Estates. Gosseye and Watson, "From IB74 to US Patent 4438616."

88. An often-cited example is Architects Cunnington McKerrell (ACM), a Brisbane-based practice led by Don Cunnington and Tom McKerrell. Tom McKerrell, interview by Janina Gosseye and Robert Riddel, Digital Archive of Queensland Architecture, February 20, 2012, audio, https://qldarch.net/architect/interview/2539?architectId=305.
89. Russell Hall, email to the authors, August 28, 2023.
90. Goldhagen and Legault, "Introduction," 15.
91. In a lecture given at the London's Architectural Association in 1971, Adolfo Natalini, one of the founders of Superstudio famously said: "If design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of the bourgeois models of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning [are] merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities [...] until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture." Source: Ross K. Elfline, "Superstudio and the 'Refusal to Work,'" *Design and Culture* 8, no. 1 (2016): 55–77 (55).
92. e.g., Kenny Cupers, ed., *Use Matters: An Alternative History of Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, eds., *Architecture and Participation* (Abingdon: Spon Press, 2005).
93. Hamann, "Postmodernism," 555.
94. Russell Hall, email to the authors, December 15, 2023.
95. In *Anxious Modernisms* Goldhagen and Legault mention "branches" such as "popular culture/everyday life," "primitivism," "history," and "regionalism/place," while in *Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture* Jencks and Kropf name "post-modern," "post-modern ecology," and "traditional." See: Charles Jencks and Karl Kropf, eds., *Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2006).
96. Early studies on the Queensland house were prepared by Donald Watson, Balwant Saini and Ray Joyce. See: Donald Watson, *The Queensland House* (Brisbane: National Trust of Queensland, 1978); Balwant Singh Saini and Ray Joyce, *The Australian House: Homes of the Tropical North* (Sydney/Auckland/London/New York: Landsdowne Press, 1982).
97. e.g., Paul Memmott, *Humpy, House and Tin Shed: Aboriginal Settlement History on the Darling River* (Sydney: Ian Buchan Fell Research Centre, 1991).
98. Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop, Albert L. Refiti and Daniel J. Glenn, "Introduction," in *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture*, eds. Elizabeth Grant, Kelly Greenop, Albert L. Refiti and Daniel J. Glenn (Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2018), 1–22 (4).
99. Lauren Tynan, "What is Relationality? Indigenous Knowledges, Practices and Responsibilities with Kin," *Cultural Geographies* 26, no. 4 (2021): 597–610.

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ORCID

Janina Gosseye http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2437-3090
Isabelle Doucet http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9711-7050

Note on Authorship

This paper originates in a joint research project by Isabelle Doucet and Janina Gosseye focusing on architect's own homes. The project started in 2017 and resulted in the edited book *Activism at Home: Architects Dwelling Between Politics, Aesthetics and Resistance* (Berlin: Jovis, 2021). During Doucet's visiting fellowship at the University of Queensland (UQ) in 2017, where Gosseye was then based, they visited the Carpenter House and invited Russell Hall as a keynote speaker in a conference that they organised at UQ. This lecture spurred their interest in Hall's Mons House. As the paper's focus shifted away from architects' own homes towards a more biographical approach, Gosseye's knowledge of Queensland and Australian architecture, and authorial voice, and architects came to play an important part in its further development.