

Image Building: Examining Australia's Diplomatic Architecture in the Asian Region, 1960-1990

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Image Building: Examining Australia's Diplomatic Architecture in the Asian Region, 1960-1990

Rowan Gower

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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UNSW Sydney



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Since the opening of Australia House in London in 1918 Australia has established a further 113 diplomatic missions throughout the world. The expansion of Australia's embassy network paralleled its increasing independence as a nation and the recognised need to engage in world affairs to both protect and promote national interests. While some historians have examined embassy buildings from either an architectural or political point of view this thesis links architecture and politics by undertaking a detailed investigation of the overseas works programmes of Australia and the administrative bodies which have managed them. Although these programmes were implemented globally, the focus of this research is on the development of Australia's diplomatic premises in Asia from the 1960s to the 1990s. This emphasis has allowed the thesis to capture the way architecture and politics interacted during a period of great change which saw the rise of nationalist aspirations, the division of the world into Cold War alliances and the emerging importance of regional trade-based economies. In response, consecutive Australian governments supported a policy of engagement which resulted in eleven diplomatic missions being constructed throughout Asia during this time.

To present a study of the role and perspectives of politicians, bureaucrats and architects in generating buildings to meet the functional and representational needs of diplomacy this thesis adopts a composite approach similar to that used by historians who have undertaken research into the embassy buildings of the United States and United Kingdom. This allows a composite picture to be constructed through surveying multiple archival and secondary sources from the political, bureaucratic and architectural fields. In employing this unifying approach, the thesis provides an insight into the representational needs and complex relationships that exist between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture and demonstrates that the resulting buildings, although intended to represent Australia on the world stage, are in fact representative of these interactions and the recognition by government of the value that Australian-based architects and their practices bring to the creation of diplomatic buildings.

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ABSTRACT

Since the opening of Australia House in London in 1918 Australia has established a further 113 diplomatic missions throughout the world. The expansion of Australia's embassy network paralleled its increasing independence as a nation and the recognised need to engage in world affairs to both protect and promote national interests. While some historians have examined embassy buildings from either an architectural or political point of view this thesis links architecture and politics by undertaking a detailed investigation of the overseas works programmes of Australia and the administrative bodies which have managed them. Although these programmes were implemented globally, the focus of this research is on the development of Australia's diplomatic premises in Asia from the 1960s to the 1990s. This emphasis has allowed the thesis to capture the way architecture and politics interacted during a period of great change which saw the rise of nationalist aspirations, the division of the world into Cold War alliances and the emerging importance of regional trade-based economies. In response, consecutive Australian governments supported a policy of engagement which resulted in eleven diplomatic missions being constructed throughout Asia during this time.

To present a study of the role and perspectives of politicians, bureaucrats and architects in generating buildings to meet the functional and representational needs of diplomacy this thesis adopts a composite approach similar to that used by historians who have undertaken research into the embassy buildings of the United States and United Kingdom. This allows a composite picture to be constructed through surveying multiple archival and secondary sources from the political, bureaucratic and architectural fields. In employing this unifying approach, the thesis provides an insight into the representational needs and complex relationships that exist between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture, and demonstrates that the resulting buildings, although intended to represent Australia on the world stage, are in fact representative of these interactions and the recognition by government of the value that Australian-based architects and their practices bring to the creation of diplomatic buildings.

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BADI	Beijing Architectural Design Institute
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force
BSM	Bates, Smart & McCutcheon
CERC	Cabinet Expenditure Review Committee
CDW	Commonwealth Department of Works
DAS	Department of Administrative Services
DCM	Denton Corker Marshall
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DHC	Department of Housing and Construction
DoF	Department of Finance
EAA	Department of the Environment, Aborigines and Art
FBO	Foreign Building Office
HOM	Head of Mission
ICR	Information and Cultural Relations Branch
MAC	Malayan Architects Co-Partnership
MARG	Modern Architecture Research Group
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NCDC	National Capital Development Commission
OBC	Overseas Building Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OOD	Overseas Operations Division
OOB	Overseas Operations Branch
OPB	Overseas Property Bureau
OPC	Overseas Property Committee
OPG	Overseas Property Group
OPO	Overseas Property Office

OVC	Overseas Visits Committee
OWB	Overseas Works Branch
OWC	Overseas Works Committee
PSB	Public Service Board
PWC	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
RMJM	Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners
SBC	Sell/Buy/Construct

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LOCATION MAP

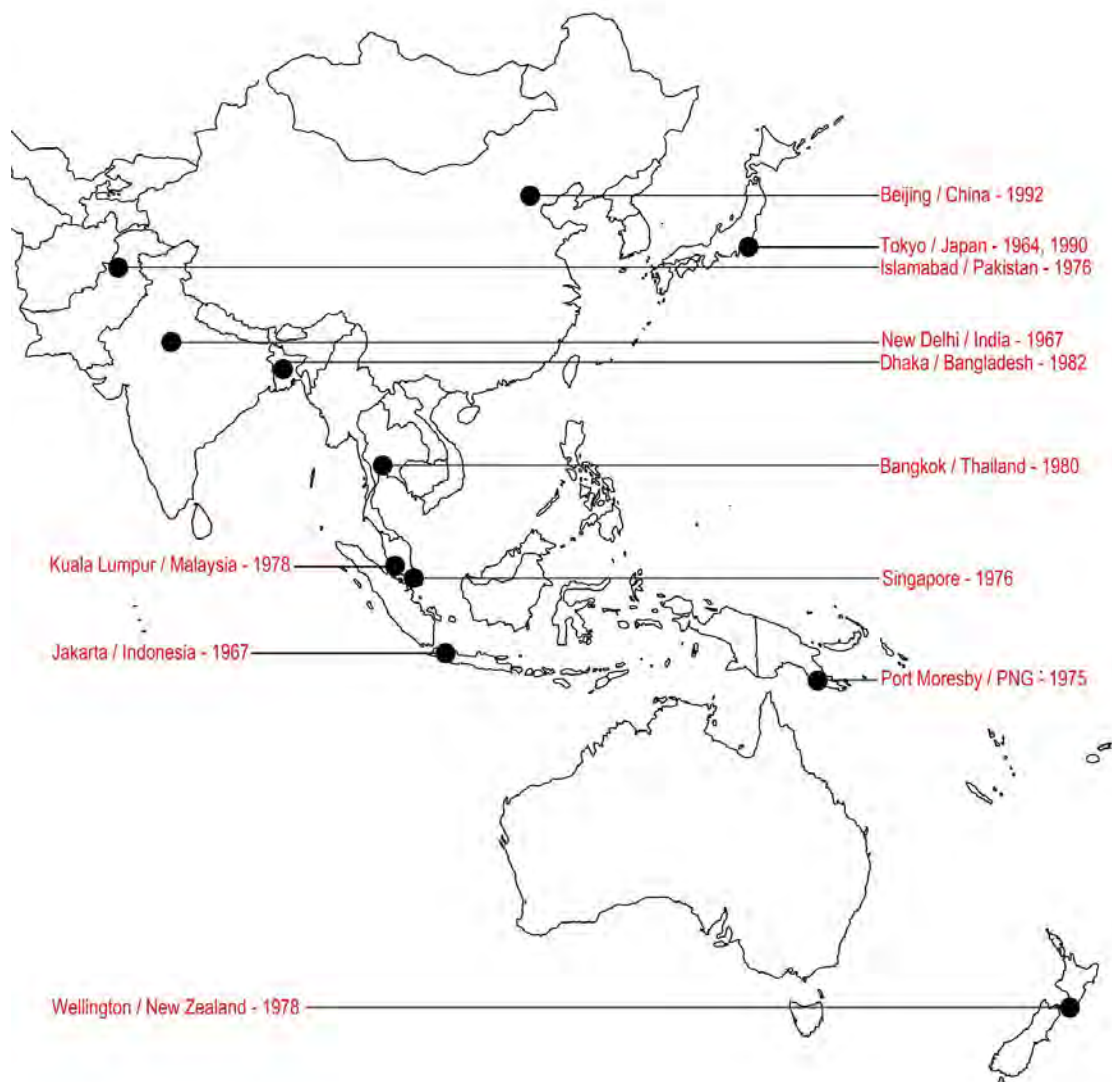


Figure 1.1. Map showing the location of Australia's diplomatic buildings and dates of completion in the Asia-Pacific region between 1960-1990, created by Rowan Gower, 2018.

INTRODUCTION

The Need for Representation

The idea that architecture, if viewed as a symbol, can have a political use was expressed by Christopher Wren in the 17th century.¹ Since this time many nations have utilised architecture as a form of representation. Australia is no different having tentatively begun to engage with diplomatic representation in the early 20th century. As a nation still heavily dependent on the Empire for trade and defence the decision to open Australia's first High Commission in London was pertinent. While some members in Parliament advocated caution in developing such a building, questions were raised as to what architectural form the building should take to represent Australian values and interests.

In 1907 King O'Malley, a proclaimed American (latter changed to Canadian in order to stand for Parliament as a British subject²), encouraged Parliament to turn towards America as a source of inspiration for developing Australia's first diplomatic mission and referenced the success of big business in buildings such as the Flatiron in New York City:

The Commonwealth building in London should be from twelve to fifteen stories high. The day of little things is gone by. Little ideas must pass away. We are a continental people, and want a continental building.³

With a background as an insurance salesman O'Malley is often remembered for his teetotaling and for his enforcement of prohibition in the new Australian Capital as Minister for Home Affairs. However, his view on architecture reflected a growing Australian nationalism, that, when coupled with his later experience as a business owner, led him to argue that any proposal should thoroughly represent Australia through its design and use of Australian materials.⁴

¹ Hanno-Walter Kruft, *History of Architectural Theory: From Vitruvius to the Present* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1994), 233.

² Arthur Hoyle, "O'Malley, King (1858-1953)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 23 August 2017, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/omalley-king-7907/text13753>

³ Question Supply Speech, 24 September 1907, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 39.

⁴ Ibid.

The then Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, also understood the value of architecture as a representational tool and pushed Parliamentarians to develop a High Commission that would be “one of the most important pieces of advertisement possible to us.”⁵ The resulting building was designed by Scottish architect Alexander Marshall Mackenzie and his son and showcased the best of Australian materials imported from all states and territories.⁶ The classical exterior was based on a derivation of French eighteenth-century architecture and utilised Portland stone on a base of Australian trachyte as an elevational treatment.⁷ It consisted of a series of rusticated arches and piers at ground level above which ran a colonnade of coupled columns capped by a entablature (Figure 1.2).⁸ The interior was given a distinctly Australian flavour by utilising motifs and sculptures that had been designed by prominent Australian artists and reflected the pride felt in a newfound nationhood.⁹ Although the High Commission was not as radical as the skyscraper proposed by O’Malley, it was considered an appropriate response when developing a Commonwealth building in the heart of London and politically reaffirmed Australia’s commitment to the Empire.

⁵ Commonwealth Offices in London, 12 December 1911, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: Senate Official Hansard*, No. 50.

⁶ For a comprehensive study on the development of Australia House, see Eileen Chanin, *Capital Designs: Australia House and Visions of an Imperial London* (Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018).

⁷ “Australia House,” *The Architectural Review* 46, no. 262 (1 September, 1918): 51-52.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The sculptures surrounding the main entrance are by Bertram Mackennal and Harold Parker. A collection of paintings by Ray Croke are displayed in the foyer space. The murals in the first floor rotunda were completed by Tom Thompson. See *Australia House: 75 Years of Service*, ed. Jan Payne (London: Public Affairs Branch, Australian High Commission, 1993), 28.



Figure 1.2. Australia House, London, 1918, Strand elevation.

Interestingly, while undergoing construction during the First World War, several publications cited the project as representing the solidity of the Empire against German aggression.¹⁰ The representational qualities of the completed building were aptly summed up in the publication produced for the opening ceremony on 3 August 1918: “Australia House thus stands for Imperial business plus national idealism.”¹¹

Imperial business would continue to dominate Australian foreign policy thinking until Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced the decision to expand Australia’s diplomatic network in 1939:

I have become convinced that, in the Pacific, Australia must regard herself as a principal providing herself with her own information and maintaining her own diplomatic contacts with foreign powers.¹²

With the threat of war looming in the Pacific as well as a change in focus by Britain away from the region, Australia looked to America for support and opened its second

¹⁰ E. Clephan Palmer, “Building up the Empire,” *Journal of the Incorporated Clerks of Works Association of Great Britain* xxxii, no. 384 (April 1915): 40.

¹¹ *Australia House, London: The Offices in Great Britain of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Opened by His Majesty the King, 3 August 1918* (London: Printing Craft, 1918).

¹² “Broadcast Speech by Mr R. G Menzies, Prime Minister,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49: Volume II: 1939*, ed. Department of Foreign Affairs (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), No 73, 97.

diplomatic post in Washington, D.C. on 19 February 1940. The opening of further diplomatic posts in rented premises in Ottawa (March 1940), Tokyo (December 1940) and Chongqing in China (October 1941) marked the beginning of Australia's diplomatic engagement with other countries.

How the Australian government chose to expand its diplomatic endeavours would take a significant turn in the mid-1950s after the quality and financial viability of Australia's existing leased embassy buildings began to be questioned in Parliament.¹³ With a diplomatic network that consisted of only one purpose-built High Commission - Australia House - it became apparent that the Australian government was operating overseas on a shoe string budget.¹⁴ Although this level of funding was appropriate for Australia's earlier tentative engagement with an independent foreign policy during the 1940s, it did not reflect the position of importance that Australia now found itself occupying after the Second World War.¹⁵ In an effort to provide suitable office and residential accommodation for its diplomats as well as establishing an image of Australia that was consistent with its new position, the government began to prioritise the construction of new premises.

The question of how to construct an appropriate international image of Australia generated a series of conflicting views within government that centred on the nexus of architecture and politics. Proponents on one side initially argued that Australia's new diplomatic buildings should be designed in a suitable Australian architectural "style" as a means of symbolising the nation. This would later be dismissed in favour of commissioning the expertise of foreign architects to generate designs that engaged with the local conditions and the latest architectural thinking. Others in Parliament sought to steer clear of architectural features altogether labelling them an "unnecessary expenditure" and advocated for functional engineering-led solutions or the continued use of generic rented accommodation. These views deal with representation as well as the

¹³ Australian National Audit Office, "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," in *Australian National Audit Office Audit Report, 1992-1993*, ed. Rod Nicholas (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992), 3.

¹⁴ Estimates: 1960-1961 Department of External Affairs Speech, 8 September 1960, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 36.

¹⁵ Since World War Two Australia played a more significant role in world affairs and was elected as the first president of the United Nations Security Council in 1946, the president of the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, and was involved in the drafting of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Australia also actively supported Indonesian and Indian independence during 1947 and nominated the Republic of Indonesia in 1949 to the United Nations Good Office Commission, which led to the recognition of Indonesian independence.

priorities of government and would impact the development of Australia's embassy buildings.

Constructing the Argument

Although these points of view would continue to be articulated in the development of Australia's diplomatic buildings during the second half of the 20th century they are not only specific to Australia. Several books exist that explore how architecture has been utilised as a form of representation in the development of diplomatic structures by both the United States and British governments. Jane Loeffler in *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* describes the relationship between architecture and politics as nothing less than necessity and the finished buildings as a reflection of architectural theory and political needs. Although this may be the case, Loeffler explains that the representational nature of these diplomatic buildings resulted in them serving as cultural advertisements in foreign lands.¹⁶ Ron Robin in *The Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965* takes this further labelling American embassy buildings as "modern day bill boards."¹⁷ Mark Bertram discusses how the British government did not pay serious attention to the actual architecture of diplomatic buildings until the 1920s and even then it was not until the 1950s that new buildings began to be considered as opportunities to project a national image.¹⁸

Representation and in turn symbolism is a continual theme in the development of the United States, United Kingdom and Australia's diplomatic networks. However, to date, little scholarly research has been undertaken into Australia's use of architecture as a tool of representation. Furthermore, no investigation has been undertaken into the role that politicians and architects have played in the development of Australia's diplomatic structures or the way in which these different professions have interacted in the procurement of these buildings on foreign soil. This gap in scholarly research was also

¹⁶ Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 8.

¹⁷ Ron Theodore Robin, *Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad 1900-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 36.

¹⁸ This statement needs some clarification as the British embassy in Washington, D.C., completed in 1930, was designed by Edwin Lutyens. Bertram describes the project as "an inspired display of self-confidence with no precedence, designed by Britain's leading architect." This clearly shows that some consideration was given to the projection of a national image prior to 1950. See Mark Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy: Britain's Diplomatic Buildings Overseas 1800-2000* (Reading: Spire Books, 2011), 10. For comments on the British embassy in Washington, D.C. see page 185. For an analysis of the project see Chapter 9 pages 197-207.

identified by Loeffler and Robin in the context of American embassy buildings. As Robin posits, political architecture encompasses diplomatic, architectural, cultural and government history and therefore does not fit into any predefined discipline. This has resulted in historians overlooking this chapter in modern American history.¹⁹ Loeffler expands on this stating that American historians have chosen to examine events and programmes that took place in or around embassies but have failed to investigate the diplomatic implications of the architecture itself.²⁰ While undertaking research for this thesis it became clear that this may also be the reason why little scholarly investigation has been conducted into Australia's diplomatic buildings. Australian historians have also chosen to examine these buildings either from an architectural or political point of view and have ignored or overlooked the significance of linking both architecture and politics as a means of exploring representation and expanding an understanding of these buildings. Two recent exceptions to this are historian Eileen Chanin's *Capital Designs: Australia House and Visions of an Imperial London*²¹ and Philip Goad's contribution to the book *The Politics of Furniture: Identity, Diplomacy and Persuasion in Post-War Interiors* in which Goad ties politics and interior design together and discusses the role that furniture and art has had in representing Australia in the Washington, D.C. Chancery (1969) and Paris Embassy (1978).²²

This thesis amalgamates architectural and political history in order to widen the lens by which these buildings have conventionally been viewed to allow insight into the complex relationships that exist between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture in procuring diplomatic buildings overseas. To achieve this a number of initial questions were asked that relate to and tie both architecture and politics together.

1. What role did the various government departments play in generating the briefs for the development of Australian embassy buildings?
2. What architectural practices were involved and what role did they play in the development of these buildings? How were these practices commissioned?
3. What were the determining political, economic and cultural factors in creating new diplomatic buildings?
4. What perspectives and ideas do government bodies and architectural practices bring to the development of these buildings?

¹⁹ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 8.

²⁰ Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, 8.

²¹ Eileen Chanin, *Capital Designs: Australia House and Visions of an Imperial London* (Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018).

²² Philip Goad, "Designed Diplomacy: Furniture, Furnishing and Art in Australian Embassies for Washington, D.C., and Paris," in *The Politics of Furniture: Identity, Diplomacy and Persuasion in Post-War Interiors*, ed. Fredie Flore and Cammie McAtee (London: Routledge, 2017), 179-197.

5. What is the significance given to representation by government bodies and architectural practices in the generation of these buildings?

The thesis answers these questions by undertaking a detailed investigation into the overseas works programmes of Australia and by tracing the historical development of the administrative bodies created to manage these programmes. These bodies are significant as they reflect a growing recognition by government of the need to manage the relationship between architecture and politics to meet functional and representational needs overseas. Because of the focus of the investigation it was determined that the direction of the thesis should not be driven by the finished buildings but instead by the underlying governmental processes that changed as the demand for new embassy buildings grew in association with the increasing complexity and scale of diplomatic representation. This is an architectural history written from the point of view of government policies and departmental interactions that effected the conception and construction of Australia's diplomatic buildings. It foregrounds the role of the government as client and creator and charts an intriguing political territory that concerns the appropriateness of architecture to diplomatic representation and how governments have adjusted to the demands of administering an overseas works programme. As a means of characterising the changes undertaken by the Australian government in its move from an early rudimentary engagement with architecture to a more professional understanding and recognition of the value of Australian-based architects and their practice, this thesis is organised around three broad headings: (1) Tentative Beginnings, (2) A Professional Approach and (3) Reform and Realisation. A later section within this introduction will further outline these changes and what was involved.

This direction and focus is justified by examining the work of both Loeffler and Robin further. Robin seeks to illuminate the process of "harnessing architecture for political purposes"²³ explaining that the goal is not to produce an architectural history but to "attempt to discover how America's concepts of the global arena were etched in stone."²⁴ Robin explains that this does not involve a study of the architects or their skills but an analysis of the texts and directions given by the government to bring these projects to fruition.²⁵ Loeffler also elected to examine the government policies and programmes that existed behind the architecture, arguing that this is the only means of accurately understanding the meaning of America's embassy buildings:

²³ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

It is similarly difficult to make inferences about the entire State Department, let alone the whole US government or its people, from the interpretation of the architecture of one embassy or another. But there is much to learn from the overall history of the program.²⁶

By tracing the historical development of the administrative bodies created to manage these programmes in Australia it is hypothesised that Australia's diplomatic buildings, although intended to represent Australia on the world stage, are in fact representative of the interactions between politics and architecture and the progressive recognition by government of the value Australian-based architects and their practices bring to the creation of Australia's diplomatic buildings.

Although the development of Australian diplomatic premises was on a global scale this thesis focusses on the procurement of these buildings in Asia from the 1960s to the 1990s. This timeframe was selected as it provides a window into the administration of the overseas works programmes under both a Liberal and Labor policy framework and parallels a period of immense change both in regional and domestic politics with the rise of post-colonial nationalism and the division of the world into competing ideological and strategic alliances formed under the banner of the Cold War. The period of time also encompasses a shift in the architectural approach to design which moves from a consolidation of regionalism and response to climatic conditions towards a focus on urbanism and contextual architectural design.

The focus on Asia is reflective of the continued bipartisan support given to the geopolitical importance of the Asian region since the creation of an independent foreign policy. This shift in policy direction occurred after the Second World War in reaction to global and regional events and was encouraged by a changing perception of Asia from an Australian perspective. The idea that Australia's future belonged with Asia began to gain traction, firstly in academic circles then in political ones during the 1950s. While earlier policies of engagement had been built on the need to maintain strategic influence in the region new ideas centred on the need to build relationships which would benefit both parties. This would see consecutive Australian governments seek to ensure Australia's security through cooperation and also promote economic prosperity in what has been termed the "economic dimension" in Asian relations.²⁷ While the reports and minutes of the Public Works Committee are accessible and a number of government

²⁶ Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, ix

²⁷ Joan Beaumont, "Making Australian Foreign Policy, 1941-69," in *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969*, ed. Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe and Garry Woodard (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003), 5-7.

publications were produced on the projects developed from the 1990s onwards many of the files located in the National Archives have not yet been opened to the public. Although this restricts the time period presented here it is recognised that Australia's overseas works programmes have continued.

A Composite Approach

Even though little has been written on the subject of representation and the complex relationship that exists between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture in the context of Australian diplomatic buildings the method and approach to researching this subject area is preceded by the works of Loeffler, Robin, Bertram and Lawrence Vale in their discussion of political architecture and symbolism.²⁸ As such, understanding the approach taken by these authors explains the research framework adopted here.

Both Loeffler and Robin draw on primary sources located at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. These records include Record Group 59, which contains the files of the Department of State as well as the Office of Foreign Building Operations (FBO), and Record Group 66, which refers to the construction of embassy buildings by the Commission of Fine Arts. The National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. has also been cited as a primary source as is correspondence from the diplomatic missions where construction projects were being undertaken.²⁹ Robin notes that these official records are often technical in nature and cites the importance of reading such records in conjunction with more interpretative material published in professional journals as a means of constructing a "composite picture" from the fragments of technical information.³⁰ Professional journals contain pictorial essays and analysis that is lacking in the archival files. Loeffler extends this approach by acknowledging interviews she had with the heads of government departments, architects and government staff who worked on the construction and administration of US diplomatic buildings as a way of supplementing the documents contained in the archival records.³¹

This thesis also relies heavily on sources located at the National Archives of Australia that were accessed for the first time for this research. These sources provide a valuable and detailed insight into government bureaucracy and political thinking which, as noted

²⁸ Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

²⁹ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 197.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

³¹ Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, xiii.

by Bertram, is necessary in communicating the “institutional terms” of the story.³² Bertram supplements what he calls “relatively static institutional outlooks” by referring to the “changeable views” of the individual office holders and the relationships that existed between the missions, diplomats, estate managers, ambassadors and architects.³³

In the case of Australia, evidence of these complex relationships exists in the recorded correspondence between departments and individuals also held at the National Archives. This correspondence is vital to understanding the significance of representation in the development of Australian diplomatic premises and gives further credence to the governmental focus of this thesis. This is also the reason why interviews were not undertaken. While Loeffler elected to expand her research by interviewing protagonists associated with the administration of the US building programme the richness of the archival sources available in the case of Australia allowed a detailed investigation to be undertaken which effectively elucidated the underlying governmental processes, government policies and departmental interactions.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the study - crossing political and architectural history - the research has concentrated on three main areas: (1) the government and its departments, (2) architectural practices and (3) the use of architecture as a representational tool. This same approach was also used by Robin in framing his research which encompassed architecture, national symbolism, American culture, foreign policy and political architecture.³⁴ Robin broadened his research by undertaking a general survey of political architecture, including literature on European colonial architecture and the architecture of the British Raj, to overcome the sparsity of material available on American political architecture.³⁵ Because of the confines of this thesis the aim of the research was not to broadly compare political architecture across the national landscape but instead deal with the specifics of developing embassy buildings within the Asian region. In doing this a wide range of Australian diplomatic architecture is presented over a thirty-year period. As a means of positioning these buildings within the changing geopolitical arena the thesis engages with literature that elaborates on policy development and representation within the context of Asia.

The first area of research focuses on understanding both the geopolitical influence of the Asian region on the development of Australian government policy as well as the more specific role of government departments in generating briefs and procuring Australia's

³² Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy*, 10.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 200.

³⁵ Ibid.

diplomatic buildings. In order to achieve this, foreign policy must be viewed as part of a larger national policy framework that continues to be influenced by both world changing events and bureaucratic forces.³⁶ Research for this thesis examined both secondary and primary sources as a way of analysing the events that occurred and the economic, political and cultural factors that were present at a national level. Archival material was also utilised extensively as a means of determining the departments that were involved in the refinement of Australia's foreign policy under both Liberal and Labor governments and the influence they had on procuring diplomatic premises. This research was key in positioning the study of Australia's diplomatic buildings within a broad political framework that deals with government bureaucracy as well as domestic and foreign policy development and is necessary to understanding the context of Australia's foreign policy development and its influence on the procurement of Australia's diplomatic buildings.

The second area of research utilised periodicals and monographs to clarify which architectural practices were commissioned and to identify the approach these practices took in designing and constructing Australia's embassies in Asia. This research presents the viewpoints and ideas as well as the influences present when architectural practices are commissioned for these projects. The third area of research studied the significance given to representation by government bodies and architectural practices in the generation of these buildings and involved reading secondary sources that deal with representation from both a political and architectural perspective. The reading of both political and architectural discourse as a method of linking architecture, politics and representation is not new and is used by both Vale and Robin in expanding the study of national Parliament buildings and American diplomatic buildings.

Thesis Structure

This thesis goes a significant way in communicating the interactions that occurred and the role both the government and architectural practices took in developing Australia's diplomatic buildings. It also contributes to a discussion of the significance of representation by presenting the ideas and perspectives of both parties in establishing these buildings within Asia from 1960 to 1990. This has been an ambitious undertaking due the scope of the research which crossed disciplines and deals heavily with the

³⁶ David Goldsworthy, "Introduction," in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 5.

machinery of government. In order to communicate this effectively the thesis had been structured into three parts and seven chapters.

Chapter One outlines the sources and methods of study that have been used. It explains how the research for this thesis concentrated on four key areas: (1) an examination of primary sources located at the National Archives of Australia (NAA), Parliament House Archives and the National Library of Australia; (2) the study of secondary sources concerned with the development of government policy and the role of government departments; (3) the examination of secondary sources concerned with the architectural practices involved and (4) an analysis of material that explores the idea of representation from both a political and architectural perspective including Australia's architectural endeavours at world expositions.

Part I - Tentative Beginnings

Prior to 1971 any government department requiring overseas representation was responsible for its own acquisition and management of property. Initially the Department of External Affairs (DEA) was the only department concerned with establishing a presence overseas and as such was responsible for developing three diplomatic buildings in Asia in consultation with the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) and a number of international architectural firms during the 1960s. The use of foreign architects to design and supervise these projects was recommended by the CDW to ensure that the designs responded to local conditions and planning regulations ultimately placing the CDW in an advisory role. This part is structured into two chapters:

Chapter Two explores the early attempts by the DEA to open diplomatic missions in Asia immediately after the Second World War in support of the government's new propaganda initiatives. This chapter reveals the conflicting priorities of government as it sought to establish an appropriate international image by engaging American architect Joseph Allen Stein to design a new Official Residence in New Delhi (1962). This project exposed the inexperience of both the DEA and the CDW in managing the construction of a new diplomatic building abroad and contributes to an understanding of the government's early views on architecture and its significance to representation.

Chapter Three focuses on the relationship between the CDW, DEA and a number of international architectural practices in constructing and designing the Tokyo (1964), New Delhi (1966) and Djakarta (1967) Chanceries. Because of delays in constructing the New Delhi residence the Treasury recommended that the CDW design and manage the

Tokyo and Djakarta projects. While the CDW utilised Australian materials and art in both designs as a method of representation, the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) began to pressure the government to consider commissioning Australian architects as a way of enhancing the representational quality of future projects. These three projects contribute to understanding the modifications that were made to the existing administrative processes as well as exposing a number of underlying departmental rivalries that continued to plague the management of the overseas works programme as the government moved more towards an acceptance of the value of architecture.

Part II – A Professional Approach

The construction of the Tokyo, New Delhi and Djakarta Chanceries is significant as they represent the establishment of an overseas works programme by the government. However, long delays and cost overruns on the New Delhi and Djakarta projects and a failure by the DEA to purchase a suitable property in Paris as a chancery prompted a reassessment of how the administration of these developments was being managed. Under the recommendation of the Public Service Board (PSB) it was decided that a single independent agency was needed to centralise the management and construction of Australia's overseas property. The second part of this thesis charts the emergence of this need within two chapters:

Chapter Four examines the reviews and ensuing debates in government that led to the creation of the first administrative body responsible for the management of Australia's overseas works programme - the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB).³⁷ This marked the beginning of a professional approach to the development and management of Australia's diplomatic buildings. In the face of continued pressure from the RAIA, the government supported the commissioning of Australian architects for future projects. This change in approach was beneficial to the new Whitlam government (1972-1975) as its policy framework demanded a rapid expansion of Australia's diplomatic network and the use of Australian architects to promote Australian culture abroad. This chapter examines the process and policies behind the creation of the OPB and the role of various government

³⁷ An earlier and different version of this chapter was presented in the annual conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand (SAHANZ) held at the University of Canberra in July 2017. The paper was published as "Image Building: A study of Australia's Domestic and Foreign Policy in relation to Embassy Architecture," in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand*: 34, *Quotation: What Does History Have in Store For Architecture Today?* ed. Gevork Hartoonian and John Ting (Canberra: SAHANZ, 2017), 193-204.

departments in developing briefs and commissioning Australian architects for the first time.

Chapter Five presents the responses of the Australian architects employed to meet the government's functional and representational needs in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. It focuses on each project and how the relevant architectural practices generated solutions based on what was known as the "Kuala Lumpur Plan". The finished buildings demonstrated what could be achieved by the government and architectural practices when operating with optimal funding and streamlined administrative processes.

Part III - Reform and Realisation

The completion of the chancery projects in Port Moresby (1975), Islamabad (1976), Singapore (1976) and Kuala Lumpur (1978) heralded the Australian government's commitment to the exclusive use of Australian architects.³⁸ These buildings reflected a continuing modernist understanding of architecture, and in some cases, blended regional building elements with contemporary design to ground the buildings in a local context. This presented a positive image of Australia as a modern, forward thinking nation that was also respectful of its neighbour's traditions and cultures. This was only achievable through the Whitlam government's generous funding and preference for commissioning Australia's leading architects. The location of these buildings emphasised a focus on Asia that would find bipartisan support from the future Fraser and Hawke governments. However a change in government priorities under the Fraser government would mark the final period in the administration of these programmes. This part has been divided into two chapters:

Chapter Six analyses the Fraser government's enforcement of austerity and the effect that the restructuring of the OPB into the Overseas Operations Branch (OOB) had on the maintenance and construction programme. Central to this was a three-year delay in the construction of the Bangkok Chancery designed by Anchor, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley. Under the recommendations of a number of government-led investigations the PSB and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) formed a new administrative body - the Overseas Property Office (OPO). This chapter contrasts with the previous chapter by demonstrating the impact that changing government priorities and policy

³⁸ It should be noted here that Bates, Smart & McCutcheon were commissioned to design the Washington, D.C. Chancery in 1964. The building was opened in 1969.

decisions can have on the efficient management of the overseas works programmes of Australia.

Chapter Seven discusses the development of the Beijing and Tokyo Embassy complexes within the economic framework previously established by Prime Minister Fraser and under the government of Prime Minister Bob Hawke and the newly-formed administrative body - the Overseas Property Group (OPG). In its new form the OPG was imbued with a global focus which encouraged ownership and allowed the flexibility to finance projects outside of budgetary constraints. The final two projects to be presented are significant as they not only represent Australia through a language of abstraction cultivated by the Australian architectural practice Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) in relation to context but they also embody the culmination of modifications undertaken by government to streamline the administration and management of overseas projects. Ironically, the Beijing complex suffered from significant delays and cost overruns underlining the continuing difficult nature of constructing buildings overseas.

The thesis concludes by firstly summarising the major points as uncovered by this study relating to the changing political and governmental mechanics that have informed the creation of Australia's diplomatic buildings. It highlights the conflicting views within government as the importance of architectural representation moved from a departmental concern to a governmental priority. As the thesis reveals, the main challenge to achieving adequate representation is the pressure on resources due to fiscal constraints and the willingness of government to support the development of diplomatic premises by providing an administrative infrastructure. The conclusion continues by considering the architectural richness of the completed projects and how this corresponded to the level of recognition given by government to the role that architecture can play in communicating Australian interests to the region. As the thesis shows, key to this is the commissioning of Australian-based practices and the adoption of a professional approach to managing Australia's overseas works programmes.

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Government - Primary Sources

Primary research for this thesis began at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) where the majority of documents dealing with the operational logistics involved in procuring Australia's diplomatic buildings are located. These records are held under various numbers that pertain to the departments and agencies responsible for the management and development of Australia's diplomatic buildings overseas. Although some of these files are filled with technical documents regarding budget concerns, supply orders, space requirements and staffing arrangements they also contain project briefs, committee minutes, project progress reports and notes from the architects and government departments designing and supervising these projects. This material is useful in understanding the departmental needs that underpin the construction of Australia's diplomatic buildings.

Also scattered throughout these files is the recorded correspondence between government departments and individuals involved in these projects, namely the architects, ambassadors and heads of departments. These letters provide insight into the more subjective points of view and debatable opinions that were expressed as design became a consideration of government. Interestingly the letters also reveal the personal difficulties that were experienced and frustration that was encountered in administering and designing diplomatic premises in foreign environments.

Of particular relevance are the records held under series A1838 that contain the main correspondence files of the Department of External Affairs II (1948-1970) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (1970-1987), which were both responsible for the procurement of diplomatic buildings from the 1950s to the 1980s. Other material that is relevant deals with the departments that operated as technical consultants for these projects. These records are held under various agency numbers including: CA 61 Department of Works Central Office III (1952-1973), CA 1875 Department of Housing and Construction (1973-1975), CA 1952 and CA 2747 Department of Construction I and II (1975-1982). After the formation of the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB) in 1971 the role of these consultant departments altered as the OPB became the central agency responsible for the provision and management of Australia's overseas property. The records for this agency correspond to the administering department's record numbers

and change as the agency came under new administration. Initially the records are held under agency number CA 2256 Overseas Property Bureau (1971-1976) with series A5561, A10755, A10852 containing photos, drawings and specifications on all the projects developed overseas from 1963 to 1975. These record numbers provide an insight into views on the use of Australian architects and architecture as a tool of representation as well as highlighting the role that the OPB played. Further records are held under CA 1488 and CA 1382 which relate to the OPB when it was under the administration of the Department of Services and Property (1972-1974) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (1974-1975). It should be noted that after 1975 the OPB operated as the Overseas Operations Branch (OOB) under the Department of Administrative Services II (1975-1981), agency number CA 1964 and later as the Overseas Property Office (OPO) until 1986 before its functions were reviewed and the name was changed to the Overseas Operations Division (OOD) in November 1986. The OOD operated under the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services until 1987. The OOD was renamed the Overseas Property Group (OPG) in 1987 and operated under a separate sub programme of the Department of Administrative Services III (1987-1993) with the records being held under agency number CA 5983.

Additional primary material including government documents, committee reports and investigations that were undertaken into the development of Australia's diplomatic network by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and the Attorney General have also been sourced from the Parliament House Archives (ParliInfo) and the National Library of Australia. Of particular relevance are the Public Works Committee annual and general reports which contain Hansard records of the minutes of meetings between the administrative bodies, architects and client departments from 1981. These reports are key in understanding the viewpoints and ideas that both the government and architectural practices bring to the development of diplomatic buildings.

Government - Secondary Sources

Government Policy

This thesis initially consulted the work of Peter Edwards, a widely published historian whose research focuses on Australian diplomacy as well as the development of Australian foreign policy. The publication most relevant to this thesis is *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1949* which utilises a collection of documents compiled by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) that

focuses on the role of government in establishing an early independent foreign policy.¹ Edwards questions why it took so long for Australia to develop such a policy and to establish a separate foreign affairs department. The chapter entitled “From Peace to War 1935-1941” has a dedicated section on the opening of diplomatic missions.² This section provides an early history of the formation of the Department of External Affairs (DEA) and its efforts to engage in world affairs by setting up diplomatic missions abroad. The text focuses on the influence of individuals on this process and provides a narrative history on the creation of an early foreign policy. Although this text deals with policy outside the date range studied by this thesis it is useful in understanding the reluctance felt by many in establishing a diplomatic service independent from the British Empire and consequently highlights why Australia did not contemplate building its second diplomatic building until the mid-1950s.

As an expansion of Edward's study, the book *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969* discusses the level of influence that the DEA had on the development of Australian foreign policy since it was established as an independent department in 1935. The book, through a collection of essays, examines the role of the Minister of External Affairs in differing periods in the department's history and presents the changes that occurred within the DEA under their leadership. Chapter Eight is entitled “The Champagne Trail? Australian Diplomats and the Overseas Mission” (a reference to the memoirs of the former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs Alan Renouf) and provides a clear picture of the working conditions that diplomats were subjected to during the early development of Australia's overseas network.³ This chapter is important as it provides insight into the control that the Treasury and the Public Service Board (PSB) had over the DEA and the effect this had on the government's approach to developing diplomatic buildings in the Asian region. It also examines the role and influence the ambassador had in establishing a diplomatic mission overseas, a point that is scrutinised in the second chapter of the thesis.

The third publication, and perhaps the most comprehensive, is edited by David Goldsworthy and Peter Edwards, entitled *Facing North: A Century of Australian*

¹ P.G. Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Foreign Policy 1901-1949* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1983); Other publications by Edwards include the official nine volume publication on Australia's involvement in Southeast Asia from 1948-1975: *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, Volumes 1-9 (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1992-2012).

² Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, 116-130.

³ Joan Beaumont, “The Champagne Trail? Australian Diplomats and the Overseas Mission,” in *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969*, ed. Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe and Garry Woodard (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003), 153-185.

Engagement with Asia, Volumes One and Two.⁴ This book was commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as a contribution to the celebration of the centenary of Federation and presents an analysis of the history of the region in relation to the development of Australian government policy.⁵ Volume One investigates the theme of national policy and the initial attempts undertaken by the Australian government to form relationships within the Asian region as a dominion of the British Empire. The Second Volume assesses how Australia endeavored to deepen its relationship with its regional neighbours by forming political, social and economic alliances between 1970 and 2000.

As well as presenting a narrative history on the development of an independent Australian foreign policy Goldsworthy chooses to expand the study by exploring the driving factors behind Australia's engagement with the region. In doing this Goldsworthy rejects the view that engagement is a linear process that advances from start to finish and instead highlights how the development of Australian foreign policy was irregular in pace and was often manifest with setbacks and reversals.⁶ He attributes this to the external factors that drove change:

Change was driven by different stimuli in different epochs, with consequentially varied outcomes.⁷

He goes on to acknowledge that these factors operated interactively in both the domestic and international arena and contributed to shaping Australia's engagement with the region. He defines one of these factors as the impact of historical events on the region and acknowledges that while these factors brought great change to Asia they also altered the ideologies, attitudes and initiatives of both the Australian people as well as the government and consequently changed Australia's national policy and role in the region.⁸

The contribution of a number of historians to the book provides insight into the multifaceted nature of Australia's changing engagement with Asia which assists in developing a historical context for the thesis. While the thesis relies heavily on this scholarship it also contributes new material by presenting an insight into government

⁴ *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy and Peter Edwards, Volumes 1-2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001).

⁵ The Hon. Alexander Downer MP, speech presented at the launch of *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia Volume 2: 1970-2000*, Canberra, 29 May 2003, accessed 16 January 2018, https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2003/030429_facingnorth.html

⁶ Goldsworthy, *Facing North*, Volume 1, 7.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Goldsworthy highlights a number of historical events including the two world wars, the Great Depression, nationalism, decolonisation, communist revolution, the Cold War and industrialisation. See Ibid., 8.

thinking as it opened up to architecture and the use of architects as a key part of engaging in the region.

Government Departments and Diplomatic Buildings

This investigation initially referred to the publication *Making Australian Foreign Policy*. The authors Alan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, like Goldsworthy, recognise that foreign policy deals with a number of interrelated themes. They define foreign policy as “a process that occurs simultaneously across four levels - the strategic, the contextual, the organisational and the operational.”⁹ The authors acknowledge that much has been written on the contextual detail pertaining to specific foreign policy issues however little has been said regarding the operational process of the departments involved.¹⁰ This publication sets out to provide these details by exploring the process of foreign policy development. In doing so the authors recognise that in order to understand the process an examination is required of the tasks performed at each level of government and the relationship these levels have to each other.¹¹ The book cites previous audits into DFAT as a way of understanding the different priorities of governments and their attitudes towards foreign policy and representation.¹² Most useful to this investigation were Chapters Four to Seven which provide a brief history on the development of DFAT before turning to focus on the key operational components of the department and the individuals that were responsible for formulating foreign policy. Chapter Six, entitled “The Overseas Network,” discusses how Australia has chosen to utilise a network of diplomatic buildings as an extension of foreign policy. The 1986 *Review of Australia’s Overseas Representation* conducted by the former Secretary of DFAT, Stuart Harris, is referenced when summarising the functions of Australia’s diplomatic buildings:

The purpose of Australia’s overseas representation is to protect and promote Australia’s national interests. It does this by seeking to influence the decisions of countries, their governments and institutions, and those of the international bodies to which they belong, where they impinge in anyway on the matter of concern to Australia.¹³

⁹ Alan Gyngell and Michael Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12.

¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

¹¹ Ibid., 31.

¹² Ibid., 106.

¹³ Stuart Harris, *Review of Australia’s Overseas Representation* (Canberra: Australian Government Printing Services, 1986), xiv.

The operational context of Australia's diplomatic buildings is discussed in detail and deals with several representational issues including advocacy, intelligence and reporting. This thesis expands on this by considering the importance of the representational quality of the buildings themselves. This is done by understanding the processes behind the construction of these buildings and, like Gygell and Wesley's analysis, is achieved by referring to government audits and by examining the role of departments and the interactions that occurred.

The discussion surrounding government departments and Australia's diplomatic buildings is expanded upon by Brian Hocking in the publication *Foreign Ministries Change and Adaptation*.¹⁴ Hocking called on a number of international authors to contribute to the publication by submitting research on the wider operational setting of the ministry, its place within the structure of foreign policy management and the approaches and policies enacted by departments to deal with change. The introduction emphasises the significance of foreign ministries as part of the bureaucratic landscape and, as highlighted previously by Goldsworthy, Gygell and Wesley, discusses the ministry's role in creating domestic and international policy. Interestingly, Hocking goes further by specifically discussing how a foreign ministry helps to define policy as well as articulate policy direction on the world stage. The book continues by studying the role of a number of foreign ministries including Australia's in a chapter written by Harris.¹⁵ Harris reiterates the importance of DFAT as a tool of government and argues the case for increased representation on foreign soil by stating:

There are reasons to be concerned about the adequacy with which the foreign ministry function is being performed in the light of the greater demands imposed on it alongside its diminishing real resources. Countries achieve their institutional objectives by threatening, by bribing (bargaining) or by persuading... Australia has little capacity to bribe and less to threaten and has therefore to depend substantially on its capacity to persuade. Given its geopolitical situation, with few natural allies, it needs a wide ranging and highly knowledgeable overseas representation proportionally more than large and powerful countries.¹⁶

¹⁴ Brian Hocking, "Introduction Foreign Ministries: Redefining the Gatekeeper Role," in *Foreign Ministries Change and Adaptation*, ed. Brian Hocking (Great Britain: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), 2.

¹⁵ Stuart Harris, "Australia Change and Adaptation in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade," in *Foreign Ministries Change and Adaptation*, ed. Brian Hocking (Great Britain: Macmillan Press, 1999), 23-39.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

Harris posits that the main challenge to achieving adequate representation is the pressure on resources due to fiscal constraints and the unwillingness to meet the increase in costs of developing diplomatic buildings overseas.¹⁷ This economic factor is consistently present at a departmental level and is also referred to extensively in the primary material that has been consulted for this thesis.

Architectural Practices

After recording important historical developments in government policy and studying the role and interaction of government departments in the expansion of Australia's diplomatic network, research for this thesis examined material relating to architectural practices. The aim was firstly to identify the architectural practices commissioned as well as to explore the role of these practices in designing Australia's diplomatic buildings. This has been undertaken as a means of further understanding the interactions that occurred and the relationships that developed between government and the architectural practices. Secondly, the research looked to establish an understanding of the viewpoints and ideas these practices brought to the development process in order to determine the significance of representation. To achieve this aim, material was sourced from architectural and building periodicals, monographs and a number of government publications.

The discussion surrounding the architecture of Australian embassy buildings came to the fore in the 1960s after the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) advocated for Australia's leading architects to be commissioned to design Australian diplomatic premises. The RAIA's official organ of record, then titled *Architecture in Australia*, published an article "Your Oz Embassies" in December 1974 that presented the sketch plans of the Singapore, Bangkok and Paris Embassy buildings after Whitlam announced that Australian architects were to be used as a means of expressing Australian culture abroad.¹⁸ The article chose to focus on the idea of representation as a way of exploring the perspectives and ideas of both government bodies and the architectural practices involved in the development of these buildings. The section discussing the role of

¹⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹⁸ It should be noted that the September 1966 issue of *Architecture in Australia* was devoted to the recent work of the Commonwealth Department of Works. The New Delhi Head of Mission (HOM) residence, Tokyo Chancery and Djakarta Chancery were included in this publication. Although there was no discussion of the architectural merits of these projects photos and plans were presented. See "Recent Works," *Architecture in Australia* 55, no. 5 (September 1966): 119-122.

government highlighted the government's expectations regarding the design of these new buildings:

The Australian government believes that an Australian image should be projected by its official buildings and thereby seeks to achieve a sensitive combination of the international/Australian style influenced by the use of indigenous detail elements where these result from the use of local material and from climatic conditions.¹⁹

Other articles were later published in *Architecture Australia* as well as the RAI NSW Chapter's monthly *Architecture Bulletin* testifying to the prestige these projects garnered in the architectural community.²⁰ The Cement and Concrete Association of Australia also published a number of articles in the *Constructional Review* which focused on the design and construction of the Singapore, Paris, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Tokyo and Beijing Embassy buildings.²¹ These articles are valuable for their detailed analysis of the viewpoints and ideas of the architects involved and in the commentary they provide on the architectural merit of the completed buildings. International periodicals such as *Blueprint* and *Architectural Review* as well as journals that do not relate to architecture directly have also contributed to the discussion on Australia's diplomatic buildings.²²

There are several monographs that have been published on Australian architects who have undertaken work on Australia's diplomatic buildings. These publications tend to allocate a section or chapter to embassy projects as part of a larger collection of works and therefore focus on the architectural firms, their approach to architecture as well as an interpretation of the firm's engagement with architectural theory. An example of this

¹⁹ "Your Oz Embassies," *Architecture in Australia* 63, no. 6 (December 1974): 62.

²⁰ See Peter Keys, "Australian High Commission Singapore," *Architecture in Australia* 67, no. 3 (June 1978): 34-36; Joyce Nankivell Associates, "Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur," *Architecture Australia* 68, no. 1 (March 1979): 42-51; Jo Bradley, "Architectural Impressions: The Australian High Commission's Offices in Kuala Lumpur," *Architecture Australia* 68, no. 1 (March 1979): 51-54; "Australian Embassy Bangkok," *Architecture Australia* 74, no. 2 (March 1985): 42-48; John Denton, "The Australian Image in Japan," *Architecture Bulletin* (February 1991): 11; Daniel Elsea, "Australian Embassy, Beijing," *Architecture Australia* 94, no. 4 (July/August 2005): 35-38.

²¹ See "Paris Embassy," *Constructional Review* 51, no. 4 (November 1978): 10-24; "High Commission Kuala Lumpur," *Constructional Review* 52, no. 1 (February 1979): 20-28; "High Commission Singapore," *Constructional Review* 52, no. 1 (February 1979): 28-33; "Bangkok Embassy," *Constructional Review* 54, no. 4 (November 1981): 22-30; "Beijing Embassy," *Constructional Review* 66, no. 1 (February 1993): 30-37.

²² See Deyon Sudjic, "Australian Embassy Tokyo, Architects Denton Corker Marshall," *Blueprint Extra* 2 (1991); Veronica Pease, "Australian Synthesis," *Architectural Review* 189, no. 1137 (November 1991): 42-45; "Australia in Malaya," *Architectural Review* 165, no. 985 (March 1979): 133-134; Michael Keyte, "Australian Embassy Paris: Architects: Harry Seidler & Associates (Sydney)," *Architectural Review* 164, no. 980 (October 1978): 210-224; Philip Drew, "Our Ambassadors with Odd Accents," *Business Review Weekly*, 18 April 1994, 102-103; Betsy Brennan, "Foreign Power," *Vogue Living* 25, no. 6 (August 1991): 135.

is *Denton Corker Marshall: Rule Playing and the Ratbag Element* which discusses the design development of the Beijing and Tokyo Embassy projects.²³

Stephen White's publication *Building in the Garden: The Architecture of Joseph Allen Stein in India and California* provides a useful discussion on the influences that surround Stein's work and the importance of landscaping to his projects. The Australian Head of Mission (HOM) residence in New Delhi is discussed briefly within the context of Stein's approach to architecture but no detailed analysis is undertaken into the project or his involvement with the Australian government. Furthermore, Stein's design for Australia's chancery in New Delhi is not included in White's publication making it necessary to refer back to archival material to supplement the text and present this project as part of Stein's body of work.

A small selection of books has also been published on specific Australian diplomatic buildings. These publications were compiled by various government departments and give insight into the political relationship between Australia and the region as well as discussing the role of the architectural practice in designing these buildings. These publications include *Australian Embassy Beijing: A Project for the Australian Government by the Overseas Property Office, Department of Local Government and Administrative Services* published by the Department of Housing and Construction (DHC).²⁴ This publication summarises the design concept and architectural approach of using traditional Chinese planning concepts of the courtyard and axis to inform the design of the embassy complex in Beijing. In introducing the project a history of Australia's representation in China is presented which begins with the legation sent to Chongqing in 1941 and concludes with a discussion of the political manoeuvring that was undertaken to bring the proposal for the new embassy in Beijing to fruition. The book was published in both Chinese and English and was given to Chinese officials at the opening of the embassy in 1992 to mark this milestone in Chinese-Australian relations.

A second publication entitled *The Australian Embassy Tokyo* was issued by the Public Affairs Section of the Tokyo Embassy after the opening of the new Australian embassy

²³ See Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall: Rule Playing and the Ratbag Element* (Boston: Birkhauser, 2000); Kenneth Frampton and Philip Drew, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, ed. Harry Seidler (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992); Philip Goad, *Bates Smart: 150 Years of Australian Architecture* (Victoria: Thames and Hudson, 2004); Catherine Burke and David Saunders, *Ancher, Mortlock, Murray, Woolley: Sydney Architects, 1946-1976* (Sydney: Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, 1976).

²⁴ *Australian Embassy Beijing: A Project for the Australian Government by the Overseas Property Office, Department of Local Government and Administrative Services*, ed. Department of Housing and Construction (Canberra: Department of Housing and Construction, 1985).

in Tokyo.²⁵ The book discusses the history of the building site after it was developed by the Hachisuka family in the Tokugawa period and was purchased by Australia in 1952. The book also presents the way that Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) used the context of Japan to inform the layout of the new embassy complex. While these texts provide some brief descriptions and determine the role of the architectural practice in a basic way they do not enter into any detail regarding governmental processes or their significance.

Architecture, Politics and Representation

As outlined, this thesis draws on research into the overseas works programmes of Australia and the administrative bodies responsible for managing them to link architecture and politics as a way of widening the lens by which Australian embassy buildings have conventionally been viewed. Material was examined that explores the idea of representation from both a political and architectural perspective. The aim here is to focus on the interactions and the complex relationship that exist between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture. This research identifies how the government has employed architecture to meet foreign policy objectives in the pursuit of diplomacy and in doing this demonstrates how various architectural practices have utilised representation to meet government needs.

Philip Goad's chapter on the Australian Washington, D.C. and Paris Embassies in the publication *The Politics of Furniture: Identity, Diplomacy and Persuasion in Post-War Interiors*, focuses on the use of Australian furniture and art as part of the interior schemes of both embassies as a means of "explaining" Australia.²⁶ This continued a "long-tried strategy" of Australian design abroad particularly in the design of Australian pavilions at international expositions.²⁷ Goad's study is an important contribution to understanding how art and design have become key components of the representational functions of Australia's diplomatic premises. This thesis aims to expand on this by directing attention toward the interactions between politics and architecture in its consideration of representation. In order to understand the significance of these interactions to representation more clearly the research turns to two international studies that were undertaken by Lawrence Vale and Ron Robin.

²⁵ *The Australian Embassy Tokyo*, ed. Information Section Australian Embassy Tokyo (Tokyo, 1990).

²⁶ Philip Goad, "Designed Diplomacy: Furniture, Furnishing and Art in Australian Embassies for Washington, D.C., and Paris," in *The Politics of Furniture: Identity, Diplomacy and Persuasion in Post-War Interiors*, ed. Freddie Flore and Cammie McAtee (London: Routledge, 2017), 180.

²⁷ Goad, "Designed Diplomacy," 184.

Architecture, Power, and National Identity (2008) investigates the development of post-colonial capitals and Parliament buildings around the world to identify the relationship between architecture and politics as well as to understand how architecture has been used to serve political means. In this publication Vale views architecture through the lens of political history and cultural production by exploring the concept of meaning.²⁸ To achieve this Vale draws on the scholarship of American post-war philosopher Nelson Goodman. Goodman's philosophy proposes that art is equal to science and logic and builds on the works of Plato, Kant and Clarence Lewis in constructing this concept.²⁹ The essay "How Buildings Mean" outlines four ways a building may mean; denotation, exemplification, metaphorical expression and mediated reference.³⁰ Goodman's scholarship on meaning echoes the post-modernist discourse surrounding architectural meaning during the 1970s and 1980s and proposes that if architecture is viewed as art "insofar as it signifies, means, refers and symbolizes in some way" it can come to represent something other than itself.³¹ This suggests "a building may mean in ways unrelated to being an architectural work (and) may become through association a symbol for sanctuary, or for a reign of terror, or for graft."³² Vale's analysis of Goodman concludes that the scholarship on meaning is useful in identifying *how* a building means but is not useful in understanding *what* a building means.³³ In order to understand the complex meanings of government buildings Vale extends his scholarship by engaging with the political aspects of the buildings or what he terms as "the political designs of government."³⁴ In order to support this he refers to the work of political scientist Murray Edelman.

Edelman first examined politics as a symbolic form in *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* and like Goodman concludes that the meaning of this form is not limited to the function that the form embodies.³⁵ Edelman expands upon this in the later text *From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shaped Political Conceptions* by suggesting that meaning exists outside of form and function and is instead ascribed by the interpretations and belief

²⁸ Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, viii.

²⁹ Alessandro Giovannelli, "Goodman's Aesthetics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta (Fall 2017) accessed 17 May 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/goodman-aesthetics/>

³⁰ Nelson Goodman, "How Buildings Mean," in *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*, ed. Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin (London: Routledge, 1988), 31-47.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1964), 2.

systems of people.³⁶ Although this may be the case Edelman does not completely dismiss the importance of “settings” as conveyers of symbolism and posits that a viewer’s impressions and responses can be intensified through the creation of artificial space.³⁷ In the chapter “Architecture, Spaces and Social Order” Edelman discusses the “setting” as being a contributor to the definition of the act taking place and concludes that the setting must be appropriate to the audience as the general impression of the setting is symbolically critical.³⁸

The idea of “setting” is important, however little mention is given by Edelman to the institutions that are housed within the settings and the meanings that they also evoke. By referring to cultural geographer Kay Anderson, Edelman’s discourse surrounding the meaning of buildings can be expanded. Anderson refers to the institution as an entity in its own right which relies on cognitive constructions about its functions to justify its existence to society and itself.³⁹ Like settings, the meaning of these institutions exist outside of their function. In order to understand what a building means an analysis of the institution, the setting and society needs to be undertaken to establish how they have interacted in using architecture as a form of representation.

Vale explores a number of case studies including the Papua New Guinean Parliament building (1984) designed by Cecil Hogan (an Australian expatriate) as an example of a “setting” that uses symbolic architecture to move “beyond the bland internationalism of much of the postcolonial urban built environment.”⁴⁰ The brief for the building emphasised the “traditional” and provided photos and sketches of traditional round houses and spirit houses in an effort to encourage an engagement with Papua New Guinean culture through architecture. Vale examines how Hogan’s modern interpretation of traditional building methods created a collage of the country’s many component cultures. Vale continues by discussing the building in reference to ‘tourist architecture’ and notes that Hogan’s use of overt symbolism offers up a consumer image of the nation through the reinterpretation of vernacular forms. Even though this may be the case the finished building achieves a balance which creates a consolidated, easily recognised national image for the newly independent nation.⁴¹

³⁶ Murray Edelman, *From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shaped Political Conceptions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 74.

³⁷ Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, 96-97.

³⁸ Edelman, *From Art to Politics*, 78-79.

³⁹ Kay Anderson and Fay Gale, “Introduction,” in *Inventing Places: Studies in Cultural Geography*, ed. Kay Anderson and Fay Gale (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992), 6.

⁴⁰ Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, 165.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 166-189.

Vale contrasts this with the design of Louis Khan's capitol complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Vale is critical of Khan's design and suggests that the building is disconnected from its social, political and cultural context and more connected to Kahn's own personal oeuvre.⁴² Although this view has since been contested,⁴³ Vale acknowledges that Khan's design is free of any political or cultural symbolism and is perhaps more successful in expressing a new-found nationhood by generating international recognition for Bangladesh. This was also expressed by Mehmet Doruk Pamir shortly after the completion of the complex:

One can regard Sher-E-Banglanagar as an investment in establishing an international medium of communication...Until very recently about all the rest of the world knew about Bangladesh was that it was a country of human misery and social instability...Then all of a sudden, this building put Bangladesh on the roster of nations boasting the most sophisticated examples of contemporary architecture.⁴⁴

In these two examples both the government and architectural practices have utilised architecture to meet particular agendas concerning representation. How this has been achieved is dependent on both parties interaction in the design process. Vale finds that the political designs of government officials are equal or in some cases more important than the physical designs of architects and that the representational intentions of both parties need to be understood when analysing political architecture.⁴⁵ Even though the building type in question differs from the focus of this thesis, Vale's scholarship on symbolism and national identity is insightful in understanding the significance of representation to both governments and architectural practices.

The second international study that explores the theme of architecture, politics and representation is Robin's historical study of diplomatic building design in *The Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965*. While Vale's theoretical framework focuses on an understanding of meaning and interpretation, Robin engages with Jules Prown, a historian of American art and a pioneer of the study of material culture; a branch of cultural anthropology that considers artistic style as a

⁴² Ibid., 236.

⁴³ For an analysis of the contextual influences on the Dhaka capitol complex see Maryam Gusheh, "Louis Kahn in Dhaka: Ruin as Method" (PhD thesis, University of New South Wales, 2013).

⁴⁴ Mehmet Doruk Pamir, "Sher-E-Bangla agar, Dhaka: The Impact on Local Design," *Continuity and Change: Design Strategies for Large Scale Urban Development* (Cambridge: The Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture, 1984), accessed 8 February 2018, <https://archnet.org/system/publications/contents/3114/original/DPC0478.pdf?1384771230>.

⁴⁵ Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, 6.

form of historical evidence.⁴⁶ Prown's 1988 essay "Style as Evidence" defines style as "the way in which something is done, produced or expressed," noting that style is in the "form of things rather than in content."⁴⁷ Prown continues by suggesting that some aspects of society are more readily expressed through the aesthetic than through other means believing that it is the act of doing that identifies a society's values:

Every time a person in the past manipulated matter in space in a particular way to satisfy his practice or aesthetic needs, he made a type of statement, albeit a nonverbal statement...It is the nonverbal, unspoken, perhaps even unconscious, nature of this statement that gives it particular importance.⁴⁸

In order to successfully analyse the values of society by these means Prown suggests that the function of the artefact must be discarded and that the focus be on "style." In pursuing his study Robin removes the functional aspects of embassy buildings from his research and instead focuses on the form of the buildings as a means of detecting the government's intentions at the time.⁴⁹ This approach is reinforced by architectural historian Andrew Ballantyne in "Architecture as Evidence" where it is argued that a building should be regarded as a complex piece of evidence as it demonstrates the societal and aesthetic agendas that mediated its production.⁵⁰ Robin also refers to the scholarship of Peirce Lewis as a way of exploring style further. In his text "Axioms for Reading Landscape" Lewis emphasises the significance that a change in style has in understanding society. As he debates, societies and individuals tend to change styles only when they are confronted by strong external pressures.⁵¹ This argument is captured by Robin in his commentary on America's embassies and war cemeteries.

Initially the US chose to emulate imperial buildings that had been constructed by the British and French in the expansion of their empires. Although successful in attaining recognition for the US amongst imperial nations, these opulent Beaux Arts designs were criticised at home for not representing "democracy and progress."⁵² In response, during the 1920s the US government sought to produce a symbolic building that was uniquely

⁴⁶ For a discussion of this discipline see Jules David Prown, *Art as Evidence: Writings on Art and Material Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 69-95.

⁴⁷ Jules David Prown, "Style as Evidence," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 3 (Autumn 1980): 198.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 10.

⁵⁰ Andrew Ballantyne, "Architecture as Evidence," in *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, ed. Elvan Altan, Ergut Dana, Arnold Belgin and Turan Ozkaya (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 47.

⁵¹ Lewis Peirce, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. Donald Meinig (New York, Oxford University Press, 1979), 15.

⁵² Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 69.

American and chose to embrace historicism as a solution, adopting a southern plantation mansion as a prototype for future embassy buildings. As Robin argues, these buildings ultimately failed because the historic references were unreadable in the context of a foreign country. America would continue to experiment with architecture as a means of representation and would turn towards modernism in the late 1940s to express itself as a technologically advanced nation. At the outset of the Cold War, America's propaganda machine would harness modern design and some of the world's leading architects in its battle against Communism. As the *Architectural Forum* saw it:

Architecture makes a good ambassador: Note the pretentious classicism of official Soviet architecture abroad, then compare it with the clean and friendly embassies, consulates, information centres and staff apartments now being built by the US.⁵³

This highlights the importance attributed to architecture as a tool of representation and outlines how the American government exploited architecture as a way of reinforcing its foreign policy objectives at the time. It also demonstrates how differing architectural strategies have been used to harness representation as a tool to express cultural identity by seeking to balance cultural expression with international recognition.

Expositions

The reading of both political and architectural discourse as a method of exploring representation is fundamental to this thesis. However, as outlined previously, little has been written on the significance given to representation by government bodies and architectural practices in the creation of Australian diplomatic buildings. As such, representation can be explored by analysing material that relates to other government projects which require an interaction with architectural practices to project an image of Australia on the world stage. Both Robin and Goad cite the importance of reading literature that explores the symbolism of international expositions as a means of considering the relationship between government, architectural practices and representation.⁵⁴ Parallels can be drawn between the design of diplomatic buildings and exposition pavilions as both are imbued with ambitions of representation that have been generated by governments and architectural practices. This sentiment has also been

⁵³ "U.S. Architecture Abroad," *Architectural Forum* 98 (March 1953): 102.

⁵⁴ Robin cites the importance of expositions in his bibliographical essay under the heading Architecture, National Symbolism, and American Culture. See Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 198. Goad discusses the important role that trade and exposition pavilions played in conveying an Australian identity abroad. See Goad, "Designed Diplomacy," 180.

expressed by historians who have specifically examined world fairs and expositions. As stated by James Gilbert:

For our own age which is so concerned to deconstruct meanings, fairs are consummate texts: they are planned and executed by committees with conflicting agendas and contradictory purposes. By digging deep, we can discover veins of rich symbolic material and lavish deposits of meaning.⁵⁵

As Goad discusses, Australia's pavilions were edifices of commerce, aesthetic experience and national identity and needed to reflect Australian culture, attract global attention and encourage international relations.⁵⁶ It was not until the late 1930s after heavy criticism was levelled at Australia's earlier pavilion designs that it was decided to harness architectural excellence as a way of enhancing the representation of Australia. How this was achieved depended on the viewpoints and ideas of the architectural consultants and exhibition designers that were commissioned by the Australian government. For the 1939-40 New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, the project architect, Frederick Romberg of Stephenson & Turner, engaged with modernism in an effort to communicate Australia's ability to participate in the international conversation surrounding architecture and simultaneously represent an Australia free from imperial ties.⁵⁷ Interestingly, the Australian Pavilion was situated directly opposite the British Pavilion and, as observed by Goad, "seemed to counter every safe move made by the British Pavilion."⁵⁸ Although the pavilion was considered an architectural success, with one Australian trade official commenting that "the best exhibit in the pavilion was the architectural work itself,"⁵⁹ it still relied heavily on large format photos in the exhibition space as a way of representing Australia.

It would not be until the Montreal Exposition of 1967 and the Osaka Exposition of 1970 that the team of Robin Boyd and James MacCormick would express national character

⁵⁵ James Gilbert, "World's Fairs as Historical Events," in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World*, ed. Robert Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 1994), 14.

⁵⁶ Philip Goad, "Australian Pavilions," in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 53.

⁵⁷ Under a scholarship from the Swiss Federal Board of Education Fredrick Romberg arrived in Melbourne in 1938 and secured a position within the architectural practice of Stephenson & Turner. His European Modernist approach to design was recognised by Arthur Stephenson who assigned him as lead architect for the exhibition pavilion project. See Ibid., 54. For a detailed discussion of the work of Romberg see *Frederick Romberg: The Architecture of Migration 1938-1975*, ed. Harriet Edquist (Melbourne: RMIT University Press, 2000).

⁵⁸ Philip Goad, "Collusions of Modernity: Australian Pavilions in New York and Wellington, 1939," *Fabrications* 10 (August 1999): 30.

⁵⁹ Letter, George R Phillip to Arthur Stephenson, 01/12/1939. New Zealand Exhibition S-Z, Vol 249, Stephenson & Turner Collection, Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, quoted in Philip Goad, "Collusions of Modernity," 33.

through the design of both the pavilion and interior spaces.⁶⁰ As Carolyn Barnes and Simon Jackson attest “Australia’s national image was overtly woven around the relationship of modernist cultural expression and technological modernisation.”⁶¹ With a pavilion that cost the Australian government three million dollars, MacCormick created a functional restrained building with an interior by Boyd that visually oscillated between the feel of a “corporate foyer, hotel lobby and the luxury home.”⁶² As Goad summarises:

In Montreal national character was portrayed explicitly as relaxed and informal, read through not just the exhibits, but also through the interior design...Boyd’s use of natural materials, his free arrangement of Featherston’s iconic chairs and even a rear Australian native garden with live kangaroos provided a modernist vernacular that was both casual and urbane.⁶³

In contrast, the three million pound British Pavilion designed by Basil Spence featured a Union Jack lit day and night on a central tower. Although both pavilions were representative of their countries they achieved this through different means. On the one hand, the design of British Pavilion relied on a blend of cultural metaphor and a form that departed from mainstream modernism and leaned towards art and sculpture.⁶⁴ On the other, the Australian Pavilion relied on a more functional architecture that was described as imaginative because of its relationship to the surrounding native landscape.⁶⁵ Interestingly, the British Pavilion received mixed reviews. The British press announced that it projected a poor design image of Britain in comparison to the more contemporary pavilions of other countries, while the local Canadian press commented on its appeal among Expo visitors and its success in promoting Britain as a progressive and youthful nation.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Harriet Edquist highlights the 1962 Australia Pavilion at the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) Fair in Tokyo as a significant precursor to the Montreal Pavilion. The pavilion was designed by Bernard Joyce and George Kral while they were working for the practice of Bogle & Banfield. See Harriet Edquist, “George Kral (1928-1978): Graphic Designer and Interior Designer,” in *RMIT Design Archives Journal* 3, no. 2 (2013): 18.

⁶¹ Carolyn Barnes and Simon Jackson, “‘A Significant Mirror of Progress:’ Modernist Design and Australia Participation at Expo ‘67 and Expo ‘70,” in *Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, Richard Gillespie, Caroline Jordan and Elizabeth Willis (Clayton: Monash University Epress, 2008), 20.1-20.19.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Goad, “Designed Diplomacy,” 180.

⁶⁴ Brian Edwards and Susan Fahy, “The British Pavilion at Expo ‘67: Art Architecture and National Identity,” *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 20, No. 2 (Spring 2007): 254.

⁶⁵ Jeffery Stinson, “Expo Report: Expo-has it future or only a past?,” *Architects’ Journal* 145, no. 23 (7 June 1967): 1353.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 268-272.

Australia's Pavilion at the Osaka exposition in 1970 could be viewed as an extension of the architectural language established by Spence at the Montreal Exposition. Although not relying on an overt form of national symbolism MacCormick's design departed from the stark modernism of earlier pavilions and instead chose to embrace a figurative form that represented Australia as a modern nation through its architectural elegance and innovation. This strategy would continue to underlie Australia's approach to pavilion design into the 21st century.⁶⁷

Literature related to the symbolism of international expositions clearly highlights the significance of representation to government. Parallels can also be drawn in terms of the government's understanding of how architecture can be used as a tool of representation in the design of diplomatic buildings be it, as shown in this thesis, in a more restrained and conservative manner. While some parallels can be drawn the level of politicisation surrounding the construction of pavilions identified by current research is considerably smaller in scale. This is possibly due to the temporary nature of the pavilions which tends to engage a smaller number of client departments and does not involve the considerable oversight and planning that larger, more permanent projects require.

⁶⁷ It should be noted that a number of expositions in subsequent years required entrants to work within pre-designed pavilions. In this case Australia chose to rely on iconic imagery as a way to brand the pavilion as Australian. Expo '74 saw a model of the Sydney Opera House used at the entrance; Expo '82 relied on ten chrome plated wind mills; Expo '84 saw a platypus tondo used and the entrance to the pavilion in Expo '86 was marked by a full-scale replica of America's Cup winner, Australia II, and a four-metre diameter neon kangaroo. The designs of these exhibitions are discussed in "Australia at Three Expositions in North America," *Architecture Australia* 76, no. 1 (January 1987): 46-49.

PART I – TENTATIVE BEGINNINGS

CHAPTER TWO: COMMENCING THE POST-WAR PROGRAMME

This chapter explores the expansion of Australia's diplomatic network immediately after the Second World War and links architecture and politics through an analysis of the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) and its role in developing the first diplomatic building to be built in the Asian region by Australia - the Official Residence for the High Commissioner (1956-1962) in New Delhi. In doing so this chapter will deal with the conflicting priorities of government as it sought to establish an appropriate international image through policy development and architecture at a time of immense political, economic and cultural change within the international arena. To comprehend the political context a discussion surrounding the growth of the Department of External Affairs (DEA) will be presented followed by a description of the government's methods of engagement that were introduced to secure new strategic and trade relations throughout Asia. The section entitled "Architecture as a National Asset" explores the early attempts at opening diplomatic missions and outlines the extent fiscal pressures dominated the government's agenda at a time when the construction of diplomatic premises was considered as extravagant and unnecessary. An examination of the New Delhi project will then be undertaken and will focus on the early master planning of the compound before turning to the development of the Official Residence designed by Joseph Allen Stein. This project will reveal the inexperience of both the DEA and CDW in undertaking construction projects in other countries and contribute to the discussion surrounding the government's early engagement with architecture.

First Steps

Australia's early strategic thinking was dominated by the idea that as a small, isolated nation it potentially could be threatened by more populous nations in the region.¹ Hence early foreign policy was directed at acquiring strong and powerful friends that would help defend Australia.² This inherited need for dependence can be traced back to the

¹ Coral Bell, "The International Environment and Australia's Foreign Policy," in *In Pursuit of National Interests: Australia's Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, ed. F. Mediansky and A. Palfreyman (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1988), 74.

² Senator Gareth Evans, "Australia's Place in the World" (paper presented at the Bicentennial Conference, Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects, Australian National University, 6-9 December 1988), 2.

federation of Australia in 1901, where, as a Dominion of the British Empire,³ the Commonwealth of Australia lacked any independent foreign policy. “National interest was more or less indistinguishable from the imperial interest.”⁴ British foreign policy objectives were accepted by consecutive Australian governments even after it became apparent that a central based imperial policy was not relevant to the majority of the Dominions due to their geographical locations.⁵ While Canada and South Africa chose to expand their diplomatic footprints by opening missions outside their territories, the Bruce government in 1925 still believed Australia’s defence, security and economy benefited from belonging to the Empire, coining the slogan “Empire, Men, Money, Markets.”⁶

Australia instead chose to engage with nations outside the Empire through trade. As discussed by David Dutton, “trade was considered better suited to independent promotion than were the weighty matters of foreign and strategic policy.”⁷ Trading was an important part of Australia’s new found constitution,⁸ however policies such as the White Australia policy and the introduction of considerably high tariffs to protect local manufacturers presented a contradictory image of Australia to the world. This image would begin to shift with the passing of the Statute of Westminster on 11 December 1931 which granted all Dominions extraterritorial powers for the first time, allowing them to pursue their own independent foreign policy. Although Australia did not immediately take advantage of this, support for an Australian diplomacy had begun to be promoted amongst intellectuals in the 1930s, specifically in relation to Asia. Robert Garran, who was responsible for founding Canberra University College which would later become the School of General Studies at the Australian National University, argued for a school of Oriental Studies, stating, “The countries of the Orient are our nearest neighbours, and

³ The term Dominion or having Dominion Status was defined in the 1926 Balfour declaration and was used to describe the autonomous communities within the British Empire. These communities included Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Newfoundland and South Africa as well as the Irish Free State.

⁴ Evans, “Australia’s Place in the World,” 1.

⁵ This was addressed at the Imperial conference of 1923 where it was agreed that Dominion governments could appoint diplomatic representatives to nations outside the Empire.

⁶ Heather Radi, “Bruce, Stanley Melbourne (1883-1960),” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, ed. National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 6 September 2017, <http://adb.nu.edu.au/biography/bruce-stanley-melbourne-5400>.

⁷ David Dutton, “A British Outpost in the Pacific,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 28.

⁸ The Australian Constitution lists “trade and commerce with other countries and among states,” as first under the Chapter V heading: “Powers of the Parliament.” See *Australia’s Constitution with Overview and Notes by the Australian Government Solicitor*, ed. Parliamentary Education Office and Australian Government Solicitor (Canberra: 2010), 14.

we are clearly destined to have a close relationship with them diplomatically, commercially and humanly.”⁹

It was not until 1935 when both the Japanese and Chinese Consul Generals sought to cultivate a political relationship with Australia that it became clear that a stand-alone foreign ministry was needed to engage with the region.¹⁰ This would see the DEA established as a fully autonomous department within the hierarchy of government giving it the means to deal with an increase in international commitments, as well as with the deterioration of relations in the global arena.¹¹ Although previous governments had debated the cost and principles of opening diplomatic missions independent of the Empire the actual process of achieving this highlighted the inadequacies of the new External Affairs Department.¹² With the opening of four legations in 1940 and a further three legations in 1941 it quickly became apparent that the DEA did not have the manning and experience to coordinate its overseas representatives or the ability to formulate a coherent foreign policy.¹³ Foreign policy development was instead left to the newly appointed heads of mission who interestingly were not from the ranks of the DEA but were prominent politicians of the day.

Even though this was an initial step in establishing representation in the international arena it was not until after the Second World War that the DEA’s capabilities would expand considerably as it sought to deal with the decolonisation of the region and move to present a more cohesive Australian foreign policy that focused on Southeast Asia and the perceived communist threat. As the Minister for External Affairs, Richard Casey, explained in his speech to the Australian Institute of International Affairs in 1952:

⁹ David Walker, “Studying the Neighbours: The Asian Collections,” in *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library of Australia’s First 100 Years 1901-2001*, ed. Peter Cochrane (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001), 163.

¹⁰ “Mr R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister, to Lord Caldecote, U.K. Secretary of State Dominion Affairs,” in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49: Volume IV: July 1940-June 1941*, ed. Department of Foreign Affairs (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), No. 1, 3.

¹¹ As a department, the DEA had been established in 1901 before its functions were absorbed by the Prime Ministers Department in 1916. It was granted autonomy in November 1935.

¹² By the end of 1937 Australia was party to 190 treaties with foreign countries and 130 multilateral conventions. The trade dispute with Japan had also demonstrated the difficulties of conducting relations with foreign countries. Increasing tensions in the Pacific region also drove Australia to increase representation. See Shannon L. Smith, “Towards Diplomatic Representation,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 85-86.

¹³ The Diplomatic missions opened in 1940 were located in Washington, D.C., Ottawa, Tokyo and Noumea. The Diplomatic missions opened in 1941 were in Portuguese Timor, Malaya and China. These missions were led by some of Australia’s leading politicians including Richard Casey, John Latham and Frederic Eggleston. See Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, 116-130.

The war had created in Australia a much increased consciousness of our vulnerability and this has been further emphasised by the course of events since. Our decision to play an active part in the United Nations and the final evolution to independent nationhood of the new members of the Commonwealth, India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), made further demands for the extension of Australian representation.¹⁴

As the number of new nations and responsibilities grew so did the demand to expand Australia's overseas representation.¹⁵ In response, the DEA under the leadership of Herbert Evatt began to recruit and train its own people for the first time to fill positions in newly-created sections and divisions which had been structured according to geographical or administrative functions.¹⁶ The new divisions included the Pacific Division, the European Division, the Administrative and General Division, the American and Middle East Divisions and the United Nations and International Organisations Division. By 1948, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, Pakistan and India had all declared independence from their colonial masters putting pressure on the government to open further dialogue.¹⁷ In response, the Chifley government sent William MacMahon Ball, a prominent academic and diplomat, on a goodwill mission to Southeast Asia to establish links with the nationalist movements and to offer educational, technical and medical assistance in an effort to promote Australia as a friend in the region.

The tour would highlight a conflict in government priorities and an emerging tension between the 'new' DEA and other more established government departments.¹⁸ While

¹⁴ Minister for External Affairs Rt. Hon. R.G. Casey, "The Conduct of Australian Foreign Policy," (paper presented at The Australian Institute of International Affairs: The Third Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Brisbane, 25 September 1952), 18.

¹⁵ Of the 28 embassies established worldwide between 1940-1949, twelve were located in the Asian region further underlining the importance given to Asia by the Australian government. See Beaumont, "The Champagne Trail?", 156.

¹⁶ Evatt established the Diplomatic Cadet scheme in late 1942. The scheme saw an increase in staff numbers from a total of 28 in 1939 to 210 in 1946. The scheme was abandoned in 1956 and a relevant university degree was cited as a minimum for entrants. For further information see Joan Beaumont, "Creating an Elite? The Diplomatic Cadet Scheme, 1943-56," in *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969*, ed. Joan Beaumont, Christopher Waters, David Lowe and Garry Woodard (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003), 19-44.

¹⁷ In 1945 there were three Asian nations - China, the Philippines and India - in the United Nations. By 1969 there were sixteen Asian nation members. See UN website accessed 17 May 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/member-states/growth-united-nations-membership-1945-present/index.html>

¹⁸ The DEA was considered the new arrival on the bureaucratic scene and was well behind other departments such as Trade, Defence, Immigration and the Treasury in establishing its influence on foreign policy development. The Department of Trade was in direct competition with the DEA at the time and had administered its own commercial representation overseas since 1935. The Department of Trade negotiated the Japanese Trade agreement without the

the tour advocated for friendship based on a policy of engagement this was in direct contrast with the Department of Immigration's administration and enforcement of the White Australia Policy. During the Malayan/Singapore leg of the journey the Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, announced the deportation of fourteen Malayan and Indonesian families who had been residing in Australia since the start of the war.¹⁹ This infuriated many, with the Progressive Party of Singapore labelling any intention of goodwill on Australia's behalf "a mockery."²⁰ Although the success of the mission was reported by Ball as being mixed because of the White Australia Policy debacle and the Chifley government's selectivity in supporting independence movements,²¹ it still provided a basis for future policy direction in Asia and highlighted Australia's position in world affairs. As Ball concluded:

I believe that Australia has a unique opportunity here. While she may be unable to contribute much to power and politics she can, if she has the will, provide indispensable aid and intellectual leadership. These countries do not fear her because of her great power as they fear the United States. They do not resent her as they resent European nations for their past or present imperialist ambitions. The countries we visited feel that they can get from Australia the things they most need without risking their political or economic independence.²²

A telegram circulated to all diplomatic posts in 1949 reinforced this new attitude to foreign policy and stressed the best means in establishing a base for lasting relations in Southeast Asia was through economic development, improving living standards and

DEA's knowledge in 1957. For further examples see *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats*, 17-18, 54-58.

¹⁹ Christopher Waters, "The Macmahon Ball Mission to East Asia 1948," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 40, no. 3 (December 1994): 358.

²⁰ "Malaya Hostile to Goodwill Mission From Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 June 1948, 1.

²¹ Although the government readily supported independence from the Dutch in Indonesia even going as far as being Indonesia's representative on the United Nations Good Offices Committee it did not do the same for the Vietnamese out of fear for damaging relations with France who held a veto on the United Nations Security Council. Prime Minister Chifley also refused to recognise the new military government in Thailand after it had seized power in a military coup and was hesitant in supporting independence in Singapore and Malay because of the security that British military forces based in both countries provided. For an expanded discussion see both Waters, "The Macmahon Ball Mission," 351-363 and Christopher Waters, "War, Decolonisation and Postwar Security," in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 121-125.

²² William MacMahon Ball, "Report on a Mission to East Asia May 27-July 6, 1948," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49: Volume XIV, The Commonwealth, Asia and the Pacific 1948-1949*, ed. Pamela Andrea and Department of Foreign Affairs (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), No. 162, 314.

promoting the growth of democracy through education.²³ This policy direction was supported by the returning Menzies government although the Minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender, believed that for Australia to truly shape events in the Pacific, Indonesia and the Far East it needed to adopt a more forceful approach and align its policy direction with American thinking in foreign policy, economic development and defence strategy.²⁴ The launch of Spender's Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia in 1950 would in Spender's mind bridge this gap. The plan would see Australia invest £31.25 million over a six-year period and allow students from Asia to study at Australian universities.²⁵ As Casey would later attest, the experiences and knowledge that these students would glean from an Australian education would breakdown prejudices on both sides and allow these students to return home with an impressionable view of Australia.²⁶ The scheme was considered a success in strengthening ties, however Spender had reservations about the effectiveness that economic aid would have in stopping the ideological spread of Communism in the region and instead used the Colombo Plan as a precursor to securing American military involvement in the Southeast Asian region through the ANZUS treaty.²⁷

Shortly after succeeding Spender in 1951 Casey undertook a tour of Southeast Asia believing that "it was in the battle for the minds of the new nations of Asia" that the defence of Australia could be achieved.²⁸ As David Lowe discusses, Casey had incredible foresight and differed from his predecessor by acknowledging the need for Australia to act as an involved party in Asian affairs and not merely as a pawn of allied strategy determined by the American and British focus on the Cold War in Europe.²⁹ To accomplish this the DEA embarked on a propaganda campaign to encourage the newly independent nations of the region to look towards the West and away from the Communist bloc. A number of cultural, information and exchange programmes were

²³ "Department of External Affairs to Posts, Canberra 10 November 1949, 7:45pm, Cablegram unnumbered," in *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49: Volume XIV, The Commonwealth, Asia and the Pacific 1948-1949*, ed. Pamela Andrea and Department of Foreign Affairs (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), No. 132, 267.

²⁴ David Lowe, *Australian Between Empires: The Life of Percy Spender* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 101-102.

²⁵ For a complete history of the development of the plan and its impacts on ties with the region see Daniel Oakman, *Facing Asia: A History of the Colombo Plan* (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2004).

²⁶ Casey, "The Conduct of Australian Foreign Policy," 24.

²⁷ David Lowe, "Percy Spender and the Colombo Plan 1950," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 40, no. 2 (August 1994): 162-176.

²⁸ Christopher Waters, "A Failure of the Imagination: R. G. Casey and Australian Plans for Counter-subversion in Asia, 1954-1956," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 45, no. 3 (September 1999): 350.

²⁹ David Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle': Australia's Cold War 1948-1954* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 82-83.

launched in addition to the Colombo Plan with the goal of influencing the people of Asia and promoting Australia as a free democratic society. These programmes included the release of the magazine *Hemisphere*, the launch of the Asian visits scheme and an expansion of Australia's overseas information activities including an increase in funding for Radio Australia. In a clear attempt to control content, all programmes in the campaign projected an idealistic image of life in Australia and noticeably avoided any discussion of the White Australia policy or Australian military involvement in Asia.³⁰

With the increase in new propaganda initiatives targeting the Asian region the establishment of further diplomatic missions was needed to bolster communications and provide a point of contact for local communities. As discussed by historian Joan Beaumont, the projection of an Australian presence internationally and regionally during this time was only possible because of the network of posts that the DEA had established.³¹ The impact Casey's focus on Asia had on the development of Australia's overseas network becomes clear when the location of Australia's diplomatic posts is analysed. During Casey's nine-year term as Minister for External Affairs fourteen new missions were opened; 50 per cent were opened in Asia with the other 50 per cent of missions being divided between Europe (five missions) and the Middle East (two missions).³² Geographically, the posts in Asia were located in Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Indo-China, as well as Colombo and Karachi. The DEA staffing levels also grew considerably under Casey increasing to 393 staff with 118 personnel being posted overseas.³³

Although the DEA was expanding rapidly the estimates for the allocation of funding did not demonstrate the government's commitment to engagement and instead reflected a pre-war attitude to foreign affairs which positioned the DEA at the lower end of the bureaucratic pecking order in Canberra.³⁴ This is evident in the 1952-1953 estimates where a total of £1,851,000 was proposed for the operation of the DEA. This amount was considerably lower than the funding allocated to the more traditional departments of government such as the Department of the Treasury which was allotted £9,661,000 and the Prime Minister's Department which received £2,016,000.³⁵ This resulted in the DEA communicating to all overseas posts that the budget allocation for equipment needs in

³⁰ Waters, "A Failure of the Imagination," 347-361.

³¹ Beaumont, "The Champagne Trail?" 154.

³² *Ibid.*, 156.

³³ Casey, "The Conduct of Australian Foreign Policy," 18.

³⁴ Harris, "Australia Change and Adaption," 25.

³⁵ Estimates 1952-1953 Department of External Affairs Speech, 28 August, 1952, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 35.

1952-1953 would be limited to £300 and that only the most essential items could be provided.³⁶ It was revealed in Parliament some years later that it was cheaper to rent and operate all twelve embassies in Asia at a cost of £625,000 per annum than to run Australia's only purpose built High Commission in London, Australia House, at an annual cost of £868,000 per annum.³⁷ This disparity reflected the ongoing struggle the DEA had in establishing any form of influence over the levels of funding accorded to representation and would ultimately lead to the government adopting the most cost effective solution when establishing missions overseas.

Architecture as a National Asset

Although one can be critical of the government's reliance on leased buildings as a means of housing diplomatic missions, the government's initial approach can be justified in its need to establish a diplomatic presence quickly in an environment that was undergoing immense change after the Second World War. Even though many of the buildings that were leased overseas were well below the standard that was provided to public servants in Canberra at the time, it must be understood that it was problematic to obtain accommodation due to an increase in demand and a limited supply of building stock. This forced many governments to lease buildings for their diplomatic representatives that were designed at best for residential purposes.

An examination of the correspondence between Australia's overseas posts and the DEA in Canberra highlights the poor working conditions and the shortage of suitable accommodation to house staff and offices in the Asian region. One of the earliest discussions was recorded in 1946 in a letter between the High Commissioner of India, Iven Mackay, and the then Acting Minister for External Affairs, Ben Chifley. The High Commissioner cites an article published in the Indian newspaper, *The Statesman*, titled "New Delhi Housing Woes; Congestion, Requisitioning and Slow Motion Building" as a way of underlining the national problem of obtaining suitable accommodation in India.³⁸

³⁶ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 4, Premises Tokyo-Building Programme, 1959-1961; letter from J. Kevin Department of External Affairs to E. Walker Ambassador Australian Embassy Tokyo, 6 August 1952.

³⁷ Estimates 1959-1960 Department of External Affairs Speech, 3 September 1959, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 36.

³⁸ The article discusses the expected influx of 10,000 people to New Delhi as a factor in the accommodation shortage. This influx was partly due to the arrival of the new members of the constitutional assembly. The article also discusses the limited supply of building materials and the fact that no new dwellings had been built during the Second World War. See Staff Reporter,

His letter emphasises the need for Australia to enter into an arrangement that would secure its future accommodation in India and concludes by recommending the government give immediate thought to replacing the existing chancery by constructing a new chancery and official residence with a “distinctive Australian character.”³⁹ Similar sentiments were also expressed in relation to the Djakarta mission with a memorandum from the Second Secretary, Hugh Gilchrist, attributing the shortage of suitable buildings for rent to an increase in the population of Djakarta from 500,000 in 1942 to over two million in 1951.⁴⁰

The lack of suitable office and residential accommodation was brought to the attention of the Treasury in 1950 when Spender noted “that wherever possible, Australia should own her own Embassies and Legations.”⁴¹ The Treasury however would continue to maintain control over the expenditure of the DEA and supported the Public Service Board (PSB) setting rental ceilings and standards for posts over endorsing a policy of purchasing property. As discussed by former Ambassador to Japan, Alan Watt, the difficulty with the Treasury’s approach was applying the PSB standards uniformly to various foreign cities where a limited supply of prescribed houses existed or were available to rent.⁴² This often forced diplomats to live in hotels for long periods which, although more expensive, was at the time considered acceptable by the Treasury as the rental ceilings were still maintained. This was the case in New Delhi where it was estimated that accommodating staff in hotels was costing the government £10,000 per annum.⁴³

“New Delhi Housing Woes; Congestion, Requisitioning and Slow Motion Building,” *The Statesman* (New Delhi), 17 August, 1946, 2.

³⁹ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/4 Part 1, Premises New Delhi-Building Project, 1945-1953; letter from Iven Mackay High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to J. Chifley acting Minister of State Department of External Affairs, 23 August 1946.

⁴⁰ It was also noted that after the new independent government was formed in Indonesia additional housing was needed to accommodate the 3000 public servants. See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 1, Djakarta Building Proposals-Chancery, 1947-1959; memorandum from H. Gilchrist Second Secretary Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Embassy Housing.”

⁴¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, letter from P.C Spender Minister External Affairs to A.S Watt Secretary Department of External Affairs, 19 September 1950.

⁴² Alan Watt and Australian Institute for International Affairs, *Australian Diplomat: Memoirs of Sir Alan Watt* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson in association with the Australian Institute for International Affairs, 1972), 274.

⁴³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/4 Part 3, Premises New Delhi-Building Project, 1953-1954; letter from J.

The newly appointed Casey returned from his tour of Asia in 1951 with firsthand experience of the conditions which diplomats were being subjected and wrote a letter to the Treasury urging that funding be given for the construction of new diplomatic premises in New Delhi and Tokyo in the 1952 estimates. In the letter he stated that he was “anxious that Australian representation, especially in our own region, be housed in a way that is reasonably comparable to other missions.”⁴⁴ This prompted the Treasury to send a representative to Japan in 1952 to enquire into the various matters that were affecting Australian representation. The resulting report estimated that the cost of rental accommodation in Japan was £18,750 per annum and noted that it was expected to double the following year after the Treaty of Peace had come into force.⁴⁵ The report attributed the high rental costs to the increasing diplomatic community and the limited supply of Western style housing available in Japan and recommended that it would be more economical in the long run to build suitable housing.⁴⁶

This forced the Treasury to act and to provide funding to the DEA to develop a number of staff bungalows in both New Delhi and in Tokyo. The DEA hoped that this would alleviate the accommodation shortages and reduce the excessive rental costs. The allocated funding did not cover the cost for the development of chanceries even though continued correspondence highlighted the need for suitable premises.

A memorandum from the First Secretary in Djakarta, Neil Truscott, to the DEA in 1955 discusses the dilapidated condition of the 80-year-old Dutch Colonial-style bungalow which was requisitioned as a chancery in Djakarta in 1947 (Figure 2.1):

One of the reasons why the Australian embassy is so often regarded as the poor relation is the building which houses our chancery. It is not good for the morale of the office staff if they are obliged to work in a building of which they

Waller Department of External Affairs to the Minister, “Australian High Commission, New Delhi,” 25 August 1953.

⁴⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, letter from R.G Casey Minister Department of External Affairs to A. Fadden Treasurer Department of the Treasury, 6 September 1951.

⁴⁵ Most diplomatic premises were procured under demand from the Japanese by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers at the conclusion of the War in the Pacific. Article 6 of the Treaty of Peace with Japan stated that any property procured under demand would have to be returned to the Japanese within a period of 90 days after the Treaty came into effect. For rental estimates in Tokyo see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, “Premises held under procurement (1951)-Australian Mission in Japan Tokyo. For a reading of Article 6 see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, letter from the Diplomatic Section General Headquarters Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to the Australian Mission in Japan Tokyo, 25 February 1952.

⁴⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, memorandum to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, “Australian Embassy in Japan,” 10 September 1952.

are ashamed, nor does the old building help in any way our relations with the Indonesians or with other embassies.⁴⁷

Although the memorandum conceded that nothing could be done because of the expensive nature of constructing a new building the letter concluded by stating that ultimately Australia should follow the British example and build a suitable premises in the future.⁴⁸



Figure 2.1. Australian Chancery, Djakarta, 1962, entrance.

The reference to the construction of a new chancery by the British government reveals a rising sense of frustration by Australia's overseas posts at the lack of forward planning and management by the Australian government. Land designated for the development of overseas missions was starting to become available in many of the new capitals in the region prompting several nations to actively undertake programmes of construction to establish new buildings. Australia had missed opportunities to purchase land in New

⁴⁷ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/11 Part 1, Djakarta-Chancery Pengansaan Barat 14, 1947-1959; memorandum from Neil Truscott First Secretary Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Djakarta," 31 May 1955.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Delhi in 1947 and in Djakarta in 1952 because of cost concerns, complicated administrative processes and policy direction.⁴⁹

A proposal to develop a new chancery in Djakarta was examined by the Treasury in December 1953 however funding was refused because of the high cost of construction.⁵⁰ Similarly, the need to construct suitable office accommodation in Tokyo had become apparent after concerns were raised about the efficiency and the security of having the existing makeshift chancery operating over four different buildings. An initial concept had been developed as early as 1951 by renowned architect Antonin Raymond. This had been rejected by the Treasury as it was seen to be “too elaborate and too expensive.”⁵¹

The Treasury recognised that there was a problem with office accommodation and agreed that with an increase in staffing in a number of posts it was likely to become “more acute.”⁵² However the need for economy drove the Treasury to focus on reducing rental

⁴⁹ The Raja of Faridkot offered his centrally located block in New Delhi to the Australian government in exchange for a block of land to build on in Australia and permission to emigrate. The proposal was put forward by the Australian High Commissioner Iven Mackay who believed that such an exchange would be to Australia's advantage as it would allow Australia to build a chancery and accommodation on the same block of land. This offer was refused by the Australian government because of the White Australia Policy and resulted in Australia having to wait until 1952 to acquire land. See Nayantra Pothan, “Diplomatic Despatches from New Delhi The Australian High Commission and the Australian-India Relationship 1946-1947,” in *India and Australia: Bridging Different Worlds*, ed. Brian Stoddart and Auriol Weigold (New Delhi: Readworthy Publications, 2011), 41-54.

⁵⁰ This decision was made shortly after the September investigation by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts into the New Delhi project in 1953-1954. See NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 1, Djakarta Building Proposals-Chancery, (1947-1959).

⁵¹ Colonel William Hodgson, the Australian Ambassador to Japan, originally commissioned a master plan and sketch plan for a new chancery from Czech-born architect Antonin Raymond. These plans were shown to Casey in 1951 during his Asian tour however were rejected by the Treasury. Alan Watt, who had accompanied Casey, noted that “since that date everyone has assumed that Raymond – in my opinion the only reputable and reliable foreign architect that I know in Tokyo - cannot be used. He is an individualist, a stylist and expensive.” Raymond & Magonigle had been used by the US as early as 1925 to develop the US embassy compound in Japan (completed in 1931). Raymond & Rado were later used by the US to develop Perry House, a seven-storey apartment complex to house US staff (completed in 1953). This was the first multi storey concrete building in Japan. The practice was also used to design the US Djakarta embassy which was completed in 1957. For Australia's commissioning of Raymond and Watt's comments see National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 3, Premises Tokyo-Building Programme, 1958-1959; letter from A. Watt Ambassador Australian Embassy Tokyo to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Proposed Chancery Building,” 24 September 1958. For a discussion of the projects Raymond completed for the US building programme see Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, 25-26, 79-84, 144-145.

⁵² NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 3, letter from C. Hewitt First Assistant Secretary the Department of the Treasury to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Tokyo-Building Programme,” 3 December 1958.

expenses and to continue to reject proposals to construct new chanceries in favour of residential premises, with C. Hewitt, First Assistant Secretary noting:

The department should bear in mind when planning ahead that in respect to Tokyo, residential accommodation will compete favourably with other proposals for the availability of funds.⁵³

The building of residential premises was now becoming an accepted course of action however how the development of these buildings would be administered was yet to be resolved. A meeting was held between the Treasury, CDW and the DEA in 1953 to focus on the proposed building programme in New Delhi, Djakarta and Tokyo. The CDW had previously undertaken work for the DEA as early as 1946 by conducting investigations into the suitability of proposed sites as well as giving recommendations in regards to plans that had been drawn up by foreign architects.⁵⁴ Although the CDW was the primary department concerned with the design and supervision of all architectural and engineering works for the government it had limited experience undertaking full design and construction programmes overseas.⁵⁵ After discussions were held with the Head of Missions (HOM) responsible for each overseas mission that were slated for redevelopment, the CDW recommended to the Treasury that they act in the capacity of technical advisor to interpret the accommodation requirements of the DEA at each location. The CDW also recommended that local practising architects be commissioned for full design and supervisory services in Djakarta and Tokyo, however it believed that sketch plans for the New Delhi project be developed in Australia by the CDW before being handed over to a local architect in India.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Commonwealth of Australia Department of Works, "Overseas Projects," *Works Review* 6 (1965-1966), 30.

⁵⁵ The exact definition of the CDW responsibilities in 1945 reads as "design, estimate of cost, supervision and execution of all architectural and engineering works (both capital and maintenance) for the Commonwealth government." This is listed in the "Order in Relation to the Functions of the Department of Works and Housing," *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 149 (2 August 1945): 1956-1957. This definition was later changed when the functions orders were superseded by the Administrative Arrangements orders. The functions of the Department of Works in 1958 are summarised as the "Planning and Execution of Commonwealth Works." See "Administrative Arrangements," *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* 25 (24 April 1958): 1337.

⁵⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, letter from L. Loder Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, "Department of External Affairs: Proposed Overseas Works Programme," 9 November 1953.

New Delhi - A Question of Style

The construction of the High Commissioner's Residence in New Delhi can be considered as the first major project undertaken by the government in its effort to develop purpose built diplomatic premises overseas since the completion of Australia House in 1918. As noted in a memorandum to the Secretary of External Affairs in 1951 it was the "Most considerable venture in foreign building on which the Australian government has so far embarked."⁵⁷ An analysis of the archive files however reveals a twenty-year story that was plagued by delays, cost overruns and administrative issues that would ultimately inform how the New Delhi, Djakarta and Tokyo Chancery building programmes were approached by the both the CDW and the DEA.⁵⁸ As the first project to be undertaken in the advancement of a suitable Australian image overseas, the question of style was a prominent topic in correspondence between all parties involved and as such will also be a focus of this section.

This building programme was initiated to alleviate the accommodation shortages that had been documented by High Commissioner Mackay. In response the CDW sent the Director of Works for South Australia, Wilfred Haslam,⁵⁹ on a four-day investigative tour of New Delhi in 1947 to measure the feasibility of undertaking a programme of construction that would include the development of a HOM residence, a block of offices and staff accommodation in the Indian capital.⁶⁰ Haslam would discuss the suitability of earlier plans that had been submitted to the DEA by Henry Rolland, Director of Architecture at the Department of Works in Melbourne in 1946, with the High Commissioner and the New Delhi planning authority. These plans were based on the Australian government being allotted a six-acre site by the Indian authorities in a district that had been reserved for foreign embassies. Rolland's plans had developed from sketch plans that had been drawn by Charles Blomfield of the practice Blomfield Brothers Architects of Delhi, who as a respected British architect had designed the Imperial Forest Research Institute (1929), Bikaner House (1931) and Jaipur House (1938) in India.⁶¹

⁵⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from F. Stuart First Secretary Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Buildings for High Commission, New Delhi," 29 November 1951.

⁵⁸ This is discussed in Chapter Three: "Djakarta, Tokyo, New Delhi."

⁵⁹ For a bibliographical discussion on Wilfred Haslam see Alison McDougall, "Architects of South Australia," Architecture Museum, University of South Australia, 2008, <http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au>; Julie Willis, "Haslam, W.T.," in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis, 317.

⁶⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 23 January 1947.

⁶¹ For more details on Charles Blomfield see Giles Tillotson, "CG Blomfield, Last Architect of the Raj," *South Asian Studies* 24, No.1 (24 August 2010): 133-139. For more details on the

Haslam's report captures the changing attitude towards the Colonial style of architecture in India that reflected India's move towards independence. In his report Haslam noted that the elevational treatment of the major residential buildings was English in character with Roman Doric columns and entablatures based on traditional classical proportions.⁶² This Haslam suggested was due to the private architects in New Delhi coming from England and maintaining the "canons of English architectural tradition."⁶³ In compiling his report Haslam undertook a tour of the residential area of New Delhi and observed that the scale of the residences constructed under British rule were considerably larger than in Australia to meet the climatic conditions and to establish an acceptable social standing in a country preoccupied with prestige and 'face'.⁶⁴ It was noted that the majority of residences employed the use of colonnades that stretched the length of the building and were designed to be no more than one room deep to provide adequate cross ventilation. This resulted in buildings of considerable length with outdoor spaces that were used more for circulation than relaxation. In the report Haslam concluded that this was no longer a viable architectural solution as labour and material costs had risen because of extreme shortages.⁶⁵ This view was also supported by the Chief Architect of the Central Public Works Department in New Delhi who agreed in an interview with Haslam:

We are now at a turning point with regard to the design and construction of buildings in New Delhi and that the spacious palace type of design erected for residences prior to the war would have to undergo considerable revision and change to meet the drastically altered circumstances of the present day.⁶⁶

To reiterate this Haslam contrasted the Colonial style with examples of non-traditional types of buildings that employed modern elevational design. In doing this he referred to the residence of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, "Teen Murti Bhavan" (1930), originally designed by Robert Tor Russell for the Commander in Chief of the British Indian Army and the residence of Mohammad Ali Jinnah "South Court" (1936) designed by Claude Batley of Bombay based Gregson, Batley & King as the possible

development of earlier plans see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, correspondence between Iven Mackay and Henry Rolland.

⁶² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, "Proposed Accommodation for High Commissioner, New Delhi, India-(Your Reference B.1456)-Visit to New Delhi, Jan. 20th to Jan. 24th, 1947."

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

future of architecture in India.⁶⁷ The report concluded with a table of meteorological data to highlight the extreme climatic conditions that were prevalent in New Delhi and noted the only comparison that could be made would be by combining the conditions of Alice Springs with the worst conditions of Darwin. For Haslam, this provided a major problem in architectural design. On his return, Haslam prepared a number of drawings, however these were rejected on the grounds that the proposed six-acre site was no longer suitable and that the whole project was only under consideration.⁶⁸

With the acquisition of a twelve-acre site in Chanakya Puri in September 1952 a new concept was needed that in the DEA's words "should reflect some traditional Australian style."⁶⁹ The site was considered one of the best in the new quarter and was bordered by what were to be the British and Pakistan embassies and located across from the proposed American embassy building (Figures 2.2 and 2.3).

⁶⁷ Ibid. For a further discussion on the architectural firms practicing at the time in New Delhi refer to Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, *Architecture & Independence the Search for Identity - India 1880 to 1980* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 140-149.

⁶⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from the Secretary to H. Rolland Director of Architecture Department of Works and Housing Melbourne and W. Haslam Director of Works Department of Works and Housing Adelaide, 6 May 1947.

⁶⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, teleprint message from the Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works and Housing, 6 December 1951.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 2.2. Map of all buildings and developments under Central Public Works Department supervision in Greater Delhi, 1955, diplomatic quarter outlined in red.



Figure 2.3. Map of diplomatic quarter showing site allocations, 1955.

Communication between the DEA and the new High Commissioner, Herbert Gollan, centred on the use of a “Greenway” design to represent Australian interests in New Delhi. Early correspondence from the DEA to Gollan refers to Francis Greenway’s work and cites George Beiers’ publication *Houses of Australia: A Survey of Domestic Architecture* as a key text that provides examples of an Australian architectural tradition.⁷⁰ Contrary to the recommendations in Haslam’s report the letter discusses the use of “lofty ceilings, large airy rooms, simple design, and pillared entrances and verandahs”⁷¹ as a way of providing a building of suitable appearance that would harmonise with the architectural traditions established under British rule. To demonstrate what could be achieved the

⁷⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, letter from J. Kevin Department of External Affairs to H. Gollan High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi, 28 November 1951.

⁷¹ Ibid.

letter refers to the illustrations of Old Government House in Parramatta as well as Camden Park in Beiers' publication.⁷²

This suggestion was supported by Francis Stuart, the First Secretary of the New Delhi High Commission, who noted in correspondence to the Secretary of the DEA that it was important that the group of buildings should possess a unity that would both enhance the impressiveness of the compound as a whole and be representative of the dignity and solidity of a diplomatic mission. To achieve this, he recommended that the HOM residence be at the centre of the design and that the other buildings be situated around it, referring to the Brian Lewis design for the new National University of Canberra campus where the buildings, as Stuart notes, have been designed in "a sort of modern Australian colonial style."⁷³ These discussions demonstrate a desire by the DEA to represent Australia through the use of an appropriate Australian architecture however also reflect the government's continued support of the British Empire by referencing aspects of colonial architecture. How the building was to be constructed had only been touched upon in the initial discussions between the DEA and the High Commissioner. As Gollan infers in a letter to the DEA:

What concerns me at the moment in this matter is that we are all of us amateurs, insofar as building and construction is concerned. We know what we want, but the business of getting it has to be placed in expert hands, both from the point of view of design and construction, and from the point of view of Government finance. The sooner we can move from the amateur to the expert phase the better.⁷⁴

After advice was sought from the British Ministry of Works it was decided by the DEA and Gollan that the best approach would be to send an Australian architect to New Delhi to draw up plans on the spot so the conditions could be properly assessed.⁷⁵ To fulfil

⁷² George Beiers, *Houses of Australia: A Survey of Domestic Architecture* (Sydney: Ure Smith Pty. Limited, 1948), 20-21.

⁷³ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from F. Stuart to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 29 November 1951.

⁷⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, letter from H. Gollan High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to J. Kevin Department of External Affairs, 12 December 1951.

⁷⁵ The British Ministry of Works had originally contracted Herbert Rowse to plan the British High Commission in February 1951. His proposal was to design a modified Queen Anne style building at a cost of £1 million. After falling sick Rowse was replaced by the Ministry of Works Architect R. Mills in 1953 who developed a new design based on the characteristics of regional Indian architecture receiving praise in *The Architectural Review* for its "worthy contribution to modern architecture abroad." See J. Richards, "Criticism: Building for the Foreign Service," *The Architectural Review* 119, no. 713 (June 1956): 342. For a discussion between the High Commissioner H Gollan and The British Ministry of Works see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from H. Gollan High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Diplomatic Enclave-New Delhi," 4 October 1951. For

this request the CDW sent Design Architect, Clive Osborne from Major Projects, to New Delhi to master plan what the DEA hoped would be an attractive compound that would gain a favourable impression in the international community.⁷⁶ The compound was to contain an official residence, chancery, residence for the first secretary, three staff houses, single officers' quarters, servant's quarters and a number of garages. Osborne quickly ascertained that there was a lack of firms with the experience or knowledge to construct the buildings required and noted the need for a local architect to supervise the construction process.

On returning to Australia Osborne produced a master plan as well as sketch plans of the individual buildings in the compound (Figures 2.4 and 2.5). Completed in October 1952 the initial planning by Osborne reflected his belief that a project of this kind should be monumental in nature.⁷⁷ Osborne's concept positioned the HOM residence in the centre of the block with the main thoroughfare leading to a colonnaded porte-cochere that drew some resemblance to the classical porch designed by Greenway for the Old Government House in Parramatta (1820).⁷⁸ The chancery itself was positioned at right angles to the HOM residence and was subservient visually to the main residence echoing a historical understanding of the "embassy" as an adaption of the urban villa and the only form of representation that a nation possessed.⁷⁹ The four staff bungalows, staff hostel and first secretary's residence were positioned at an angle to the main road reflecting the classical principles of planning that governed the layout of New Delhi. Although formal in nature the concept did not compete with the monumentality of Lutyens' architecture and instead referenced Australia through an interpretation of a Colonial homestead archetype; an approach that had been used by both the US and Britain in establishing missions overseas.

a discussion on the historical development of the British High Commission in New Delhi see Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy*, 276-283.

⁷⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum, "Accommodation for the Australian High Commission at New Delhi," 4 July 1950.

⁷⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, memorandum from J. Waller Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, 18 February 1954.

⁷⁸ George Beiers, *Houses of Australia*, 20.

⁷⁹ While traditionally the Head of Mission (HOM) residence or the official residence was the only building needed to represent and house a nation's diplomatic mission the increase in administrative duties saw the chancery annex develop and eventually superseded the HOM residence in its representative role. As analysed by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, the operational context of Australia's embassy buildings has seen the urban villa typology programmatically dismantled into separate buildings; the HOM residence, chancery, staff accommodation and recreation facilities. See Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 86-89.

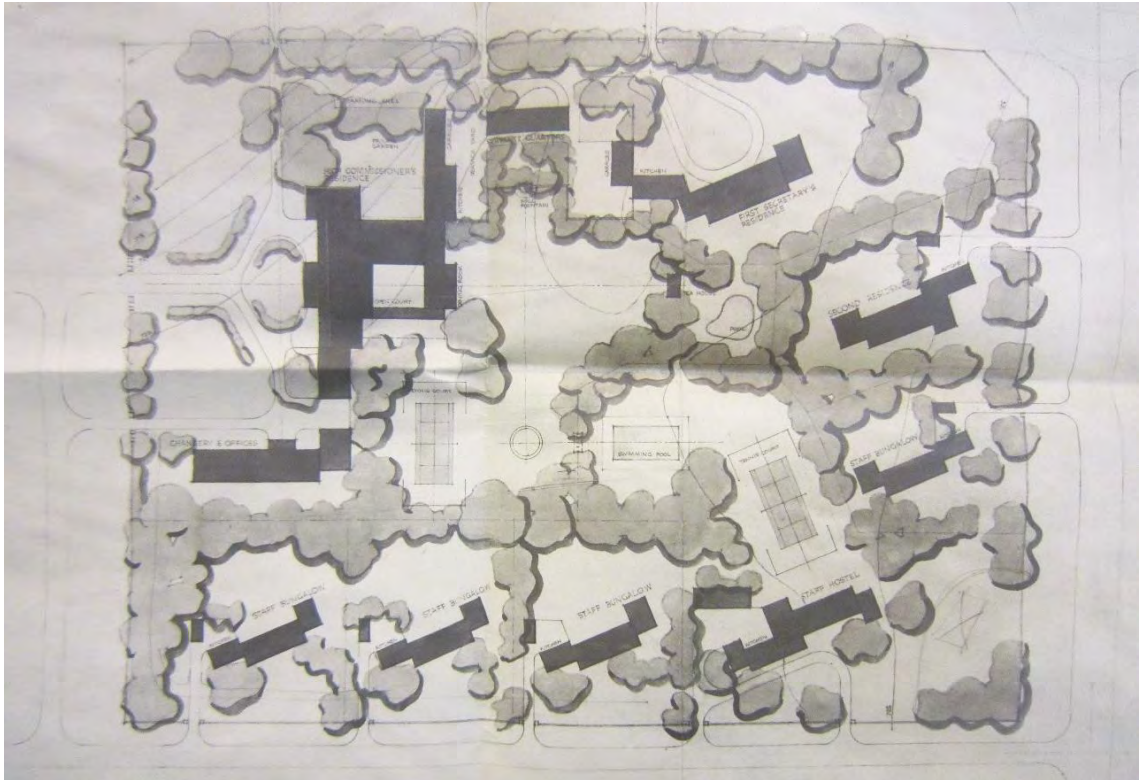


Figure 2.4. Clive Osborne, Australian High Commission Compound, New Delhi, sketch site layout, 1952.



Figure 2.5. Clive Osborne, Australian High Commission Compound, New Delhi, perspective sketch of layout from north-west, 1952.

The DEA were “well satisfied” with Osborne’s design and even recommended that Osborne travel to Tokyo to undertake master planning of the newly purchased site

there.⁸⁰ The Treasury however disagreed, rejecting the New Delhi master plan on the basis that it was too liberal in scale and not appropriate for Australia's needs. Casey agreed labelling the design as "much too lavish."⁸¹ In order to alleviate the high rental costs the Treasury provided funding to construct the four bungalows and recommended that the remainder of the plan be revisited at a later date.⁸²

The CDW commissioned Walter George, a practicing British architect who had followed Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker to New Delhi in 1915, to supervise the construction of the bungalows based on plans that had been prepared by the CDW in Melbourne in February 1953.⁸³ The experience George had gained as a resident assistant under Baker and in his collaboration with Lutyens demonstrated the difficulties in constructing buildings in India. This fact escaped the CDW which complained of George's slowness and lack of supervision in seeing the project through and called for him to be replaced with a more capable architect.⁸⁴ In September 1953, after the completion date for the bungalows passed with little visible signs of progress on site, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts was tasked to undertake an investigation into the New Delhi project. In their sixteenth report it was recommended that a system of regular inspections of overseas posts by a qualified officer be introduced and that the New Delhi project be scaled down and reviewed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, memorandum from C. Hartley to the Australian Embassy Tokyo, "Embassy Compound," 29 September 1952.

⁸¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, memorandum from J. Waller Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, 27 October 1953.

⁸² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, memorandum from J. Waller Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, "New Delhi-Building Project," 3 December 1953.

⁸³ As noted by Peter Scriver and Amit Srivastava, Walter George and the work of other residential assistants were responsible for melding the monumentality of the New Delhi Capitol complex with more "normative building types." During his time in India George designed Bhawalapur House (1927), Kashmir House in conjunction with Lutyens (1929), St Stephen's College (1938-1959) and the Tuberculosis Association of India Building (1950-1952). For a discussion of the role and work of the residential assistants see Peter Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), 81-88; For a discussion of Walter George's work see Richard Butler, "The Anglo-Indian Architect Walter Sykes George (1881-1962): A Modernist Follower of Lutyens," *Architectural History* 55 (2012): 237-268.

⁸⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, memorandum from the Official Secretary to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Building Programme," 2 December 1953.

⁸⁵ It was later revealed that because the project was to be built in stages Parliament was not aware of the total expenditure on the project until after the investigation. When the total cost was discovered both the press and members of Parliament questioned the need to build. This prompted the DEA to reassess how future projects were planned. For the recommendations of the report see Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Sixth Report of the Committee (7th September 1953)-Department of External Affairs," in *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, Sixteenth Report Treasury Minutes on Reports of the 152-54 Joint Committee of Public Accounts* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1954), 13-14. For a discussion of Parliament's lack of knowledge on the project see NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 1, Restricted Cablegram 238 from

In his defence, George sent a letter in which he highlighted the deficiencies of the department and the need for the CDW to alter its approach in managing overseas projects by either designing and supervising the projects themselves or commissioning local architects for full architectural services:

The contractors and workmen here are so inefficient by our standards, and have so little knowledge of what we consider ordinary building procedure, that unless there is a competent British (or Australian) foreman constantly at site, the only safe course is to make complete drawings.

If an attempt is made to work from such drawings as have been issued from Australia, supplemented by verbal instructions given at frequent inspections, disappointment and trouble are likely to result...With infinite care, time and trouble, a mediocre result, by our standards, may be attained...

For your future work, there is a choice between such drawings as are not sent, or the employment of such a foreman. Both are costly, but either the one or the other is necessary, if reasonably fair soundness and quality of work is desired.⁸⁶

This suggestion had earlier been supported by Casey who believed that a local architect should be associated either in partnership with, or in lieu of, an Australian architect, as knowledge of local conditions would be crucial to the successful planning of these new projects.⁸⁷ In response to the investigation both the Treasury and the PSB became even more stringent with the funding and administration of overseas property. The Treasury appointed a senior official to both monitor overseas spending and to revisit the 'agreed standards' that all missions adhered too when renting, purchasing or constructing property. The DEA would also respond and revisit the role of the CDW in its future construction programme in New Delhi advising the CDW that no further plans should be developed without close consultation beforehand.⁸⁸ The DEA also supported George's recommendation of having a local architect commissioned for full design and supervision

the Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Department of External Affairs, 22 September 1953. For a reaction from the press see Beaumont, "The Champagne Trail?" 171.

⁸⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, letter from Walter George, "3 Houses Australian High Commission New Delhi, Note on Drawings made in New Delhi up to January 1st, 1954," 8 January 1954.

⁸⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 1, memorandum from F. Stuart First Secretary Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 1 November 1951.

⁸⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 1, New Delhi-Building Project, Chancery, 1958-1962; "Building Programme: New Delhi Background Documentation.

services as had been recommended by the CDW for the Djakarta and Tokyo projects. To avoid any further delays George was initially approached to continue working on the next stage of the programme while the DEA sought approval from Parliament. George however declined the offer citing his return to England after the bungalows were completed.⁸⁹ The DEA submitted an application for the development of a new HOM residence to Treasury in August 1956 after the sketch plans and the brief of the project had to be reconsidered to meet the newly enforced standards that now specified the area and number of rooms, the quality of furniture and even the amount that could be spent on curtains.⁹⁰ To support the submission, plans of the Japanese, German and Papal embassy compounds were included for comparison as well as letters from George and the Chief Architect of the Central Public Works Department of India that discussed the size of a number of official residences that had been developed in the area. Treasury would give approval in principle to the scale of the building and support the use of a local architect to develop working drawings and to supervise the project.⁹¹

Joseph Allen Stein and Benjamin Polk of Stein & Polk, a New Delhi-based architectural practice, were approached by the High Commissioner and the DEA to undertake the work. Stein had immigrated to India in 1952 to take up the position as Head of the Department of Architecture, Town and Regional Planning at the Bengale Engineering College as part of a three-year Ford Foundation sponsored contract to develop a new architectural curriculum.

Stein had studied under Eliel Saarinen at the Cranbrook Academy and worked in the practice of Ely Jacques Kahn in 1938 and Richard Neutra in 1939. After collaborating with Gregory Ain in Los Angeles in 1942 he opened his own office in San Francisco at the end of the Second World War. Like a number of his American contemporaries at the time, Stein concerned himself with the search for an appropriate modern regionalism. As Stein commented “regional without modern is reactionary, and modern without regional is insensitive, inappropriate.”⁹² His work in the Bay Area of San Francisco with John Funk and landscape architect Garrett Eckbo during the late 1940s would emphasise

⁸⁹ The bungalows would be completed in July 1955. NAA: A1838, 1428/19/4 Part 3, letter from L. Loder Director General Department of Works to Walter George, “Australian High Commission, New Delhi,” 24 August 1953.

⁹⁰ Watt, *Australian Diplomat*, 274.

⁹¹ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/5 Part 3, New Delhi-Building Project, official residence, 1960-1963; letter from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Official Residence-New Delhi,” 15 March 1963.

⁹² Stephen White, *Building in the Garden: The Architecture of Joseph Allen Stein in India and California* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 23.

this and seek to integrate structure and nature by positioning buildings within a garden setting.⁹³ Stein believed that his attitude and outlook were impacted by the organic work of Frank Lloyd Wright as an extension of Louis Sullivan's philosophy, writing in his university thesis that "Good modern architecture learns from the past (immediate and ancient) and is perpetuating those ideals that have stood the test of time and are still valid and vital."⁹⁴

As discussed in Haslam's report the impact of the British Raj on the built environment of India is evident through its occupation since 1858.⁹⁵ However, after independence the need for buildings to symbolise a newly independent India as well as to fill the practical needs of housing and increased industry presented Stein with an opportunity to introduce an architecture that was "appropriate to its time and place."⁹⁶ While India had played host to a number of foreign architects including Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin (1935), Antonin Raymond (1939), George Nakashima (1939) and Otto Koenigsberger (1939) the independence of India had brought to the fore a debate on the merits of a suitable national architecture to symbolise a modern India.⁹⁷

⁹³ Mumford first published an essay discussing the relevance of the San Francisco Bay area to architectural discourse in 1947 see Lewis Mumford, "The Sky Line," *The New Yorker* (11 October 1947): 96-99. The work of Stein is presented in the seminal publication *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* which also includes essays by Mumford, William Wurster and Elizabeth Kendall. *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1949).

⁹⁴ Joseph Stein, "The Modern Style in Architecture" (Thesis, University of Illinois, 1934), quoted in White, *Building in the Garden*, 22.

⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion on the planning and development of New Delhi under the British see Robert Irving, *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁹⁶ A number of publications cover India's independence and the role of architects in the search for an appropriate national architecture. See Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History*; Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, *Architecture & Independence the Search for Identity - India 1880 to 1980*; Sarbjit Bahga, Surinder Bahga, and Yashinder Bahga, *Modern Architecture in India: Post-Independence Perspective* (New Delhi: Galgotia Publishing Company, 1993); Prajakta Sane, "Modern Temples for Post-independence India: Institutional Architecture of Achyut Kavinde" (PhD thesis, UNSW Sydney, 2016). For Stein's comment see White, *Building in the Garden*, 53.

⁹⁷ Scriver and Srivastava identify the work of these architects as "perhaps some of the purest statements in the late colonial era of different possible directions that a more ideologically aligned and rigorous approach to the making of a modern architecture for India might have taken." For a brief commentary on the pre-war work of Koenigsberger, Raymond, Nakashima and the Griffins, see Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History*, 114-119; For a more detailed commentary on Koenigsberger see Rachel Jane, "Constructing a Shared Vision: Otto Koenigsberger and Tata & Sons," *ABE Journal* 2 (2012) accessed 22 January 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/abe/356>; For the work of the Griffins in India refer to Paul Kruty, "Creating a Modern Architecture for India," in *Beyond Architecture Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin: America, Australia India*, ed. Anne Watson (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 1998), 138-159.

During the first decade of Indian independence *Marg*, the architectural mouthpiece for the Indian Modern Architecture Research Group (MARG), published the debate.⁹⁸ The founding editor, Mulk Raj Anand, opened the discussion presenting a manifesto illustrated with pictures of Greek and Egyptian buildings contrasted with the works of Le Corbusier, Erich Mendelsohn, Wright and Mies van der Rohe. Typed in capital letters the text focused on criticising nationalism in architecture as a form of retrogression, extolling the need to design a national architecture representative of India in the 20th century.⁹⁹ To achieve this MARG identified climate, materials and topography as fundamental elements that would inform the character of architecture derived from the tenets of the International Style.¹⁰⁰ Andrew Boyd, a modernist architect from Ceylon, would write some years later that a modern Indian architecture must fundamentally be Indian - arguing that “continuity is worth having and national pride is worth expressing.”¹⁰¹ In his argument he deplored the imitation of both European Functionalism and historic Indian architecture believing that inspiration should be drawn from living building traditions based on structure and function.¹⁰²

It was within this context that Stein imported his modern regionalist ethos that had been cultivated in California expanding on the work already started by the Griffins and Raymond.¹⁰³ Stein would initially find traction with the Nehru government's push to alleviate the unprecedented housing crisis after half a million refugees sought shelter in New Delhi following the Partition in 1947. Nehru held the International Exhibition of Low-Cost Housing in New Delhi (1954) and invited international architects to submit designs as well as full scale buildings that provided low cost housing of a dignified standard.¹⁰⁴ Stein's awareness of climatic and landscape responsive design came to the fore.

⁹⁸ *Marg* was first published in 1946 by Mulk Raj Anand and a team of local and international editors that consisted of Koenigsberger, Hermann Goetz, Andrew Boyd, Percy Marshall, Milnette De Silva and Rudy Van Leyden as well as local architects such as MJP Mistri and Durga Bajai. It was the first Indian journal to focus on modern architecture and town planning as well as presenting a survey of art, photography and craft. It readily published foreign art and architecture from Europe and the United States. For an outline of the debate see Mustansir Dalvi, “Mid-Century Compulsions: Visions and Cautions about Architecture and Housing in the Emerging Nation State,” *Domus* 7, no. 6 (April 2018): 60-65; Rachel Jane and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, “Marg Magazine: A Tryst with Architectural Modernity,” *ABE Journal* 1 (2012) accessed 22 January 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/abe/623>

⁹⁹ “Architecture and You,” *Marg* 1, no. 1 (October 1946): 13.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁰¹ Andrew Boyd, “An Approach to Modern Indian Architecture,” *Marg* 3, no. 3 (July 1949): 6.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 8. A further discussion is presented in the following chapter.

¹⁰³ Scriver and Srivastava position Koenigsberger as the most direct connection between the architectural community in late Colonial India and the Functionalist aspect of International Modernism that had originated from inter-war Europe. In contrast, the Griffins and Antonin Raymond are positioned as the exponents of the other stream of philosophical thinking regarding modern architecture which could be traced in some respects to the architecture of Wright. Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History*, 116.

¹⁰⁴ White, *Building in the Garden*, 38.

Although the housing was built from modern materials such as bricks and concrete Stein's proposals were devised to sympathetically comprehend the cultural context by reinterpreting the visual qualities of more traditional buildings as well as opening the living areas out to the landscape.¹⁰⁵ Stein carried this concept into later institutional commissions including the Australian High Commission in New Delhi by using local materials and craftsmanship to reinterpret traditional shading techniques such as Jali.¹⁰⁶

The brief that was provided to Stein & Polk by the DEA emphasised the importance of designing a building that was "appropriate both to its functions, as representing the Commonwealth of Australia, and to its situation to New Delhi."¹⁰⁷ It also stipulated that the approach to the residence be direct and dignified and that the building be easy to navigate, with private and public functions separated. Some consideration as to the siting of the future chancery in relation to the residence was called for so that privacy and views could be maintained.¹⁰⁸ Stein & Polk produced four alternative designs based on the brief, however the DEA requested the plans show some elevational treatment before a decision was made. A further two alternative designs were produced during December 1956 of which one was selected by the CDW and DEA. Accompanying the drawings was a letter entitled "Design considerations" which outlined the architects' concept in meeting the brief. In keeping with Stein's architectural focus the letter discussed the HOM residence in relation to its surroundings with a particular emphasis on the buildings that had been developed by Pakistan, Britain and the US. Perhaps to emphasise the difference between the practice's approach and the modernist thinking of others, Stein focused on the monumentality of Edward Durrell Stone's recently finished US embassy located opposite the Australian compound¹⁰⁹:

It should be mentioned that the American embassy is an unusually monumental, almost "temple"-like type of building, perhaps as monumental as the Parthenon, or the Taj Mahal, and much larger. Its materials are to be white marble walls and screens, with gold columns in accent.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Stein was later commissioned to master plan three garden-city inspired steel and ore townships with Benjamin Polk (1953-1959). The townships are located in Rourkela, Jamshedpur and Durgapur. Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ The only institutional buildings Stein had completed before being approached by the Australian government were the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (1953) and the Institute of Child Health (1955) see Ibid., 348-351.

¹⁰⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from Stein & Polk, "Design considerations, Residence for the High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, at New Delhi," 20 June 1957.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion on the reception of Edward Durrell Stone's design for the US embassy see Norma Evenson, *The Indian Metropolis: A view Towards the West* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹¹⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from Stein & Polk, "Design considerations."

Stein and Polk acknowledged that while it was not possible or desirable for the HOM residence to compete with such a large building it was necessary to address the American embassy in a similar way as a “nearby vista, or a looming hillside” would be treated.¹¹¹ To achieve this they proposed that the residence would possess its own dignity through the use of simple, well-proportioned areas of walls and windows utilising a veneer of local stone (Figure 2.6). In visual contrast to the walls, it was proposed that a portico of perforated cast stone be constructed to encourage vines to grow which would signify the entrance and produce a building of distinction, able to assume its place along a street where broad vistas and monumental structures were expected to set the character.¹¹²

Stein and Polk’s letter continued to outline their approach to climatic design through orientation, sun shading and the use of generous overhangs. The west and south walls were to be solid with planting used to provide shade for a number of small openings. As with all of Stein’s designs the key feature was the relationship between the house and the garden. In this case it was mediated through the provision of a loggia made from a series of arches that would also provide a terrace for the first floor. The rounded arches evoked the Mughal use of arched colonnades in the mid-16th century and helped to imbed the building into the larger context of colonial New Delhi by recalling Lutyens blending of eastern and western architectural elements. As a feature, the terrace would traditionally surround the entire structure, but due to financial constraints Stein and Polk only positioned it on the eastern elevation. In designing the loggia, they envisaged a place of relaxation that would express its character through the use of light and shadow and the provision of two reflection pools. Even though the building was considered small the architects believed that by providing interesting vistas throughout the building the restricted room sizes could appear more generous (Figure 2.7).¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² The use of planting in modern buildings had been foregrounded in India by the Griffins (1935) who had produced a number of designs for institutional and residential buildings that according to Scriver and Srivastava anticipated what a contemporary Indian architecture might accomplish by combining geometry, decorative patterns and textures. Of particular relevance is the design for the Husainiya Collection Library which fused landscape and structure through a terraced garden. See Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History*, 117-118.

¹¹³ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from Stein & Polk, “Design considerations.”

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 2.6. Stein & Polk, Official Residence of the Australian High Commissioner, New Delhi, perspective, 1955.

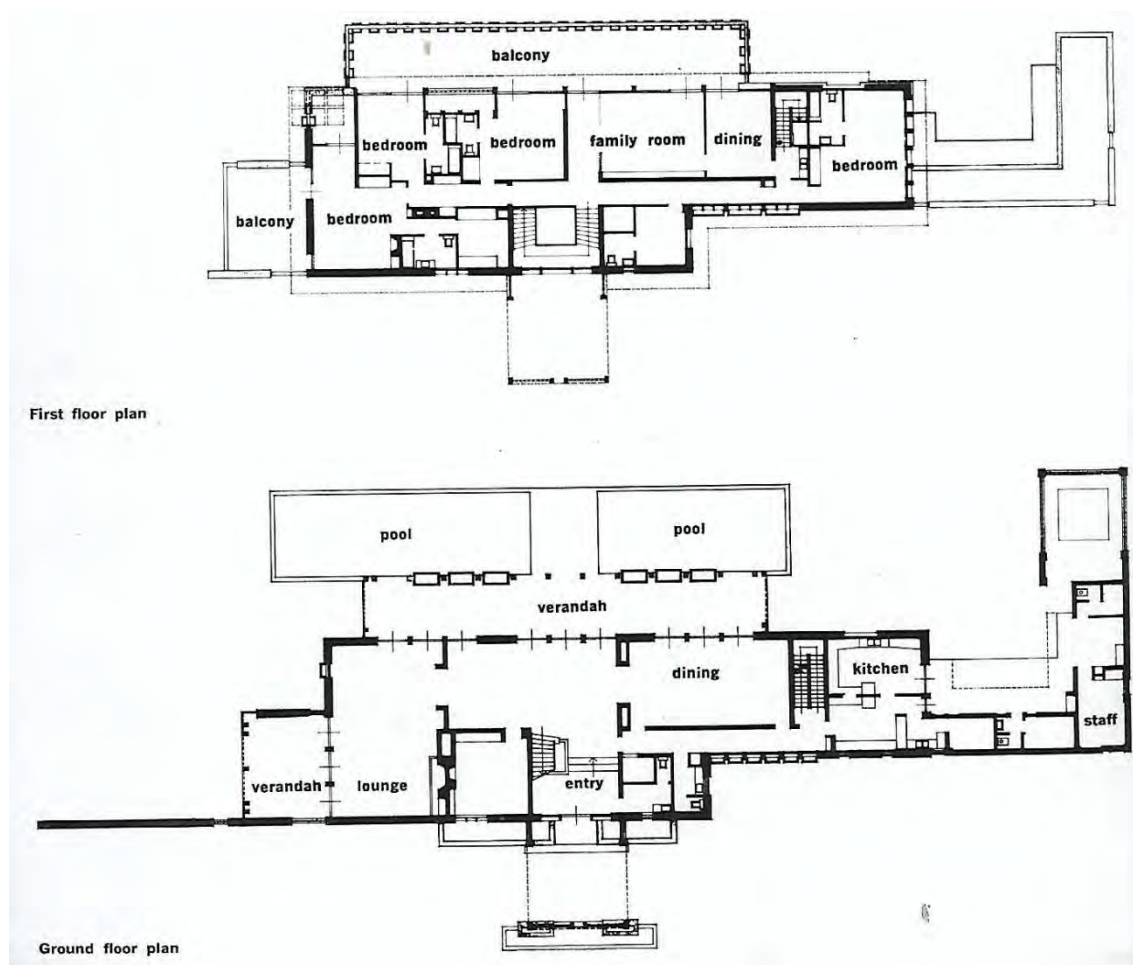


Figure 2.7. Stein & Polk, Official Residence of the Australian High Commissioner, New Delhi, ground and first floor plan, 1955.

Work would commence on the HOM residence on 12 October 1959 with an estimated build time of one year. By the end of 1960 it was calculated that only 28 per cent of the building was complete. At the request of the DEA the CDW would send superintending architect, Cynthia Teague, to New Delhi in May 1960 to assess the project and to review the sketch plans for the development of the chancery with the architects.¹¹⁴ Teague's report concluded that progress on site was slow mainly due to poor supervision, however noted that the completed work was of a very high standard and that at an estimated cost of £30,000 the return on investment was excellent.¹¹⁵ The project would continue to suffer from a number of delays prompting the DEA to comment in a letter in November 1961:

¹¹⁴ For more information on Cynthia Teague see Julie Willis, "Teague, Cynthia" in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis, 691.

¹¹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, report from C. Teague Department of Works, "Report on Overseas Mission for the Department of External Affairs April 29 – May 22 1960," 10 June 1960.

The history of the New Delhi building project is long and unhappy, particularly in regard to the interruptions, frustrations, poor advice and procrastination which have marked the construction of the official residence.¹¹⁶

The letter conceded that some blame needed to be accepted by the Treasury, CDW, and the DEA but attributed the majority of the blame for the delays to Stein, noting that even though he was an architect who possessed a considerable design ability he was incapable of providing the necessary on-site supervision.¹¹⁷ While this may have been the case other factors such as labour strikes, a shortage of water, shipping delays and a number of unauthorised changes to the plan by Walter Crocker, the High Commissioner at the time, would also have contributed to the delays.¹¹⁸ The DEA proposed that if Stein's services were to be retained for the development of the chancery it would be necessary for the CDW to station an architect in New Delhi to act as a Clerk of Works to prevent a repeat of events, noting that the person for the job must be able to stand up to the architect, contractor and the High Commissioner.¹¹⁹

At the completion of the project in October 1962 the CDW recognised that there were difficulties in constructing the residence however stated that "the challenge of creating a building to blend in with local architecture, yet with distinctive Australian 'flavour' has been met with striking success" (Figure 2.8).¹²⁰ The term 'flavour' would come back to haunt the CDW as an argument would ensue over the "character of the residence" and the furniture specified.¹²¹ The newly appointed acting High Commissioner, William Pritchett, opened the disagreement substituting 'flavour' for 'taste' in a letter to the

¹¹⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, memorandum from Property and Supply Branch to C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Building Project New Delhi-Supervision," 2 November 1961.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the labour strikes and water shortages see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, Letters from J. Allen acting High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Completion of High Commissioner's Residence," 28 May 1962 and 9 June 1962. For a discussion of delays in material and supplies see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, Letters from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs to the Australian High Commission New Delhi, "New Residence," 25 September 1961. For a discussion on unauthorised changes see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs, "New Delhi Residence Project-Changes in Plan," 4 November 1960.

¹¹⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, memorandum from Property and Supply Branch to C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Building Project New Delhi-Supervision," 2 November 1961.

¹²⁰ Commonwealth Department of Works, "Overseas Projects," *Works Review* 6 (1965-1966): 29.

¹²¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from W. Pritchett Acting High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "The Official Residence: New Delhi," 21 December 1962.

Secretary of External Affairs in which he outlined his understanding of the role of ‘taste’ in design:

Many of my comments arise from judgments of taste. It is easy to shrug off such comment on the grounds that taste is a highly individual matter and Smith and Jones will never agree. I suppose we must recognise too, that in the sort of system in which these decisions have to be taken there is a tendency for the criteria of good taste to be strongly influenced by rank so that a senior officer’s judgments of what is good or ugly are more likely to serve as criteria than a junior officer’s. Then again, people usually find their predecessors wanting in taste. How such factors are to be dealt with I do not know. I do feel strongly, however, that we should not on these grounds evade responsibility for consistently attending to matters of taste and seeking to establish an informed judgment of them.¹²²

Although Pritchett recognised that his judgment in the matter of taste differed widely from Stein, he would continue to chastise the colour and furniture scheme prepared by Teague in consultation with Stein during her visit to New Delhi in May 1960 (Figure 2.9).¹²³ While the CDW scheme specified Knoll furniture, believing that a building designed in the 1960s should have contemporary modern furniture,¹²⁴ Pritchett questioned the specification of “furniture so uncomfortable, undistinguished and downright ugly” commenting that “it lacks any agreeable or gracious quality whatsoever and is the sort of furniture one might expect to find in a motel lounge.”¹²⁵ Instead, Pritchett’s ‘taste’ corresponded to a Georgian aesthetic which had been popular in the established suburbs of Sydney in the interwar period especially among wealthy clients.¹²⁶ This aesthetic preference was reiterated when Pritchett noted that he was required to

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, report from C. Teague, “Report on Overseas Mission for the Department of External Affairs April 29 – May 22 1960,” 4488

¹²⁴ The specification of Knoll furniture began to gain traction in Australia’s diplomatic projects as it, in Goad’s view, was “eminently suited to the spaces of diplomacy where the subtle suggestion of domesticity imparted understatement and invitation, a form of humane and not overbearing efficiency. It was a palette that spoke across international borders.” See Goad, “Designed Diplomacy,” 183. For a discussion of the furniture plan for the Commissioner’s residence see National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 4, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1965-1965; Letter from K. Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to J. Ryan Deputy Assistant Secretary Property and Supply Section Department of External Affairs, “New Delhi-Residence,” 6 April 1965. 6014

¹²⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from W. Pritchett, “The Official Residence-New Delhi.”

¹²⁶ Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture Styles and Terms from the 1788 to the Present* (North Ryde: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1989), 150.

hire furniture for the Minister's visit as the residence conveyed an impression of "poor taste and ignorance of better things" with its lack of display cabinets, easy chairs, occasional tables, standard lights, and ornamental fire screens.¹²⁷

Pritchett continued writing letters to the DEA in which he provided a room by room account of the shortfalls of the completed building and condemned the residence "as evidence of the ignorance and neglect of the special character and requirements of an official residence abroad" stating the building was institutional and visually unappealing inferring the DEA could have done better with far less than the £50,000 it spent.¹²⁸ In concluding he wrote:

I think the feature of the residence and furnishing that dismays me most is its departure from tried and established conventions. I am not just opposing change, but I suggest we should be well advised to be conservative in questions of design and style and should not be led by a desire to have something new and distinctive into fairly radical and expensive, departures from the norm. These might promise the good and the beautiful, but often do not achieve it. They have not here.¹²⁹

After undertaking an investigation the DEA came out in defence of the architect highlighting that the unauthorised changes that had been made to the first floor plan of the residence by Crocker in the late 1950s had made it impossible for Stein's stated design aims to be realised.¹³⁰ The DEA would caution the acceptance of Pritchett's criticism at face value noting that the CDW and DEA had signed off on both the design of the building and the furniture plan, commenting that if the resulting building was unsatisfactory in terms of taste, the architect could not be blamed.¹³¹ Although Pritchett was critical of the design, the encumbering High Commissioner, James Plimsoll, was supportive, believing the residence brought distinction to Australia by showing imagination and character, boasting how the American Ambassador, Chester Bowles,

¹²⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from W. Pritchett, "The Official Residence-New Delhi."

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ The DEA had investigated these changes at the time however deemed the £10,000 needed to rectify the changes as too costly. When Crocker was asked by the Secretary of External Affairs, Arthur Tange, about the changes he stated that he took the initiative as the approval process in Canberra was too slow in coming to any sort of conclusion. See NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, restricted cablegram from W. Crocker High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to A. Tange Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Official Residence," 1 November 1960.

¹³¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3 letter from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Official Residence-New Delhi," 15 March 1963.

had been heard saying that it was the finest residence in New Delhi and he wished it was American.¹³²



Figure 2.8. Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Official Residence of the Australian High Commissioner, New Delhi, 1962, east elevation.

¹³² An article published in *Time* magazine discusses the new US HOM residence designed by Edward Durrell Stone completed in 1963 at a cost of \$700,000 USD. The article identifies a lack of privacy in the design and quotes Ambassador Galbraith as saying, "People who live in Stone houses should undress in the dark." The article also quotes Stone: "Why are they carping about these little points? These petty features obscure the truth - they are living in a palace." See "Open Diplomacy," *Time Magazine* 81, no. 15 (12 April 1963): 88. Plimsoll's comments are found in National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 2, New Delhi-Building Project-Chancery and other compound development, 1962-1964; letter from J. Plimsoll High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Project," 11 October 1963.



Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 2.9. Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Official Residence of the Australian High Commissioner, New Delhi, 1962, entrance hall (photograph taken in 2011).

Although initial attempts to open diplomatic premises relied on leasing substandard buildings, early planning concepts developed by the CDW for the New Delhi HOM residence engaged with the idea of producing a design which was considered Australian in “style.” The bureaucratic belief that recalling the colonial architecture of Australia would be an appropriate solution to meeting its representational needs is of interest. As the first overseas project undertaken by the DEA since the opening of Australia House the political motivations behind this choice could be read as safe because of its adherence to tradition and past links with Britain. Although these motivations are unclear, the notion of “dignity” and its importance to diplomacy is readily articulated in the correspondence between departments and individuals. While “dignity” for some became a personal matter of “taste” which was rooted in a preference for a more traditional aesthetic, the “dignity” of the space was still an overarching theme in conveying Australia’s early interests overseas. It is this representational emphasis that carries through to Stein’s design for the New Delhi HOM residence. While countering

the “colonial” emphasis of the Australian government, Stein’s modern regionalist aesthetic also significantly contrasted with the more overt forms of symbolism used by other nations in the production of their diplomatic premises. Stein’s approach offered Australia a building of distinction that quietly assumed its place in the context of New Delhi by utilising local materials and building techniques. The completed building appropriately signalled Australia’s first steps in developing an independent foreign policy and marked the tentative beginnings of the Australian government’s engagement with architectural representation.

The development of the HOM residence however was plagued with delays and cost overruns which brought to the fore the inexperience of both the DEA and CDW in managing overseas works from a distance in an environment that was undergoing immense change. The lessons learned from New Delhi would alter the approach taken by the CDW and DEA in the construction of the next two embassy projects, the Djakarta Chancery and Tokyo Chancery, which are discussed at the beginning of the next chapter. The discussion will then return to the development of the New Delhi Chancery project where the DEA continued to use Stein but under a new arrangement with the CDW.

CHAPTER THREE: DJAKARTA, TOKYO AND NEW DELHI

This chapter continues the examination of the development of Australian diplomatic buildings in Asia during the 1960s by focusing on the relationship between the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) and the Department of External Affairs (DEA) in the construction of the Djakarta, Tokyo and New Delhi Chanceries. As a result of the delays experienced in completing the New Delhi Head of Mission (HOM) residence and the recognition that there were inherent problems in directing developments many thousands of miles away, both the CDW and the DEA would reassess their roles.¹ Although international architects continued to be commissioned to produce working drawings, the DEA and Treasury pressured the CDW to take a more active role in the design and management of these projects to avoid delays and cost overruns. Initially this chapter will outline the discussion in the Australian Parliament surrounding the use of leased buildings as chanceries before examining the early planning stages of the Djakarta Chancery where the approach and roles of those involved were redefined in an effort to streamline future projects.

The chapter will then discuss the first CDW designed chancery to be completed - the Tokyo Chancery - where Australian materials and art were employed as a means of representation. This will be followed by an examination of the second stage of the New Delhi compound development. While highlighting new working relationships both these projects also demonstrate the administration problems that an ever-increasing workload had for the CDW as the prestige nature of diplomacy became a key consideration of government in its pursuit of foreign policy objectives. The role of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) is also examined as it began to pressure the DEA and CDW to consider commissioning Australian architects as a way of enhancing the representational quality of future projects. The chapter will then conclude by exploring the final stages of the Djakarta project and the reasons why it was opened two years after the expected completion date.

¹ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 3, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound developments, 1964-1965; "Meeting of the Sub-Committee on Staffing of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs," 15 September 1964.

Lessons Learned

Members of the Public Service Board (PSB) undertook a tour of eight properties in Asia in 1953 and 1954 to assess living standards and to ensure that both the existing office accommodation and the constructed bungalows in New Delhi were keeping within the agreed standards. The PSB concluded that the accommodation was satisfactory.² However, with correspondence from overseas missions continuing to describe working conditions as below standard, it was starting to become clear to some government officials that there was a disconnect between the government's commitment to improving the image of Australia throughout Asia and the actual image that was being projected by the leasing of substandard buildings. When it was revealed in Parliament that commercial operators overseas such as Qantas Airways could provide suitable office accommodation for its staff but the Commonwealth of Australia could not criticism was levelled at the Treasury and the PSB for the stranglehold they had on the operations of the DEA.³ Phillip Stokes, Member for Maribyrnong, demanded in his speech to Parliament in 1960 that the Government acquire suitable accommodation for its officers abroad, describing the existing chancery in New Delhi as a "positive disgrace," raising the question as to why the government was still operating the majority of its overseas network through leasehold arrangements:

For too long has this country tried to operate abroad as what I heard described as a middle nation...It is time that the Government acquired suitable accommodation for its officers abroad...I make the plea that a little more consideration be given to providing facilities which would be equivalent to those which officers would enjoy if they were stationed in Canberra.⁴

The PSB sent chairman, William Dunk, to investigate further. On his return he recommended to the Prime Minister that an improvement was needed in both the management and standards of Australia's overseas office and residential accommodation.⁵ Dunk's findings crystallised what was already clear to many in government that leasing 60 per cent of Australia's diplomatic buildings at an annual cost

² Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Sixth Report of the Committee (7th September, 1953)-Department of External Affairs," *Sixteenth Report, Treasury Minutes on reports of the 1952-54 Joint Committee of Public Accounts*, 13-14.

³ Estimates 1960-1961 Department of External Affairs Speech, 8 September 1960, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 36.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," in *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978), 1.

of £168,620 per annum or 26 per cent of the vote for overseas representation was not cost effective. This had been proven with the purchase of buildings in Paris and Washington, D.C. where it had been demonstrated that it was more financially viable to buy buildings and utilise the increase in capital as a way of purchasing more buildings.⁶ This left the government with two choices - to build or buy - however with the demonstrated lack of suitable properties in the region the only practical alternative was to build embassies that would meet the representational requirements of Australia. This forced the Treasury to alter its position and to announce that it would be receptive to building or buying property where accommodation was scarce, living conditions were difficult or rent was excessively expensive.⁷ With this change in policy direction the DEA released a five-year plan which focused on improving office accommodation overseas as well as alleviating the costs associated with renting. The plan outlined the capital works projects for overseas buildings with an estimation given on the financial requirements for each project, plus a breakdown of expenditure over a five-year period.⁸ New Delhi, Djakarta, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Washington, D.C. were the only projects that were specifically listed as construction projects while the remaining projects were listed with an option to purchase established properties. A clause was added to allow for a variation in the programme if an opportunity arose “to remedy serious deficiencies in the existing office or residential accommodation.”⁹ This was enacted to accommodate the building of the Djakarta Chancery after the Indonesian government offered a block of land located within the centre of the city to the Australian government under the conditions that construction begin immediately.

Redefining Roles - Djakarta

Land had been sought in Djakarta as early as 1953 however it was not until 1960 when the Indonesian government offered Australia a choice of four blocks that the DEA called on the CDW to assess the suitability of the sites and to make recommendations on the need for future development. After condemning the existing chancery as inadequate

⁶ Estimates 1960-1961 Department of External Affairs Speech, 8 September 1960.

⁷ Proceedings of the sub-committee on staffing of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Foreign Affairs, 16 September 1964.

⁸ For a copy of the Department of External Affairs Capital Works Projects-Overseas Buildings Estimated Cash Requirements refer to Appendix V.

⁹ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 2, Djakarta Building Proposals 1961-Chancery, 1960-1961; memorandum from C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, “Building programme: Djakarta.”

and unsuitable, Clive Wade, Superintending Architect within the CDW, selected the first block of the four offered; a 5400-square metre plot fronting Djalan Thamirn and recommended that it be acquired as soon as possible so that new premises could be built.¹⁰ The land was located in an area that was being developed by President Sukarno in anticipation of hosting the 1962 Asian Games. As a trained architect, Sukarno had initiated a number of large scale projects in an attempt to remove the provincial appearance of the capital since he had become Indonesia's first president in 1945.¹¹ In preparation for the Asian Games, Djalan Thamirn was to be expanded into a six-lane boulevard that would connect the Presidential Palace in Merdeka Square to a new banking, commercial and government sector which was to contain "well designed prestige buildings."¹² The site Wade selected was to be part of this redevelopment and was located next to the planned Japanese Chancery and a short walk from the proposed fourteen-storey Hotel Indonesia. The Indonesian government stipulated that any building the Australian government designed must be a minimum of five storeys high and requested that at least two storeys be completed before the commencement of the Games in August 1962. For this deadline to be met, Wade estimated work would need to commence by January 1962.¹³

To meet the Indonesian government's requirements the DEA was forced to bring the Djakarta project forward by two years from the originally slated 1963-1964 start date. In order to accommodate this change funding for the construction of the Washington, D.C. Chancery was pushed back from 1962-1963 to 1963-1964, releasing an estimated £100,000. The purchase of two new HOM residences in Accra and Manila was also deferred and a 50 per cent cut in expenditure was initiated for the Colombo New Office project due to start in 1961-1962. These changes saved a further £103,000, freeing up

¹⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, preliminary notes, report and recommendations basis for final report by Clive Wade Superintending Architect, Department of Works, Hawthorn, Melbourne, "Overseas Mission for the Department of External Affairs: Australian Embassy, Djakarta The Chancery Project," noted as the corrected copy 23 February 1961.

¹¹ For an analysis of the role Sukarno played in the development of Djakarta see Christopher Silver, *Planning the Mega City: Jakarta in the Twentieth Century* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2008), 96-103.

¹² Djalan Thamirn was lined with substandard housing and kampung settlements which were progressively being cleared to make way for Sukarno's plan. See NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, preliminary notes, report and recommendations basis for final report by Clive Wade.

¹³ The Japanese had originally designed a two-storey chancery which had been approved by the Local Architects Panel responsible for planning approvals. This was later revoked personally by Sukarno as the building was not five storeys high and did not embody his vision for Djalan Thamirn. See *Ibid.* The Raymond & Rado scheme for the US embassy was also rejected by Sukarno as he wanted an impressive high-rise tower that would not only symbolise the importance of his capital but also underscore the US commitment to his regime. Sukarno also criticized the design for not respecting the local climatic conditions. The US kept the original design and amended the entrance making it more imposing and formal to appease the Indonesian Government. See Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, 144-145.

the estimated £200,000 needed to complete the Djakarta project.¹⁴ With the adjustments made, the DEA began to prepare a planning brief which outlined the department's intentions for the project and specified space requirements in accordance with the PSB agreed standards:

It is this department's intention to construct in Djakarta a Chancery building which will provide adequate, comfortable working conditions and reflect the importance attached to Australia's interests in Indonesia. The building must bear comparison to other Embassies and Governmental buildings in the area but without extravagance and observing due economy.¹⁵

In view of the limited time available to complete the documentation and construction of the project Wade advised that the CDW take a more active role than had previously been agreed and commence initial planning for the project in the Melbourne head office.¹⁶ His reasoning for this was so that "close liaison may be maintained during planning with officers of the Department of External Affairs, Canberra."¹⁷ This approach responded to criticism received from the DEA in regards to the New Delhi HOM residence where it had become evident that undertaking overseas projects via correspondence had resulted in all manners of "misunderstanding and delays."¹⁸

The Djakarta Chancery was the first project where the role of the CDW was redefined.¹⁹ Although the CDW would design the building it still supported the use of local architects to develop working drawings and to supervise construction on site.²⁰ As the largest

¹⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, letter from W. Pritchett Acting Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, "The Chancery Building Project-Djakarta," 21 February 1961. See Appendix V for the DEA Capital Works Projects-Overseas Buildings Estimated Cash Requirements.

¹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, letter from W. Pritchett Acting Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, "New Chancery Building Project: Djakarta," 21 March 1961.

¹⁶ The CDW recommended to the Treasury in 1953 that they act in the capacity of technical advisor to interpret the accommodation requirements of the DEA at each location. The CDW also recommended that local practising architects be commissioned for full design and supervisory services in Djakarta and Tokyo. See Chapter Two: "Commencing the Post-War Programme."

¹⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, preliminary notes, report and recommendations basis for final report by Clive Wade.

¹⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, Overseas Visits Committee Background Notes, "Visit by J. D. Alderton, Architect Grade 4, Department of Works to New Delhi, Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane," 23 October 1963.

¹⁹ See Appendix VI, Schedule of Necessary Approvals, Agreements & Proposed and Actual Progress of Project Development.

²⁰ It was noted by the DEA that this was mainly due to a shortage of CDW staff at the time. See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 4, Djakarta Building Proposals 1961-Chancery, 1961-1961; letter from

project commissioned by the DEA both in terms of size and budget (now estimated at £250,000) the Treasury looked to protect the government's financial commitment and sanctioned that the CDW assume full responsibility for the design and supervision of the project, or at the very least, contract a local architect to develop working drawings from the CDW sketch design and then hand construction supervision back to the CDW.²¹ In response, the CDW argued that providing full architectural services was not practical and suggested that Alfred Wong, an Australian-trained, Singapore-based architect, be engaged.

Wong had studied architecture at the University of Melbourne and had successfully completed a number of large-scale projects in Asia after opening his practice in Singapore in 1957. One of the best examples of Wong's earlier work is the corner building located at 225 Outram Road, a six-storey development of commercial and residential accommodation.²² Wong also completed five churches for the Catholic diocese of Singapore between 1958 and 1964.²³ In 1960 he won the international competition to design the National Theatre at Fort Canning Hill in Singapore with a design praised as "architecturally distinctive."²⁴ While willing to undertake the documentation and supervision of the chancery, Wong requested that his practice be brought into the design phase of the project and produce sketch plans in close consultation with the CDW, commenting in a letter that:

We consider it an honour to undertake a project of this nature and wish to be more closely identified with the project rather than assuming only the "processing" and supervision work without contributing to the development of the original design.²⁵

Wong cited his knowledge of climatic conditions and construction techniques in Asia as being crucial to the success of the project and believed that if he was commissioned to

C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Djakarta Chancery Project," 9 August 1961.

²¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12, Part 2, letter from the Secretary Department of External Affairs to The Director General Department of Works, "Construction of Office for Australian Embassy Djakarta," 26 April 1961.

²² Johannes Widodo, "Modernism in Singapore," *DOCOMO* 29, (September 2003): 59.

²³ Alfred Wong designed the Church of St Bernadette (1959), Church of St Francis Xavier (1959), Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church (1961), Church of St Ignatius (1961) and the Church of the Holly Spirit (1964). See Raymond Queck, "The Modernisation of the Catholic Church: Four Singapore Churches by Alfred Wong 1958-1961," *Singapore Architect* (September 1998): 92-103.

²⁴ "National Theatre: This is How it Looks," *Straits Times* (Singapore) 11 September, 1960, 9.

²⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, letter from Alfred H. K. Wong Architect to the Australian Commission, "Chancery Building Project-Djakarta," 20 March 1961.

provide full architectural services, lengthy consultations via correspondence could be avoided.

Although the CDW advocated for Wong to undertake both the working drawings and the supervision of construction, preliminary planning of the project determined that 90 per cent of the materials needed for construction would have to be imported because of an extreme shortage of available material in Djakarta.²⁶ This raised concerns as to how this could be administered without a permanent on-site representative.²⁷ The DEA requested that additional clerical assistance be found for Djakarta to support the embassy with the range of tasks required in importing materials and dealing with what it termed as the “considerable correspondence” that would exist between the DEA in Canberra, the Singapore High Commission and Wong’s practice.²⁸ Even though the DEA noted that Wong was able to provide periodical on-site supervision through an assistant architect it was suggested that a permanently stationed Australian liaison officer with experience of the Public Service and departmental procedures would still be required to deal with the Indonesian governmental departments responsible for customs and planning.²⁹ This had not been the first or last time that a request had been made for the CDW to provide permanent on-site technical assistance for construction projects overseas. In 1958 the Australian embassy in Japan had requested for a CDW architect to be sent to supervise

²⁶ The CDW questioned the DEA on whether the imported material specified for the Djakarta Chancery was to be sourced from Australia so as to keep in line with a recently released Cabinet directive that urged all Commonwealth Departments to “buy Australian.” The DEA noted that this would increase the cost of construction by an estimated £20,000, which it believed contradicted the Treasury’s requirements of accepting the lowest satisfactory tender. The DEA would state “we have specified the use of Australian materials wherever possible and intend buying elsewhere only where this represents a financial advantage.” See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 5, Djakarta Building Proposals 1961-Chancery, 1961-1965; “Government Purchasing Policy: Djakarta,” 25 October 1961.

²⁷ Wong specified in his tender that a principal architect would travel to Djakarta once per fortnight to provide supervision. It was also mentioned that in addition to this an assistant architect would be stationed in Djakarta during periods when constant supervision was necessary. This was noted as most likely to occur during the construction of the foundations, concreting of the main structure and when the building was nearing completion. It was also suggested by Wong that an assistant architect could be permanently stationed in Djakarta throughout the construction phase “subject to financial arrangements being mutually acceptable.” See NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, letter from Alfred H. K. Wong Architect to the Australian Commission, “Chancery Building Project-Djakarta,” 20 March 1961.

²⁸ In meeting the DEA request it was suggested by the Treasury that the project be managed from Darwin or that the British Ministry of Works be asked for assistance in providing supervision on site. The British responded stating that this was not possible due to limited staff and the fact the assistance would have to be offered to other Commonwealth countries if the Australian request was granted. See NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 4, minutes of meeting, “Meeting held at the Department of External Affairs on the subject of cost estimates for the construction of a chancery and associated buildings in Djakarta,” 27 July 1961.

²⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, letter from the Property and Equipment Section to W. Pritchett Department of External Affairs, “Staffing: Djakarta,” 8 March 1961.

the construction of a number of bungalows expressing the concern that “We have unfortunately neither architects, engineers or even quantity surveyors in the department let alone in the embassy of Tokyo.”³⁰ Similar sentiments had also been raised in New Delhi after the High Commissioner, Walter Crocker, had requested that the entire overseas works programme in any post be handed over to the CDW stating that neither the DEA nor the overseas post was qualified to handle the minute details needed by Treasury. He would claim in a letter to the DEA that the difficulties that were being encountered were because of “the number of cooks preparing the broth.”³¹

In a compromise that would affect the future Tokyo and New Delhi programmes the CDW commissioned Wong in June 1961 “as working in association” with the department.³² This new arrangement put the contracted architect under the control of the CDW and moved the DEA into the position of client. After a meeting was held between Wong, the DEA, and the CDW in Melbourne in August it was agreed that on site supervision was required in Djakarta. The CDW advertised positions for a Project Officer, Assistant Project Officer, Building Works Supervisor, Field Account Officer, Works Supervisor and an Assistant Architect/Interpreter, stating that the personnel recruited needed to be in Djakarta by February or March 1962.³³ The DEA believed that the use of CDW personnel to supervise the project on site would benefit any future building programme commenting:

If we are to develop in increasing measure building programmes in foreign countries, it is in our interest to develop a degree of expertise in the Department of Works. Where this will lead us in our relations with Works Department in the long run is something that cannot be determined now. In

³⁰ A discussion surrounding the priority given to the development of residential accommodation is presented in Chapter Two: “Commencing the Post-War Programme.” For the embassies comments see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 3, letter from H. Anderson First Secretary Australian Embassy Japan to D. Hay Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, 14 October 1958.

³¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/5 Part 3, letter from W. Crocker High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, “New Residence: Furnishings,” 5 September 1961.

³² National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 3, Djakarta Building Proposals 1961-Chancery, 1961-1961; letter from A. Tange Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, “Building Programme: Djakarta,” 15 June 1961.

³³ It was suggested that the position for the Assistant Architect/Interpreter be filled by a Colombo Plan architect. NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 5, letter from L. Loder Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Djakarta Chancery Project,” 8 December 1961.

the short term there is much advantage in our “training” Works Department people in these jobs.³⁴

With the CDW now designing and providing on-site supervision in Djakarta it was hoped that effective control could be maintained over the project and that any of the administration issues that had occurred in constructing the New Delhi HOM residence could be avoided in the construction of the new Australian chanceries in Tokyo and New Delhi.

In a letter to Patrick Shaw, the Australian Ambassador in Djakarta, Colin Moodie, the Assistant Secretary of the DEA, explained the delay in commencing construction, remarking that the problems encountered in building overseas had been magnified in the case of Djakarta because of the planning requirements imposed on the site, the uncertainty of estimates and the doubts surrounding architectural supervision. He emphasised that the way issues were resolved in the planning of the Djakarta Chancery would have significant bearing on how other developments in Washington, D.C., Paris, Brasilia, Tokyo and New Delhi would be conducted.³⁵ He further commented that it had become apparent that the DEA needed to develop a policy in the future to ensure that the Treasury could not “whittle away” building designs that were considered by the DEA as appropriate and attractive.³⁶

In response, Shaw expressed his frustration, stating that he could understand the difficulties involved in gaining interdepartmental and ministerial approval but believed that the project should have been undertaken some years ago:

There is not much which we can say helpfully regarding your administrative problems in Canberra. From the point of view of Djakarta, however, we must warn you that the length of time involved in reaching firm decisions in Canberra could jeopardise the project as we have envisaged it...In other

³⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 4, letter from C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Djakarta Chancery Project,” 9 August 1961.

³⁵ It should be noted that even though an agreement was reached on the final sketch plans in June 1961 the Treasury again requested that Arthur Tange, the Secretary for External Affairs, re-examine the entire overseas works programme and comment on the implications that the Djakarta proposal would have on the funding of future projects before it would release funding. Under pressure from the Treasury a firm of Quantity Surveyors in Melbourne were hired to revisit the estimated expenditure on the project. The estimate came in £100,000 over the initial £250,000 estimate forcing the DEA to again seek approval from the Minister and the Treasury. See NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 3, letter from C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Australian Embassy Djakarta, “Chancery Building Project,” 11 July 1961.

³⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 4, letter from C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Djakarta Chancery Project,” 9 August 1961.

words, I fear that because of our complicated administrative processes at home, we may miss the bus locally.³⁷

Wade returned to Djakarta with Wong and a construction manager from the Western Australian CDW branch, in September 1961 to secure approval from the Indonesian Architectural Panel for the CDW design and to investigate the capabilities of the local construction industry. The design Wade presented was for a modern five-storey building which would be in harmony with the 'prestige' location and Indonesian architectural tradition. This was achieved by the selective interpretation of a number of local architectural elements including the flared form of the overhanging roof, which, while traditionally used to keep water out and provide much needed shade, was modernised through the specification of materials. The roof was to be sheeted in copper which would contrast with the white mosaic tiles that were specified to cover the fascia and the anodised aluminium to be used on the underside of the eaves.³⁸ The arrangement of fixed louvred sun screening along the east and west elevations as well as the use of pierced grille blocks along the ground floor wall were to ensure the building was "designed for tropical living."³⁹

³⁷ NAA: 1428/4/12, Part 3 letter from P. Shaw Ambassador Australian Embassy Djakarta to C. Moodie Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Building Project," 15 July 1961.

³⁸ It should be noted that while white mosaic tiles were specified for the fascia in the plans, black mosaic tiles were used during construction. Because of this change Sukarno reproached the Australian ambassador for the roof noting that it was not what he had approved and was instead "heavy, thick and unattractive." See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 19, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1965-1965; letter from K. Shann Ambassador Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Department of External Affairs, "Chancery," 21 June 1965.

³⁹ *ABC News*, 12:30pm, aired Friday 16 August 1963 on ABC.



Figure 3.1. CDW in association with Alfred H. K. Wong, Australian Chancery, Djakarta, 1962, model as viewed by Sukarno.

Although the panel approved the design in principle it would not sign off on the project until it had been viewed by Sukarno. In a private conversation between Wade and a member of the panel it was revealed that the roof line was perhaps a concern as the President preferred flat roofs and had previously ordered a pitched roof be removed from a new bank building near the Australian site. A few weeks later, after the President personally viewed the CDW model (Figure 3.1), the Djakarta Embassy sent a memorandum stating that “the President has given the design (and roof) his blessing.”⁴⁰ With the design approved James James, the Deputy Director General of Works, travelled to Djakarta to negotiate a contract with the construction firm Biro A.I.A who agreed that the project would be completed in October 1965.

Tokyo Chancery Project (1962-1964)

The DEA's five-year plan scheduled the Tokyo Chancery as the first building to be completed out of the three projects initiated in Asia and specified that it be approached in the same manner as the Djakarta Chancery to avoid delays in commencing work. The site was once part of the Hachisuka estate and was of considerable historical interest to the Japanese as it had a rare traditional garden from the Edo period which included a

⁴⁰ NAA: A 1838, 1428/4/12 Part 5, letter from R. Moore Consul Australian Embassy Indonesia to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “New Chancery Site,” 21 October 1961.

moon viewing hill.⁴¹ In complete contrast the site also contained an English style mansion that had been completed in 1927 by Marquis Masaaki Hachisuka and his son Masuji who had been influenced by early 20th-century English architecture while studying at Cambridge University (Figures 3.2 and 3.3).



Figure 3.2. Australian HOM residence, Tokyo, 1927, front entrance.

⁴¹ The Japanese garden was believed to have been designed by Seitaro Aoki and was considered a good example of garden art and worthy of preservation. See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 15, Property Premises Tokyo Chancery Project, 1972-1972; "Abstract from the report of Dr P. Takuma Tono, Landscape Architect."



Figure 3.3. Australian HOM residence, Tokyo, 1927, main reception room.

After purchasing the land in December 1951 with credits from the sale of surplus BCOF property (British Commonwealth Occupation Force) the Australian government renovated the mansion so it could be used as the HOM residence and renamed the building 'Commonwealth House'.⁴² The adjoining "Asano," "Negoro" and Japanese Ministry of Finance blocks were also purchased within a year of the Peace Treaty being enacted.⁴³ This expanded the Australian site enough to allow the DEA to propose in a submission to the Treasury in 1956 that a separate chancery and residential accommodation be built. This, however, was rejected by the Treasury which instead demanded that an investigation of the site be undertaken to determine if the existing

⁴² It should be noted that the Treasury would only approve the purchase of the site if it could be settled with credits from the BCOF diverted stocks account which had been accruing funds from the sale of surplus BCOF property. On June 1950, the Japanese government agreed to settle the diverted stocks account by paying ¥150 million in instalments. The first instalment was used to pay for the site. See NAA A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, "extract from Australian Mission in Japan Annual Report 1951."

⁴³ The purchase of the other three blocks was delayed as the owners were waiting for the Peace Treaty to come into force as it was believed that the value of the sites would rise significantly in an open property market. For a discussion of the negotiations for the Asano block see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 4, memorandum for the Secretary Department of the Treasury, "Australian Embassy, Tokyo," 19 August 1952.

HOM residence could be further renovated to accommodate the chancery space needed by adding an extra floor or extension to the historic building.⁴⁴

The signing of the Australia-Japan Agreement on Commerce in July 1957 saw a significant increase in bilateral trade between the two countries.⁴⁵ The Ambassador, Allan Watt, and the DEA would continue to request that the Treasury allow funding for a new chancery to consolidate the existing “patchwork” arrangement writing in a letter that the ongoing rejection of funding for the provision of an adequate chancery was against Australian interests in Japan.⁴⁶ The expansion of Australian trade with Japan during the 1960s was to contribute significantly to the rapid growth of the Australian economy as well as encouraging future economic integration with the region.⁴⁷ With the continued expansion of diplomatic relations with Japan it was clear that a suitable building was needed to house all embassy staff including the department of trade, customs and services representatives in one accessible area. To achieve this the Japanese architects of King Associates K.K were commissioned to work in “association” with the CDW and were tasked with completing the working drawings based on a CDW design (Figure 3.4). In a move to appease the Treasury the DEA specified that the design needed to include two staff flats on the top floor of the building to address rental concerns. The brief also stipulated that the finished building was to “reflect adequately the prestige of the Commonwealth in Tokyo.”⁴⁸

⁴⁴ NAA A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 3, letter from P. Sullivan Property Section Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department External Affairs, “Tokyo Building Programme,” 18 March 1959.

⁴⁵ Roderic Pitty, “The Postwar Expansion of Trade with East Asia,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 246.

⁴⁶ NAA A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 3, letter from A. Watt Ambassador Australian Embassy Tokyo to the Minister Department of External Affairs, “Chancery, Australian Embassy, Tokyo,” 1 April 1959.6222

⁴⁷ Pitty, “The Postwar Expansion of Trade with East Asia,” in *Facing North*, Volume 1, 261.

⁴⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 7, Tokyo Chancery Building Project, 1963-1963; letter from J. Ryan Deputy Assistant Secretary Property and Supply Section Department of External Affairs to the Chairman of the Overseas Visits Committee Prime Ministers Department, “Proposed Visit by Mr Ian Mangan, Senior Interior Designer, Department of Works-Melbourne to Tokyo and Manila,” 7 June 1963.



Figure 3.4. CDW in association with King Associates K.K, Australian Chancery, Tokyo, artist's impression, 1962.

The proposed building was designed as a paired-back modernist block with a projecting roofline that avoided any overt architectural gestures or references to typical Japanese architectural elements; many of which did not exist in the Tokyo area after the 1923 earthquake. The new building was positioned adjacent to the existing HOM residence on the Asano block with the entrance addressing Mita Avenue, the main thoroughfare into the district. It was planned that the foyer space would be located to the side of the office block and engage the driveway through a double height porte-cochere (Figure 3.5). The chancery was to be connected to the older HOM residence via a raised glass corridor. While giving access to a remodelled consular waiting room this feature was also designed to provide an area that could be used for exhibitions and displays.⁴⁹ Because of the threat of earthquakes, a reinforced concrete frame was specified for the construction of the building. The elevation of the building was to be faced with granite panels and trimmed with black and white marble to define the structural grid (Figure 3.6).

⁴⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from A Carmody Deputy Secretary Department of Trade to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "New Chancery Tokyo," 15 July 1963.

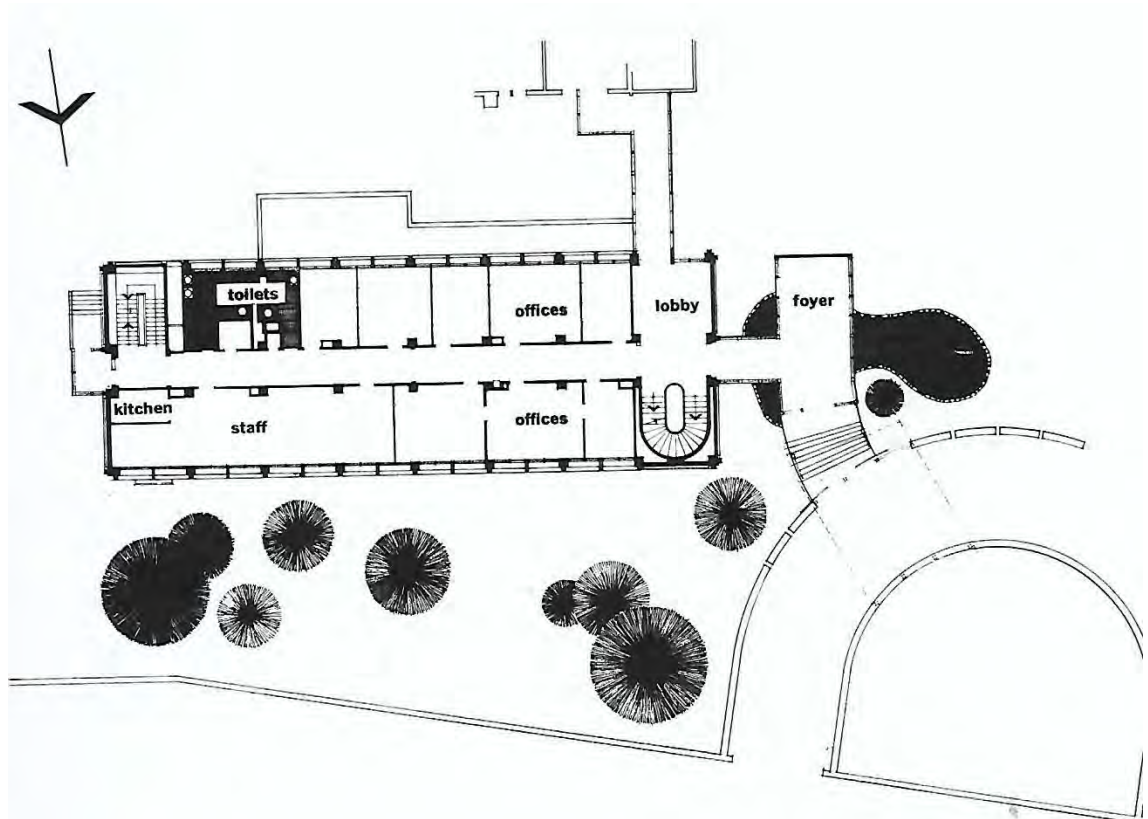


Figure 3.5. CDW in association with King Associates K.K., Australian Chancery, Tokyo, ground floor plan, 1962.



Figure 3.6. CDW in association with King Associates K.K, Australian Chancery, Tokyo, 1964, the coat of arms was designed by Australian sculptor Raymond Ewers.

While the CDW was heavily committed to providing staff to supervise the Djakarta project it was reluctant to send any officers to Tokyo believing that the local architects were more than capable of completing the task as they had previously overseen the construction of two senior residences on the site in 1958. This belief however altered after the documentation of the Djakarta project took eighteen months to complete and involved over 2000 letters being exchanged between Wong and the CDW.⁵⁰ To avoid a repeat of this occurring in Japan the CDW posted Wade to work in the offices of King Associates K.K to provide on-the-spot technical advice and approve the working drawings once they

⁵⁰ This bolstered the Treasury's argument for the CDW to provide full architectural services and put pressure on the CDW to speed up the documentation process underway in Tokyo. NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, Overseas Visits Committee Background Notes, "Visit by J. D. Alderton, Architect Grade 4, Department of Works to New Delhi, Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane," 23 October 1963.

were completed.⁵¹ Although construction supervision was still left up to the architects the documentation of the project was completed within three weeks.⁵²

The building contract was awarded to Kajima Construction Co. Ltd with the first sod being turned in January 1963. It was expected that the project would be completed by the end of the same year however a disagreement over the interior design concept presented by King Associates pushed the completion date back. Although the architects had been commissioned to provide an interior design scheme the CDW rejected the proposal as “completely unsatisfactory” on the grounds that it lacked a “homogeneity of theme” and did not present the desired atmosphere needed in a chancery.⁵³ Even though the CDW were already struggling to find suitable candidates to fill over 100 advertised architectural positions in Australia the Director General of Works recommended that Ian Mangan, a Senior Interior Designer, be sent to Tokyo to re-work the scheme so that control could be maintained over the project on site and not via correspondence.⁵⁴

Mangan had previously worked for Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) before taking on the position of Interior Designer at the CDW in September 1959. In this role he had been contracted by the Reserve Bank of Australia in September 1962 to travel abroad and study current interior design trends that could be applied to the future development of Reserve Bank buildings. He subsequently was promoted to Senior Interior Designer and was heavily involved in the interior design of the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Reserve Bank buildings as well as the interior design of the international air terminals in Melbourne and Perth.⁵⁵ On studying the King Associates scheme for the interior Mangan assessed it as “inappropriate for incorporation in a project to represent Australia abroad” proposing that the scheme warranted a complete revision that would utilise a more “masculine and confident approach.”⁵⁶ This was reinforced by both the embassy and the

⁵¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, “Department of External Affairs Summary of Overseas Travel Proposal.”

⁵² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, Overseas Visits Committee Background Notes, “Visit by J. D. Alderton, Architect Grade 4, Department of Works to New Delhi, Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane,” 23 October 1963.

⁵³ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from J. Ryan, “Proposed Visit by Mr Ian Mangan, Senior Interior Designer.”

⁵⁴ The CDW advertised over 100 positions for mainly lower grade architects in February 1963 in the *Commonwealth Gazette* and all major capital city newspapers. Only eleven suitable applications were received. In response the PSB would send David Pate from the CDW to the UK to recruit staff in an effort to fill the outstanding vacancies. See NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Overseas Travel Committee, “Recruitment of Architects-Overseas Mission to United Kingdom-Mr D. Pate,” 7 May 1963.

⁵⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, resume of Ian Mangan.

⁵⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from I. Mangan Interior Design Department to the Director of Architecture, “Australian Embassy: Tokyo. Interior Finishes and Colour Scheme,” 23 May 1963.

DEA who believed that there was an advantage of having as much “Australian atmosphere” as possible in the finished design by specifying Australian finishes and fixtures throughout the building. The DEA cautioned that the dignity of the public spaces should be preserved by avoiding a “shop front” approach to display.⁵⁷

Similarities can be drawn between the requirements of the chancery and Mangan’s previous experience as a senior member of the design team responsible for the interior of the Reserve Bank in Sydney (1964). As a building that marked a new phase in the institutional banking sector of Australia the need to visually separate the Reserve Bank’s function from the Commonwealth Bank of Australia was a key focus of the design philosophy employed by the CDW design team headed by Clive Osborne.⁵⁸ In designing the interior the CDW team relied on the use of high quality Australian materials and the work of Australian artists and designers as a “deliberate strategy to communicate an Australian identity on the world stage.”⁵⁹ This was a rarity in the development of office interiors in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s but as discussed by Philip Goad was a “long-trying strategy of Australian architecture and design abroad” especially in relation to Australia’s pavilion designs for international expositions.⁶⁰

Mangan would follow the approach undertaken in the design of the interiors of the Reserve Bank buildings and specify the use of prestigious Australian finishes and art as a means of projecting an Australian identity. In a departure from the office layouts defined by the PSB and Treasury in the agreed standards, Mangan proposed a clean contemporary interior choosing to simplify the standard 1957 series Department of Works furniture by redesigning and combining hat racks, shelves and cupboards into single functional pieces to reduce clutter and reinforce the modern design of the

⁵⁷ For a discussion of “Australian Atmosphere” see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from D. Nutter Head of Chancery Australian Embassy Tokyo to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Chancery Project,” 17 May 1963. For a discussion around trade display see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from P. Sullivan to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, “Chancery Project: Tokyo,” 10 July 1963.

⁵⁸ Russell Rodrigo, “The ‘Gold and Marble Palace:’ The Reserve Bank of Australia,” in *Sydney’s Martin Place: A Cultural and Design History*, ed. Judith O’Callaghan, Paul Hogben and Robert Freestone (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016), 109.

⁵⁹ As Rodrigo discusses, the Sydney Office featured a range of Australian stones including New South Wales Wombeyan grey marble (façade, banking chamber and main entrance vestibule paving), South Australian Imperial black granite (mullions), Queensland Ulam marble (lift lobby walls), Narrandera grey granite (main foyer and forecourt), Victorian Footscray basalt and South Australian slate (decorative features). Local timbers featured in the interior included jarrah, black bean, tallowwood and Tasmanian blackwood. Australian designers and artists were also employed and included Gordon Andrews (corporate logo), Fred Ward (furniture), Margel Hinder (entry sculpture), Bim Hilder (lobby relief sculpture) and Margo Lewers (tapestry). See *Ibid.*, 117-118.

⁶⁰ Goad, “Designed Diplomacy,” 184.

chancery.⁶¹ The walls of the offices were clad in wood veneer with Australian wool carpet and curtains specified throughout (Figure 3.7). In the lobby area marble was used extensively for the floor and stairs and a mural of Australian design was specified for the interior. Mangan's proposal was well received with the embassy commenting that it would act as an example for future DEA projects.⁶²

The building was officially handed over on the 10 February 1964, although it had been occupied in stages by staff from November 1963. The CDW expressed approval at the high level of finish achieved and the fact that the project was completed within budget. Ambassador Patrick Shaw wrote to the Minister of External Affairs stating:

There is reason to be proud of the building, which is the first Australian chancery to be constructed overseas as a new building. It is Australian designed.⁶³

Shaw proposed that the chancery be opened by the Minister of External Affairs in an official ceremony to mark the achievement as well as to underline the importance of the relationship with Japan. This, however, did not eventuate and instead a small ceremony was held with the local Australian community and some Japanese business officials.

⁶¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from K. Ward to S Herring, "Furnishing and Decorating Proposals for Chancery Building at Tokyo," 14 August 1963.

⁶² NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 7, letter from D. Nutter Head of Chancery Australian Embassy Japan to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Project-furniture," 18 July 1963.

⁶³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 9, Tokyo-Chancery Project, 1963-1964; letter from P. Shaw First Assistant Secretary Australian Embassy Japan to the Minister Department of External Affairs, "New Australian Embassy Chancery in Tokyo: Opening Ceremony," 12 March 1964.



Figure 3.7. Australian Chancery, Tokyo, 1964, ambassador's office as furnished by Ian Mangan.

New Delhi Chancery Project (1959-1966)

Although the Tokyo Chancery was now complete and the construction of the Djakarta Chancery was underway, progress in New Delhi had stalled. Joseph Allen Stein had been commissioned by the DEA in November 1959 to develop sketch plans for the new chancery however the Treasury did not approve the design until the fifth revision was submitted by Stein in April 1961.⁶⁴ It was after a frustrated Stein ignored repeated requests from the High Commission to demonstrate some progress on the working drawings that the CDW and the DEA sent representatives to New Delhi in December as part of a Committee of Investigation. The committee was tasked with determining the stage reached by Stein in planning the chancery as well as to report on the reasons why

⁶⁴ Stein was required to explore the possibility of developing a two-storey building before the Treasury was satisfied. See NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2 letter from Joseph Allen Stein to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery-New Delhi," 16 November 1962.

the delay in planning had occurred. A meeting was held between Osborne, Peter Sullivan, the head of the DEA Property and Supply Branch, and Stein to reconsider how the project could best be managed. Stein admitted that he had been losing interest in the project because of the difficulties in interpreting the scales of accommodation that were being enforced by the Treasury. He believed that this had resulted in the original concept being cut so considerably that it had been hard to find a suitable substitute to the “presentational” problems of the design.⁶⁵ This had been confirmed earlier by the High Commissioner, Crocker, who had noted in a letter to the DEA that the positioning of the chancery in the north-west corner of the compound had meant that the final design would need to be “sufficiently distinctive” in order to compare favourably with its “big and spectacular neighbours.”⁶⁶ This, wrote Cocker, included the American embassy of “worldwide fame,” and the Pakistan embassy which was considered in the diplomatic community as the “most imposing building in the compound.”⁶⁷ It was in this context that Stein was reported as feeling that:

In his long experience as an architect he has never been baffled in the way that he has been in recent months over the presentational problems involved in devising an adequate elevation for the chancery.⁶⁸

Although Osborne commented favourably on the massing of the building believing it to be strong enough to compete successfully with its larger neighbours due to the placement of the two-storey wing a frank discussion ensued on the “willingness and ability” of Stein to continue on the project.⁶⁹ Through the meeting it was determined that the DEA should relinquish control over Stein and place him under the direct supervision of the CDW.⁷⁰ This would mimic the method of contracting architects in Djakarta and Tokyo which was now considered as preferred by the CDW. It was also decided that in order to improve communications and to avoid any further unauthorised design changes, as had occurred on the HOM residence, the new arrangement would be amended to ensure that Stein communicated directly with the CDW and that the High Commissioner was only to communicate via the DEA. Although the DEA would latter comment on the

⁶⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, letter from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “New Delhi Building Project: Interim Report,” 21 December 1961.

⁶⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, letter from J. Allen Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Chancery Plan,” 8 November 1961.

⁶⁷ Ibid. The Pakistan Embassy was complete with minarets and a central dome.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, Brief, “New Delhi Building Project Committee of Investigation,” December 1961.

⁷⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, “New Delhi Building Programme Chancery-Chronology.”

impracticality of the arrangement they agreed that tighter controls were needed over the project.⁷¹

Under the new arrangement Stein agreed to work to a new set of target dates as well as to submit progress reports to the CDW every two weeks.⁷² It was also decided by the CDW that it would be better for Stein to attend a meeting in Australia to finalise the plans. Due to illness and prior lecturing commitments in the US Stein would instead send Jai Bhalla, a partner in the firm and President of the Indian Institute of Architects, to meet with Osborne in September 1962. Over a period of ten days the chancery plans were amended and signed off on with all parties agreeing that the chancery was a dignified design and that the amended plans were to be used as the basis for contract documentation. At the conclusion of the meeting the Treasury noted that visits to Australia by professional consultants seemed worthwhile as important matters of detail could be resolved promptly.⁷³ On 5 October the Minister for External Affairs, Garfield Barwick, inspected the CDW model of the New Delhi compound. During the meeting the concept behind the New Delhi Chancery was explained with the Minister expressing some disappointment that the chancery could not be set further back to reinforce the residence but agreeing to the importance of expressing the best façade to the main street (Figure 3.8).⁷⁴

⁷¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 3, letter from J. Ryan Director General Services Section Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "New Delhi-Building Programme," 9 March 1965.

⁷² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, letter from P. Sullivan, "New Delhi Building Project: Interim Report," 21 December 1961.

⁷³ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, meeting notes P. Sullivan, "New Delhi Chancery," 20 September 1962.

⁷⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2 memorandum, "Inspection by Minister of Project Models and Photographs in Property Branch," 5 October.

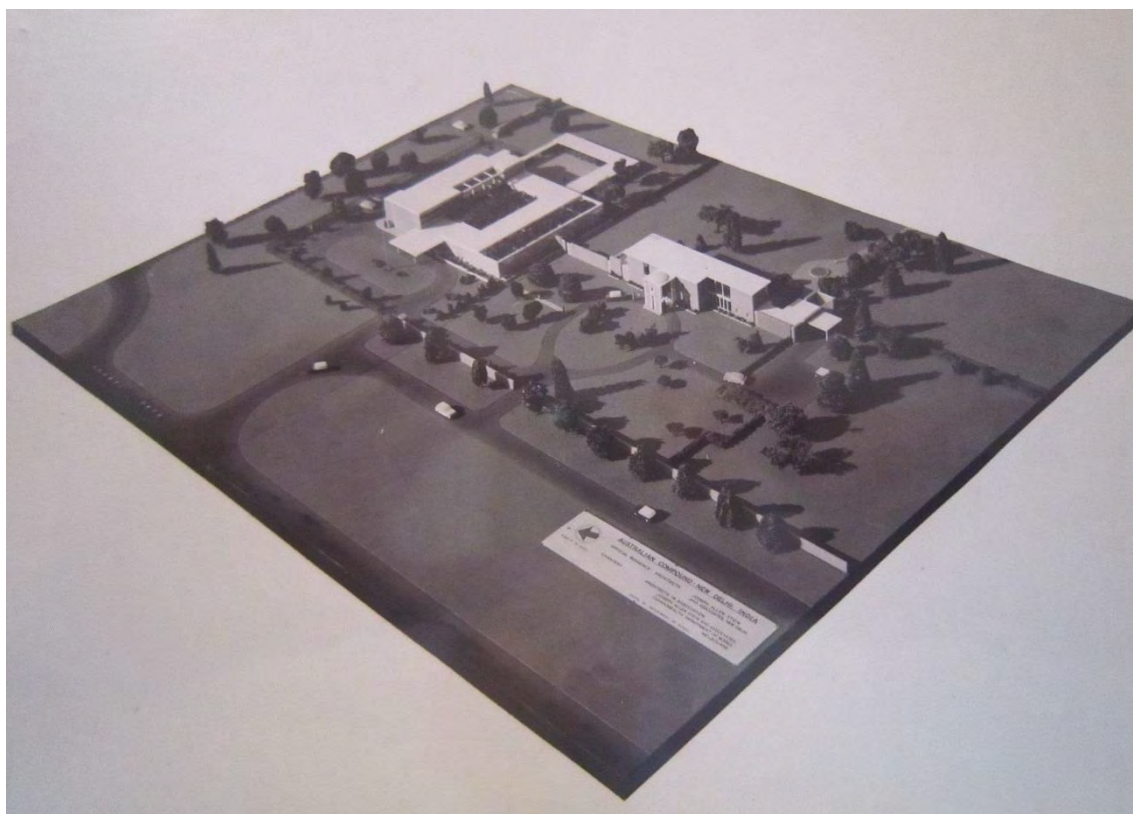


Figure 3.8. CDW in association with Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Australian High Commission Compound, New Delhi, 1962, model showing existing HOM residence (right) and proposed chancery (left).

On returning to India, Bhalla would prepare the contract drawings and send a letter to the CDW in May 1963 that outlined the reasoning behind a departure from the agreed elevational treatment. Bhalla noted the use of the local stone that had been specified for the residence would be used in the plinth and adjoining wall of the chancery so that they would visually relate to each other without the need to match exact detailing. Bhalla also believed that by harmonising the chancery with the residence both buildings would respect the scale of the British High Commission and American embassy and reiterate the concept that had driven the design of the residence.⁷⁵ On receiving the amended plans some two weeks after they were misplaced in the offices in Canberra, the CDW condemned the design changes as “an expression of a building more related to commercial activities” than to the dignity of diplomacy noting that all parties had agreed to the design and the Minister had viewed and commented on the model.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from J. Bhalla to the Director General Department of Works, “New Delhi Chancery,” 7 March 1963.

⁷⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from Director General Department of Work to Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, “New Delhi Chancery,” 4 April 1963.

A letter was sent from the CDW to Stein in August 1963 specifying that Stein would have to complete the working drawings as approved by October or state his unwillingness to act in accordance with the CDW requirements and withdraw from the project.⁷⁷ The DEA wrote to the CDW expressing their frustration at the delays:

After almost two and a half years the documentation of this project is still not complete...We have grave doubts whether it would be wise to continue the project under Stein's supervision. We had similar doubts at the end of 1961 however accepted Osborne's assessment that Stein would be capable under his personal direction, of successfully completing the documentation.

The letter continued, recommending that Arthur Tange, the Secretary of the DEA, approach the Director General of Works to suggest that an Australian architect might be considered for the job in lieu of Stein, mentioning that the RAIA had on two occasions during the year raised the possibility of the DEA commissioning Australian architects for overseas projects.⁷⁸

In a strongly worded letter Tange wrote expressing his concern over "Stein's frequent disregard of instructions" highlighting the three years it took to complete the HOM residence as an example of his "unreliability in keeping to agreed schedules."⁷⁹ Although Tange stopped short of ordering the CDW to terminate Stein he deemed it necessary that the CDW provide immediate on-site supervision. In response, Ronald Lewis, the Director General of Works, acknowledged the shortcomings of Stein but argued for his continuance on the project to avoid further delays. He also agreed that Stein should not be engaged for any further services and that the CDW might consider commissioning Australian architects in the future. In order to ensure Stein adhered to the agreed construction schedule Lewis endorsed the stationing of a technical officer in New Delhi to act in the capacity of Resident Architect noting that the experience the office would gain would be invaluable for future developments. To rectify the current delay in completing the working drawings Lewis recommended that an officer be sent to New Delhi for two weeks in a similar arrangement that had been undertaken in Tokyo.⁸⁰ To expedite the process the DEA supported an application to the Overseas Visits Committee (OVC) to send J. Alderton, an architect within the CDW, to New Delhi,

⁷⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan Deputy Assistant Secretary Property and Supply Section Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Building Project, New Delhi, Chancery," 4 September 1963.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from A. Tange Secretary Department of External Affairs to R. Lewis Director General of Works, 9 September 1963.

⁸⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, letter from R. Lewis Director General of Works to A. Tange Secretary Department of External Affairs, 23 September 1963.

Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane where it was envisioned future building programmes would commence over the next few years.⁸¹ In the brief prepared for Alderton, the CDW stipulated that Stein would not be retained after the completion of the chancery and that Australian architects would be used as consultants for the proposed Stage Two development which was to include a deputy HOM residence, staff flats, duplex apartments and recreation facilities. As such Alderton was instructed to gain as much knowledge of the local building requirements and practices as possible so that future Australian consultants could be fully briefed.⁸²

With Alderton on site a call for tenders was issued in February 1964 and the Northern Construction Company was contracted in September of that year to complete the building in 78 weeks. It was envisaged that the CDW Resident Architect would be posted to New Delhi in March 1965. However with diplomatic projects under consideration in Brasilia, Islamabad, Rangoon, Vientiane and Washington, D.C. the capacity of the CDW was stretched.⁸³ A meeting was held between the CDW and DEA on 4 December 1964. George Maunder, the new Director General of Works, stated that the continued growth and complexity of the DEA's overseas projects coupled with the increase in CDW involvement had placed a considerable strain on the Head Office in Melbourne and raised substantial staffing and administration problems. As a solution Maunder proposed that a specialist subsection be created to deal with the overseas works projects. He suggested that the new section be headed by Wade and be located in Canberra at the ACT branch Office of Works to allow the works officers to readily attend the newly established Overseas Building Committee (OBC) interdepartmental meetings.⁸⁴ By creating a new subsection, the CDW would also be able to approach the PSB to recruit architects and project officers who could be based overseas. The Secretary of the DEA

⁸¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, Overseas Visits Committee Background Notes, "Visit by J. D. Alderton, Architect Grade 4, Department of Works to New Delhi, Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane," 23 October 1963.

⁸² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 2, CDW brief, "Visit by J. D. Alderton, Department of Works to New Delhi, Karachi, Islamabad, Bangkok and Vientiane."

⁸³ Land had been acquired in Rangoon 1955, Brasilia in 1958, Vientiane 1961, Islamabad 1963 and in Washington, D.C. in 1963.

⁸⁴ The OBC was formed at the end of 1964 and consisted of members from the PSB, Treasury, CDW and the DEA. It was originally tasked with coordinating and reviewing the development of the Washington, D.C. Chancery project which had an estimated expenditure of £1,175,500. This afforded the project be viewed separately from the DEA's five-year programme. The remit was later expanded to include all overseas projects so tighter controls could be maintained. For information on the OBC see National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/37/9 Part 4, Washington-New Chancery, 1963-1963; For information on the meeting held between the CDW and the DEA in December 1964 see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 3, "Notes on Discussion with Secretary regarding Washington, New Delhi, Brasilia following his visit to Melbourne 4 December 1964." 7 December 1964.

was accepting of the idea however noted that it was essential that External Affairs should get the best people available to work on these projects citing the need for immediate on-site supervision in New Delhi.⁸⁵

During the meeting it was revealed that the Secretary of the RAIA, Roger Greig, had written a number of letters during October and November expressing an interest in the DEA's overseas building programme and a wish for Australian architects to be involved in future projects.⁸⁶ The RAIA had shown an interest in overseas commissions for Australian architects as early as 1962 after the Department of Trade had asked for support to be given to encourage architects to obtain work abroad, believing that this would open the market for the export of Australian building materials and products.⁸⁷ The 1962 RAIA Annual General Meeting minutes noted that:

The Commonwealth Department of Trade be advised that there are firms of architects who would be prepared to undertake work in other countries if it were offered to them, and suggesting that assistance could be given by the Government through Trade Commissioners and Colombo Plan projects and by the commissioning of Australian architectural firms to design Australian embassies and similar buildings.⁸⁸

In the 1963 annual meeting the Council moved that the President of the RAIA should write an appropriate letter to the Minister of External Affairs to seek his assistance in encouraging the government to employ Australian architects to undertake work for the DEA in its overseas building programme.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 3, letter from J. Ryan Property and Supply Section Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Discussions in Melbourne with Works Department and Bates, Smart & McCutcheon," including attachment B titled, "Brasilia," 26 November 1964.

⁸⁷ The Department of Trade had actively sought Australian architects to design exhibitions since November 1958 when Melbourne-based architectural practice, Bogle & Banfield, were commissioned to design the exhibition for the first Australian Trade ship M.V. Delos. The ship stopped in Manila, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Japan. Over 90 manufactures were represented. Bogle & Banfield were also responsible for the design of the Australian pavilion at the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) Fair in Tokyo (1962). The modernist pavilion projected an image of a modern Australia and promoted the emerging Australian fashion and automotive industry for the first time. JETRO had been established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports overseas. The commissioning of pavilions at JETRO by the Department of Trade reflected the commercial importance of Japan to Australia. See Edquist, "George Kral (1928-1978): Graphic Designer and Interior Designer," 18. For a discussion of M.V Delos see Boris Schedvin, *Emissaries of Trade: A History of the Australian Trade Commissioner Service* (Canberra: WHH Publishing, 2008), 158.

⁸⁸ "Annual General Meeting," *Architecture in Australia* 51, no. 3 (September 1962): 131.

⁸⁹ "Annual General Meeting," *Architecture in Australia* 52, no. 1 (March 1963): 115.

Greig's letters focused on the planned development of the Brasilia Chancery and HOM residence. Having learnt that BSM were to be commissioned to design the Washington, D.C. Chancery, Greig expressed hope that the process by which the Brasilia project was to be designed and directed would do "credit to Australia and its architecture."⁹⁰ In response, the DEA stated that the Brasilia project had been in the planning stages for a number of years after Henrique Mindlin, a Brazilian architect, had been commissioned in 1961 to design a chancery, HOM residence and staff housing.⁹¹ The letter further noted that while the preliminary sketch plans were still under consideration by the CDW the DEA had every confidence that the ultimate design would be a credit to Australia.⁹²

Greig's second letter dated 13 November 1964 continued to outline the RAIA's stance on the subject:

We also feel that where appropriate our Australian diplomatic buildings abroad will only achieve a true Australian design flavour if carried out by Australian architects, and this in its turn may materially assist our trade promotion programme by not only exporting Australian professional services but probably some Australian building materials as well.⁹³

The letter also hinted that information had been received from the British embassy regarding the dissatisfaction of its own UK architects (at the time Peter and Alison

⁹⁰ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/23/4 Part 2, Property Brasilia-Building Project, 1964-1965; letter from R. Greig Secretary RAIA to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 29 October 1964.

⁹¹ Mindlin was the first of three recommended architects on a list given to the DEA by Adelaide architect Gavin Walkley, a member of the National Development Planning Committee and Vice President and Councillor of the RAIA. Walkley had been approached by the DEA in August 1960 to investigate and make recommendations on constructing an embassy compound in Brasilia while on holidays in Brazil. The other architects on the list included Affonso Reidy and Lucio Costa. Walkley recommended Mindlin as he believed that the project could only be completed by a Brazilian architect as the construction and planning procedures as well as materials were unlike anything that he had seen in Australia. This recommendation was reviewed by the CDW who in December 1960 agreed that Mindlin was an architect of "outstanding professional ability and international reputation." Mindlin was commissioned by the ambassador on 16 August 1961 to provide a masterplan for the site, sketch plans of the buildings (HOM residence, chancery and staff accommodation) and an estimated cost. Mindlin submitted sketch plans in June 1962 which were amended under the guidance of the CDW and resubmitted in April 1964. See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/23/4 Part 3, Property Brasilia-Building Project, 1961-1967. For information on Walkley see Julie Collins, "Walkley, Gavin," in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, ed. Philip Goad and Julie Willis (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 744.

⁹² NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from A. Fogg Department of External Affairs to R. Greig Secretary RAIA, 4 November 1964.

⁹³ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from R. Greig Secretary RAIA to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, 13 November 1964.

Smithson) in hearing that a Brazilian architect had been commissioned to design the Australian chancery instead of an Australian architect.⁹⁴ In fact, a letter had been written by the Smithsons to the RAIA commenting, “there must be some good architects in Australia who are used to the climate, they can do some very nice houses.”⁹⁵

The DEA responded by outlining the working relationship it had with the CDW in the planning and design of projects overseas remarking that “the approach adopted in each case as far as architectural services, material and the like, are concerned, is determined by a great many factors.”⁹⁶ In a separate memorandum to the ambassador in Brazil the DEA requested that inquiries be made into the authenticity and substance of the alleged criticism made by the Smithsons.⁹⁷

After reading the correspondence between the RAIA and the DEA, Maunder wrote to the DEA to suggest that while the Brasilia plans were under critical review due to the scale and the cost of the project it would be opportune to create a review committee that consisted of Wade, Osborne and the President of the RAIA.⁹⁸ The DEA were unaccepting of the proposal commenting that the RAIA as an organisation outside the Commonwealth service should not be involved noting that Arthur Stephenson’s earlier requests to review the Brasilia plans had been rejected based on this premise.⁹⁹ It was believed within the DEA at the time that the CDW were using the formation of a review committee as an opportunity to reject Mindlin’s plans in favour of a CDW design. Maunder would later retreat from his suggestion but acknowledge that consultation with the RAIA on future projects could be of benefit.¹⁰⁰

The use of Australian architects to design future DEA projects also began to gain support in Parliament after it was announced that BSM were to provide full architectural services for the development of the Washington, D.C. Chancery. Senator Albion Hendrickson asked the acting Minister for External Affairs, Senator John Gorton, about the exclusive use of Australian architects and Australian materials for the future DEA programme. Although Gorton publicly acknowledged the selection of BSM from a shortlist of

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Cross-Section*, no. 148 (February 1965): 2.

⁹⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from the Secretary Department of External Affairs to R. Greig Secretary RAIA to, 18 December 1964.

⁹⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from Department of External Affairs to Australian Embassy Rio de Janeiro, “Brasilia Project,” 17 November 1964.

⁹⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from G. Maunder Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Brasilia Embassy-Brazil,” 11 November 1964.

⁹⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2, letter from K. Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, “Building Project: Brasilia.”

¹⁰⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 3, letter from J. Ryan, “Discussions in Melbourne with Works Department and Bates, Smart & McCutcheon, 26 November 1964.

Australian architects he did not confirm if a similar process was being considered for other developments which would draw criticism from the architectural community.¹⁰¹

The newsletter of the Melbourne University Architecture Department *Cross-Section* remarked that, although recognised internationally, Australian architects were apparently not good enough to design either the Qantas Wentworth Hotel in Sydney¹⁰² or the Australian embassy in Brasilia noting that Mindlin had previously designed “jazzy office buildings and flash houses.”¹⁰³ Robin Boyd referred to the newsletter in an article entitled “Lost Chance At Brasilia: Economy-Minded Canberra Spurns Australian Design” in which he wrote:

Even if we had commissioned Oscar Niemeyer himself we would still have been missing the point and the opportunity of making an original Australian contribution to this design mecca of the world.¹⁰⁴

In the article Boyd commended the British government for recognising that “extraordinary measures in design” were called for and praised them for their “spectacular turn in policy away from its stiff-upper-lip export design” by commissioning the “New Brutalists” the Smithsons.¹⁰⁵ Boyd agreed that Brasilia was perhaps not the most important post politically however argued that Australia had made a mistake by economising when it was clear that prestige was a factor that needed to be recognised in the case of Brasilia where “design is part of politics.”¹⁰⁶ Boyd continued by analysing the Australian government’s “non-policy in diplomatic design” suggesting that while there was nothing

¹⁰¹ The firm of BSM was selected by the Minister for External Affairs and members of the CDW from a shortlist of architectural practices provided by the RAIA. The panel was presented with a list of the qualifications of the practices to ascertain if the firms were capable of carrying out the project. The list included the size of the practice and a resume of previous works. The offices of the architectural practice were also visited by the panel members and interviews conducted. See Question Australian Embassy Buildings Speech, 11 November 1964, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: The Senate Official Hansard*, No. 46.

¹⁰² Qantas commissioned the American architectural practice of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) on the recommendation of Robert Law-Smith a member of the Qantas board to design the hotel in association with the local architectural practice of Laurie & Heath. See Paul Hogben, “Double Modernity: The First International Hotels,” in *Leisure Space: The Transformation of Sydney 1945-1970*, ed. Paul Hogben and Judith O’Callaghan (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing University of New South Wales Press, 2014), 50-69.

¹⁰³ *Cross-Section*, no. 148 (February 1965): 2; Mindlin had designed a country house for George Hime in Rio de Janeiro (1949), as well as for Lauro de Souza Carvalho (1955). He also had designed the Tres Leões apartment building in Sao Paulo (1951) and was master planning the project for the development of Pernambuco Beach in Sao Paulo (1953). For a detailed description of his work and the work of other noted Brazilian architects of the time see Henrique E. Mindlin, *Modern Architecture in Brazil* (New York: Reinhold Publishing, 1956).

¹⁰⁴ Robin Boyd, “Lost Chance at Brasilia: Economy-Minded Canberra Spurns Australian Design,” *The Australian*, 20 February 1965, 9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* For a discussion of the UK embassy proposal see Bertram, *Room for Diplomacy*, 352-360.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

inferior in the representational qualities of Australia's diplomatic buildings, which happily gave "no hint of the average taste in plastic flowers back home," there was a need to follow the American example and create an advisory committee to both guide the DEA building programme and to "protect and develop our visual character abroad."¹⁰⁷

This media publicity prompted Senator Adrian Gibson to ask the Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, to confirm if it was a fact that the architect designing the Australian embassy in Brasilia was not an Australian and question if the Minister was willing to review the matter.¹⁰⁸ Hasluck's response, while summarising the reasons why Mindlin had been selected, chose to conclude with the following statement:

In general, it is my personal view that as far as possible we should use Australian architects, and I will have a look at this particular project to see whether an Australian architect could suitably be used.¹⁰⁹

While the DEA, CDW and Treasury scrambled to assess the impact of this statement on the future building programme construction on the New Delhi Chancery commenced.

In December 1965, a few months after construction was underway, the New Delhi project would stagnate because of delays in procuring the specified windows, copper piping and air-conditioning units. When the DEA approached the CDW for information, Stein was quickly blamed for his "tardy clearance of drawings."¹¹⁰ Although the DEA recognised that there was an issue with Stein, they believed that they had been "badly let down by Works" who had not learnt from previous dealings with Stein and had failed to send an officer to New Delhi as had been requested.¹¹¹ The DEA stipulated that moving forward the CDW must provide monthly reports on all of the ongoing projects. To expedite requests and avoid the need to refer everything back to Australia for approval the DEA requested that the procedures for correspondence that had been established with the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Boyd's article is referred to in correspondence between the CDW and DEA including at a ministerial level. See NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 2.

¹⁰⁹ Question Australian Embassy in Brasilia Speech, 24 August 1965, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 34.

¹¹⁰ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 5, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1965-1966; Letter from G. Maunder Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "New Delhi Chancery Project," 17 December 1965.

¹¹¹ Although the CDW had investigated permanently stationing an officer overseas it was decided to wait until the Rangoon and Islamabad projects had started so that the officer could oversee all three projects. It was also suggested that BSM could be approached to fill this role based on the excellent standard of work that was being achieved in the Washington, D.C. project. See NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 4, letter from E. Hanfield Property Section Department of External Affairs to J. Ryan Property and Supply Section Department of External Affairs, "Washington Chancery Project," 3 April 1965.

re-signing of Stein be modified so that overseas posts could exercise closer control over local architects on behalf of the CDW.¹¹² The CDW responded some month's later agreeing:

that there are undoubtedly instances where the help of your overseas posts would be of great value in overcoming many of the problems associated with the construction of your building works overseas...Your proposal for monthly progress reports is a reasonable starting point and we intend to request Stein and associates to furnish these in future.¹¹³

Tange was posted to New Delhi as High Commissioner in 1965 and with first-hand experience of the building programme composed a letter to the newly appointed Secretary of External Affairs, James Plimsoll.¹¹⁴ The letter titled "architectural advice" recommended that the DEA consider having a CDW architect on secondment in the Department to avoid the months of correspondence needed to get answers to simple technical questions.¹¹⁵ In an internal memorandum the DEA commented on the desperation of the situation:

Our reaction has been one of desperation, since it probably isn't practical politics to simply sack Works from our projects. But that is certainly what I would like to do after 14 months experience of them.¹¹⁶

Tange's proposal had been considered previously but had been rejected because of the continued shortage of staff in the CDW, the lack of work and the objections that would be raised by the PSB and Treasury in creating a position outside of the CDW which had already been tasked to advise the DEA. It was, however, suggested that the DEA look at other options including the use of the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) and private architects to provide advice.¹¹⁷ In its conclusion the memorandum

¹¹² NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 5, letter from J. Walshe for the Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, "New Delhi Project-Procurement of Materials," 13 January 1966.

¹¹³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 6, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1966-1966; letter to Australian High Commission New Delhi, 11 May 1966.

¹¹⁴ James Plimsoll had been the Australian High Commissioner to India while the HOM residence was being constructed. See Chapter Two: "Commencing the Post-War Programme."

¹¹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 6, letter from A. Tange High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Architectural Advice," 10 March 1966.

¹¹⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 6, memorandum E. Hanfield Property Section Department of External Affairs, "Architectural Advice," 23 March 1966.

¹¹⁷ The success of the working relationship that had been established with BSM in the Washington, D.C. project was referenced as an example. See *Ibid*.

presented a more balanced view of the situation recognising that as a department the DEA was not the ideal client and that the stationing of CDW architects abroad was still perhaps the best solution:

It takes us ages to decide what we want; we tend to second guess works any time that we, or one of our posts, develop what looks like a good idea; on several projects, we have hurried works along to produce sketch plans which have then been kept on the shelf.¹¹⁸

With concerns over the delays in the construction of the chancery and the future management of the Stage Two proposal, Osborne and Maunder travelled to New Delhi to hold talks with Tange in an effort to improve the working relationship and to discuss how a resident architect could be positioned within the hierarchy of the mission to provide effective supervision and to relieve the administrative burden.¹¹⁹ On receiving information of the pending visit Tange wrote:

I greatly doubt whether this visitation will contribute very much to solving a problem which now reeks of neglect and confusion...The fault is not lack of money or financial opposition or bad building or lack of raw materials. The failure - and it is a failure which occurred in both my time and yours - is in administration.¹²⁰

Maunder also visited Rangoon, Islamabad, Paris, Bonn and Djakarta to inspect the building programmes. On returning he concluded that there was no alternative but to post a number of architects to Asia and Europe to oversee the programme. In a meeting with the DEA, Maunder suggested that an architect should be located in Rangoon and New Delhi to oversee developments in Asia while an architect in Paris could oversee Europe.¹²¹ Maunder also asked that the DEA forward plan projects more than what had

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 6, memorandum E. Hanfield Property Section Department of External Affairs, "New Delhi Project," 2 May 1966.

¹²⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 6, letter from A. Tange High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to J. Plimsoll Secretary Department External Affairs, "Compound Development Staff Housing," 16 March 1966.

¹²¹ Peter Vogel would be appointed the First Secretary (Works) for the project in New Delhi and would take up his position a year after the chancery had been completed (1967) and three years after the proposal to post CDW architects overseas had been made. He would be tasked with overseeing Stage Two and Stage Three of the development which would be based on a CDW design. Stein would be contracted to produce the working drawings. Vogel's principal role was to act as a liaison between the DEA, Canberra, the High Commission, CDW and Stein. He was also required to travel to other countries to carry out investigations and submit reports on projects for the DEA. It was stated in his briefing notes that he was "to obtain first hand local knowledge of regulations, materials and customs in order to properly evaluate the design and details being documented." See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main

occurred in the past, again reiterating the possibility of moving the architects engaged in the overseas works programme to Canberra to be closer to the DEA.¹²²

The chancery was occupied on 15 December 1966 after three extensions were given on the completion date. Tange was requested by the DEA to write comments on the design of the new building so that any unsatisfactory features could be eliminated from future projects. Although Tange commented on the small size of the reception area and the lack of imagination in its design as well as on the poor quality of the front door he concluded by stating:

This is an aesthetically pleasing building. The architect showed ingenuity in creating an impression of greater size than the aggregate of actual room space, in order to fit the surroundings and comparisons with neighbouring buildings. The cantilevered porte-cochere is a particular architectural success.¹²³

The finished chancery differed from the earlier completed HOM residence in its function as well as its form. The HOM residence offered a sequence of indoor and outdoor spaces that recalled the scale of Stein's residential work in California and clearly expressed his regionalist approach to modern architecture by incorporating reinterpreted traditional architectural elements within a landscape setting. In contrast, the chancery - an institutional building that contained the offices of a number of Australian government departments - was more functional in appearance.

Designed at a time of revival in the debate on the direction of architecture in India, Stein attended the "Seminar on Architecture" held in New Delhi in 1959. The seminar focused on an appropriate architectural expression for India in the light of the Nehru government announcing it was considering formulating a National Policy on Architecture to improve

Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 11, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1967-1968; "Financial Responsibilities-Appointment of Regional Architect Designated First Secretary (Works) Australian High Commission New Delhi India," 22 November 1967.

¹²² National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 9, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1967-1967; meeting notes K. Brennan, Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Overseas Building Programme," 4 August 1966.

¹²³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/19/10 Part 10, New Delhi-Chancery and other compound development, 1967-1967; letter from A. Tange High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Construction of Chancery in New Delhi," 25 October 1967.

the standard of buildings being delivered.¹²⁴ As the opening speaker Nehru called for architects to build for the present and not to reproduce the past “we cannot obviously, even if we have the capacity, build Taj Mahals now. It does not fit in with society today.”¹²⁵ The debate would divide the architectural community of India as commented on by Achyut Kavinde:

Our architectural expression is in a most confused state as there is neither clear thinking nor a definite ideology. Some of our so-called leading architects are decorating their cement concrete buildings with plaster copies of stone trimmings of temple and mosque architecture in the name of tradition and nationalism. On the other hand, there are also numerous examples where modern buildings of northern European countries are being blindly copied, which is equally reprehensible.¹²⁶

Stein however continued his independent and consistent line of thought choosing to rely on his tenets founded in California.¹²⁷ This would lead the publication *Span* to later credit Stein’s work as embodying the modern simplicity that was responsible for changing the face of New Delhi and perhaps all of India.¹²⁸

In designing the chancery Stein elected to elevate the building on a five-foot podium of local stone, defining the main façade by utilising an exposed structural grid; a method Stein employed in his design for the Triveni Kala Sangam Centre for the Arts (first stage 1957) and a technique that he would continue to experiment with in the design for the India International Centre (1962) and other collaborations with engineer Vishnu Joshi.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ The idea of a National Policy on Architecture was attacked by the majority of attendees as inappropriate. It was suggested by a number of speakers that the policy was devised to curb the “typical” buildings being produced by the Central Public Works Department. See Scriver and Amit Srivastava, *India: Modern Architectures in History*, 166-169.

¹²⁵ Jawaharlal Nehru, “Inaugural Address by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister,” in *Proceedings of the “Seminar on Architecture,”* (New Delhi: 17 March 1959), 9.

¹²⁶ Achyut Kavinde, “Opening Remarks by the Convener,” in *Proceedings of the “Seminar on Architecture,”* (New Delhi: 17 March 1959), 12.

¹²⁷ Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai and Miki Desai group Wright, Khan and Stein under the heading of Empiricist noting that they influenced the second generation of Indian architects. Although the focus is on the influence of Khan, Stein’s India International Centre (1962) is listed as being in the Empiricist vein. See Jon Lang, Madhavi Desai, Miki Desai, *Architecture & Independence the Search for Identity-India*, 213 & 223-228.

¹²⁸ Kenneth C. Wimmel, “Joseph Allen Stein: An American Architect in India,” *Span* (March 1965): 15.

¹²⁹ Stein designed the India International Centre at the same time that he was designing the Australian Chancery although the International Centre would open four years earlier and gain Stein international recognition. For a discussion on Stein’s resolution of structure, site and infill in the India International Centre, see White, *Building in the Garden*, 133.

Designed around a central courtyard the asymmetrical composition visually oscillates between structure and infill elements which consist of solid local stone and opaque Jali screening. While this gives the passer-by little opportunity to glimpse the inner workings of the mission the cantilevered porte-cochere reaches out to the street encouraging interaction - in some ways recalling the approach to visual massing employed by Frank Lloyd Wright (Figures 3.9 and 3.10).¹³⁰ An internal courtyard allowed the building to appear more spacious (Figure 3.11).¹³¹ Paved in local green-blue patterned Kotah Stone Stein specified sprinklers to mist the courtyard area during the afternoon to assist in cooling and to provide a visual effect.¹³² The internal corridor connecting the office spaces runs around the perimeter of the courtyard with access to the restricted areas being controlled via a small reception area located in the foyer to the right of the main entrance. At the rear of the square hollow plan a set of stairs lead to the upper floors which in one wing contains two staff flats and the other wing contains access to the strong room.

The connection of the residential HOM and institutional chancery with a continuous solid wall not only links the two buildings visually but makes the composition appear larger than it actually is. Although not as monumental as the US embassy building designed by Stone directly opposite or as overt as the Pakistan embassy complete with minarets and a central dome, the Australian chancery acknowledged both neighbours by presenting a contrasting architectural solution to the question of diplomatic representation.

Stone relied on a tentative connection to the Taj Mahal to justify his use of gold accented columns, marble sun shading and gargantuan replica of the Great Seal of the United States.¹³³ Stein's organisation of structure and surface responded directly to the Indian environment through the use of local building materials and shading techniques to successfully blend functionalism with regionalism. This not only offered a solution to the debate on the direction of Indian architecture but also represented Australia through the

¹³⁰ Stein recognised that both Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright had some influence on his approach to architecture although he believes that this is not visually obvious in the forms he developed. Ibid., 22.

¹³¹ The enclosed courtyard was first used by Stein in the Appert House (1951) in Atherton, California, and is considered by Stephen White as Stein's most "polished Bay Area building." See Ibid., 71.

¹³² NAA: A 1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, letter from W. Crocker High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "New Chancery Plans," 2 March 1960.

¹³³ Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy*, 187-191.

idea of “beauty with simplicity,”¹³⁴ a sentiment expressed by the outgoing High Commissioner:

Mr Stein has produced a plan that is, constructionally speaking, simple, direct and uncomplicated. Its aesthetic features - in particular the inner courtyard, with its sprinklers playing on patterned stone and its strategically placed screens, and the broad Jali fascia running around the eaves while strictly functional have also an immediate aesthetic appeal.¹³⁵



Figure 3.9. CDW in association with Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Australian Chancery, New Delhi, 1966, entrance.

¹³⁴ White, *Building in the Garden*, 36.

¹³⁵ NAA: A 1838, 1428/19/10 Part 1, letter from W. Crocker High Commissioner Australian High Commission New Delhi to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “New Chancery Plans,” 2 March 1960.

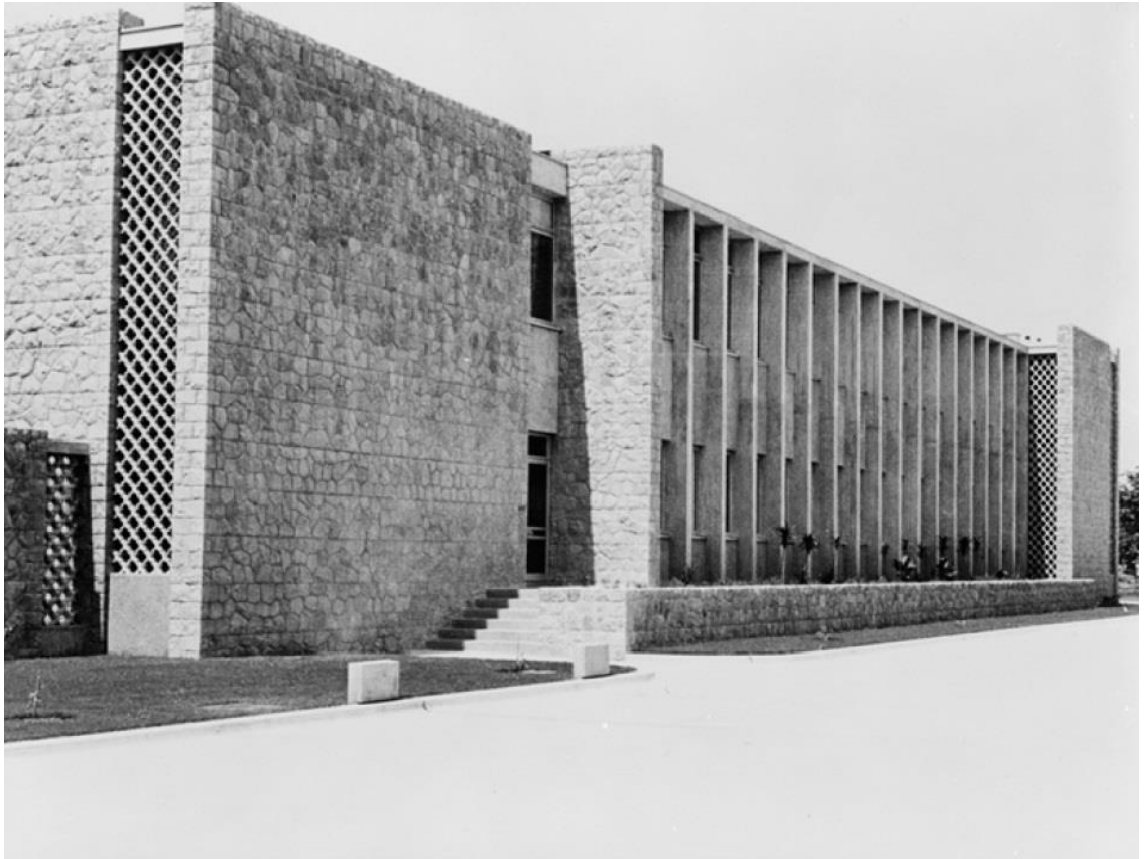


Figure 3.10. CDW in association with Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Australian Chancery, New Delhi, 1966, north elevation.



Figure 3.11. CDW in association with Joseph Allen Stein & Associates, Australian Chancery, New Delhi, 1966, internal courtyard.

Djakarta Chancery Project (1961-1967)

While it was expected that the Djakarta Chancery would be completed by October 1965 a number of external factors had led to serious delays and cost overruns in the construction schedule. As the first project to be solely supervised by the CDW on site it was expected that any issues could be promptly resolved. However, the difficulties encountered in constructing the building were outside the control of both the DEA and CDW. Even so this would not stop the DEA and the Ambassador, Keith Shann, from levelling criticism at the effectiveness of the CDW in supervising the project.

The supervisory team headed by a Victorian CDW Project Engineer, W. Zinn, assembled in Djakarta early in 1962.¹³⁶ Although having advocated for supervision the DEA was

¹³⁶ Other members of the original team included: J. Maher (Project Clerk), S. Todd, W. Emmett, A. Dobie (Works Supervisors), N. Veall (Store Holder), Y. Kian Seng (Interpreter/Typist/Telephonist). As the project progressed the team was expanded to include: G. Setchell (Assistant Project Officer), K. Thomas, H. Herklots, W. Butler (Clerks), J. Holland, W. Huth, K. Munchenberg (Works Supervisors), B. McCartney, G. Hartney (Trades Foremen), B. Singler (Plumber). See Commonwealth Department of Works, "Director General's Message-Djakarta Chancery," *Newsletter from the Director General (Mr. G. D. B. Maunder)* no. 27 (13 March 1967): 3.

hesitant in having an engineer running the project believing that an architect would be more suitable to ensure a high standard of finish. The CDW disagreed noting that the initial stages of the project would require technical knowledge to complete the foundations and that a consulting architect would be sent during the latter stages of the project to ensure the finishing work was completed correctly.¹³⁷ While this was accepted, the DEA believed that Zinn, although technically competent, lacked the all-round ability to manage the project - a point that was later considered when posting a resident architect to New Delhi.¹³⁸ The criticism of Zinn would underlie the majority of correspondence between the DEA, Shann, CDW and the Treasury from the early stage of the project. In September 1965 the CDW sent Ray George, a consultant architect, to Djakarta to evaluate the project while Zinn was on medical leave in Australia.¹³⁹ George commented that the work on site was "drifting along in a more or less haphazard uncoordinated manner without plan."¹⁴⁰ Though this may have been a fair assessment it did not take into account the unstable political climate of Indonesia at the time or the daily conditions that were faced on site.

While it had been planned that the majority of building material would be imported from Singapore, the Indonesian-Malayan confrontation (1963-1966) would see the Indonesian government terminate communications with Singapore one year into the project. This forced the CDW to re-direct communications through Manila and Hong Kong and import material such as steel and concrete from Japan and India as well as manufactured items from Australia.¹⁴¹ The irregularity of shipping manifests as well as a boycott to fly to Djakarta by Qantas in July 1965 due to safety concerns over the condition of the runway

¹³⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 19, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, letter from E. Hanfield Property Section Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Visit to Djakarta by Messrs James and George," 22 June 1965.

¹³⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 3, letter from J. Ryan, "Discussions in Melbourne with Works Department and Bates, Smart & McCutcheon," 26 November 1964.

¹³⁹ The CDW had approached the PSB in April 1965 to replace Zinn with a suitably qualified architect however no replacement could be found. Instead it was recommended that a consultant architect undertake regular inspections of the site. See National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 21, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1965-1966; "Djakarta Chancery Point for Discussion."

¹⁴⁰ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 20, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1965-1965; report by R. George Acting Project Officer Department of Works to the Deputy Director General Department of Works, "Djakarta Chancery Project Report at Time of Taking Over Project," 16 September 1965.

¹⁴¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 21, letter from G. Maunder Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Djakarta Chancery Project Financial Review," 24 November 1965.

led to significant delays in procuring the material needed for construction to continue.¹⁴² At one stage out of desperation to keep the project on track 300 bags of cement were borrowed from the German construction site with the promise it would be returned once the shipment from Japan had arrived.¹⁴³ The daily conditions that were reported by Zinn in his fortnightly report added weight to the difficulty in managing construction in such an environment:

During the past report period we were considerably handicapped by local political upheavals, daily mass demonstrations with their transport blocks, the recent military coup and celebration and demonstrations in its wake, and by tension and excitement among our workers, which turned their minds from the job in hand. Besides, heavy monsoon rains delayed our work in the open, and on top of it we had and still have to cope with sickness among our own staff.¹⁴⁴

Although this was also experienced by the Ambassador, Shann would still write a letter shortly after George had completed his assessment which called for Zinn to be replaced because of his lack of organisational skill and concern over the financial handling of the project.¹⁴⁵ To appease the DEA the CDW would recruit Garth Setchell, an architect from the Sydney CDW office, as an Assistant Project Officer expanding the team further. The DEA however continued to pressure the CDW to recall Zinn to Australia until a meeting was held in March 1966 between Maunder, James and the DEA. Maunder informed the DEA that he had every confidence in Zinn and would retain his services until the project was completed, commenting that it had never been clear whether it was the Department or Shann raising difficulties.¹⁴⁶

The opening of the Djakarta Chancery on Australia Day 1967 marked the completion of the third DEA project in Asia. Despite the setbacks, in his opening speech the Minister

¹⁴² NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 21, restricted Cable Gram 819, "Qantas," 12 July 1965.

¹⁴³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 18, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1965-1965; report from W. Zinn Project Officer Department of Works to the Director General Department of Works, "Djakarta Chancery Project Fortnightly Report No. 80," 5 May 1965.

¹⁴⁴ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 22, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1966-1966; report from W. Zinn Project Officer Department of Works to the Director General Department of Works "Djakarta Chancery Project Fortnightly Report," 17 March 1966.

¹⁴⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 20, letter from K. Shann Ambassador Australian Embassy Djakarta to K. Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Chancery Project," 27 September 1965.

¹⁴⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 22, report of meeting with Officers of the Department of Works by H. Loveday Department of External Affairs, "Djakarta Chancery," 17 March 1966.

for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, praised the collaboration between the CDW architects and the Singapore-based architect Alfred Wong for the design, documentation and supervision of the \$1.5 million (£766,166) project. Hasluck described the new chancery as impressive and modern stating how the completed building would, for the first time, allow the thirty-two Australian staff the opportunity to work “in conditions similar to those experienced in modern office buildings in Australia.”¹⁴⁷ He continued by saying how the materials gave the building an impressive appearance, a point latter reiterated by Maunder who wrote that the building “is considered to be one of the most striking buildings in Djakarta” (Figure 3.12).¹⁴⁸ By the end of the project expenditure on Australian material was approximately 30 per cent (\$400,000) of the final cost. Marble from New South Wales was used for the foyer walls while Victorian black granite was used for the steps at the front entrance (Figure 3.13). The prefabricated office partitions were made from Australian timber including Queensland walnut and black bean as well as Victorian ash. The steel office furniture, curtains and carpets were also manufactured in Australia.¹⁴⁹ The foyer area was seen as a place to display Australian character and art was requisitioned from the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board to hang opposite the main entrance. This included works by Franz Kempf, Stan de Teliga and Russell Drysdale.¹⁵⁰

The press, however, focused on the high level of security that surrounded the building with the *Sydney Morning Herald* running an article three days before it was opened entitled “Push Button Embassy in Djakarta.” The article described the completed building as “a modern day diplomatic fort” highlighting that the building could be sealed with a push of a button and that it was designed to hold out under siege as it was completely self-sufficient with its own bore and electrical substation.¹⁵¹ The addition of a number of security measures including riot proof screens and the surrounding fence were added to the plans as a precaution after the British chancery was sacked and burned on 18

¹⁴⁷ Department of External Affairs, “Minister for External Affairs to Open Djakarta Chancery on Australia Day,” News release (25 January, 1967).

¹⁴⁸ Commonwealth Department of Works, *Newsletter no. 27*, 4.

¹⁴⁹ Commonwealth Department of Works, “Overseas Projects,” *Works Review Report for year 1966-1967* (Melbourne: Abaris Printing, 1967): 29.

¹⁵⁰ From 1960 the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board had authority to make contributions towards overseas exhibitions of Australian art. For a history of the board see Alan McCulloch, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Art* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 173. For a list of artworks and artist see National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 26, Premises-Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1966-1967; “Djakarta Chancery Description and Location of Works of Art.”3623

¹⁵¹ Peter Polomka, “Push Button Embassy in Djakarta,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 January 1967, 2.

September 1963.¹⁵² The decision to add these measures was reinforced after the Australian site was hit by bullets in October 1965 while the Indonesian Secret Police forcibly overtook the building next door.¹⁵³ The DEA would comment that the press descriptions were unfortunate and inaccurate:

Architecturally, a serious attempt has been made both to combine grace and dignity with the normal functional requirements of an office building, and to ensure that the addition of the security devices will not detract from the general appearance of the chancery.¹⁵⁴

With the project complete comments were sought on the design of the building as had been done in New Delhi. Although smaller in scale than the surrounding modernist blocks which had been built to emulate Sukarno's vision for the boulevard, the Australian chancery was distinctive in its appearance with its traditional roof form and sun shading elements. The DEA rated the external appearance of the building very highly commenting that "the roof, makes the whole layout look much more impressive than would be warranted by considerations of size and bulk."¹⁵⁵ The success of the roof form could be read as an attempt by the CDW to localise the building and elevate it beyond the formalities of modernist architecture.

Concern was raised however over the dimensions of the conference room and strong room as well as the narrow width of the corridors which gave the effect of "pokiness."¹⁵⁶ Although this was attributed to "a basic weakness in planning" the DEA did not fault the CDW but instead commented that:

¹⁵² Previous comments had been made by the press during October 1965 after an official working on the project was quoted by the BBC on the television program "Panorama" as saying the embassy was being made into a "latter day castle." The *Sydney Morning Herald* published an article a few days later naming the building as the "Australian Fortress" in reference to the television broadcast. See "Australian Fortress," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1965, 1. For the government's correspondence concerning the press coverage see NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 20 letter from G. Jockel First Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, "Australian Chancery, Djakarta," 27 October 1965.

¹⁵³ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 20, letter from K. Shann Ambassador Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Minister Department of External Affairs, "Secret Immediate" 3 October 1965.

¹⁵⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 20, letter from G. Jockel First Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, "Australian Chancery, Djakarta," 27 October 1965.

¹⁵⁵ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/4/12 Part 28, Premises Djakarta Chancery Building Project, 1967-1969; letter from E. Hanfield Property Section Department of External Affairs to K. Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs, "Djakarta Chancery," 17 July 1967.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

A number of these weaknesses arise from rigid application of the approved accommodation standards, and it is shattering to think that on current standards if we were to build in Dili we could theoretically have the same sized conference room, strong room, reception area etc., as we have in Djakarta. We must surely get away from this concept and get to the situation where standards are no more than a guide when we are building.¹⁵⁷

While the building in its appearance differed little from the early conceptual drawings and model, the DEA had pushed for an increase in floor area commenting that the office space available under the PSB standards was inadequate for meeting staff needs let alone the future needs of the department.¹⁵⁸ As noted previously the standards which had been devised initially to govern rental ceilings were also used to control the size and number of offices for newly constructed chanceries. While the PSB acknowledged the DEA's request it commented that the method that was employed in designing the building had ensured adequate space had been allocated as specified by the standards.¹⁵⁹ It was noted that future expansion could be undertaken in the courtyard and carparking space if needed (Figure 3.14).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ NAA: A 1838, 1428/4/12 Part 5, letter from P. Shaw Ambassador Australian Embassy Djakarta to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, "New Chancery – Djakarta," 4 November 1961.

¹⁵⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 3, letter from P. Sullivan Property and Supply Branch Department of External Affairs to the Australian Embassy Djakarta, "Chancery Sketch Plans," 13 July 1961.



Figure 3.12. CDW in association with Alfred H. K. Wong, Australian Chancery, Djakarta, 1967, east elevation with the Japanese chancery under construction to the right.



Figure 3.13. CDW in association with Alfred H. K. Wong, Australian Chancery, Djakarta, 1967, entrance showing black granite steps and the security screens next to the front door.

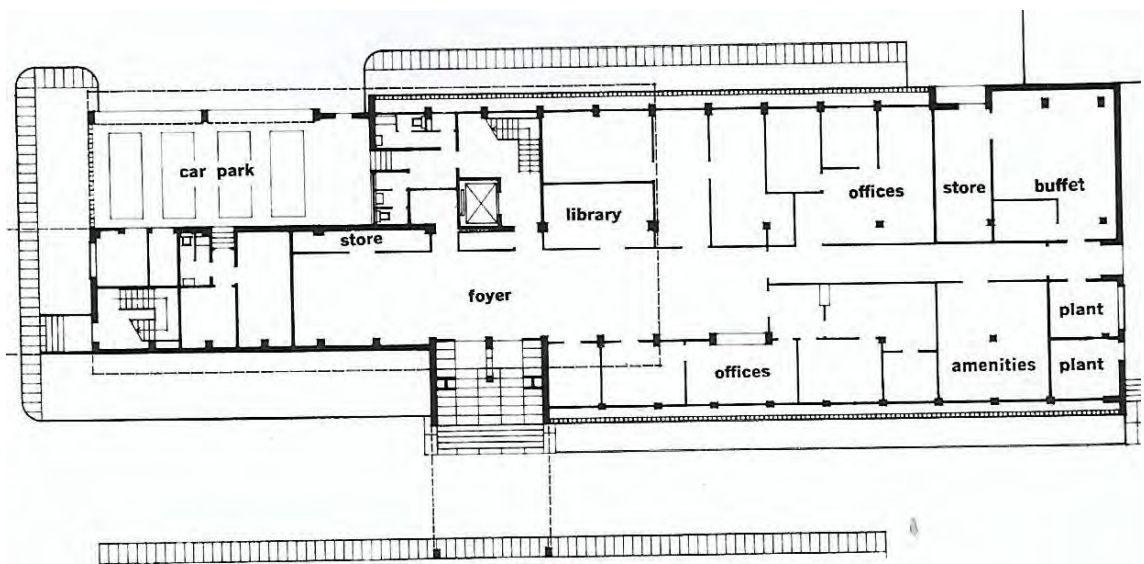


Figure 3.14. CDW in association with Alfred H. K. Wong, Australian Chancery, Djakarta, ground floor plan, 1967.

The three buildings discussed in this chapter are significant as they were responsible for generating a discussion in government circles focused on establishing a policy and administrative framework to support the construction of future diplomatic buildings overseas. While the CDW had initially taken on the role of technical advisor, pressure to complete future projects on time and on budget saw the department operate alongside three different international firms to complete the Tokyo, Djakarta and New Delhi chanceries. In its new role the CDW was directly responsible for the designs of the Djakarta and Tokyo chanceries. These buildings continued to express a representational emphasis on “dignity” although in a limited capacity due to the financial controls and standards implemented by the PSB and Treasury. While these restrictions favoured functionalism over architectural expression the CDW elevated the potentially mundane by referencing traditional building forms and also in the employment of shading devices. This allowed the buildings to sit within the local context and quietly promote “Australia” through the specification of Australian materials and art. As such, the interior of these buildings became a central consideration as the shop front approach of trade displays and brochures was rejected in favour of more composite schemes that communicated the prestige nature of diplomacy and reinforced the dignity of the interior spaces.

While this shows a continued tentative engagement with representation and architecture these projects also reveal a government divided by departmental priorities. The decision to defer the management of the overseas works programme to the CDW was done to utilise the existing “expertise” of the CDW and to cut costs. Even though this could have improved existing processes, the lack of structure and support from the Treasury and the PSB meant the CDW was unable to cope with the increasing complexity and scope of the overseas works programme and instead had to operate in association with a number of international practices. This arrangement came to the attention of the RAIA which lobbied the government to commission Australian architectural practices in lieu of the CDW and international architects as a means of representing Australia through design. Although the DEA initially supported its relationship with the CDW the use of Bates, Smart & McCutcheon on the Washington, D.C. Chancery highlighted the effectiveness of using Australian consultants that operated outside of bureaucratic circles.

Because of the RAIA’s push for the government to reconsider its approach to commissioning Australian architects for the DEA programme as well as the long delays and financial overruns experienced in completing the Djakarta and New Delhi

Chanceries, the Australian government called for a review of how overseas property was procured and designed. This review along with a new attitude towards the exporting of Australian expertise will be discussed in the following chapter.

PART II – A PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

CHAPTER FOUR: AN ACTIVE GOVERNMENT

This chapter examines the process and policies behind the creation of Australia's first administrative body - the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB) - which was tasked with overseeing the construction and management of Australia's overseas property portfolio. This change in administrative arrangement was born from a number of reviews conducted by the Auditor General and Joint Committee of Public Accounts into the management and procurement of overseas property. The findings tabled in these reports reignited parliamentary debates about Australia's approach to diplomatic representation and ultimately redefined the role of various government departments. As part of these bureaucratic changes Prime Minister John Gorton's decision to promote the use of Australian consultants for projects abroad through the "Australian Policy" brought to the fore the value of commissioning Australian-based architectural practices and the importance of utilising architecture as a representational tool.

With the election of Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister in 1972 the way in which Australia chose to engage with Asia would change. Prime Minister Whitlam's approach to domestic and foreign policy created an environment which allowed the Department of External Affairs (DEA) to launch an ambitious programme of construction to expand Australia's diplomatic network. From 1974 this expansion was solely overseen by the OPB which utilised leading Australian architects to design buildings throughout the region. The first projects to be introduced under these favourable political conditions were the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Chanceries and the Bangkok Chancery and Head of Mission (HOM) residence. Although the economic environment was conducive to expansion the DEA would still be cautious in its approach by recommending the three projects be treated as a joint exercise based on a Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) plan developed for the Kuala Lumpur Chancery in 1966. The final sections of this chapter will describe the role the CDW undertook in commissioning Australian architects for these projects and the diminishing effect this had on its involvement in future projects.

The "Australian Policy"

As explained in the previous chapter the government's decision to commission Henrique Mindlin to design the new Australian embassy in Brasilia had led to an exchange of views

on the use of Australian architects for DEA projects overseas. After the Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, was questioned in Parliament he reviewed a submission by the CDW and DEA on the Brasilia plans and elected to terminate Mindlin in May 1967.¹ Hasluck would comment that the decision was not taken because of any dissatisfaction with the work already completed but was driven by “a desire to see an Australian architectural approach introduced into the development of the project.”² The Treasury requested advice as to the reasons why the professional services of Mindlin had finished when the CDW had considered it essential that a Brazilian architect be engaged. The Secretary of the DEA, James Plimsoll, would respond stating that other “important countries” such as the US, UK, Japan, Canada and Turkey had all commissioned architectural practices of note from their own countries and that it was the minority of nations that were engaging Brazilian architects.³ In an internal memorandum to Plimsoll the DEA outlined that the use of Australian architects, such as Bates, Smart & McCutcheon (BSM), had ensured that the government’s requirements were more readily understood:

The smoothness in which the Chancery project in Washington has moved forward contrasts sharply with the slow progress of almost all our other projects.⁴

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects (RAIA) had successfully lobbied for an architect from Australia to be commissioned for the Brasilia project.⁵ However, it

¹ The CDW would argue that Mindlin should not be terminated as he was aware of Niemeyer’s philosophy for the new capital and his design reflected the required “Brasilia Idiom.” They believed that an architect from Australia would not be able to achieve this and would be disadvantaged because they had no knowledge of the local conditions and planning requirements. See NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from Keith Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, “Building Project: Brasilia,” 14 April 1967.

² NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from E. Hanfield Property Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, “Brasilia Building Project,” 5 May 1967.

³ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from J. Walshe Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, “Australian Building Project, Brasilia,” 21 June 1967.

⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from Keith Brennan Senior Assistant Secretary Department of External Affairs to the Minister Department of External Affairs, “Building Project: Brasilia,” 14 April 1967.

⁵ Cameron, Chisholm & Nicol, a Perth-based architectural practice, was commissioned in December 1973 to design the HOM residence and chancery in Brasilia. Although the design they presented was described by Prime Minister Whitlam as “an exciting concept, well fitted for the architectural environment in Brasilia and one which is likely to enhance Australia’s image in Brazil” it was never built due to cost concerns. See National Archives of Australia: Cabinet Office, A5931, Whitlam Ministries-Cabinet Files, Single Number Series With ‘CL’ Prefix; CL1642, Proposed New Chancery and Official Residence-Brasilia, 1975-1975; submission by E.G. Whitlam Acting Minister Department of Foreign Affairs to Cabinet, “Chancery and Official Residence-Brasilia,” September 1975.

continued to pressure the government to make the use of Australian architects a matter of policy. In 1968, President of the RAI, Best Overend of Acheson Best Overend wrote directly to Prime Minister Gorton to reiterate the stance of the Australian Professional Consultants Council on the promotion of Australian expertise overseas in projects such as Expo '70 and the development of other Australian embassy buildings.⁶ The letter suggested that the use of Australian consultants should be mandatory where "Australian funds are to be spent on Australian building projects abroad."⁷ The letter was forwarded to the CDW for comment and advice. The CDW response clearly shows a department that was trying to stay relevant in a discussion which was leaning more towards the outsourcing of overseas projects to Australian architectural practices:

Although it would cost less for the Commonwealth to design all the overseas projects with its own staff, and work of this nature is important for the morale of the staff, it is considered desirable for Australia to develop a national character in its overseas buildings and this can best be done by sharing the work with selected consultants. Whether the work is done by the Commonwealth or consultants, the Department of Works can provide continuity in briefing and in interpretation of Client's requirements and the Department is able to undertake the complex task of organising and controlling overseas works, much of which requires the supply of building material and equipment and some trade participation from Australia.⁸

Prime Minister Gorton would take the CDW evaluation and respond to a request from the Association of Consulting Engineers of Australia to use Australian engineers overseas:

I am advised that in the majority of cases, the employment of consultants by Commonwealth Departments is determined by assessment of which firm, in the opinion of the client, is considered most likely to be the most efficient in undertaking a particular engineering or other consultant requirement. I am

⁶ The Australian Professional Consultants Council was formed after a survey tour was instigated by the Department of Trade with the aim of exporting consultant services overseas. The tour was led by Mervyn Parry, the RAI president at the time. The mission visited Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Libya, Lebanon and Iran. See "Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting, Hobart, April 3 1968," *Architecture in Australia* 57, no 3 (June 1968): 456. The Mission was also reported in *Cross-Section*, no.173 (March 1967): 1.

⁷ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/1/51 Part 2, Premises General-Joint Chancery Construction Project Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, 1972-1973; letter from A. Reiher Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Australian Embassy Paris," 23 May 1973.

⁸ Ibid.

further advised that it is the usual practice, where this procedure is followed, for Departments to engage Australian Consultants wherever possible and that overseas engineering consultants are only engaged on rare occasions when it is deemed that special skills which may be required for a project are not available at the time from amongst the Australian engineering profession⁹

While the engineering profession is emphasised in this particular instance it was understood by the Director General of the Department of Works, Alan Reiher, that the procedures and policy outlined by Prime Minister Gorton also applied to the architectural profession. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)¹⁰ termed this internal government policy the “Australian Policy” and used this letter to argue for the exclusive use of Australian architectural practices in future chancery projects when they were questioned by the Treasury.¹¹

A Review of Procedures

With the release of the Auditor General's Report for the financial year of 1967-1968 and the subsequent Joint Committee of Public Accounts *One Hundred and Fifth Report* awareness of the difficulties experienced in the management and construction of diplomatic premises overseas would be brought to the attention of Parliament, reigniting the discussion surrounding Australia's approach to diplomatic representation and expediting a review of the existing procedures for procuring overseas property. Paragraph 80 of the report comments on the approved purchase of a property in Paris in November 1963 at a price of \$578,000 and its pending sale six years later for an expected loss. The report was instigated after it had come to the attention of the Auditor General in 1967 that the existing Paris building had remained unoccupied since being purchased and that the alterations proposed by the DEA to make the structure usable as a chancery had never been undertaken. When questioned by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts a year later the DEA stated that because of “a variety of factors including

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ On 6 November 1970, the DEA was renamed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) by Executive Council Meeting No 18 (Prime Minister's Minute No 45) taking over all its predecessor's functions.

¹¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to C. Wade Assistant Director General Department of Works, “Appointment of Consultant Architects: Singapore, Kuala Lumpur & Paris,” 10 May 1973.

the high cost of alterations and the now known non-acceptability of the premises for an Australian chancery” it had been decided to dispose of the property.¹²

In order to understand the reasons why the government necessitated the need to amend the procedures and policies that were in place it is essential that a summary of the sequence of events that led to the purchase as well as the subsequent sale of the Paris property be presented here. As these events ultimately led to a review of procedures and the formation of the OPB they are key to understanding the government’s change in approach to architecture and its future interaction with Australian architectural practices.

The search for a suitable building in Paris had been initiated in 1960 when the retired Director of the CDW, Wilfred Haslam, had been approached in London to investigate the Paris property market. In his report Haslam concluded that there was a “serious lack of suitable office accommodation” and that Paris was the most difficult European city in which to obtain premises.¹³ Even so, the officers of the Paris Embassy were tasked with continuing the search reportedly inspecting over 50 properties during a three-year period until premises at 59 Rue de la Faisanderie were found. When asked if the officers in the embassy were qualified to engage in such a search the DEA stated in retrospect they had “sent a boy on a man’s errand and that, in general, the Australian tax payer had not fared well in the operation.”¹⁴ It was discovered that even though the property was not ideal it represented the best value for money in a competitive market. The DEA commissioned a French architect, Jean Demaret, to inspect the building before settlement.¹⁵ In his report Demaret concluded that the building was of good quality and that with minimal cost and alterations it could be made into a suitable chancery.¹⁶

In the normal course of events the proposal would be put before the Federal Cabinet to consider the expenditure of purchasing the premises especially as it had not been included in the DEA estimates. However, in a property market where prices were rising

¹² Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Report of the Auditor-General-Financial Year 1967 – 68,” in *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, One Hundred and Fifth Report* (Canberra: Government Printing Office, 1969), 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴ One reason why embassy officers had been used was to keep the ancillary costs of acquisition as low as possible and although it was recognised that the officers had an understanding of the functional aspects of a chancery they were not qualified to make a technical appraisal of a multi-storey building. See *Ibid.*, 22-23.

¹⁵ Demaret designed the French embassy in Canberra (1959) as the Architect for Civil Monuments and National Palaces.

¹⁶ It was revealed that no written brief setting out the DEA’s requirements had been supplied to Demaret before his investigation as it was believed that he had previously been consulted by Haslam in conjunction with the initial investigations undertaken in 1960. See Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Report of the Auditor-General-Financial Year 1967-68,” 25.

and suitable properties for use as offices were limited, the Minister for External Affairs, Garfield Barwick, sought approval directly from the Prime Minister and Treasurer in an effort to circumnavigate the administrative delays which had been experienced in other projects.¹⁷

With approval given, a qualified architect was sought to provide detailed plans of the modifications needed to adapt the building for use as a chancery. Although the CDW was approached in 1964 to undertake the task no architects were available to travel to Paris. The DEA waited until July 1965 before a CDW architect was sent to assess the building and provide plans. The plans proposed a major redesign of internal spaces to bring the building in line with the office standards and needs of an increasing number of Paris-based staff. A subsequent inspection by Clive Osborne in June 1966 put the cost of implementing the proposed changes at \$300,000. In regards to the building's location Osborne stated, "the area had a disappointing air of declining town house quarter" adding that the "property certainly could never create, by its location, the image and national prestige that a well selected chancery site should do."¹⁸ Following his inspection a second security audit was completed on the building which concluded the building was completely unacceptable for use as a chancery. This forced the DEA to conclude in 1967 that the best course of action on economic grounds was to sell the property.¹⁹

In analysing these events the Joint Committee of Public Accounts noted the difficulties experienced by the DEA in securing the services of Australian architects during the important phases of the investigation. The Committee concluded that the use of international architects as sole consultants on overseas projects was completely unsatisfactory and that the remit of the Overseas Building Committee (OBC) be broadened to include the acquisition and alterations of premises.²⁰ Recognising that there was a need to redefine the procedures required in the procurement of overseas property as well as to establish a more coherent method in obtaining approvals, the DEA,

¹⁷ The embassy had a verbal option on the purchase of the premises which would expire on the 15 September 1963. As the vendor had another interested party he was willing to extend the date by a month if the embassy paid a ten per cent deposit noting the deposit would be forfeit if it was decided not to proceed. As the Minister testified this meant a decision had to be made within two days as risking \$57,800 was an unacceptable course of action. See *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹ As the property values in Paris had fallen considerably since 1963 a number of proposals were examined to ensure the highest price could be obtained. This included an option to demolish the building and sell a vacant site as well as commissioning the real estate agents, Weatherall, Green and Smith, to prepare a planning application to increase the market value. The initial offers received were \$309,000 and \$317,625 which were more than \$250,000 under the purchase price of \$578,000. See *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁰ The Committee also suggested that a security officer be included as a member of the committee moving forward. See *Ibid.*, 34-36.

CDW and Treasury formed an interdepartmental committee known as the Programming of Overseas Works Committee (OWC) in early 1968 which would operate alongside the OBC. The Committee was tasked with establishing the principles and procedures to be followed by the OBC in the planning, acquisition and construction of properties overseas.²¹

Forming the OPB

With the findings of the Auditor General's Report tabled in Parliament discussions centred around the representational needs of Australia. Senator James Toohey voiced his concerns over the standard of facilities available to diplomats:

I would hope that, in addition to studying matters associated with the problems arising from the building in Paris, an investigation will be made into the living conditions and other matters affecting our representatives abroad.²²

Senator Robert Cotton posited that the problem with Australia's representation overseas lay in the fragmented departmental approach that had been at the forefront of government thinking since the formation of the DEA:

I have come to the view that what we need in this country is a total review of what we are trying to do in representation overseas in the full sense...My view is that we should be representing ourselves overseas not so much departmentally as in the long and extended arm of Australia's interest.²³

Cotton cited the restructuring of the British Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office into one unified department after the recommendations of the Plowden Committee on Representational Services Overseas (1962-1964) as an example of what was needed in Australia.²⁴ Cotton also referred to the chapter headings listed in the subsequent *Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968-1969* tabled in the

²¹ Question Proposed Expenditure 1969-1970 Speech, 18 September 1969, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: Senate Official Hansard*, No. 38.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The committee led by Lord Plowden was tasked with reviewing the "purpose, structure and operation of the services responsible for representing the interests of the United Kingdom Government overseas, both in Commonwealth and in foreign countries and to make recommendations, having regard to changes in political, social and economic circumstances in this country and overseas." For a further analysis of the Plowden Committee report see "The Plowden Report: Commonwealth Relations in Whitehall," *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 215 (1964): 222-227. For Senator Cotton's statement see Ibid.

British Parliament by Val Duncan as a means of understanding the individual functions of government and the need to address these under the common heading of representation.²⁵

Chapter Twelve of this report was dedicated to overseas accommodation and focused on the need for the British government to be more efficient in the management of diplomatic premises abroad.²⁶ The report recommended the consolidation of a number of regulatory departments into a single executive authority known as the Overseas Diplomatic Estate Board which would be tasked with owning, administering and managing overseas estate. It also acknowledged the need to reduce the number of rental properties noting that:

Office accommodation is an important factor in the effectiveness of our missions overseas. We must be prepared to spend money on providing modern and well-equipped buildings in the right locations.²⁷

The report's recommendations would be reviewed by an interdepartmental committee which also supported British ownership of two thirds of the overseas estate, however it recommended against establishing the Overseas Diplomatic Estate Board because of accountability issues over funding. Instead, the committee advocated for the creation of a Directorate of Estate Management Overseas that would operate within the structure of the Department of the Environment.²⁸

By 1969 Australia was operating 68 diplomatic missions around the world. The addition of 26 new embassies in the nine years since the expansion under Casey meant that Australia now had diplomatic representation throughout the majority of Asia excluding communist China, North Korea and North Vietnam.²⁹ With 973 of the 1547 staff of the DEA posted overseas the importance of providing suitable premises was crucial to both

²⁵ The *Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968-1969* chapter headings are: Ch 1 - The role of Overseas Representation in the Conduct of British Foreign Policy, Ch 2 - The Structure of the Diplomatic Service, Ch 3 - The Management of the Diplomatic Service, Ch 4 - Political Work, Ch 5 - Commercial Policy and Economic Work, Ch 6 - Commercial Work, Ch 7 - Aid Administration, Ch 8 - Information and Culture, Ch 9 - Consular Work, Ch 10 - Civilian Attaches, Ch 11 - Service Attaches, Ch 12 - Accommodation.

²⁶ The Australian government would not conduct a review of overseas representation until 1977. This will be discussed in Chapter Six: "A Change in Direction."

²⁷ Val Duncan, "Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968-1969" (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, July 1969), 148-159.

²⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/1/35 Part 2, Property Proposals for Overseas Property Committee or Commission, 1971-1972; record of conversation with B. Roberts Director Directorate of Estate Management Overseas in the Department of the Environment with J. Watson, "Directorate of Estate Management Overseas," 3 September 1971.

²⁹ Beaumont, "The Champagne Trail?" 156-157.

staff morale and the projection of an appropriate national image.³⁰ In order to assess the situation the Public Accounts Committee proposed that Joseph Collings, the Commissioner for the PSB, undertake a tour of overseas property in 1970 to “make recommendations on new administrative arrangements.”³¹ On his return Collings reported that the management of overseas property as it existed “lacked drive and purposeful management.”³² In a subsequent paper entitled “Overseas Property” Collings argued for a more effective machinery to deal with policy and practice in real-estate matters overseas.³³ The DEA admitted that the proliferation of overseas commitments in the latter half of the 1960s had left the department struggling to manage the property portfolio “efficiently, expeditiously and economically” and as the commitment remained vast and ever expanding there was an urgent need to find an effective solution.³⁴

It is widely recognised that the present machinery, which tends to be over-bureaucratic, is quite incapable of quick, efficient or consistently satisfactory action. The Department’s Overseas Property Section, at present consisting of 26 officers, is lamentably deficient in numbers and expertise to cope with any sense of adequacy.³⁵

With the value of the Commonwealth overseas estate being estimated at \$22 million the PSB concluded that there was “an immediate need for the provision of an expert central unit to coordinate and expedite the handling of overseas property issues.”³⁶ A task force was established to investigate overseas property matters. The concluding report drew on the findings of the British Plowden Committee and the Canadian Foreign Service Manual of Supplies and Property. In its recommendations the task force determined that further consultation was needed with the PSB on the desirability of introducing a specialised property inspectorate which could operate as part of a body which would be responsible for the purchase, sales and construction of properties overseas. It was

³⁰ Public Service Board, *Forty-Second Annual Report 1965-1966*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, September 1966), 18.

³¹ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/1/35 Part 1, Property Proposals for Overseas Property Committee or Commission, 1970-1971; report by J. Collings, “Overseas Property Matters.”

³⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from K. Shann Acting Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs to the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 29 November 1971.

³⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, circular memorandum from H. Marshall Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs to all Foreign Affairs Posts, “Departmental note on the Overseas Property Bureau,” 24 December 1971.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

envisaged that the inspectorate (similar to that used by the Canadian government in the management of its overseas property portfolio) would deal with the acquisition of furniture and equipment and carry out maintenance inspections.³⁷ In response, the DEA recommended that the PSB call an informal meeting of the departments concerned to “get down the terms of reference of the proposed committee more concisely than had been done to date.”³⁸

Discussions were held between the DFA, Treasury, Trade and Industry, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Immigration, PSB and the CDW. Initial suggestions included setting up a board based on the British Directorate of Estate Management Overseas with the DFA proposing that a meeting at a Ministerial level be set up so advice could be gleaned from the British.³⁹ Another possibility discussed included the formation of an independent Australian Overseas Property Commission modelled on the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) as a body with funds and the capacity to operate independently.⁴⁰ A consensus was reached that centred on the establishment of a flexible independent bureau that could assume overall responsibility for the Commonwealth’s overseas office and residential accommodation.⁴¹ The DFA advocated for a bureau that could be positioned outside the normal bureaucratic structure of a department as an “outrider” while reporting directly to the department head. The DFA noted that the benefit of having a bureau removed from departmental bureaucracy with the ability to operate on an approved budget independent of the Treasury was ideal.⁴² The only reservations expressed by the DFA was the relationship the new bureau would have with the CDW in the design and construction of capital works:

We preferred to see the Bureau get away to a fresh start, being equipped with its own adequate technical staff, with Works playing a due part but leaving flexibility to the Bureau on how it operated to get things done.⁴³

³⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 1, notes for a suggested draft report, “Task Force on Property.”

³⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 1, notes for file from L. Border First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Committee,” 31 July 1970.

³⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from B. Meade Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to the First Assistant Secretary Management and Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs, “D.E.M.O.S Organisation, Functions and Staffing,” 23 September 1971.

⁴⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, circular memorandum from H. Marshall, “Departmental note on the Overseas Property Bureau.”

⁴¹ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 1.

⁴² NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, circular memorandum from H. Marshall, “Departmental note on the Overseas Property Bureau.”

⁴³ Ibid.

In April 1971 Prime Minister William McMahon created the Overseas Property Bureau as a specialist agency “charged with a functional responsibility for the provision, management and maintenance of overseas land and property for Commonwealth purposes.”⁴⁴ This effectively consolidated the overseas functions performed by the PSB and DFA into one professionally-based organisation that could handle the growing requirements of Australia’s overseas representation.⁴⁵ The OPB was placed under the management of the Department of the Vice-President of the Executive Council before being transferred in a ministerial shuffle to the newly created Department of the Environment, Aborigines and Art (EAA) in May that year.⁴⁶ To avert another Paris fiasco, Prime Minister McMahon also announced the formation of the Overseas Property Committee (OPC). This Committee, like the OWC, was an advisory body with no executive or enforcement authority. It was made up of senior second level representatives of the departments with interests in overseas property and operated as a forum for client consultation to advise the OPB on the various client needs associated with overseas representation.⁴⁷ Prime Minister McMahon declared to Parliament that “the operations of the Bureau will help departments and Heads of Mission to concentrate on their principal task of representation.”⁴⁸

While the OPB was operational on paper, its inclusion within the EAA drew condemnation from both the Treasury and DFA. The Secretary of the DFA immediately expressed concern that the inclusion of the OPB in a department with no overseas property experience would not only lower the status and authority of the OPB but also result in the Bureau developing into another intervening piece of bureaucratic machinery.⁴⁹ The EAA as a new department was structured into three divisions which included the Australian Government Publishing Services, the Office of the Environment as well as the Arts and General Division which was further divided into branches that

⁴⁴ This is the definition that Prime Minister McMahon used in his address to Parliament. See Minister of State Bill 1971 Second Reading Speech, 29 April 1971, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 17. A more detailed synopsis of the functions of the OPB are available in Appendix VII.

⁴⁵ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Australian National Audit Office, “Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group,” in *Australian National Audit Office Audit Report, 1992-93*, ed. Rod Nicholas (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992), 120.

⁴⁸ *House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 17.

⁴⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, report from H. Marshall Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs on conversation with B. Juddery *Canberra Times*, “The Overseas Property Bureau,” 19 October 1971.

were to deal with Arts, World Expositions, Archives, Establishments and Finance, and finally, Overseas Property.

A number of interdepartmental meetings were held on the 17th, 20th and 27th of May to further define the principal administration aspects of the Bureau in relation to major and minor works, acquisitions, purchasing and leasing, maintenance, furniture and fittings and its relationship with the CDW. The DFA took these meetings as an opportunity to demonstrate that the original concept of the Bureau being a semi-autonomous “specialist agency” had been lost.⁵⁰ The PSB argued that this was not the case and that there was no significant difference between the OPB operating as an “outrider” or as a branch working within a division. The DFA retaliated suggesting that if the OPB was simply to be part of a department then perhaps the OPB could operate under the DFA where a great deal of experience in overseas property matters had already been accumulated.⁵¹

In response, the Secretary for the EAA, Lenox Hewitt, carried out an assessment of the staffing levels and structure the Bureau would need to maintain in order to effectively undertake the functional responsibility assigned to it. As a first step in the analysis, all departments were requested to provide details of their overseas property holdings including leased premises, as well as the scales and provisions for furniture and fittings for both residential and office accommodation.⁵² The core team of the Bureau was set at six members by Hewitt which was a substantial reduction from the staffing levels of the DFA Overseas Property Section. While the DFA had envisioned that the OPB would be staffed with technical officers who were specialists in architecture and engineering the staff recruited were administrative officers.⁵³ This led the DFA to comment:

It continues to be difficult to feel any confidence that some half dozen administrative offices, lacking professional and technical support and

⁵⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 1, notes, “Overseas Property Bureau-Meeting,” 27 May 1971.

⁵¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 1, letter from L. Border First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to H. Marshal Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 24 May 1971.

⁵² National Archives of Australia: Australian High Commission, United Kingdom [London], A3211, Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number Series; 1974/122 Part 1, Overseas Property Bureau Property Matters, 1971-1975; letter from E. Bunting Secretary The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to the Official Secretary Office of the High Commissioner for Australia, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 16 July 1971.

⁵³ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from L. Border First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 7 March 1971.

unfamiliar to a large degree with the functions involved, can make a worthwhile contribution.⁵⁴

Nigel Bowen, Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote to Prime Minister McMahon questioning the placement of the OPB in the EAA and requested that its function be moved as an “outrider” of the DFA.⁵⁵ By mid-1972 concern was continuing to grow as to the operational capacity of the OPB with the *Canberra Times* publishing an article entitled “Departments in Dispute: Property Branch just another PS Limb.”⁵⁶ The Treasury requested that the EEA provide the draft estimates for the overseas property portfolio for the 1972-1973 budget however the EAA admitted that it was not in a position to do so and that the DFA would need to continue managing the overseas estate.⁵⁷ Bowen approached the Minister of the EAA, Peter Howson, on 7 March 1972 to ascertain what progress if any had been made in establishing a structure for the new OPB and whether the EAA was “happy” to have the OPB within its department. Howson commented that as a department the EAA was happy to take on the responsibility but would only do so when there was appropriate staffing. Howson continued referring to the article in the *Canberra Times* as a clear example of the DFA not wanting the EAA to be responsible.⁵⁸ First Assistant Secretary from the Management Services Branch of Foreign Affairs, Lewis Border, summarised the meeting noting:

From what was said, and the way it was said, I would judge that the EAA will not make any particular effort to set up the Bureau quickly or to do us any special favours. I have no confidence whatever in present activity and I have positive fears for the future of our property programme if the Bureau is established in its present location... I believe that there is no alternative but to start again.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to L. Corkery Ambassador Australian Embassy Vienna, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 11 February 1972.

⁵⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from Nigel Bowen Minister Department of Foreign Affairs to the Prime Minister

⁵⁶ Bruce Juddery, “Departments in Dispute: Property Branch Just Another PS Limb,” *Canberra Times*, 21 October, 1971, 6.

⁵⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from H. Marshall Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs to G. Glenn Public Service Board, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 14 March 1972.

⁵⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 2, letter from L. Border First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 7 March 1972.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the positioning of the OPB within the machinery of government it would become a key player in the rapid expansion of Australia's diplomatic network and be supported by the Whitlam government's policy focus.

Policies under Whitlam

With the announcement of the planned withdrawal of British forces from Malaysia and Singapore in 1967 and President Nixon's endorsement of the Guam Doctrine in 1969, Australia effectively became responsible for its own affairs in the Asia-Pacific region.⁶⁰ Amidst continuing pressure from the public to stop Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War Prime Minister McMahon visited the US in October 1971 and subsequently announced the withdrawal of Australian troops in August 1972. With the strategic environment changing, Prime Minister McMahon called for an assessment of Australia's position and outlook in the region. The *Australian Defence Review* presented to Parliament was the first major assessment of defence policy since the enactment of the Guam Doctrine and the end of Australia's involvement in Vietnam. The review recognised the need for a policy that would balance the defence strategy of "self-reliance" with the development of important strategic alliances through diplomacy.⁶¹ As David Goldsworthy attests, the implications of these strategic changes were to fundamentally influence how diplomatic relations in the region were conducted and ultimately contributed to "the flow of new ideas about living in Asia."⁶²

The election of Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister in December 1972 would significantly accelerate this process. Whilst in opposition, Whitlam had led a Labor delegation to Peking which had met with the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, in July 1971. The meeting's success was broadcast internationally with Whitlam being touted as the first Western leader to engage with the much-feared Communist block; publicly beating the Americans, who a few days later would declare a secret meeting had been held between

⁶⁰ The Guam doctrine outlined the United States government's expectations that its Asian allies would be responsible for their own defences. For a discussion on Australia's shift in strategic thinking see Nicole Brangwin, Nathan Church, Steve Dyer, and David Watt, "Defending Australia: A History of Australia's Defence White Papers," *Parliamentary Library Research Paper*, (20 August, 2015), 9, accessed 6 January 2018, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/4024138/upload_binary/4024138.pdf;fileType=application/pdf

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶² David Goldsworthy, David Dutton, Peter Gifford, Roderic Pitty, "Reorientation," in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. David Goldsworthy, Volume 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 314.

Henry Kissinger and the Chinese Premier.⁶³ Prime Minister Whitlam's engagement with China signalled a shift in thinking which would underlie the newly elected Labor government's approach to foreign policy in Asia. Less concerned with the ideological divisions of the Cold War alliances, Prime Minister Whitlam actively sought to establish Australia as an independent player in regional affairs by building relationships based on equality, announcing his desire for:

An Australia which will be less militarily oriented and not open to suggestions of racism; an Australia which will enjoy a growing standing as a distinctive, tolerant, co-operative and well regarded nation not only in the Asian and Pacific region, but in the world at large.⁶⁴

To achieve this, Prime Minister Whitlam promptly reassessed a number of domestic policies which had hampered Australia's involvement with Asia. This included scrapping the White Australia Policy, opening Australia's markets by reducing tariffs and increasing aid funding. Within the first three days of being in office Prime Minister Whitlam opened negotiations with the Chinese and officially recognised China diplomatically. This rendered Australia's long standing Cold War policy towards the communist threat obsolete and opened up a new economic and trade market. Through his policy of engagement Prime Minister Whitlam recognised the governments of North Korea and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and embarked on negotiations with Japan to establish a basic treaty of friendship through the Nippon-Australia Relations Agreement. He also secured Australian membership on the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation, a popular move in the region, as well as forming a dialogue partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).⁶⁵

The Whitlam government's domestic policy development was aimed at establishing and expressing a new Australian identity at home and abroad that would promote Australia as less inward looking and more culturally accepting.⁶⁶ To achieve this, funding for the arts was increased and the Australia Council was given statutory authority to oversee a number of newly established arts boards. These boards would operate independently

⁶³ For an analysis of the 1971 meeting and its effect on Australian foreign policy see Billy Griffiths, *The China Breakthrough: Whitlam in the Middle Kingdom, 1971* (Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2012).

⁶⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, "The Prime Minister's Press Conference at Parliament House," (5 December, 1972), 14, accessed 2 January 2018, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00002730.pdf>

⁶⁵ David Goldsworthy, David Dutton, Peter Gifford, Roderic Pitty, "Reorientation," in *Facing North*, Volume 1, 314-315.

⁶⁶ Gough Whitlam, *It's Time for Leadership - Policy Speech 1972 Delivered by Gough Whitlam*, ed. Australian Labor Party (Canberra: Australian Labor Party, 1972), 28.

and have authority to make decisions for theatre, music, literature, visual and plastic, crafts, film and television and Aboriginal arts.⁶⁷ As experts in their fields the boards acted as a source of communication and policy initiatives that focused on three key areas; to consider the economic value of the arts, to seek increased participation and community access and to align art policy with federal policies on multiculturalism and cultural identity.⁶⁸ Although no design and architecture board was established within the Arts Council it was in the context of these foci that architecture can be considered as part of the agenda.⁶⁹

The first department to be created under the Whitlam government was the Department of Services and Property. Headed by Fred Daly with Maurice Timbs as Secretary, the department would replace the EAA and be responsible for the OPB.⁷⁰ Daly promptly requested up-to-date information on the establishment and operations of the American Foreign Building Office (FBO) believing it to be more superior than the British equivalent.⁷¹ The DFA consulted with the Assistant Secretary of the OPB, Ralph Whalen, to establish the position of the OPB within the new department. Whalen acknowledged that the functions of the Bureau as established under the McMahon government still stood and that the position of the OPB within the department was as an “outrider” with a direct line to Timbs. Whalen also confirmed that over 90 positions had been proposed to the PSB while the EAA was in control but this had been rejected. While there was evidence of the OPB beginning to develop into the concept that had been envisioned the DFA still had concerns with Whalen noting that after nineteen months on the job Whalen still had a limited knowledge of the day-to-day workings of overseas

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Katya Johanson, “The Role of Australia’s Cultural Council 1945-1995” (PhD Dissertation, University of Melbourne, 2000), 149, quoted in Paul Walker and Karen Burns, “Architecture and the Australia Council in the 1980s,” in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australian and New Zealand: 32, Architecture, Institutions and Change*, ed. Paul Hogben and Judith O’Callaghan (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015): 689.

⁶⁹ In the late 1970s a group within the Visual Arts Board advocated for the creation of a Design and Architecture Board. The existence of such a board was confirmed with the announcement of the judging panel for the international competition for the design of the new Parliament House in Canberra in April 1979. The Architecture and Design Panel was formally announced in 1980 as part of the Visual Arts Board and was chaired by John Andrews. See Paul Walker and Karen Burns, “Architecture and the Australia Council in the 1980s,” in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australian and New Zealand: 32, Architecture, Institutions and Change*, ed. Paul Hogben and Judith O’Callaghan (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015): 691-692.

⁷⁰ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, “The Prime Minister’s Press Conference at Parliament House,” (16 January 1973), 14, accessed 4 October 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00002775.pdf>

⁷¹ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/1/35 Part 3, Property Proposals for Overseas Property Committee or Commission, 1972-1974; cablegram from Department of Foreign Affairs to Australian Embassy Washington, “State Department Office of Foreign Buildings,” 6 August 1973.

missions and lacked awareness of many of the problems associated with accommodation overseas.⁷²

“The Kuala Lumpur Plan” (1963-1972)

The issue of accommodation had again come to light during an interdepartmental meeting held between the DFA, CDW and the Treasury in regards to the Kuala Lumpur Chancery prior to the election of Whitlam. The meeting held on the 30 May 1972 centered on the space requirements of the project and a set of plans that had been produced by the CDW in 1966. These plans were developed after the Secretary of the DEA, Arthur Tange, visited Kuala Lumpur in 1963 and directed the CDW to undertake an investigation into purchasing land so a permanent chancery could be constructed which would replace the inadequate leased premises.⁷³ Under instruction from the DEA, Clive Wade was sent in September 1964 to select a block of land in Kuala Lumpur that would be large enough to develop a chancery and residential accommodation. The site selected was located in Jalan Yap Kwan Seng and was well situated relative to the city centre because of its position adjacent to Jalan Ampang - a major arterial road. The Treasury approved the purchase price of £153,338 in August 1965 on the proviso that any unused land from the 1.9 acre block be sold off or utilised for staff accommodation.⁷⁴ Wade returned to Malaysia in May 1966 to assess the best means of conducting the project and to determine if the development of residential accommodation was suitable.⁷⁵ In undertaking his investigation he commented on what he regarded as the high quality of architecture that existed in Kuala Lumpur as well as in Singapore; a point the High Commissioner, Allan Eastman, also reiterated in his summary of Wade's visit: “I explained to him my main objective was to see that our eventual chancery should be able to stand without shame in the architectural company in Kuala Lumpur.”⁷⁶

⁷² NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 3, minutes on meeting between R. Whalen Assistant Secretary Overseas Property Bureau, J. Donaldson Overseas Property Bureau, A. Fogg Acting First Assistant Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Property Bureau,” 5 January 1973.

⁷³ National Archives of Australia: Department of External Affairs [II] Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/73/6 Part 2, Property Kuala Lumpur-Chancery Project Kuala Lumpur, 1966-1970; letter from D. Connors Major Projects Sub Section Department of Works, “Overseas Visit by E. Hanfield Information Note on Kuala Lumpur Project,” 19 January 1967.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, letter from A. Eastman High Commissioner Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Chancery Project: Overseas Visit-J. C. Wade Department of Works,” 18 May 1966.

During his investigation Wade visited a number of buildings to determine how local architects were adapting building forms to mitigate the harsh climatic conditions.⁷⁷ Some examples included works completed by foreign architects Booty, Edwards & Partners such as the Brunei State Mosque (now Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque, 1958), the Mercantile Bank (1961) and the Subang International Airport (1965), as well as work by local architect T. S. Leong who had been responsible for the design of Kwong Yik Bank (1965).⁷⁸ Wade also visited the offices of the architectural practice Malayan Architects Co-Partnership (MAC)⁷⁹ and interviewed a partner in the firm, Chen Voon Fee, who, with William Lim and Lim Chong Keat, had successfully won the competition to design the Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House in 1961 shortly after the office was founded.⁸⁰ As one of the first local practices established in Malaysia their focus was on a regionalist approach to architecture readily adapting the theoretical aspects of the International Style to the local context through material use and climatic response.⁸¹ The completed Conference Hall and Trade Union House (1965), although not on the list of buildings Wade visited, embodied the practices' approach combining cantilevered terraces and roof forms with vertical louvers and strip cladding made from local hardwood. As described in *Cross-Section* at the time "the form is powerful, open and airy."⁸²

Wade's interview with Chen Voon Fee focused on the availability of building materials and the capability of local architectural practices to undertake the chancery project. Chen questioned Wade as to whether a local firm would be commissioned by the Australian government to design the chancery. Wade did not confirm, replying that no decision had been made regarding the use of a local architect or Australian architect for the design or supervision of the project. He did however inform Chen that a number of questions had been asked in Parliament regarding the use of Australian architects for

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, report from F. Robertson, "Visit-Mr. J. C. Wade 16-17 May 1966." For a complete list of buildings visited see Appendix IX.

⁷⁹ MAC was modelled on Walter Gropius' Architects Collaborative and the Architects Co Partnership in the UK. The firm was started in 1960 by William Lim educated at the AA and Harvard, Lim Chong Keat educated at Manchester University and MIT and Chen Voon Fee.

⁸⁰ The open competition was the first architectural competition held in Singapore since the end of the Second World War. MAC won the competition which had sixteen other entries. The completed building was seen as a marker for Singapore's bid for modernity reflecting a national pride free from a colonial past. See Mark Crinson, "Singapore's Moment: Critical Regionalism, its Colonial Roots and Profound Aftermath," *The Journal of Architecture* 22, no. 4 (May 2017): 689-709.

⁸¹ Mohamad Tajuddin M. Rasdi and Nor Hayati Hussain, "National Identity and the Architecture of Malayan Architect Co-Partnership," in *International Conference on Construction Industry 2006: Towards Innovative Approach in Construction and Property Development* (June 2006), accessed 10 October 2018, <http://epublication.fab.utm.my/id/eprint/201>

⁸² *Cross-Section*, no. 203 (September 1969): 1.

overseas work and that this could have “some bearing on the government’s decision on the Kuala Lumpur Chancery.”⁸³ When asked if MAC would be interested in supervising such a project Chen commented that his firm would only be interested if they were given “complete charge of the design.”⁸⁴ On leaving the interview Wade commented favourably on the extensive list of projects the office was undertaking believing that if a local firm was to be used that MAC would be more than competent, although he did note that a number of the firm’s designs were too “flamboyant” believing a simpler design would have been better in some cases.⁸⁵ After departing Malaysia Wade requested a photographic survey of the recently completed Indonesian embassy in Singapore (1964) - a building that presented a mix of traditional Indonesian roof forms and modernist geometry.⁸⁶

Once Wade had returned to Australia he developed a sketch design in 1966 that would later be referred to as the “Kuala Lumpur Plan.”⁸⁷ While the OWC met in November 1968 and agreed on the proposed space requirements and the sketch plan produced by the CDW, the project was delayed because of political unrest in Malaysia. A letter from the CDW to the DEA in October 1969 would request that the project be reactivated.⁸⁸ However with the British withdrawal of forces from the region and the need to administer the Australian/New Zealand military presence with the Malaysian authorities, staffing numbers had increased dramatically at the High Commission. This forced the DEA to re-evaluate the plans and resubmit new space requirements to the OBC in February 1971.⁸⁹ The new plans were rejected by the High Commissioner, John Rowland, as being unsuitable because of the chancery’s position on the site and the failure to retain prominent trees, leading Rowland to comment on the CDW’s “very unimaginative use of

⁸³ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, report from F. Robertson, “Visit-Mr. J. C. Wade 16-17 May 1966.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “The Kuala Lumpur Plan” is referred to in correspondence after the 30 May 1972 for an example see NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, “Major Construction Projects,” 4 June 1973.

⁸⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, letter from A. Reiher Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Kuala Lumpur Chancery Project, 16 October 1969.

⁸⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, letter from A. Campbell Deputy High Commissioner Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Chancery Premises in Kuala Lumpur,” 27 January 1970.

the land.”⁹⁰ Rowland instead suggested that the earlier sketch plans produced by Wade in 1966 which had proposed a multi-level building with a reduced footprint be revisited.⁹¹

The next chapter will examine the development and realisation of the Kuala Lumpur Chancery in detail. It is important at this point to expand on the CDW’s development of the “Kuala Lumpur Plan” as a spatial template that would not only inform the design of the Kuala Lumpur Chancery but also the Singapore and Bangkok projects in what was considered a joint approach.

Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur - A Joint Approach

Although initially rejected, the 1966 “Kuala Lumpur Plan” was developed further by the CDW as an exercise in investigating the interrelationship of spaces determined by the technical requirements of security. The concept clearly divided the public from the restricted areas accessible only to embassy staff. The CDW layout proposed a ground floor with two mezzanine levels above for public use which were accessed via a number of interconnecting stairways.⁹² The intermediary space between the mezzanines provided the ceiling height required for a theatrette; an addition that was being argued by the Information and Cultural Relations Branch (ICR) as being crucial to presenting the “warmth and competence” of Australia.⁹³ A tower block extended four levels above the mezzanine floors and was designed as the secure area of the chancery being accessible only via restricted elevators.⁹⁴ On examining the plans the DFA commented that they were “attractive and practical” and allowed the main reception, display and library area to be on the ground floor with the public offices of the Consular, Students, Immigration

⁹⁰ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/73/6 Part 3, Property-Kuala Lumpur-Chancery Project, 1970-1972; letter from J. Rowland High Commissioner Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, “Plans for High Commission Building,” 30 July 1971.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/1/51 Part 1, Premises General-Joint Chancery Construction Project Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, 1972-1973; background notes for discussion between the Treasury, Public Service Board, Department of Foreign Affairs and Works at 10:30 on 15 December 1972 at the Department of Foreign Affairs, “New Chancery Constructions: Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.”

⁹³ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, letter from A. Woolcott Assistant Secretary Information and Cultural Relations Branch to the Department of Foreign Affairs, “Theatrettes in Embassies,” 1 December 1972.

⁹⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, background notes for discussion between the Treasury, Public Service Board, Department of Foreign Affairs and Works.

and Trade Offices located above on the two mezzanine floors.⁹⁵ The DFA also commented that the use of mezzanines allowed extra height above the foyer and display areas which fostered an “impression of spaciousness.”⁹⁶

In analysing the space requirements of the Kuala Lumpur Chancery the DFA determined that the staffing levels and functional requirements followed a similar structure as was needed in Singapore and Bangkok leading them to consider using the CDW layout as the basic design for all three projects.⁹⁷ In essence this standardised the functional and display areas and accommodated the various sections of the embassies roughly in the same location as specified on the “Kuala Lumpur Plan.” The DFA anticipated that the advantage of administering the three proposals as a single project would be in the saving of time and expense in developing the basic planning, cost estimates and tender documentation.⁹⁸ The DFA also believed it was possible that the projects could commence on the same date and exploit the same construction schedule. In a letter to the CDW the DFA outlined the importance of the scheme:

If the regulatory departments could be persuaded that it was in the interests of time and economy to agree to the three Chanceries being planned according to the attached floor by floor allocations based upon the October Kuala Lumpur designs, perhaps we could gain an effective precedent by which to set firm standards for future space allocations (particularly for functional/display areas) in chanceries of this order of size and importance to be constructed elsewhere.⁹⁹

To gain agreement for using the “Kuala Lumpur Plan” together with the standardised space figures as the basis for the detailed layouts of the other chanceries the DFA called another interdepartmental meeting on 15 December 1972. During the meeting the DFA argued that significant savings could be gained in developing the same basic administration planning of all three projects. Howard Dare, from the CDW, would agree with the DFA proposal commenting that there were a number of remarkably common areas that existed in all three projects. Although he admitted that it would be feasible to

⁹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, Introduction, “Brief to the Department of Works: Australian Chanceries to be Constructed in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore,” (Second Draft) February 1973.

⁹⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, background notes for discussion between the Treasury, Public Service Board, Department of Foreign Affairs and Works.

⁹⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, Introduction, “Brief to the Department of Works.”

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, letter from R. Allen Planning and Development Unit Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to C. Booth Department of Foreign Affairs, “New Chancery Constructions: Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore,” 11 December 1972.

develop a common schematic layout he advised against employing one architect to design all three projects noting that “the problems of building in Bangkok are quite different from those in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.”¹⁰⁰ The OPB disagreed with Dare and argued that because the three proposed buildings were in geographical proximity to each other and the functions of each chancery were basically the same a single architect and contractor could be employed to control the documentation and construction. To achieve further cost savings the OPB also suggested that the same technical and supervisory personnel could be transferred from one country to the other.¹⁰¹ The Treasury would disagree recalling the recommendation of the CDW in 1968 to undertake the development of the Commonwealth Offices in Melbourne and Sydney as a single project. The Treasury commented that although the early planning of these buildings was successful the approach was later abandoned because the detailing in each programme was so divergent that it became unworkable as a single undertaking.¹⁰² The PSB, on the other hand, believed that architects from each country should be commissioned as had been the case in previous projects. Dare would conclude the argument saying that:

The three projects could not be treated by Works or the client as other than entirely separate exercises requiring entirely separate approaches.¹⁰³

It was agreed that in preparing the briefing material and in developing the initial planning the three projects would be treated concurrently but would diverge when the projects became technical in nature.¹⁰⁴ The final brief issued to the CDW stated that:

This is intended to be a common brief for the three projects, assuming the same basic planning requirements wherever possible, except where special conditions peculiar to one or other of the projects occur. It is not the intention of this Department (Foreign Affairs) that an identical building for each project be the end result.¹⁰⁵

It was the most comprehensive brief that had been produced by the DFA for the design requirements of an embassy. The brief described the staffing structures of an embassy

¹⁰⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, transcript from “Meeting held in room 1-30 Department of Foreign Affairs, 10:30, to Discuss the New Chancery Constructions in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore,” 15 December 1972.

¹⁰¹ The OPB recommended using Leighton Industries to achieve this. See Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, introduction to final brief prepared in consultation with G. Bull Architect Department of Works, “Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore Chanceries,” 1 February 1973.

and the purpose of each section as well as the floor space for each office and the auxiliary facilities needed. It was considered that this brief would be the standard from which all future briefs would be prepared.¹⁰⁶

The DFA sought reassurance from the CDW that personnel with appropriate qualifications would be assigned to produce the site and building layouts for the three projects expressing concern that a shortage of architectural staff in the department might lead to unwanted delays.¹⁰⁷ The brief stipulated that all three projects needed to be completed within a 36-month timeline. This was to meet a requirement set by the Singapore government on the development of the site selected by Australia government in the Tanglin Barracks area.¹⁰⁸

Selecting Australian Architects

With detailed space proposals being agreed to in an interdepartmental meeting held on the 27 February 1973, the CDW was asked for its opinion on commissioning architects to design, cost and supervise the projects. In the case of Brasilia the CDW had previously recommended that the first step in selecting an architect should be to approach the RAIA to compile a short list of names from which an architect could be selected by the CDW and the Minister of the DFA.¹⁰⁹ Dare suggested that perhaps the DFA should rank the three projects in order of prestige and commission an Australian architectural practice to design the project considered most important. In this regard, Dare recommended that a medium sized firm be commissioned that specialised in “distinctive design” to create a chancery of “greater personality and a more deliberately Australian atmosphere.”¹¹⁰ Dare endorsed the British firm of Robert Matthew, Johnson-

¹⁰⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to the Director General Department of Works, “Proposed New Chanceries: Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore,” 15 March 1973.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/26/19 Part 3, Property-Premises Singapore-Proposed Permanent Chancery, 1972-1972; letter from E. Gleeson to the Secretary the Treasury, “Proposed Construction of Chancery Singapore,” 17 May 1972. For a copy of the general schedule of the three projects see Appendix VIII.

¹⁰⁹ This approach was used to select BSM for the Washington, D.C. Chancery project. See NAA: A1838, 1428/23/4 Part 3, letter from A. Reiher Acting Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of External Affairs, “Brasilia Project,” 26 April 1967.

¹¹⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, letter from R. Allen Planning and Development Unit Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to C. Booth Department of Foreign Affairs, “New Chancery Constructions: Bangkok, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur,” 13 December 1972.

Marshall & Partners (RMJM) who had designed the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok and were undertaking work on the British chancery (1973).¹¹¹

Because of the need to appoint consultants urgently the CDW dismissed the use of foreign architects and the possibility of conducting a competition, instead recommending three Melbourne-based practices; Yuncken Freeman Architects were approached to design the HOM residence and chancery in Bangkok, Joyce Nankivell Associates were allocated to the design of the chancery in Kuala Lumpur, and Godfrey & Spowers were tasked with designing the chancery in Singapore. All of these firms had worked or had offices in Asia and, according to the CDW, they all enjoyed a high professional reputation and were favourably known to the department.¹¹² It was noted that Yuncken Freeman Architects had been commissioned to undertake the design of the Islamabad Chancery (delayed since 1968) and had staff who had previously travelled to New Delhi at the request of the CDW to study the standard of finish achieved in the completed chancery and HOM residence.¹¹³ The CDW would later withdraw its nomination of Yuncken Freeman Architects because of the anticipated reactivation of the Islamabad project and the architects acceptance of a major Commonwealth commission in Canberra.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, teletype message from C. Wade Assistant Director General Department of Works to A. Fogg Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, "Proposed Chanceries Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore," 23 March 1973.

¹¹³ William Balcombe-Griffiths of Yuncken Freeman Architects visited the New Delhi compound in March 1968 after Yuncken Freeman Architects were commissioned to design a HOM residence, a chancery and staff housing in Islamabad on a block purchased in 1963 as part of the Pakistani government's establishment of a new diplomatic enclave in Islamabad. The Australian government halted the project because of the unstable political climate in Pakistan and questions as to whether the capital was to remain in Islamabad. Violent riots in Pakistan during 1968 delayed the project further. A technical team comprising of senior members of Yuncken Freeman Architects and the CDW visited the site in March 1968 and developed a basic masterplan. The Australian government decided to postpone the development until after the Pakistani elections were held in 1970. Wade and Peter Vogel (First Secretary of Works in New Delhi) returned to the site in 1971 to reassess the 1968 plans however economic restrictions in Australia and the Indo-Pakistani war delayed the project again. For Balcombe-Griffiths' visit to New Delhi see NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 11, letter from P. O'Hehir Department of External Affairs to the Australian High Commission New Delhi, "Stage 2 Building Works," 24 January 1968. For a discussion of the history of the Islamabad project see National Archives of Australia: Australian High Commission, Pakistan [Islamabad], A10008, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (First Uniform Post System) (Karachi/Islamabad); 5/32/2 Part 2B, Islamabad Construction of New Chancery, 1968-1974.

¹¹⁴ Because of the continued delays in starting the Islamabad Chancery project the Australian government was forced to build an interim chancery to meet demands from the Pakistan government that construction commence. The Pakistan government requisitioned property from diplomatic missions to encourage building in the new diplomatic enclave. The lease on the existing Australian chancery which was housed in the National Bank was to expire in December 1975. The interim chancery was designed and managed by Yuncken Freeman Architects and was completed within seven months. It was envisaged that the interim chancery would be replaced in three years by a permanent building also designed by Yuncken Freeman Architects. This was never realised due to cost cutting and more pressing priorities elsewhere. A permanent chancery was finally built in 1997 and was designed by Australian Construction

Instead, the practice of Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley was approached by Wade to design the Bangkok project. Wade justified the new nomination in a letter to the DFA commenting:

The firm with a staff of about thirty, enjoys a reputation for architectural ability of a high order. Their work has won a number of awards for outstanding merit. They have undertaken work for the NCDC and are well and favourably known to our department.¹¹⁵

To deal with the difficulties in managing projects overseas from Australia the CDW recommended that Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley form a working relationship with the Bangkok office of RMJM to expedite administration in a country that was politically the most difficult for “the foreigner to navigate.”¹¹⁶ Godfrey & Spowers would manage the construction of the project from their Singapore office - Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong - while Joyce Nankivell Associates proposed reopening their Malaysian office which had closed after the completion of the Perak Turf Club Grandstand in Ipoh (1971). The Heads of each Mission and the DFA Overseas Property Section were asked to assess the CDW selection and to investigate the “availability and reputation” of the local firms associated with the Australian architects.¹¹⁷

The DFA did not agree with the selection of Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley observing that they had no association with Bangkok and essentially were using the commission to bolster their experience.¹¹⁸ Although the DFA recognised the political importance of “using-exporting-Australian expertise wherever possible,” it was argued that the practical advantages of commissioning the Bangkok office of RMJM directly would “greatly outweigh the political expedients in employing an Australian firm for this particular project.”¹¹⁹ As the Bangkok project was considered the most complex, the DFA maintained that time would be saved by commissioning a firm who already had

Services. See National Archives of Australia: Australian Embassy, Pakistan [Islamabad], A10008, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (First Uniform Post System) (Karachi/Islamabad); 5/6/3 Part 4-7, Construction of Interim Chancery, 1975-1976.

¹¹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, teletype message from C. Wade Assistant Director General Department of Works to A. Fogg Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Proposed Chancery etc. Bangkok,” 9 April 1973.

¹¹⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to A. Fogg Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Architectural Consultants and Bangkok Chancery,” 12 April 1973.

¹¹⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, “Use of Australian Consultant Architects,” 4 June 1973.

¹¹⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray, “Architectural Consultants and Bangkok Chancery.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

knowledge of the local conditions and the complicated political and administrative procedures needed to get work underway. The stance was further justified by stressing that this was only one project out of seven where the use of an Australian architectural practice would not be preferable; concluding in an internal memorandum:

If we decide to commission Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley, it should be recognised that we are doing so purely for political reasons.¹²⁰

The Ambassador in Bangkok, Tom Critchley, reiterated the concern expressed by the DFA in Canberra and suggested that an Australian firm with offices in Bangkok should be considered first, nominating the engineers Valentine, Laurie & Davies who had recently won a World Bank contract for the design of the Fifth High Way Project in Thailand.¹²¹

The Singapore High Commissioner, Nicholas Parkinson, recommended the local architectural practice of Kee Yeap & Associates be employed fearing that the Singapore branch of Godfrey & Spowers was not up to the task because of its association with Wong & Wong. To gain further insight to Parkinson's concerns Wade consulted the New South Wales Government Architect, Ted Farmer, for his opinion on Kee Yeap's architecture. Farmer commented that Yeap's work possessed "a greater design flair than Godfrey and Spowers."¹²² During the discussion Wade reiterated the government's policy of giving preference to the engagement of Australian professional consultants commenting that if Kee Yeap was used it would be necessary to demonstrate that the firm had design skills above what was available in Australia.¹²³ To settle the matter Wade interviewed the senior partners of Godfrey & Spowers who revealed that the Singapore branch of the office was supervised by at least two Australian architects at all times and had recently been responsible for the design and documentation of the eleven-storey Chinese language newspaper office developed by Aw Cheng Chye known as the Jit Poh building (1972).¹²⁴ Wade concluded that Parkinson had been misinformed and that Godfrey & Spowers had the capacity and experience to carry the project to completion.

Alfred Parsons, the Australian High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, believed that the final selection should be based on the architects' ability to produce "a high quality and

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, cablegram from the Ambassador Australian Embassy Bangkok to Department of Foreign Affairs, "Chancery Construction Project," 13 April 1973.

¹²² NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, teletype message from C. Wade Assistant Director General Department of Works to F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs, "Consultants for New Chanceries," 24 April 1973.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Godfrey & Spowers had formed a partnership with Wong & Wong in January 1971 and had a 50 per cent interest in the Singapore branch. See Ibid.

imaginative design” commenting that the firms selected should be versed in local building practices and that if these requirements were met then they had no objections to the CDW recommendation.¹²⁵ With all the comments received the CDW sought permission from the DFA to proceed with commissioning the architects that had been nominated. The DFA agreed reiterating that the use of Australian consultants was the most efficient means in completing the projects even if there were reservations over commissioning Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley. Reiher would write to each of the three firms on 4 May 1973 confirming their appointment to design and manage the respective projects.¹²⁶ In accepting the commission the architects were encouraged to visit the sites promptly to develop initial technical, architectural and planning studies and report on the feasibility of construction.¹²⁷

Interestingly, the Treasury was not informed by the DFA of the use of Australian consultants on overseas projects. While the DFA believed the “Australian Policy” was widely accepted within government this had not been the case and a letter was written to the Secretary of the Treasury from Frank Murray, the Director of the DFA Overseas Property Section, in June outlining the reasoning behind the decisions that had been taken:

This Department’s experience during the planning stages of the Washington project and more recently the Port Moresby Chancery also leads it to the conclusion that the most efficient and in the long term most economical means of implementing plans to construct these buildings is to use Australian firms of consultants. There are no major architectural firms in any of these cities which, in our and Works view, are capable of carrying out the tasks with a greater degree of efficiency. As for speed it is quite evident - from experience in other projects - that the opportunity to meet constantly with the consultants in a situation where the planning and documentation is carried out in Australia more than offsets the minimal additional cost of fares.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, cablegram from the High Commissioner Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur to Department of Foreign Affairs, “Chancery Construction Project,” 13 April 1973.

¹²⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from A. Reiher Director General Department of Works to Ancher, Morlock, Murray & Woolley, “Proposed Embassy Building Programme: Bangkok, Thailand,” 4 May 1973.

¹²⁷ Bill Nankivell visited Kuala Lumpur on 25 June, Ken Woolley visited Bangkok on 2 July and two representatives of Godfrey & Spowers visited Singapore on 9 July.

¹²⁸ Peddle, Thorpe & Walker were commissioned to prepare the documentation for the Australian High Commission in Papua New Guinea. NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray, “Use of Australian Consultant Architects.”

The Treasury raised no objection to the commissioning of Australian architects on the basis that travel costs were curtailed to a reasonable level. The CDW however requested that a project officer from their staff be posted to Singapore to oversee all three projects to provide technical support to the consultant architects. In a separate request it was also proposed that CDW architects travel to all three locations on a regular basis to administer the projects.¹²⁹ This, the CDW argued, was necessary if it was to fulfil its role as a technical advisor:

We are concerned that whilst in many instances we have necessarily been obliged to adopt an 'advice only' role in respect to the administration of overseas projects, this should not overshadow the fact that as the technical authority for the Commonwealth we have a regulatory role with regard to the adoption of appropriate standards by Consultants. If our judgment is to be sound in these matters we must attempt to obtain current and preferably first-hand information on which to base our assessment of what is technically feasible and represents value for money in all aspects of building and associated engineering works and services.¹³⁰

The DFA expressed frustration at the need for the CDW to be involved in the "monitoring" of projects overseas citing that perhaps the CDW had realised that the involvement of leading Australian architectural firms at an early stage had led to "a further diminution of their involvement in the projects."¹³¹ The letter continued stating "Works designs are just not good enough" as they were expensive and technically inept when applied to the overseas cities for which they have been designed:¹³²

We finish up with a fortress which costs a fortune. Treasury naturally refuses to fund the projects. In all these circumstances we just don't get anything built - and after all, that's what we are trying to do.¹³³

¹²⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from R. Allen Planning and Development Unit Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs, "Joint Chancery Construction Project: Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore," 19 March 1973.

¹³⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 6, letter from A. Reiher Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Djakarta Chancery: Proposed Extensions," 28 May 1973.

¹³¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs, "Works Department," 4 June 1973.

¹³² The letter refers to the Singapore Group D housing, Manila HOM residence and Osaka offices as examples of CDW failures. The letter also notes that the Lagos, Singapore and Wellington Chancery projects are at a standstill because of CDW involvement. See *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

The letter continued positing that the DFA would accept CDW involvement in the discussion of documentation but only in Australia. The CDW response argued that the ability to achieve the tight schedule that had been outlined in the brief was reliant on competent liaison staff being able to gain speedy agreement from the missions on the consultants layouts - something that the CDW noted with past experiences did not encourage optimism.¹³⁴

The DFA admitted that perhaps in previous developments the project officers assigned had lacked first-hand experience and knowledge as they had not visited the sites or had the opportunity to discuss the projects with the consultants, diplomatic staff and the CDW simultaneously in the local environment, further reflecting that:

a great number of delays in the past have been brought about, less by Board and Treasury procrastination, than by our own inability to answer their questions promptly and unambiguously and to counter effectively and quickly their proposals to modify our plans.¹³⁵

To eliminate the possibility of this occurring again and to keep to the schedule a liaison officer, R. Allen, from the Overseas Property Section of the DFA, accompanied the architects to each mission to provide guidance in settling the details of the DFA's requirements regarding the placement of buildings, staff amenities and expansion provisions as well as responding to any concerns raised by the diplomatic staff.¹³⁶ All the architectural practices were sent a letter outlining Allen's role and were given a copy of the brochure handed out at the opening of the Washington, D.C. Chancery to illustrate the level of design that was required.¹³⁷

On returning from their inspection of the relative sites the architects had two months to prepare plans, perspectives and models which were reviewed by the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries of the DFA before endorsement was sought from the Treasury and

¹³⁴ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, teletype message from C. Wade, "Proposed Chanceries Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore."

¹³⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Major Construction Projects," 4 June 1973.

¹³⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Chairman Overseas Visits Committee, "Proposed Visit to Saigon, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Singapore by Mr. R. J. Allen Project Officer Department of Foreign Affairs," 4 June 1973.

¹³⁷ It should be noted that it is unclear if the brochure referred to is in fact the book *Chancery: Australian Embassy, Washington* published in 1969 which contains sketches and plans of the project and a discussion of the materials used. A copy of this book is held at the National Library of Australia. For a copy of the letter see NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from C. Booth Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to Australian Embassy Washington, "Publicity Material," 28 August 1973.

the plans finalised. Comments were also sought from the HOM's of each mission but to avoid the protracted process of commenting and re-commenting that had plagued past projects the DFA sent a project officer to each post to gain on-the-spot approvals.¹³⁸

An Expanded Bureaucracy

A press release on 19 September 1973 from Prime Minister Gough Whitlam announced the government's plan to build new embassies and high commissions in Saigon, Suva, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Paris. Prime Minister Whitlam announced that six Australian architectural firms had been selected in accordance with the government's intention that new diplomatic buildings "should not only be functional and efficient but demonstrate overseas the qualities and skills of some of Australia's leading architects."¹³⁹ The firms that were engaged are listed below along with an estimated completion date of the projects:

Post	Project	Architects	Estimated Completion
Saigon ¹⁴⁰	Chancery	Leighton Contractors of Sydney	November 1974
Suva	Ambassador's residence	Daryl Jackson Evan Walker of Melbourne	June 1975
Singapore	Chancery	Godfrey & Spowers of Melbourne	June 1976
Kuala Lumpur	Chancery	Joyce Nankivell Associates of Melbourne	September 1976
Bangkok	Chancery and Ambassador's residence	Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley of Sydney	September 1976
Paris	Chancery and Ambassador's residence	Harry Seidler & Associates of Sydney	June 1977

Figure 4.1. Australian architectural practices commissioned for new diplomatic buildings.

¹³⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "New Chanceries," 18 September 1973.

¹³⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, "Australian Architects Chosen for New Embassy Buildings," News release (19 September, 1973), 2, accessed 11 November 2016, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR10022758/upload_binary/HPR10022758.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

¹⁴⁰ The Saigon Chancery was never built because of the continuation of the Vietnam War and the eventual fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese forces in April 1975.

The press release also announced that Sydney practice Peddle, Thorpe & Walker had been commissioned to design substantial extensions to the Jakarta Chancery and that the CDW had been utilised to provide a complete redesign of the chancery and HOM residence in Tokyo.¹⁴¹ The estimated cost of the construction of these projects was more than \$32 million over a three-year period which was a considerable amount of the Whitlam's government's budget. However, this was justified with a saving of over seven million dollars in rent per annum.¹⁴²

The press release prompted the OPB to ask why the DFA announced the projects publicly without their consent. The DFA wrote:

¹⁴¹ The need to expand the Djakarta Chancery seven years after completion and the Tokyo Chancery three years after completion drew condemnation from the DFA who blamed the regulatory departments for truncating the programme which had originally been designed to accommodate future expansion. The DFA would reluctantly agree to use the services of the CDW in Tokyo to masterplan the compound. The CDW pushed for involvement in the project after the DFA had asked that an Australian consultant be selected with the help of the NCDC and RAlA citing the location of Tokyo as an opportunity to demonstrate in one of the great capitals of the world, the design skills and achievements of Australian architects. The DFA wanted the best architects as had been commissioned for Washington, D.C. and Paris. The CDW in 1972 employed 6,472 staff of which 437 were classified as professional architects and 192 were cadets in training. The CDW reassured the DFA that it would assign staff of the highest calibre to the project stressing that the department was recognised for its outstanding skills in architecture by the design community and had at its disposal some leading Australian architects. This included Richard Ure, Richard Johnson and newly recruited architect Albert Ross. As an Architect Grade 3 Ure had begun his career with the CDW in 1946 and designed the Australian-American Memorial (1949), Allawah, Bega Courts and Currong Apartments (1956), Royal Australian Mint (1965) and Black Mountain Tower (1980). He had also worked on the design of the Reserve Bank of Australia building in Sydney (1964). At the time of the Tokyo redevelopment Ure was Senior Assistant Director General of the CDW. Richard Johnson was a principal architect with the CDW from 1969-1985 and had placed fourth in the Houses of Parliament competition, Westminster with Peter Page in 1970-1971. He was later responsible for designing the Australian Pavilion at Expo '74, Spokane with James McCormick and for designing the Australian Pavilion at the 1975 Okinawa Expo. Newly appointed architect Albert Ross was the winner of the Haddon Architectural Travelling Scholarship (1960) and runner up in the competition to design the Reserve Bank in Canberra (1962). Reiher commented that he had no doubt that the Department's design and management of the Tokyo project "would be at least as efficient and effective as the services that could be provided by private consultants." The DFA would "bow to the inevitable" and accept the CDW as the architects for the project. Ross worked under the direction of Wade to complete the master plan of the compound in 1970. The plan included a new eleven-storey unified chancery, residential accommodation as well as a new HOM residence. The Japanese architectural firm PAE International were commissioned to supervise construction which was to be staged over six years. The DFA dismissed the scheme. For a discussion of the Tokyo masterplan and the use of the CDW see National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/32/4 Part 19, Tokyo-Chancery Project, 1973-1974; letter from A. Fogg Acting First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Acting Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Tokyo Compound-Redevelopment," 9 August 1973. For an outline of the CDW argument see NAA: A1838, 1428/32/4 Part 19, letter from A. Reiher Director General Department of Works to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Tokyo Compound Development," 26 July 1973.

¹⁴² Department of Foreign Affairs, "Australian Architects Chosen for New Embassy Buildings."

Our reasoning had been that a relatively large number of architects had been appointed in recent weeks and that we were aware of a degree of discussion and specification in architectural circles about overseas work. We thought it timely therefore to make a formal statement about the current appointments.¹⁴³

Although the OPB had moved from the EAA to the Department of Services and Property in December 1972 it still had not assumed responsibility for all of the Commonwealth's overseas property holdings.¹⁴⁴ Daly had increased staffing levels from the initial permanent core of six to meet the demands of the Whitlam government's foreign policy objectives and to "adopt a more professional approach to overseas property dealings."¹⁴⁵ Further job vacancies were listed in April 1973 for a First Assistant Secretary, Assistant Secretary and other senior executive and professional positions which would see staffing numbers increase to 35.¹⁴⁶ Malcolm Cowie was appointed Director in August 1973 and two Assistant Directors, Thomas Hopkinson and Arthur Hillier, were appointed shortly after. Cowie and Hillier undertook a familiarisation tour of Australia's overseas property in late September.¹⁴⁷ The OPB became the central agency responsible for the construction of the Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok projects on 29 October 1973 as part of the progressive assumption of responsibilities from the DFA. The DFA informed the consulting architects and CDW to direct all communications to the OPB who were now representatives of the client - the Australian Government.¹⁴⁸ In turn the OPB reassured the commissioned architects that the aims and principles of the new bureau would be consistent with those already established by the DFA and that as such

¹⁴³ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, for the file from A. Fogg Assistant Secretary Services Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, "Overseas Property Bureau-Prime Minister's Press Release," 20 September 1973.

¹⁴⁴ The OPB had progressively been assuming responsibility of Australia's overseas property holdings since July 1973 however it was common knowledge that the DFA were still in control of the majority of the estate. The OPB assumed responsibility for all posts in New Zealand on 1 July 1973. All posts in Southeast Asia and the Pacific—Hong Kong, Manila, Peking, Seoul, Japan and Port Moresby on 1 November 1973. Paris, London and Dublin 1 December 1973 and all posts on the Indian sub-continent 1 March 1974. See *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁵ Department of Services and Property, "The Minister for Services and Property the Hon. Fred Daly Leader of the House," News release (5 April, 1973), accessed 10 November 2016, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR06000223/upload_binary/HPR06000223.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁷ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 3, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs, "Overseas Property Bureau-Staffing and Organisation," 30 July 1973.

¹⁴⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/26/19 Part 5, Premises Singapore-Proposed Permanent Chancery, 1973-1973; letter from A. Fogg Department of Foreign Affairs to Godfrey & Spowers, 26 October 1973.

there would be no interference with any of the designs or programming already initiated.¹⁴⁹

In April 1974 the OPB became accountable for all property holdings overseas - 96 posts in 62 countries replacing the function of the DFA Overseas Property Section. In a press release Daly compared the OPB to the FBO in the United States commenting that “the task of planning and co-ordinating the development of a rational, professionally oriented authority in the Overseas Property field was both challenging and important.”¹⁵⁰ The search for qualified staff had been expanded to outside the public service with over 200 applications received from experts in property, architecture and engineering.

In expectation of an increased work load, the Overseas Works Branch (OWB) was established in May 1974 under the Department of Housing and Construction (formerly the CDW) to provide technical and professional advice to the OPB on all major works overseas, as well as to coordinate the commissioning and control of architectural consultants.¹⁵¹ It was headed by Garth Setchell and would be responsible for half of the workload assigned by the OPB, the other half being commissioned to outside consultants. As an independent division of the Melbourne central office, the OWB was based in Sydney and was initially staffed by a multi-disciplinary team that consisted of twenty specialist architects, engineers and project managers with the aim of having a core staffing level of fifty.¹⁵²

The OPB moved again from the Department of Services and Property to the DFA in September 1974. The Bureau was re-organised into specialised sections including an operational area to cover four geographical regions, as well as a policy and planning team and a technical section. The OPB was tasked with developing a programme of construction for the next four to five years in accordance with a Cabinet decision taken on the 23 August making it a policy to own a higher proportion of property overseas to

¹⁴⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 6, minutes, “Consultant Meeting No.3 Australian Embassy Bangkok,” 16 October 1973.

¹⁵⁰ The Minister for Services and Property The HON. Fred Daly Leader of the House, “Overseas Property Bureau,” News release (10 April, 1974), 3, accessed 5 November 2016, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR04006318/upload_binary/HPR04006318.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

¹⁵¹ The Department of Housing and Construction was formed after the amalgamation of the Department of Works and the Department of Housing on 30 November 1973. The merger would bring together 15,300 staff and be the largest building and construction group established in Australia. See Department of Housing and Construction, “The New Department,” *Australian Department of Housing and Construction Newsletter from the Secretary A. S. Reiher*, no. 63 (December 1973): 1.

¹⁵² Department of Housing and Construction, “Overseas Works Branch,” *Australian Department of Housing and Construction Newsletter from the Secretary A. S. Reiher*, no. 65 (July 1974): 8.

reduce continually rising rental costs which were exceeding seven million dollars annually.¹⁵³

This decision was based on a paper submitted to the OPC on 25 March 1974 from the Minister of Services and Property entitled "Overseas Property Bureau: Guidelines for Ownership of Overseas Property." The paper recommended the proportion of property owned overseas be increased from eighteen per cent. In doing this it suggested that staff housing ownership be increased to between 60 and 70 per cent, the ownership of HOM residences be increased to 80 per cent and the ownership of chancery and office accommodation increase to 90 per cent. These figures were based on the policies of ownership developed by the Canadian, US and British governments. In arguing for an increase in ownership the paper outlined that the advantages of owning property was a freedom from local market fluctuations in rental costs, the capacity to accommodate staff quickly and the ability to meet specialised requirements. The paper also outlined the advantages to constructing chanceries as opposed to purchasing noting that specialised requirements could be more easily attained and that a certain level of prestige would be gained overtime as the building became widely known and associated with the country who built and designed it.¹⁵⁴

The paper recognised that the program could be affected by a wide range of political, economic and social factors both at home and abroad and as such the program should be reviewed and developed as a forward plan up to three years in advance. To achieve this it was noted that a flexible and forward looking attitude would be needed by all concerned and that a project should be approved on its merits alone. The paper concluded by seeking agreement from the OPC to allow the OPB to introduce an annual program of purchasing and construction to attain a higher proportion of property.¹⁵⁵

This drive increased staffing levels by a further 60 per cent to 56 with many of the new staff being recruited from the now obsolete DFA Overseas Property Section.¹⁵⁶ In the interests of preserving the Bureau's separate identity and to enable it to sustain its role as a service provider to all departments the Director and two Assistant Directors continued in their positions. The Secretary of the DFA also announced that to maintain

¹⁵³ Cabinet Decision No. 2563, 23 August 1974.

¹⁵⁴ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," Annexure A, 74-80.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Australian National Audit Office, "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," 116.

an appropriate level of autonomy and specialisation, staff from the OPB were not able to transfer out to other areas of the DFA.¹⁵⁷

By November 1974 more projects had been added to the list including a feasibility study to reactivate the Brasilia project, an extension to the Washington, D.C. Chancery, construction of a new chancery in Port Moresby, as well as a chancery and HOM residence in Wellington.¹⁵⁸ With the building programme it was responsible for being described by Prime Minister Whitlam as a “programme of major proportions,” this would be the highest point in the history of the OPB.¹⁵⁹

This chapter has surveyed the findings of specialist investigations into the procurement and management of Australia’s overseas property to show that the difficulties being encountered were not only due to unfamiliar conditions, but were a result of interdepartmental conflicts and bureaucratic manoeuvring. While individual departments can be blamed for curtailing the architectural expression of the earlier chancery developments it was also the inability of government as a whole to adjust and recognise the complex nature of these projects that led to a lack of overall coordination and management. This lack of cohesion was detrimental to the government’s efforts as seen in the cost overruns and delays of the Djakarta and New Delhi projects and in the purchase of a suitable property in Paris. The decision by Prime Minister McMahon to review procedures and consolidate the relevant functions of individual departments into a single agency known as the OPB is significant. This centralisation marks the beginning of a more professional approach to the administration of the overseas works

¹⁵⁷ NAA: A3211; 1974/122 Part 1, administrative circular no. X94/74 from N. Parkinson First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to Heads of Australian Diplomatic and Consular Posts, Heads of Divisions, Branches and Sections, “Transfer of the Overseas Property Bureau to the Department of Foreign Affairs,” 13 September 1974.

¹⁵⁸ Peddle, Thorpe & Walker were commissioned to prepare the documentation for the Australian High Commission in Papua New Guinea. As there was such a short timeframe to complete the building the CDW reused the Peddle, Thorpe & Walker design for ANG House that had already been built in Port Moresby for the Australian and New Guinea Corporation. See National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/117/1 Part 5, Property Premises Port Moresby Interim Chancery Building, 1972-1973.

¹⁵⁹ Answers to Questions Upon Notice Australian Government: Purchase of Land Overseas (Question No. 665), 24 September 1974, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 39.

programmes and signifies a recognition by government of the importance of managing its future interaction with architectural practices.

As part of this adjustment, the merits of commissioning Australian architectural practices as a means of imbuing future diplomatic projects with an “Australian design flavour” came to the fore. Lobbying undertaken by the RAIA and the local architectural community persuaded the Gorton government to introduce what became known as the “Australian Policy.” This internal government policy ensued that Australian architectural practices would be commissioned for future building projects demonstrating the increasing importance given to architectural representation within government. While the two developments are significant, the cultural, political and economic independence established under the Whitlam government’s policy framework created an environment which fostered a rapid expansion of Australia’s diplomatic network and allowed the OPB to thrive. Because of these favourable political conditions and the recognition by government of the value Australian-based architectural practices could bring, two architecturally distinctive buildings were created – the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Chanceries.

Although both projects are derived from the same spatial template - the “Kuala Lumpur Plan” - the government also recognised that the differing political, climatic and building conditions would direct the projects. The use of space as a means of communicating the “prestige” nature of these buildings however was a key representational consideration during this time, contrasting vastly with the earlier constrained CDW designs. The following chapter will discuss the development of the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur projects by focusing on the commissioned Australian architects’ responses to the joint brief. It will also foreground the relationship between government and architect in the pursuit of a suitable architecture to represent Australia in foreign places.

CHAPTER FIVE: REACHING THE PEAK - SINGAPORE AND KUALA LUMPUR

Although the brief for the Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok projects was developed concurrently, the construction of these buildings occurred over a seven year period in which a change in government and the restructuring of the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB) occurred. This chapter will focus only on the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur projects as the bulk of the administration of these two projects was carried out by the OPB under the policies of the Whitlam government. The Bangkok project will be investigated in Chapter Six as it was directly impacted by the new Fraser government's enforcement of cost cutting and restructuring.

This chapter begins by analysing the architectural responses that were considered to resolve functional requirements, respond to local conditions and present a suitable Australian image in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. While both projects were derived from a common spatial plan - the 1966 "Kuala Lumpur Plan" - this chapter will examine each project and explain how, through access to unprecedented government funding and OPB support, the relevant architectural practices generated designs on a scale that had not been considered previously. This will demonstrate what can be achieved under favourable political conditions when the perspectives of both the architect and government align and the importance of representation is a common consideration.

The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the Whitlam government's attempts to curb a growing economic crisis which threatened the level of funding needed to continue the overseas works programme into the future.

Singapore Chancery Project (1969-1976)

The Singapore High Commission was officially established on 10 August 1965 following Singapore's independence after its expulsion from the Federation of Malaya.¹ The

¹ The earliest diplomatic representative was Vivian Gordon Bowden who was appointed as Australia's Official Representative at Singapore in September 1941. After the Second World War Australia posted a Resident Commissioner and Trade Commissioner until Singapore's federation with Malaysia in 1963. Australia would then appoint Richard Woolcott (1963-1964) and Bill Pritchett (1964-1965) as Deputy High Commissioner's until Singapore's independence in 1965 when Bill Pritchett would be promoted as Australia's first High Commissioner to Singapore. See Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, 126.

continued significance of Singapore to Australia's economic and defence policies required the High Commission to relocate four times in a twelve-year period to accommodate a growing number of staff in leased premises.² With the withdrawal of British forces expected to be completed by 1971 under the Dudley Agreement it was envisaged that land would become available in the Tanglin Barracks area for development. As the Singaporean government had no significant plans to develop the land the Australian government was offered a choice of two sites on a 99-year lease.

Howard Dare of the CDW undertook a feasibility study of the sites in July 1969. The investigative report noted that the slope of the land and the north-south orientation was conducive to the development of a building in the tropics because it allowed adequate protection from the sun (Figure 5.1).³ Dare recommended the Australian government acquire the larger 3.2 acre site opposite the Botanical Gardens and adjacent to the new British High Commission and planned Singapore Ministry of Defence, concluding that the site enjoyed:

a promontory like projection out into the proposed parkland which would form a highly desirable and prominent site for the Australian Chancery.⁴

² National Archives of Australia: Cabinet Office, A5882, Gorton and McMahon Ministries-Cabinet files, 'CO' single number series; CO 1359, Construction of an Australian Chancery in Singapore [25cm], 1972-1972; submission number 551 from Nigel Bowen Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, "For Cabinet: Major Property Acquisition Proposal-Singapore," February 1972.

³ Ibid.

⁴ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/26/19 Part 1, Property-Premises Singapore-Proposed Permanent Chancery, 1969-1971; letter from R. Jenkins Department of External Affairs to the Secretary Department of the Treasury, "Proposed Purchase of a Site for a Chancery Singapore," 3 August 1970.



Figure 5.1. Australian Chancery site, Singapore, 1975.

The site was visited by William McMahon in April 1970 who remarked on the “favourable financial” terms under which the plot was offered.⁵ With the cost of the land set at \$630,000 plus a subsequent nominal annual payment of \$3.60 the Department of External Affairs (DEA) wrote to the Treasury recommending that funding be approved urgently so the Commonwealth could take advantage of “a unique opportunity to acquire land on a very favourable basis.”⁶ Endorsement was given to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to negotiate with the Singaporeans the terms of the site in July 1971 noting that it was in the interest of “security, economy and prestige” that Australia own its own chanceries.⁷ With overcrowding again becoming a problem at Thornycroft House the High Commission started to search for new premises.⁸ Even though it was possible to

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/26/19 Part 2, Property-Premises Singapore-Proposed Permanent Chancery, 1971-1972; letter from L. Border First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Proposed Site for a Chancery, Singapore,” 7 July 1971.

⁸ Thornycroft House was a converted warehouse located at 201 Clemenceau Avenue. It was never considered suitable as a long-term chancery however was the only option available at the time. The Australian government leased the ground, second and third floors at a cost of \$49,852 per annum to accommodate the mission after overcrowding had forced them to relocate from the previous premises. See Ibid.

rent a further 2,000 square feet in the current building the decision was made to submit a proposal to Cabinet to purchase the site so a long term solution could be implemented.⁹ The submission outlined the growing importance of Australia's representation in Singapore after the signing of the Five Power Defence Agreement in 1971 and the expansion of trade relations with Southeast Asia in general.¹⁰

Approval for the purchase was given by Prime Minister McMahon in March 1972. A clause in the contract added by the Singapore Commissioner of Lands specified that the construction of the chancery was to be completed within 36 months of the alienation of the land otherwise the Australian government would be liable to pay considerable penalties.¹¹ With the deadline set the Singapore Chancery project was given the highest priority by the DFA which enforced the same timeline for the completion of the Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok projects. In determining the design direction to be taken the DFA believed a special effort was required to build "a modern, efficient and suitable Australian High Commission Office" as had been done with the Djakarta, New Delhi and Washington, D.C. buildings.¹²

As explained in the previous chapter, Godfrey & Spowers were selected by Clive Wade to design and manage the project based on their previous experience in the construction of buildings in Singapore and their partnership with local firm Wong & Wong. As a Melbourne-based practice, Godfrey & Spowers was known for its commercial and institutional architecture having designed the National Mutual Centre on 447 Collins Street (1962-1965) and the AMP rental investment office block (1969) located at 350 Collins Street.¹³ *Cross-Section* had pointed out that the use of perimeter balconies in the National Mutual Centre was not only a clever sun shading device but demonstrated

⁹ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/26/19 Part 6, Singapore-Proposed New Chancery, 1973-1974; letter from M. Cowie First Assistant Secretary Overseas Property Bureau to F. Daly Minister Department of Services and Property, "Permanent Chancery Singapore," 25 June 1974.

¹⁰ NAA: A5882, CO 1359, Submission number 551.

¹¹ The Singapore government initially stipulated that the building be completed within a two year time frame. This was deemed impossible by the DFA who noted that preparing the brief would take an estimated twelve months. After extensive negotiations, the contract was amended to 36 months and included a clause that the Singaporeans would give due consideration before insisting on implementing any penalties. See NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 2, letter from R. Marshall Assistant Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs to Australian High Commission Singapore, "Proposed Chancery Site," 21 July 1971.

¹² NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 2, for the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, "Property Acquisitions in Saigon, Bangkok and Singapore," 19 November 1971.

¹³ After the Second World War the firm was expanded and the name changed to Godfrey Spowers, Hughes, Mewton & Lobb. It was in this capacity that the practice completed the National Mutual Centre. The name was later simplified to Godfrey & Spowers P/L. See Guy Murphy and Bryce Raworth, "Godfrey & Spowers" in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 278.

“that there are other alternatives to the architecture of multi-storey office blocks than the ubiquitous all-glass curtain wall sheath.”¹⁴ This innovative approach was carried forward into the planning of the Jit Poh building (1972) in Singapore with Wong & Wong, where projecting floor plates and vertical louvers were applied to protect the eleven-storey concrete tower from the tropical weather.

Godfrey & Spowers adapted the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) “Kuala Lumpur Plan” through the use of local materials as well as clever spatial planning that responded to both the site and climatic conditions. The Singaporean planning authorities 2:1 plot ratio and three-storey height limit placed significant restrictions on the architects. These restrictions were of concern to the DFA who wanted to avoid the building taking on a commercial appearance.¹⁵ In order to negate these concerns the architects designed a foyer and display area considerably larger than the stipulated requirements outlined by the “Kuala Lumpur Plan” and pushed the planning authorities height limit by proposing an additional floor for expansion.¹⁶ They argued that by including this additional space the aesthetic quality of the building was improved as both the massing of the building and generous internal volume would be more conducive to government representation than to commercial activities.¹⁷ The DFA justified the increase in size to the Treasury by citing the failure of the Washington, D.C. and Djakarta Chanceries to be adequately planned for expansion.¹⁸ Of the 27,000 square feet of office accommodation it was estimated that only 9,000 square feet would be used initially. The additional 18,000 square feet would allow the High Commission enough space to operate effectively past 1985.¹⁹ Although the Treasury endorsed the inclusion of extra space it was recommended that the vacant floor be utilised for accommodation. This was rejected by the OPB who noted that the Singaporean authorities were only allowing the construction of a chancery on site and the cost of converting the residential accommodation at a later date would be considerable.²⁰

¹⁴ *Cross-Section*, no. 104 (June 1961): 2.

¹⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 5, “Minutes of an Interdepartmental Meeting held at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 16 October 1973.

¹⁶ The 700 square metre foyer area was justified as it included 250 square metres of space that could be easily included for display. See *Ibid*.

¹⁷ The plan was split over the ground floor, partial mezzanine and three upper floors and provided 60,000 square feet of usable space. See *Ibid*.

¹⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 5, “Minutes of an Interdepartmental Meeting held at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 16 October 1973.

¹⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, letter from M. Cowie First Assistant Secretary Overseas Property Bureau to F. Daly Minister Department of Services and Property.

²⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 5, “Minutes of an Interdepartmental Meeting held at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 16 October 1973.

Even though the 1966 “Kuala Lumpur Plan” used mezzanines and height to create the feeling of spaciousness in the foyer area, Godfrey & Spowers amplified this experience by designing a low entry and omitted the mezzanine and first floor plates to open up the ground floor space and provide a full height atrium that extended twelve metres to the underside of the top floor (Figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4). Conceived by the architects as the “theme” of the chancery, the “Great Hall” allowed all the various functions and activities of the High Commission to be linked in an “exciting and positive statement of the Australian Government’s representation in Singapore.”²¹ This was a common element in the design of both chanceries and was a direct response to the brief which emphasised the importance of the foyer as being the first point of contact with Australia.²² To delineate the library, exhibition, reception and circulation zones within the “Great Hall” Godfrey & Spowers specified different materials and furniture. Victorian Bluestone from Warrnambool was used for the flooring of the circulation spaces while green carpet was specified for the reception, library and display areas. The library was also clearly visible with its rows of yellow stacks which had been modified from the standard government furniture. The differing functions were further defined by raising and lowering the floor level to break up what was conceived as an expansive open space in the original spatial template (Figures 5.5 and 5.6).²³

While small display areas mainly concerned with trade promotion had been introduced into the foyers of the earlier Tokyo, New Delhi and Djakarta Chanceries this approach was no longer considered appropriate by the Information and Cultural Relations Branch (ICR) which encouraged the design of separate purpose-built exhibition spaces as part of realising a “total information concept.”²⁴ To respond to this requirement Godfrey & Spowers chose to locate the exhibition space at the rear of the building under the first floor office level making the area more intimate in scale for the visitor. They designed the space to be flexible by employing a series of movable metal frames which allowed

²¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, architectural description of project for inclusion in Singapore brochure, “Australian High Commission, Singapore,” 2 January 1974.

²² NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, Functional Areas and Common Services, “Brief to the Department of Works.”

²³ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, architectural description of project for inclusion in Singapore brochure, “Australian High Commission, Singapore,” 2 January 1974.

²⁴ The ICR believed the effectiveness of trade displays were increased and the impact intensified when shown in conjunction with film. The News and Information Bureau had argued for the incorporation of a purpose-built theatre in the plan of the Djakarta Chancery in 1961 however this had been rejected by the Treasury and the Committee on Conditions of Service Overseas as theatre facilities were not included in the standards of office accommodation. A purpose built 100 seat theatre was however introduced in the plan for the Washington, D.C. Chancery bolstering the ICR’s argument for similar spaces to be included in the Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Singapore Chanceries. See NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, Letter from A. Woolcott, “Theatrettes in Embassies.”

the display of art to be brought into the foyer space, if needed. The upper floors were planned around the perimeter of the building with balcony access allowing staff and visitors views down into the ground floor area (Figure 5.7). In keeping with the spatial template the entire first floor was allocated to the Trade Commission while the second floor was occupied by Administration. The third floor was assigned to the Head of Mission (HOM), Political and Defence sections and, in accordance with the brief, was only accessible via controlled lift access.²⁵

Godfrey & Spowers chose to embed the building in the landscape by specifying the use of full height glazing on the north-east elevation which gave the approaching visitor a view through the building and opened up the “Great Hall” to the landscape beyond.²⁶ The architects developed this further by carrying the use of the Victorian Bluestone to the outside spaces surrounding the building in an attempt to blur the demarcation between indoors and outdoors. A series of planter boxes containing Australian native plants were located around the perimeters of the internal balconies on the upper floors to add an Australian landscape character to both the building and the site. In order to mitigate the harsh climatic conditions Godfrey & Spowers relied on their previous experience in designing the Jit Poh building and again used vertical louvers and overhangs to shade the interior spaces (Figure 5.8).

The building was constructed of reinforced concrete and was tiled with white mosaics which was a common cladding technique used in Singapore to prevent the growth of mould on a building’s exterior.²⁷ The use of tiled facades can be traced back to the development of shophouses. These buildings had a mix of European, Malay and Chinese architectural features and were located in the majority of Southeast Asian urban centres.²⁸ Coloured tiling was used to enhance the aesthetic appeal but also to improve the waterproofing of the building. This tradition would continue with the rapid urban development of Singapore during the 1970s. Many commercial and institutional high-rise buildings were designed with mosaic cladding that echoed the colourful tiles used in the vernacular shophouses.²⁹

²⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, architectural description of project for inclusion in Singapore brochure, “Australian High Commission, Singapore,” 2 January 1974.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Peter Keys, “Australian High Commission Singapore,” *Architecture in Australia* 67, no. 3 (June 1978): 34.

²⁸ Julian Davison, *Singapore Shophouse* (Singapore: Talisman, 2010).

²⁹ Liu Thai-Ker and Wong Chung-Wan, “Challenges of External Wall Tiling in Singapore,” in *Proceedings of Qualicer 2006: IX World Congress on Ceramic Tile Quality*, ed. Arnold Van Gelder (Castellon, Camara Oficial de Comercio, Industria y Navegacion, 2006), 97-106.

The DFA considered the “original concepts in the design” enough to convince the Singaporean planning authorities to allow the limitations to “be stretched a little” so the design could be approved.³⁰ With this in mind John Davidson of Godfrey & Spowers travelled to Singapore to meet personally with the planning panel as a gesture of good will. The Singaporean authorities approved the design in February 1974 prompting the OPB to seek approval for the final design from the DFA and Treasury before writing to Prime Minister Whitlam. The cost of construction was estimated at \$3.3 million or \$28 per gross square foot, which as noted by the OPB was comparable to a good quality commercial development in Melbourne.³¹ Prime Minister Whitlam endorsed the design on 6 March 1974 and construction began in December of that year.³²

Godfrey & Spowers provided a supervising architect, John Dennis, who worked in consultation with an OPB Project Officer. The OPB Project Officer acted as the onsite representative of both the Bureau and the High Commission with a responsibility to coordinate and undertake client administrative requirements and to exercise financial delegation. This freed the High Commission from having to be involved in running the projects as had been done in the past. As the client’s technical agent, the Overseas Works Bureau (OWB) would also provide a Regional Works Officer with delegated responsibility for the technical oversight of the project. This officer was based in Singapore and was responsible for the oversight of all projects in the Southeast Asian region including Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.³³

³⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 5, letter from F. Murray Director Overseas Property Department of Foreign Affairs to Australian High Commission Singapore, “New Chancery,” 13 August 1973.

³¹ The initial cost of construction was estimated at one million dollars. A commercial building in Melbourne at the time cost \$23 to \$25 per gross square foot. See NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, letter from M. Cowie First Assistant Secretary Overseas Property Bureau to F. Daly Minister Department of Services and Property.

³² NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 6, letter from G. Whitlam Prime Minister to F. Daly Minister Department of Services and Property, 6 March 1974.

³³ Department of Housing and Construction Overseas Works Branch, *Australian High Commission: Singapore Construction of New Chancery Contract Administration Procedure* (Sydney: Overseas Works Branch Construction Group, April 1975), 1. For a relationship diagram see Appendix X.

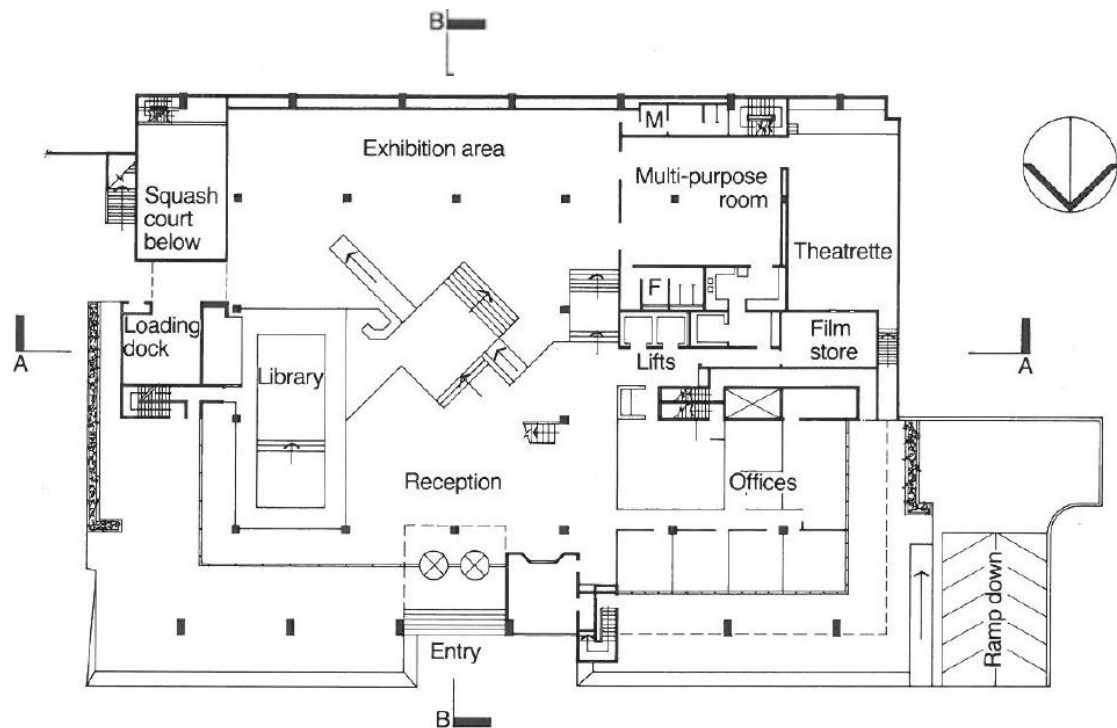


Figure 5.2. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, ground floor plan, 1976.

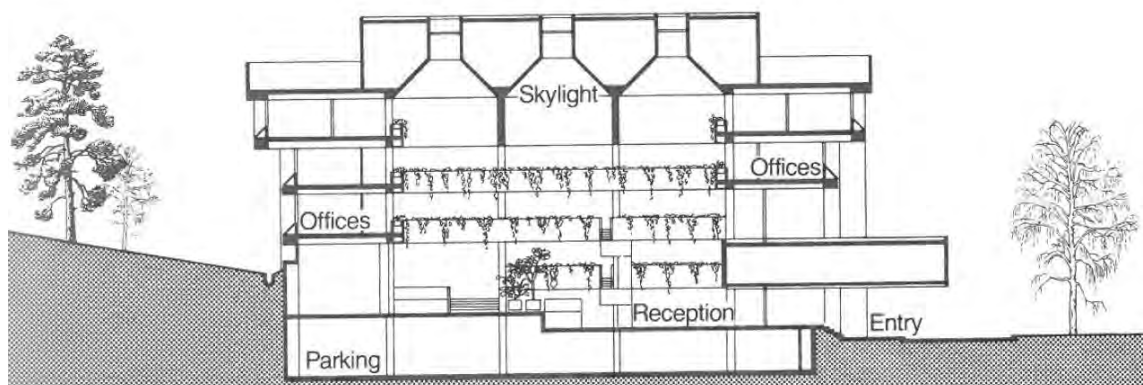


Figure 5.3. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, section B-B, 1976.



Figure 5.4. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, 1976, main entrance showing porte cohere and Bluestone paving.



Figure 5.5. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, 1976, "Great Hall" with exhibition space visible at the back.



Figure 5.6. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, 1976, “Great Hall” with waiting area and library.



Figure 5.7. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, 1976, view of “Great Hall” from above.



Figure 5.8. Godfrey & Spowers-Wong & Wong, Australian Chancery, Singapore, 1976, glazed walls protected by overhangs.

Kuala Lumpur Chancery Project (1973-1978)

Even though the design of the Singapore Chancery project was the first of the joint projects to be approved by the Whitlam government the estimated date of completion had been pushed back six months to December 1976. In response, the OPB and DFA pressured the architects for the Kuala Lumpur project to finalise their designs quickly in order to adhere to the original schedule. William Nankivell visited the Kuala Lumpur site on the 25 June 1973 to discuss the DFA requirements with R. Allen and the High Commissioner. The conversation centred on the need to include residential accommodation on the block either as a separate building or as part of the overall chancery.³⁴ At an interdepartmental meeting held on 16 October 1973 the preliminary design was presented by Frank Murray from the DFA.³⁵ Although the DFA recognised

³⁴ While the 1966 “Kuala Lumpur Plan” provided a spatial template for the location of departments it did not include residential accommodation as part of the mix. See NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, Teletype message from R. Allen Planning and Development Unit Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to G. Bull Architect Department of Works, “New Chanceries,” 14 June 1973.

³⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 5, “Minutes of an Interdepartmental Meeting held at the Department of Foreign Affairs on 16 October 1973 to discuss the proposed Chanceries at

difficulties with the site they believed that the plans presented were still “not ideal” because of concerns over the possibility of heat gain from the reflection pond in the forecourt.³⁶ Dare from the CDW commented on the “potential” of the latest design noting that the design process was being slowed because of the site as well as “other issues.”³⁷

These issues were later made clear in *Architecture Australia* when Joyce Nankivell was quoted as saying that the “most challenging aspect of the commission was the process of identifying and attempting to solve client and user needs which were often conflicting.”³⁸ These conflicts were evident in the brief which stated that the building should be “friendly and inviting” at the same time as listing the security requirements needed to control public access.³⁹ This incongruity was driven by differing priorities and needs which involved the space requirements, future expansion, and operational context of each individual user department. In order to meet these, the OPB, as the central authority, was required to gain approval for the design from all the departments that were to occupy the building. This not only led to considerable delays but also exacerbated underlying departmental rivalries. This was later investigated by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts which noted that any changes to planning not only be approved by the departments but also be referred to the Public Service Board, Overseas Property Committee and the Treasury which ultimately led to delays and cost overruns.⁴⁰

Despite the fact the 1966 “Kuala Lumpur Plan” offered Joyce Nankivell a solution to navigating the complex space requirements and locations of the user departments in relationship to public accessibility and in their positioning to each other, the architects still needed to adapt the space arrangements to the difficult site. Because of the limited size of the site and concerns that future buildings would overlook the finished chancery Joyce Nankivell quickly rejected the DFA calls for residential accommodation to be included. It was proposed that the building form be generated by adapting the spatial template within the constraints of the site. Although a number of forms were trialled the architects settled on the use of an L-shaped plan to resolve the functional requirements of the brief. The L-shaped plan allowed the freeing up of internal spaces for the

Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and extensions to the Chancery in Jakarta,” 16 October 1973.

³⁶ The site was considered the most difficult of the three chancery sites with the Treasury even suggesting that a new site should be considered to avoid the possibility of the current design being dwarfed by high-rise buildings in the future. Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Joyce Nankivell Associates, “Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur,” *Architecture Australia* 68, no.1 (March 1979), 42.

³⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 1, Functional Areas and Common Services, “Brief to the Department of Works.”

⁴⁰ The Joint Committee of Public Accounts *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

necessary exhibition and reception areas by positioning the services at the junction of the L to the rear of the building (Figure 5.9).⁴¹ The L-shaped plan also allowed the chancery to sit back from the road giving space for the incorporation of a paved forecourt which acted as a transitional space linking the chancery to the street and mitigating the Treasury's concerns of the building being visually dominated by larger buildings on adjoining sites in the future (Figure 5.10).⁴² The interior spaces of the chancery and the local climate drove the design of the asymmetrical façade which consisted of a series of contrasting vertical and horizontal planes that not only provided shade but also attributed a sculptural quality to the building.

As the most common material used in Malaysian construction projects the chancery was erected primarily of in-situ reinforced concrete finished in a grey Shanghai plaster – a local rendering technique faced with fine exposed granite chips. This choice of material was not only cheap but also allowed Joyce Nankivell to continue the Brutalist thinking developed in their earlier design for the Perak Turf Club located in Ipoh, Malaysia by again exposing the structural system and utilising a minimal palette of locally available materials (Figure 5.11).

This Brutalist ethos can be traced to Bernard Joyce's previous work as a design architect with the architectural firm Bogle & Banfield during the 1950s and his interest in Japanese architecture. With Bogle & Banfield Joyce was involved in the design of the 366 metre-long grandstand at the Sandown Park Racecourse in Melbourne (1965).⁴³ Constructed with reinforced concrete the cantilevered roof and exposed concrete structure had a structural lightness that reflected Joyce's interest in post-war Japanese architecture; a connection that was furthered after he visited Japan in 1962 to study contemporary architecture and landscaping.⁴⁴ Joyce's link with Japan carried through to the design for the Total House carpark and offices (1963) in Russell Street Melbourne which drew from the architectural aesthetics of Tange's Kagawa Prefectural Office building (1958) through its use of an exposed concrete structure that appears to make the heavy concrete slabs float.

⁴¹ While an exhibition space was included in the design of the chancery no information has been located in regards to the art or sculpture that was displayed.

⁴² Joyce Nankivell Associates, "Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur," 42.

⁴³ Harriet Edquist, "William Nankivell Collection: William Nankivell (1928-2002) Architect," in *RMIT Design Archives Journal* 1, no. 2 (2011): 10.

⁴⁴ Edquist initially speculated that the visit was possibly inspired by Boyd's recently published monograph on Kenzo Tange (1962). Edquist later acknowledges that the visit also coincided with the installation of the Bogle & Banfield designed Australian pavilion at the JETRO fair in Tokyo. See *Ibid* for the initial discussion of Joyce's travel to Japan. For Edquist's later analysis see Edquist, "George Kral (1928-1978): Graphic Designer and Interior Designer," 18.

In partnership with William Nankivell the practice entered a design for the Perak Turf Club grandstand that sought to continue the language of the grandstand at Sandown however added a Brutalist philosophy inspired by the same sources that had influenced the design for the Total House carpark.⁴⁵ The result was a proposal that sat comfortably within the contemporary architectural context of Malaysia which had seen the development of a number of government and hospital buildings in a similar Brutalist manner.⁴⁶ In completing the grandstand the architects utilised a repetitive structural system of exposed concrete cantilevered beams which was visually offset by two 180 foot towers that faced the raceway and functioned as an observation deck for stewards, committee members and broadcasters (Figure 5.12).⁴⁷ The entrance was designated through a series of fountains and the use of Malaysian hard wood screening to contrast with the concrete finish. Joyce Nankivell also took responsibility for the design of the furniture and fittings, breaking from the repetitive concrete exterior surface and providing blocks of colour to designate the functions of a number of interior spaces.

It had been anticipated by the CDQ that Joyce Nankivell would re-open their Malaysian office established during the design and construction of the Perak Turf Club grandstand to manage the construction of the chancery however the practice instead decided to complete the building in association with the Malaysian firm of Leong Thian Dan Rakan-Rakan.

As in Singapore the chancery needed to present “a good image of Australia” and “a feeling of generous space and scale” by rejecting a corporate image and instead representing Australia through the use of a dignified space.⁴⁸ To achieve this Joyce Nankivell devised an alternative solution to the vast lobby space of the Singapore Chancery by designing a section of the lobby as an internal glazed courtyard that extended the full height of the building. While this space emphasised the prestige nature of the building it did not overpower the user who could comfortably interact with a more intimately scaled lobby space defined by the mezzanine above (Figure 5.13). The lobby was smaller than the Singapore Chancery because of the restricted site dimensions and as such the library was located on the mezzanine level. The mezzanine’s supporting row of columns helped define the ground floor exhibition space that wrapped around the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ This included the Kuala Lumpur General Hospital designed by Wells and Joyce (1966-1974), James Cubitt’s Faculty of Medicine and Teaching Hospital at the University of Malaysia (1963-1968) and Booty, Edwards & Partners design for the Dewan Tunku Canselor University of Malaysia (1966); Azrul k. Abdullah, “Brutal Practicality,” (2001), accessed May 10, 2017, <http://www.mir.com.my/rb/photography/portfolio/azrul/html/prac1.html>.

⁴⁷ Construction commenced in 1967 with the stadium opening in 1971.

⁴⁸ Joyce Nankivell Associates, “Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur,” 42.

reflection pool and had views to a number of retained Tembusu trees. Instead of dividing the various functions of the lobby by specifying differing materials and colours which had been done in the Perak Turf Club the architects elected to add continuity to the interiors by using a small selection of materials and colours that reflected a controlled simplicity which added to the brutalist expression.⁴⁹

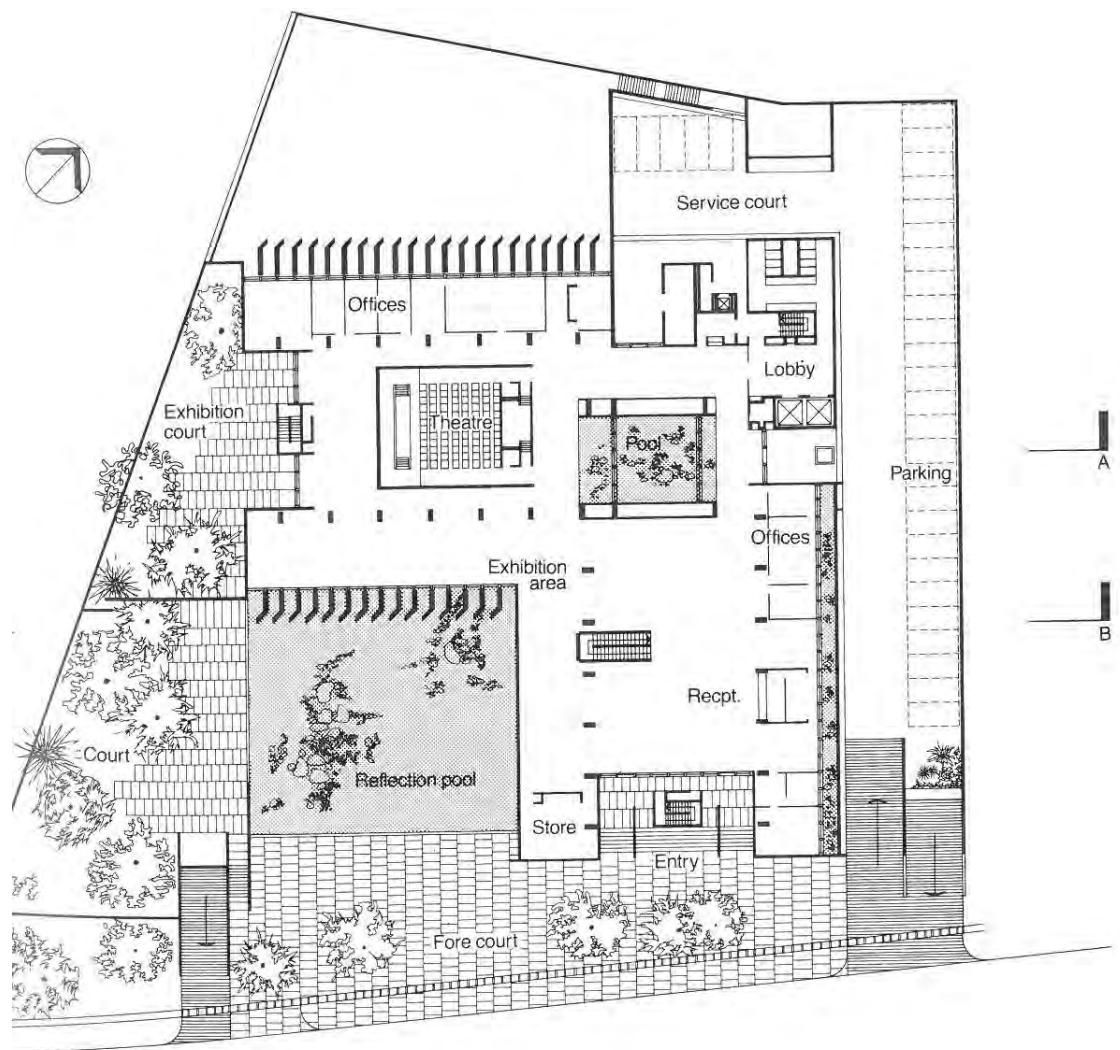


Figure 5.9. Joyce Nankivell Associates in association with Leong Thian Dan Rakan Rakan, Australian Chancery, Kuala Lumpur, level two (ground) plan, 1974.

⁴⁹ Jo P Bradley, "Architectural Impressions: The Australian High Commission's Offices in Kuala Lumpur," *Architecture Australia* 68, no. 1 (March 1979): 53.

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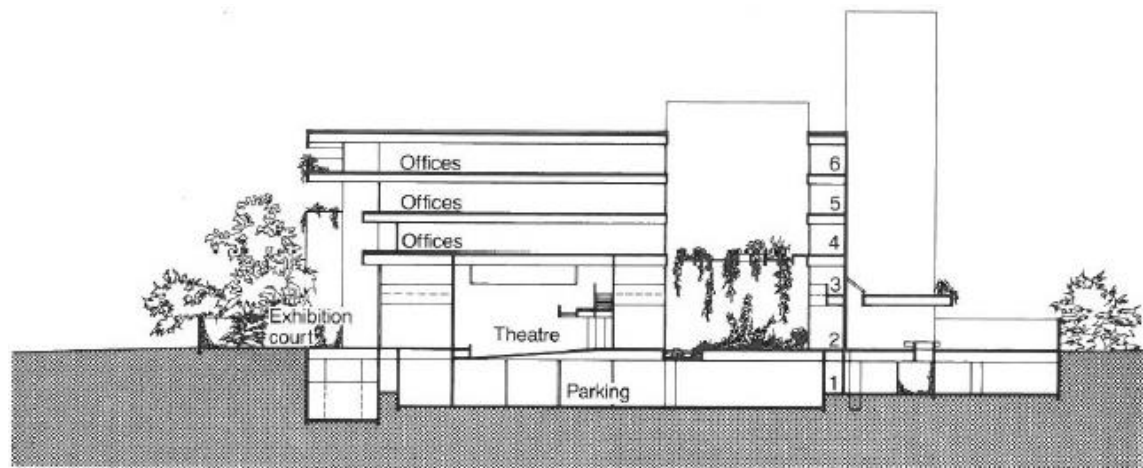
Figure 5.10. Joyce Nankivell Associates in association with Leong Thian Dan Rakan Rakan, Australian Chancery, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, forecourt with reflection pool.



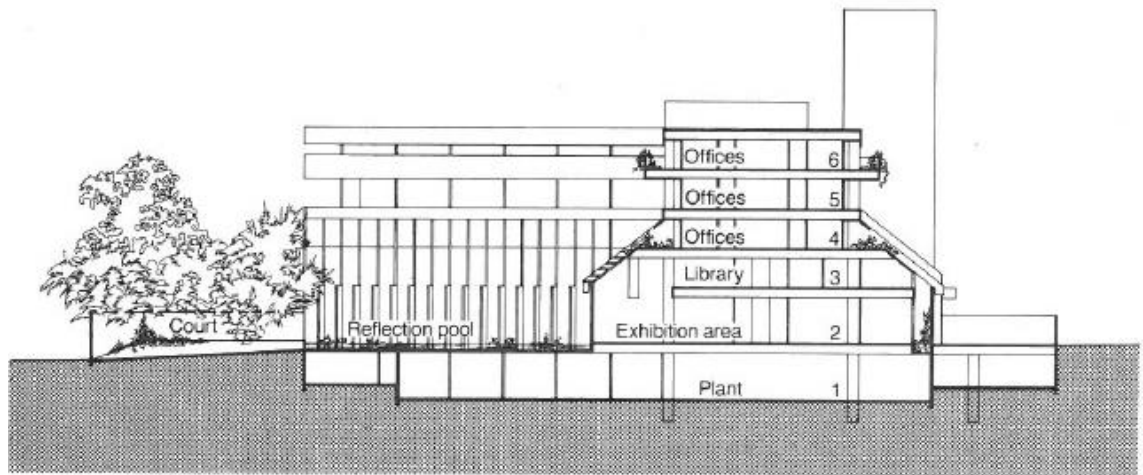
Figure 5.11. Joyce Nankivell Associates in association with Leong Thian Dan Rakan Rakan, Australian Chancery, Kuala Lumpur, 1978, exposed structure and shading system.

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Figure 5.12. Joyce Nankivell Associates in association, Perak Turf Club, Ipoh, 1971.



SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B

Figure 5.13. Joyce Nankivell Associates in association with Leong Thian Dan Rakan Rakan, Australian Chancery, Kuala Lumpur, section A-A and section B-B, 1974.

The Kuala Lumpur project was executed under increasing economic difficulties which had begun shortly after Prime Minister Whitlam was elected. Rising unemployment and inflationary pressure forced the new government to act and assess the best means to curtail government expenditure and stimulate the economy. Central to this was a revision of the overseas works programmes and the level of funding being provided to complete existing projects and continue the expansion of Australia's diplomatic network.

Political Troubles

On 26 August 1974, in a nationally televised speech, Prime Minister Whitlam addressed the growing uncertainty surrounding unemployment, wage growth and inflation.⁵⁰ In his speech he promoted the newly released budget as part of the government's "ongoing fight against inflation" reassuring the nation that the budget was framed with "the needs of the Australian economy and the needs of the Australian people" in mind.⁵¹ Further expenditure on schools, hospitals, and infrastructure was justified not only as a way to combat growing inflation but also as a way to build an "even stronger fairer Australia."⁵² Whereas the government focused on reducing unemployment through spending the Treasurer warned that there was no quick solution to fixing an economic situation that was "very bad."⁵³ At the beginning of the Whitlam government's term in December 1972 the rate of inflation stood at 4.5 per cent; a percentage the previous Liberal government claimed proved their fiscal policy was sound. By October 1973 it had risen to ten per cent, eight months latter it was sitting at over fourteen per cent. At the same time the unemployment rate had risen from 71,000 in June to 111,000 in August.⁵⁴

Prime Minister Whitlam's introduction of a mini budget in November attempted to rectify the situation and responded to calls from the opposition for an eight per cent reduction in government spending.⁵⁵ In releasing the mini budget Prime Minister Whitlam noted that the Australian economy was "beset by rapid inflation and rising unemployment" which he explained was an issue being experienced by comparable countries which had resulted in the need for "economic management of unparalleled complexity."⁵⁶ The

⁵⁰ Prime Minister Whitlam had promised to budget for a domestic surplus during his election campaign in order to deal with the worldwide spike in inflation that had occurred because of the 400 per cent increase in the global price of oil after the Arab-Israeli War and the OPEC oil embargo in October 1973. See John Hawkins, "Frank Crean: A Long Wait for a Turbulent Tenure" *Economic Roundup* (6 December 2013): 112-113.

⁵¹ Prime Minister, "National Broadcast," 26 August 1974, accessed 4 December 2018, <http://whitlamdismissal.com/1974/08/26/whitlam-budget-national-broadcast.html>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Jim Cairns, "The Economic Situation," Submission No. 1534, January 1975 in *The Economy: 1975 Cabinet Records-selected documents*, ed. National Archives of Australia (Canberra), 13, accessed 4 December 2018, http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/economy-1_tcm16-45403.pdf.

⁵⁴ There is much debate as to whether the Whitlam government's fiscal policies actually stimulated the economy or led to its downturn. See G. Whitwell, "Economic Affairs," in *Whitlam Re-visited: Policy Developments, Policies, and Outcomes*, ed. Hugh Emy, Owen Hughes, Race Matthews (Sydney: Pluto Press in association with the Public Sector Management Institute, Monash University, 1993). 32-62.

⁵⁵ The Deputy leader of the Opposition appeared on the "Monday conference" asking the Labor government as a matter of responsibility to reduce its expected rate of spending from 32 per cent to 25 per cent. See Government Spending Discussion of Matter of Public Importance Speech, 19 November 1974, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 47.

⁵⁶ Australian Economy Ministerial Statement, 12 November 1974, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 46.

Prime Minister explained that the government's immediate concern was to stop and reverse the downturn by stimulating the economy whilst simultaneously abating cost pressures.⁵⁷ To achieve this it was announced that there would be a relaxation on monetary policy along with a reduction in the rate of tax applied to companies and to individuals.⁵⁸ The opposition condemned the mini budget as inconsistent as it did not reduce government spending proportionally to the rate at which it was investing money in the private sector. Although Prime Minister Whitlam had expressed the hope that "genuine concern-must not give way to despair,"⁵⁹ McMahon claimed that the budget would be "disastrous for everyone" and advocated for more to be done.⁶⁰

In a debate on government spending recorded in the *Official Hansard* as a "Discussion of Matter of Public Importance" the "opulent demands of international diplomacy" were singled out as a means of reducing costs by the liberal government.⁶¹ An article published in the *National Times* entitled "Have Money Can't Spend: Plenty of Room to Cut Government Budgets" was tabled by McMahon during the parliamentary session. The article summed up the spending on overseas projects as "sheer grandiloquence on an opulent scale," attributing the Whitlam government's failing efforts to cut expenditure on the unnecessary growth of departments as a key factor in Australia's economic crisis.⁶² The article listed how the DFA planned to spend \$40 million over the next two financial years on projects in Saigon, Suva, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Paris and Wellington as well as on extensions proposed for the Jakarta, Tokyo and Washington, D.C. Chanceries. It also labelled the need to conduct a feasibility study for the re-activation of the Brasilia Chancery and HOM residence estimated at a cost of two million dollars as "luxury plus."⁶³

The OPB justified the \$46.6 million expenditure for 1974-1975 in its submission to Cabinet as a "conscious step" in meeting the government's decision to increase the percentage of owned overseas estate. In planning these projects the OPB noted that it had prioritised urgent residential and office accommodation needs which had been

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ In September 1974 the government moved to value the Australian dollar against a basket of currencies called the Trade Weighted Index (TWI) in an effort to reduce the fluctuations that were being experienced because of the 1967 decision to peg the Australian dollar against the US dollar. See John Hawkins, "Frank Crean," 116.

⁵⁹ *House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 46.

⁶⁰ *House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 47.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Yvonne Preston, "Have money can't spend': plenty of room to cut government budgets" *National Times*, 18 November 1974, 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

“apparent for some years.”⁶⁴ The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Donald Willesee, also commented that any efforts to curtail expenditure on construction overseas would not have the effect of reducing inflationary pressure as only a very small percentage of expenditure under the construction programme was incurred in Australia. He also suggested that if projects were deferred the cost of construction in the future would inevitably be higher.⁶⁵ The programme was approved with the following comment, “We see no objection having regard to the fact that this is an expenditure which does not put Australian domestic resources under pressure.”⁶⁶

Although the start of 1975 would see an improvement in the economic outlook the Treasurer, Bill Hayden, cautioned the government on the fiscal solution it had adopted, commenting:

we can now be reasonably confident that we have halted the downslide in economic activity and that a recovery is underway. The manner in which that recovery has been brought about - i.e. through stimulating consumer spending and by an increase in public sector spending - has potentially stored up problems for the future.⁶⁷

Hayden continued by warning of an increased inflationary risk if the government attempted to push ahead too quickly with its social and economic goals.⁶⁸ While the OPB's estimates were approved without question in 1974-1975 their submission to Cabinet for the 1975-1976 budget became a focus for significant cost cutting by a government intent on rectifying the economic situation.

Willesee's initial estimates submitted to Cabinet in June 1975 sought to continue the program of capital works and acquisitions of property which had been approved in 1974 requesting that for the 1975-1976 programme approximately \$33.5 million be approved with \$28.9 million being allocated for new works and works now in progress.⁶⁹ His

⁶⁴ National Archives of Australia: Cabinet Office, A5931, Whitlam Ministries-Cabinet Files, Single Number Series With 'CL' Prefix; CL1146, Overseas Property Bureau-Capital Works Program 1974-1975, 1974-1975; D. Willesee Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Capital Works Programme 1974-1975,” Cabinet Submission No. 1191, July 1974.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ NAA: A5931, CL1146, notes from J. Anderson External Relations Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Note on Cabinet Submission No. 1191 Overseas Capital Works Program 1974-1975,” 14 August 1974.

⁶⁷ Bill Hayden, “The Economic Context,” Submission No. 1778, 12 June 1975 in *The Economy: 1975 Cabinet Records-selected documents*, ed. National Archives of Australia (Canberra), 20, accessed 4 December 2018, http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/economy-1_tcm16-45403.pdf

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ The submission cites Singapore, Paris, Washington, D.C. and Bangkok as examples. See NAA: A5931, CL1146, D. Willesee Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Capital Works Proposals 1975/1976,” Submission No 1743, June 1975.

reasoning for the continuance of the programme mimicked the 1974-1975 submission although an additional section was added that went into detail describing the urgent need to build in Brasilia and Islamabad at the risk of losing the sites.⁷⁰ In reading the submission Senator George Poyser stated he was horrified at the amount being spent annually by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the desire of the previous McMahon government to spend money on “prestige buildings overseas.”⁷¹

Prime Minister Whitlam would write to all his Cabinet Ministers on 13 June 1975 informing them that the Cabinet Expenditure Review Committee (CERC) would be reviewing existing as well as new programmes to identify possible reductions.⁷² In the letter he asked Ministers to consider what they would do if their overall budget was cut by five per cent, ten per cent or fifteen per cent.⁷³ The committee subsequently presented a report entitled *Budget 1975-76: Options to Reduce On-going Expenditure*. The report focused on the rationalisation of public expenditure and suggested two alternatives to reducing expenditure for the proposed Overseas Capital Works Programme.⁷⁴ The first proposal suggested that all funding for any new works should be

⁷⁰ The section also outlined the need to start building in Kuala Lumpur as Prime Minister Whitlam had already preformed the ground breaking ceremony and any deferment of the project could be embarrassing. The London - Computer Based Messaging Switching Centre was also considered urgent as it was part of an overall communications network in which construction on two other centres had already commenced. Any delay in the construction of the Wellington Chancery was also noted as being unsatisfactory because the current chancery was split over two buildings. See *Ibid*.

⁷¹ Question: Proposed Joint Standing Committee on the New and Permanent Parliament House Speech, 5 June 1975, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: Senate Official Hansard*, No. 23.

⁷² CERC can be viewed as the lineal decedent of the Ministerial Committee on Forward Estimates and is composed of officials representing various departments. According to the Report of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration the creation of CERC reflected the Whitlam government's stance that the rate of growth in public expenditure needed to be reduced. CERC reviewed every proposal to Cabinet for new expenditure. Most of the work was carried out by the Treasury who were more concerned with broad macroeconomic control and therefore tended to resist expenditure rather than coordinate policies to achieve similar means. It was noted in the report that “there was no planning, simply slashing where the organism will stand it.” See The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, “Australian Government Administration (Parliamentary Paper No. 186/1976),” in *The Report of The Royal Commission*, Vol 1 (Canberra: The Commonwealth Government Printer, 1977), 100-101.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁷⁴ The CERC report would also target the Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA) recommending a nine million dollar cut in bi-lateral aid and an overall reduction in funding from \$465 million to \$441 million. Willesee would recommend that no further cuts be made below this figure as the “government has international obligations which require it to increase the level of external economic aid in real terms.” These obligations included the underpinning of the new PNG government; the continuing world food problems and a number of international initiatives introduced to support countries hit by the oil crisis. The Treasury would push for a further \$21 million reduction however it was argued that the maintenance of a credible development assistance program was an important element of the government's foreign policy and as such a meaningful response needed to be made. See NAA: A5931, CL1146, letter from I. Simington

cut with funding only being provided for works in progress (\$17.5 million). The second proposal allowed funding of \$6.5 million for new works in addition to the \$17.5 million allocated to works in progress. Willesee rejected the first proposal as unacceptable however reluctantly accepted the second proposal commenting that it was still in effect a 50 per cent reduction in the new works programme that had been proposed.⁷⁵ In a letter to Prime Minister Whitlam he wrote:

A reduction of this magnitude will mean the deferral of a number of urgently needed works and a significant slowing down of progress towards the desirable objective of increasing the proportion of Government-owned properties overseas. Nevertheless, having regard to the serious Budget problem we are facing and to your request for complete co-operation, I am prepared to agree to the lower level of new works program proposed.⁷⁶

Cabinet would reiterate the stance taken in the CERC report however sided with Willesee in his acceptance of the reduced programme agreeing that a cutting of all expenditure would “dislocate planning and priorities.”⁷⁷ A reduced programme with access to funds totalling \$24 million would allow most if not all of the urgent works to be kept “on stream.”⁷⁸ The proposal would be further reviewed by an ad hoc committee of ministers who recommended that a further \$2.5 million reduction to the programme be undertaken by only allowing four of the 27 new works proposed for 1975-1976 to proceed.⁷⁹ The projects that the committee recommended to proceed were the Kuala Lumpur and Brasilia Chanceries, the London-Computer Based Messaging Switching Centre and the provision of a new chancery and residential accommodation in Hanoi.⁸⁰ Cabinet

Acting Assistant Secretary External Relations Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Notes on Cabinet Submission No. 1879 ADAA Estimates,” 4 July 1975.

⁷⁵ NAA: A5931, CL1146, letter from D. Willesee Minister Department of Foreign Affairs to G. Whitlam Prime Minister.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ NAA: A5931, CL1146, letter from I. Simington Acting Assistant Secretary External Relations Branch Department of Foreign Affairs, “Notes on Cabinet Submission No. 1743 Overseas Capital Works Proposal 1975/1976,” 4 July 1975.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ NAA: A5931, CL1146, comments from Ad Hoc Committee on Budget Expenditure to the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, “Overseas Capital Works Proposals 1975-1976 Submission No. 1743,” Decision No. 3705.

⁸⁰ The development in Hanoi was a late submission and was only included after an OPB officer visited Hanoi in June and recommend the project be given the highest priority because of the poor working and living conditions to which DFA staff were being subjected. See NAA: A5931, CL1146, letter from D. Willesee Minister Department of Foreign Affairs to Cabinet, “Overseas Property Bureau-Overseas Works Proposals 1975-1976,” Submission No. 1743, July 1975.

accepted the recommendation in July and agreed that the amount of \$21.5 million be provided for the program of capital works for overseas posts in 1975-1976.⁸¹

Although funding had been significantly reduced Prime Minister Whitlam was asked in August 1975 to submit a list of overseas building projects for examination by the House of Representatives. The buildings under construction in 1975 were:

Post	Description	Cost \$
Accra	Alterations to HOM residence	168,000
Bangkok	Construction of chancery and HOM residence	5,800,000
Islamabad	Construction of Interim chancery	669,000
Jakarta	Alterations to HOM residence	174,200
Lagos	Construction of HOM Residence, site development and recreational facilities	1,026,000
London	Renovation of Official residence Australia House – External renovations and electrical works	78,000 477,400
Manila	Construction of HOM residence	330,250
Noumea	Construction of chancery	208,350
Paris	Construction of chancery and staff accommodation	18,500,000
Port Moresby	Construction of chancery HOM residence Renovations to Port Road residence	1,972,000 215,000 32,000
Rangoon	Construction of recreation complex	170,600
Singapore	Construction of chancery	4,390,000
Stockholm	Renovations to chancery	26,500
Vienna	Residential complex	534,000
Washington, D.C.	Extensions to chancery	4,642,000
Wellington	Construction of HOM residence	460,000

Figure 5.14. Overseas building projects under construction as of 1975.

⁸¹ NAA: A5931, CL1146, Cabinet Minute Decision No. 3852, "Submission No. 1743 – Overseas Capital Works Proposals 1975-1976," 24 July 1975.

Prime Minister Whitlam also submitted a list of important projects that were to begin construction in 1975-1976. It was noted that these projects were dependent on funding and priorities.

Post	Description	Cost \$
Dacca	Recreation complex	150,000
Hanoi	Construction of chancery and residential accommodation	450,000
Islamabad	Construction of residential complex	1,500,000
Kuala Lumpur	Construction of chancery	4,200,000
London	Computer Centre Redevelopment Australia House	1,800,000 100,000
Suva	Construction of HOM residence	534,000
Wellington	Construction of chancery	4,030,000
Vientiane	Construction of recreational complex	150,000

Figure 5.15. Proposed overseas building projects for 1975-1976.

The *Australian* published an article on the 23 August 1975 outlining the expenditure the Whitlam government was committing to overseas developments.⁸² This was followed by an editorial that singled out Prime Minister Whitlam's statement in Parliament regarding the previous government's initiation of the projects overseas.⁸³ Prime Minister Whitlam would respond to the articles in a press conference on the budget. In his response he listed all the projects that had been approved under the McMahon government:

Now to be quite precise let me go through them. The cost of the Bangkok Chancery and Residence will be \$5.8 million, approved by our predecessors. The renovation and electrical works at Australia House in London will be \$477,400 approved by our predecessors. The Chancery and accommodation in Paris will be \$18 and a half million, approved by our predecessors. The Chancery in Port Moresby will be \$2 million, approved by our predecessors. The Chancery in Singapore will be \$4.4 million, approved by our predecessors and the extensions to the Chancery in Washington will be \$4.6 million, approved by our predecessors. Lastly the construction of the Chancery in Kuala Lumpur will be \$4.2 million, approved by our predecessors.⁸⁴

⁸² "\$53m Bill For Envoys: Home and Office for Ambassador to Hanoi will Total \$450,000," *The Australian*, 23 August 1975, 3.

⁸³ "Putting Diplomats Before Doctors," *The Australian*, 25 August 1975, 6.

⁸⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, "The Prime Minister's Press Conference at Parliament House," (26 August, 1975), accessed 6 December 2018,

He concluded by stating that “all the expensive ones, all the big ones were approved by our predecessors.”⁸⁵

The *Australian* subsequently published an article “Don’t Blame us for the \$53m Embassies.”⁸⁶ Although criticism would continue to be levelled at the amount being spent on the construction programme overseas by the opposition, Senator Poyser, in supporting the budget, recommended to Parliament that any expenditure on overseas works should be commended to review by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC).⁸⁷ In making his argument Poyser referred to the 1974 DFA estimates as “disturbing” signalling out the \$15 million to be spent on an extension to the Tokyo Chancery as an example of why the DFA projects should be scrutinised suggesting that at that price it would be the “eighth wonder of the world.”⁸⁸ Poyser stated:

I do not think a small country such as Australia should out – Jones the Joneses and compete with great overseas countries in the construction of embassies, consulates and other buildings.⁸⁹

In clarifying this position he outlined his concern that any government could gain approval for projects without them being scrutinised by a committee of Parliament. In order for this to occur the Public Works Committee Act would need to be amended to include “overseas works” within its remit.⁹⁰

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR07000632/upload_binary/HPR07000632.pdf

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “Don’t Blame us for the \$53m Embassies,” *The Australian*, 27 August 1975, 2.

⁸⁷ The Public Works Committee was first established in 1913 and is considered the longest serving investigative committee of the Parliament. The PWC is constituted by the Public Works Committee Act (1969) which gives it wide ranging investigative power. The PWC is made up from six members of the House of Representatives and three Senators. The PWC receives evidence from departments and organisations proposing public works as well as from the design and construction authority responsible for the technical development. Submissions are also sought from the public which are reviewed in a public hearing of the proposal. After the public hearing a report is prepared assessing the need for the proposal and an assessment of the estimate cost. The report is presented to both the House of Representative and the Senate for authorisation to proceed. For Poyser’s comments see *Senate Official Hansard*, No. 37. For a discussion of the PWC see Secretariat of the Public Works Committee, “Public Works,” *Newsletter of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*, November/December 1990.

⁸⁸ *Senate Official Hansard*, No. 37.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ In 1973 the mandatory limit of reference was raised from \$750,000 set in 1969 to two million dollars in order to reduce the workload of the committee so it would be able to devote a greater proportion of time to larger scale works. Parliament agreed to the increase based on the requirement that an in-depth examination be made into widening the scrutiny of the committee to include major public works of statutory authorities, institutions, and other bodies not already covered by the Act. An Interdepartmental Committee was established and its findings were tabled in Parliament during 1974. The PWC responded to the recommendations in August 1974 however consideration of the amendments were postponed awaiting consultation at a

By November the government was in deadlock. Prime Minister Whitlam was unable to pass the Budget bills through the opposition-controlled Senate which in October had voted to delay the passage of the Budget bill until an election was called. Prime Minister Whitlam realised if the bill was not passed the government would run out of money rendering it ineffective. In an effort to secure the majority in the upper house Prime Minister Whitlam arranged to meet the Governor General Sir John Kerr to authorise a half senate election. In an effort to break the deadlock Kerr informed Whitlam that he was no longer Prime Minister.⁹¹

The completion of the chancery projects in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur demonstrates what was achievable by both the government and architectural practices when operating under favourable political conditions prior to an economic tightening and change of government. While both projects were derived from the same spatial template - the “Kuala Lumpur Plan” - the responses generated by both Godfrey & Spowers and Joyce Nankivell differ because of their consideration of the climatic and building conditions specific to each country. The idea that “prestige” could be communicated in the design and scale of the interior spaces is a representational theme that can be seen in both the projects. This was driven by the government which devised a brief conveying the importance of the lobby space as a first point of contact with “Australia.” As part of this, the users’ experience became a key representational consideration for the first time. In order to elevate this experience the chancery buildings needed to include theatres, library spaces and purpose-built exhibition areas as a means of informing the public

Ministerial level. These consultations centred on the inclusion of overseas works and developments within the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra as part of the proposed widening of authority. In late 1975 when the review of the Act was nearing completion the Joint Committee on Parliamentary Committee Systems recommended changes to the operational capacity of the PWC delaying revision of the Act. These recommendations were rejected by the PWC in August 1976. During 1978 the government gave further consideration to the proposed amendments and recommended their introduction to a Parliamentary discussion in 1979. On 20 February 1979 the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Government Operations tabled its report on Statutory Authorities of the Commonwealth recommending that the powers of the PWC be extended to “strengthen the total accountability of statutory authorities to the Parliament.” This was endorsed by the PWC in August 1980. See Australia Parliament Standing Committee on Public Works, “Review of Public Works Committee Act Interdepartmental Committee Report (Parliamentary Paper No. 105/74),” in *The 44th General Report The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works* (Victoria: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1980), 5-9.

⁹¹ For an account of the Whitlam dismissal see Clem Lloyd, “Edward Gough Whitlam,” in *Australian Prime Ministers*, ed. Michelle Grattan (Sydney: New Holland Publishers, 2013).

about Australia. This indicates that representation was no longer considered detrimental to fiscal policy but rather as fundamental to fulfilling Australia's foreign policy objectives.

The role of the OPB as considered in this chapter was also crucial in the development of these buildings as it overrode the bureaucratic tendencies of individual departments and centralised control of the projects. This allowed the DFA to act in the role as client and allowed the CDW to operate as a technical advisor within the machinery of government. Although the commissioning of Australian architectural practices may have increased the propensity of communication breakdowns, as had been the experience with Stein, the fact that there was only one coordinating body ensured the projects were completed within the required timeframe.

The Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Chanceries present an image of Australia through a generosity in scale and furnishing which had previously not been realised. This was only achievable because of the substantial funding provided by the Whitlam government and its support of the "Australian Policy." However, as explained in the following chapter, political pressures saw the new Fraser government reduce the overseas works programme through policy intervention and restructuring to meet economic targets. This was at odds with Australia's representational needs and resulted in administrative confusion and delays in the development of the next project to be undertaken – the Bangkok Chancery and HOM residence.

PART III – REFORM AND REALISATION

CHAPTER SIX: A CHANGE IN DIRECTION

This chapter firstly discusses the new Fraser government's enforcement of austerity in order to control what it deemed to be excessive spending during the Whitlam era. Although the new government would readily support Australia's diplomatic engagement in Asia it would continue to do so after new policies and regulations were implemented to control expenditure on overseas property, ultimately halting the construction drive. This chapter contrasts sharply with the previous chapter and demonstrates the impact that changing government priorities and policy decisions had on the efficient management of the overseas works programmes of Australia. While the representational quality of Australia's diplomatic premises could have been impacted, the ability of the architect and the resilience of the departmental infrastructure that had been created since the formation of the OPB ensured that the architecture produced was still appropriate to Australia's needs.

The first section will focus on a number of government-led reviews which resulted in the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB) being restructured into the Overseas Operations Branch (OOB) so that new financial targets could be met. This change adversely affected the maintenance and construction schedule of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and prompted further investigations into the deteriorating state of the Commonwealth's overseas property portfolio. The section "Effects and Further Enquires" highlights the political, economic and cultural priorities of the Fraser government by analysing the findings of both the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and the Joint Committee of Public Accounts. This forms the background to a study of the next embassy project to be completed by the Australian government, the Bangkok Chancery and Head of Mission (HOM) residence.

Fraser and a Budget Conscious Government

With the dismissal of the Whitlam Government on 11 November 1975 the Governor General Sir John Kerr announced that Malcom Fraser as the leader of the Liberal Party would become the caretaker Prime Minister. Although Prime Minister Fraser supported a number of policies that had been established under Whitlam he quickly set about taking ownership of his new position by cutting costs and streamlining the public service to restore confidence in the machinery of government. In short, he sought to "purge the

Whitlam excesses from the system.”¹ With inflation running at more than twenty per cent, spending on the arts, health, the environment and social welfare was cut significantly. To further combat inflation taxation relief was also introduced.

In order to improve the efficiency of the public service Prime Minister Fraser established the Administrative Review Committee. Under the direction of Henry Bland the committee was tasked with reviewing expenditure and recommending ways to eliminate the “waste and duplication” that existed in the inherited departmental arrangements.² The committee worked in conjunction with the Royal Commission on Government Administration which was undertaking an assessment of the systems of government in terms of the principles and practices of administration.³ Both Bland and the Royal Commission conducted a cursory examination of Australia’s overseas representation and the role of the DFA.⁴ In its findings the Commission referenced a report by Ian Sharp of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The report praised the OPB for removing the administration problems that had existed previously recommending that further independence be given to the OPB by relinquishing the Public Service Board (PSB) of its control over the rental ceilings at posts. Sharp also commended the OPB for enacting a policy of purchasing over leasing which provided a higher standard of accommodation, a conclusion he reached after visiting a number of missions himself.⁵

Contrary to the findings of the Bland review and recommendations of the Royal Commission the PSB decided that the domestic and overseas property functions should be amalgamated because of similarities in function, subject matter and operational requirements. To realise this the Property and Survey Division was created as part of

¹ Paul Kelly, “John Malcom Fraser,” in *Australian Prime Ministers*, ed. Michelle Grattan (Sydney: New Holland Publishers (Australia), 2013), 361.

² For the committee’s terms of reference see Prime Minister, News release (21 December, 1975), accessed 7 December 2018, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR04006692/upload_binary/HPR04006692.pdf

³ The Commission was the first to be implemented since the Commissioner Duncan McLachlan had conducted a comprehensive review 50 years earlier. It was noted that many issues surrounding the administration of government had been resolved since the commission was undertaken. It was believed that this was a direct result of the commission’s enquiries bringing to light matters of opinion that might have otherwise been ignored. The commission was given two years to complete the review and took over 750 submissions and heard over 350 witnesses. In reaching its recommendations it noted the short time given to complete the task. See The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, “Australian Government Administration (Parliamentary Paper No. 186/1976),” 3-10.

⁴ The Royal Commission was concerned with the adequacy of the existing staff arrangements for Australian administration overseas in particular reference to conditions of service and organisation. See The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, “Australian Government Administration (Parliamentary Paper No. 186/1976),” *Appendix Vol 3*, 388.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

the new Department of Administrative Services (DAS).⁶ The merger was further justified as a means of ensuring that the administrative body was 'neutral' in its role and accessible to other departments.⁷ The division was overseen by a newly appointed Director of Commonwealth Property, John Wollaston, who was also responsible for the Commonwealth domestic property portfolio.⁸ The OOB was responsible for the operational, technical and financial programming aspects of the overseas estate while project work, policy and development for both overseas and domestic property would be undertaken in the Planning and Review Branch. The positions of Director and Assistant Director were abolished and both branches were overseen by newly appointed Assistant Secretaries.⁹ Under the new administrative arrangement the OOB would maintain a five-year list of possible construction projects which would be updated according to priority. Any new construction projects would only be considered after all other avenues were investigated and the Department of Finance (DoF) as well as Cabinet had approved funding for the project.¹⁰ The Minister for DAS would also decide if consultants were to be engaged or if the services of the Overseas Works Branch (OWB) were to be used. In response, the DFA expressed concern that as the OPB's major client they had not been consulted by the PSB before the reorganisation had occurred.¹¹

A press release in May 1976 by the Minister for DAS, Reginald Withers, confirmed that the government had completed a review of major expenditure proposed by all departments for 1976-1977. Withers announced that spending on proposed overseas works would be cut from \$56.2 million to \$42.5 million in the 1976-77 budget.¹² This

⁶ It was noted that "the rearrangement was within a wider context of a substantial top structure rearrangement designed to produce an effective management framework for the department as a whole." DAS was made from elements of seven defunct departments and superseded the Department of Services and Property in October 1975. The new administrative arrangement of the OOB was investigated by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts as part of the *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* into the Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government, however no evidence was found to warrant why the OPB had been restructured into the OOB and moved under the control of DAS. See Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," 26-27.

⁷ It was argued that other departments were limited in using the functions of the OPB as it was controlled by the DFA. *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰ The Department of Finance was split from the Department of the Treasury in December 1976. The aim of doing this was to separate financial oversight functions from economic policy development. The DoF was tasked with "promoting and supporting excellence in Commonwealth financial management and budgeting, and in program performance throughout the public sector." See Department of Finance, *Annual Report 1996-1997* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1997), 7.

¹¹ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," 27-28.

¹² Australia Department of Administrative Services, "Statement by Senator the Hon. R.G Withers Minister for Administrative Services," News release (May 1976), accessed 10

meant that funds were available to meet current commitments plus “absolutely essential repairs.”¹³ Any new projects planned for 1976-1977 would be deferred together with the purchasing of several properties.

After the transfer of the OPB’s functions in December 1976 the Secretary of DAS, Peter Lawler, remarked that the operations carried out by the OPB would not change and that the reorganisation was not meant to imply any criticism of the Bureau’s performance to date. It was also noted that the Overseas Property Committee (OPC) would continue to operate as an advisory body alongside the OOB.¹⁴ The OPC Chairman lamented the “demise” of the OPB while the DFA felt that the new administrative arrangement with the OOB was “far from ideal;”¹⁵ a comment that was supported by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and the Department of Trade and Resources which hoped that the administrative changes would not cause delays.¹⁶

Although the Fraser era was dominated by fiscal policy that saw the closure of posts in Bombay, Calcutta, Salonika,¹⁷ as well as in Rio de Janeiro, Karachi, the Port-of-Spain and Christchurch,¹⁸ Prime Minister Fraser readily supported spending on defence tabling Australia’s first Defence White Paper *Australian Defence* on 26 November 1976. The paper built on the earlier Australian Defence Review by seeking to establish self-reliance as the primary focus of Australia’s defence policy and in determining Australia’s future role in the region.¹⁹ Prime Minister Fraser would also reinforce Australia’s diplomatic and trade ties with countries in Southeast Asia, visiting China in June 1976 to demonstrate bi-partisan support for the relations established by Whitlam and to approve the formal

November 2016,

http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/media/pressrel/HPR10023127/upload_binary/HPR10023127.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 4.

¹⁵ National Archives of Australia: Office of the Public Service Board, A451, Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number Series with Occasional Alphabetical Prefix; 1977/6418, Overseas Property-Committee Meetings, 1977-1978; minutes of Meeting no. 12 at CAGA Centre, Canberra, “Overseas Property Committee Meeting,” 3 March 1977.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 88.

¹⁸ Standing Committee on Expenditure Speech, 2 June 1977, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 22.

¹⁹ The paper recognised that the geopolitical landscape had changed significantly since the Defence Review of 1972 including Britain focusing its efforts towards Europe and the disengagement of the US from Southeast Asia. Funding of twelve billion dollars over five years was provided. In October 1978 Prime Minister Fraser would acknowledge that not all the objectives stated in the paper would be achieved due to continuing budgetary constraints. See Nicole Brangwin, Nathan Church, Steve Dyer, and David Watt, “Defending Australia,” 61.

exchange of land to build a new embassy compound.²⁰ While Whitlam had encouraged engagement with the region through dialogue and cooperation, Prime Minister Fraser's early defence and foreign policies were directed more towards reducing the Communist threat and developing trade relations that were favourable to the Australian national interest and independent from the US.²¹ As described by the Secretary of the DFA (1974-1977), Alan Renouf, foreign policy under the Fraser government was an unusual combination of policies that fluctuated between conservatism and liberalism with a focus on power backed by principle.²² In this way it can be said that Prime Minister Fraser's foreign policy philosophy was distinct in its blend of Cold War cynicism and Third World sympathy.²³ While Whitlam had emphasised the importance of non-discriminatory policy Prime Minister Fraser believed immigration was central to Australia's future development as a multi-cultural society and as such should be increased.²⁴ This placed a considerable strain on the falling staff numbers of the DFA and Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs both at home and overseas.

In late 1976 the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure would conduct a formal inquiry into Australia's overseas representation and the DFA.²⁵ While the committee recognised that past reviews had been conducted they noted that these were undertaken in an ad hoc manner and as such the focus of the committee was on staffing levels and the systems of control required to ensure that recruitment was appropriate to meet the government's expenditure targets and foreign policy objectives. In completing the review the committee did not question the broad foreign policies of the

²⁰ Prime Minister Fraser believed that China was a valuable strategic ally because of the Chinese government's anti-Soviet agenda. China was also one of Australia's largest trading partners due to its need for Western skills and technology to further its own economic reform. Prime Minister Fraser promoted the need for US-China relations and also established Australia's future role as a critical ally of America. See Kelly, "John Malcom Fraser," 371. For a discussion of the Beijing Embassy project see Chapter Seven "Moving Forward."

²¹ Initially, independence from the US was sought as a reaction to Australia's treatment as an ally in Vietnam and a need to be self-reliant. See Alan Renouf, *Malcolm Fraser and Australian Foreign Policy* (Sydney: Australian Professional Publications, 1986), 76-78.

²² *Ibid.*, 182.

²³ Kelly, "John Malcom Fraser," in *Australian Prime Ministers*, 371.

²⁴ Immigration was increased from 25,000 (1975-1976) to 120,000 (1982) by taking in Vietnamese refugees after the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Prime Minister Fraser also established the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs in 1978 to oversee the promotion of a multicultural ethic. See *Ibid.*, 369-370.

²⁵ The House of Representatives appointed the Standing Committee on Expenditure by resolution on 29 April 1976. The Committee was initially formed to establish procedures to maximise effective scrutiny of the estimates on behalf of the House. Hearings were conducted in May and June 1976. The committee sought further information on government expenditure in July 1976 and resolved to conduct a formal inquiry into Australia's overseas representation on 23 September 1976. See House of Representatives Standing Committee on Expenditure, *Australia's Overseas Representation* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, May 1977), x.

government and instead chose to concentrate on how these policies were implemented and administered. In justifying its focus the committee outlined that staffing costs made up the majority of the \$110 million allocated to the DFA estimate for 1976-1977.²⁶ In its conclusion the report recognised up until 1974 successive governments, departments and the PSB had failed to keep DFA staff numbers in line with workloads. This had resulted in the department's staff numbers expanding from 2792 in 1966 to a high of 4746 in 1974. With the implementation of austerity measures staff numbers had been reduced by seventeen per cent to 4029 in March 1977.²⁷ The report also concluded that there was a need to enforce a more effective system of control over Australia's system of representation overseas and as such it was recommended that a bi-annual review of overseas representation be conducted to determine if the resources needed over the ensuing two years was correct.²⁸ By conducting these scheduled reviews it was hoped that the ad hoc and often overdue reviews of the past could be avoided.

Effects and Further Enquires

The OPC meeting notes from 1977-1978 clearly highlight the effects cost cutting was having on the DFA and OWB in the administration of an effective maintenance and construction programme overseas. While it was accepted that the government was committed to a strategy of ensuring that budget outlays for 1977-1978 would not exceed in real terms those from 1976-1977 the DFA expressed disappointment that the "cake" has been so small and that deserving proposals such as Islamabad had been deferred.²⁹ The OWB commented that while scheduled to move to Canberra it was not presently involved in any new work and that the environment of restraint had seen staff numbers reduced to 48.³⁰ The OWB had seven projects in the pipeline with three slated for completion in 1977-1978. The fact that Islamabad was delayed and Brasilia was before the Minister "painted a gloomy picture for the branch," noted Garth Setchell.³¹ In response to the tapering off of project work the chairman commented that the OOB was

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

²⁸ Ibid., 1.

²⁹ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 13 at CAGA Centre, Canberra, "Overseas Property Committee," 23 June 1977.

³⁰ Australian National Audit Office, "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," 116

³¹ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 13.

seeking to start the Dacca Chancery project and that perhaps the OWB could be involved in the preliminary design stage.³²

Although the government was enforcing strict controls over funding for acquisitions and capital works it was highlighted by the OPC that the outlay for rental costs was in fact increasing to keep up with accommodation needs. This prompted a further meeting in which the topic of alternative means of purchasing accommodation was discussed. During the meeting the figures pertaining to the percentage of property owned by the Commonwealth were presented. These figures showed an increase from seventeen per cent to 27 per cent since the Whitlam government had recommended a policy of attaining a higher proportion of ownership. The OPC identified that the largest increase had occurred leading up to June 1975 because of the unprecedented levels of funding provided by the Whitlam government for the purchase of overseas accommodation. Since the Fraser government's restriction of budget outlays, only a small increase had occurred in the ownership of property, mostly as a result of the continued construction programme.³³ It was noted that rental costs had increased from \$9.6 million in 1975 to \$13.05 million in 1977, a fact that demonstrated that the government was willing to accept short-term economies at the expense of longer-term savings, leading the OPC to comment:

Given this inflation in rental expenditure it is incongruous that purchase of accommodation should have been so curtailed when government policy has been heavily oriented towards increased savings.³⁴

In order to reduce costs and increase property holdings it was proposed that the OPC endorse the purchase of properties under purchase lease back terms or as a fixed

³² DAS requested that the OWB prepare a cost report into the feasibility of constructing the Brasilia Chancery and HOM residence as well as the Islamabad and Dacca Chancery. The final report concluded that savings had been achieved by reducing the area of the buildings and rationalising the standards of construction. When discussing the report Setchell commented that the rationalisation process had resulted in buildings that were of a sensible shape and form rather than the earlier innovative solutions that had been presented by commissioned architectural consultants (Yuncken Freeman–Islamabad, Cameron, Chisholm & Nicol–Brasilia). Setchell also commented that the OWB had accepted that “realistic commercial quality finishes” were to be used compared to high end finishes which had been used on previous projects. The PSB endorsed the report on its economic basis agreeing that “overseas construction should not be too large for foreseeable needs, nor too lavish and should be suitable from a security viewpoint.” The Department of Finance (DoF) commented “that the designs were realistic compared with the previous proposals” and that they were pleased with the reduction in extravagance and costs. See NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 15 at CAGA Centre, Canberra, “Overseas Property Committee,” 15 May 1978.

³³ See Appendix XI for a table of owned and leased properties overseas 1974–1977.

³⁴ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 14 at CAGA Centre, Canberra, “Overseas Property Committee,” 8 December 1977.

mortgage arrangement.³⁵ It was argued this would allow the ownership of property to increase at a cost not greater than the overall cost associated with renting a comparable property.³⁶

Another issue that was a repeated point of discussion was the allocation of funds for maintenance. This had become of significant concern after it was discovered that the OOB had been taking funds from the furniture allocation to prop up the diminishing maintenance fund which was also being used to cover utilities and rates.³⁷ The Department of Construction believed that the lack of funds for maintenance would ultimately result in larger outlays needing to be made in the future.³⁸ In a number of letters to the Department of Finance (DoF), Nicholas Parkinson, Secretary of the DFA, outlined:

The very unsatisfactory situation that has developed over recent years in respect of the level of funds made available for overseas property administration.³⁹

Although he admitted that the DFA was conscious of the need to adhere to the government's financial policy of restraint he believed that:

The situation has now reached the stage where it is no longer economic in terms of sound property administration, nor fair to officers serving overseas, to continue under existing funding levels.⁴⁰

Parkinson highlighted an inspection of properties in Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia by the PSB as evidence of how the continuing restraints on maintenance expenditure was not only leading to the deterioration of the Commonwealth's overseas property portfolio valued at \$500 million but also physically impacting staff morale. He continued expressing concern at the government willingness to allow valuable

³⁵ Purchase lease back meant the government would buy a property then lease it back to the seller for a fixed rate to cover the mortgage repayments.

³⁶ Ibid. This would be the precursor to the introduction of the first non-budget program, Sell/Buy in 1986 which is discussed further in Chapter Seven.

³⁷ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 13.

³⁸ The Department of Construction was formed by the Fraser government after it abolished the Department of Housing and Construction in December 1975. The new department would operate until December 1978 when it was replaced by the Department of Housing and Construction (II) which would operate until May 1982. For meeting notes see NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 12.

³⁹ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, letter from N. Parkinson Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs to R. Cole Secretary Department of Finance, 24 November 1977.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Commonwealth assets to deteriorate without regard to the future cost that would have to be incurred.⁴¹

In response, the DoF recommended that the OOB in collaboration with the DFA seek support from the Minister of DAS to submit a special maintenance allocation. It was also expressed however that the current allocation was based on the continuation of the government's expenditure restraint.⁴² Even though the issue was tabled with the OPC the chairman suggested that if further evidence came to light of "properties falling to pieces" then perhaps a special case for increased funding could be put forward to the Minister of DAS.⁴³

The re-election of Malcom Fraser in December 1977 signalled a change in the government's foreign policy objectives. With the newly elected Carter administration in the US supporting a continuation of detente with the Soviet Union, concern in the Fraser government grew over the ability of the Soviet Union to exercise power and threaten the region's stability. In this context, Prime Minister Fraser informed the US that it needed to limit Soviet ambitions by taking a stronger stance. This view was vindicated when in 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and US hostages were taken in the Iranian Crisis forcing the US to review its foreign policy objectives. In response, Prime Minister Fraser abandoned the government's position of independence from the US and chose to support the US in its confrontation with the Soviet Union reinforcing the importance of the ANZUS treaty and allowing US strategic bombers on Australian soil.⁴⁴ Although Prime Minister Fraser continued to advocate for the plight of the Third World, spending on aid was reduced in favour of military expenditure as a means of confronting Soviet expansion and ensuring Australia's security.⁴⁵ Within the region Prime Minister Fraser backed the ASEAN stance on Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, supported the US security pledges to Japan and South Korea and pursued closer ties with Indonesia which was identified as a key strategic partner because of its anti-communist rhetoric.⁴⁶ Although the objectives were clear the continued cost cutting and administrative changes

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² NAA: A451, 1977/6418, letter from R. Cole Secretary Department of Finance to N. Parkinson Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, 5 December 1977.

⁴³ NAA: A451, 1977/6418, minutes of Meeting no. 12.

⁴⁴ Renouf, *Malcolm Fraser and Australian Foreign Policy*, 183-187.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁶ In order to maintain a stable relationship with Indonesia Prime Minister Fraser accepted the Indonesian incorporation of East Timor in 1975. This, as argued by Kelly, was driven by a need to protect Australian interests against Communism in the region. See Kelly, "John Malcom Fraser," 373.

were effecting the ability of a number of departments to administer the government's new policy direction.

In light of the growing concern being expressed by the DFA in meeting the government's new objectives a further review of the DFA and Defence was conducted. The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence investigation: *Australia's Representation Overseas - The Department of Foreign Affairs* was initiated by the Senate in March 1978. The examination was undertaken to determine whether the DFA, as the department responsible for presenting and implementing Australia's foreign policy and representation overseas, had the resources and organisational ability to do so. The committee noted that even though the DFA had undergone seven reviews in the past four years it believed that past reviews had been "limited in nature" because they had not taken into account the effects that ongoing financial restraint and staff cut backs had on the DFA's operational capability which it considered had increased significantly in the past ten years.⁴⁷ As part of its investigation evidence was taken from the Secretary of the DFA. Parkinson opened by suggesting that a couple of points he wished to make "might seem to be defensive in kind," requesting that it be placed on record that:

The evolution and implementation of foreign policy is over the long term as fundamental to our national well-being as any domestic policy considerations.⁴⁸

Perhaps as a swipe at the DoF he further commented that he doubted that this point was appreciated by all. His submission primarily sought to dispel the regular attacks made on the DFA by some factions of Parliament and the media for its excessive expenditure on overseas representation notably the cost of maintaining staff and property which was often described as being complete with "luxurious trappings."⁴⁹ In relation to the subject of overseas property Parkinson stated:

Let me say without reservation that I regard Australia's newest embassies and high commissions as positive additions to the national estate, both as

⁴⁷ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian Representation Overseas-the Department of Foreign Affairs Report from the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1979), 1-3.

⁴⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, "Statement by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Mr. N. F. Parkinson, to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence," 27 July 1978, 2.

⁴⁹ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian Representation Overseas-the Department of Foreign Affairs*, 62.

sound investments and as manifestations of Australia's status as a middle ranking power with substantial overseas interests.⁵⁰

He continued to argue that the Australian taxpayer was well served by these investments outlining that the Tokyo property purchased in 1951 at a cost of \$138,000 was now valued at an estimated \$40 million. A one million dollar saving in rental outlays in Paris was presented as a justification for the completion of the new chancery complex designed by Harry Seidler & Associates.⁵¹ Parkinson summarised by suggesting that the government's concern should be:

less with combatting arguments about the relatively few buildings we own, and more with the cost of renting other premises and with the adequacy of those premises, not least in security terms.⁵²

Parkinson's discussion of overseas property convinced the committee of its significance to Australia's representational needs. In the report's recommendations, the committee advocated for the government to initiate an immediate review of overseas property management with a focus on the operations of the OOB.⁵³

The committee stopped short of criticising the OOB directly because it recognised that the OOB was operating under "severe financial limitations" and as an organisation had undergone five transfers between departments.⁵⁴ The committee did however condemn the current arrangement as ineffective and recommended that the OOB be removed from DAS and returned as a branch of the DFA, commenting that 85 per cent of properties overseas were administrated by the DFA.⁵⁵ The committee further noted that the officers employed by the branch should not have their duties divided between domestic and overseas property matters but should use their expertise exclusively for the management of overseas property.⁵⁶

The majority of blame however was placed on the government's "short-sighted attitude" to the funding of overseas property maintenance and acquisitions.⁵⁷ In making this statement the report referenced "spiralling leasing costs, delays in future works programs, higher market prices for the reintroduced but modest acquisitions,

⁵⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs, "Statement by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs," 8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵³ Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian Representation Overseas-the Department of Foreign Affairs*, 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

deteriorating property, added expenses for maintenance and a decline in living standards” as the affects that this “attitude” had proliferated.⁵⁸ Because of this the committee proposed that realistic funds be allocated to the maintenance of existing properties and that the merits of constructing or purchasing properties be investigated further.⁵⁹ This matter was also discussed in the *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts which was released in conjunction with the Senate Standing Committee’s report.⁶⁰

Bangkok As Evidence (1972-1977)

The *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* recognised that the cuts in funding to overseas property as well as the change in administrative arrangements had adversely impacted both the maintenance schedule and the construction timeline of several overseas projects. While the Senate Standing Committee’s report had focused on the DFA and its ability to implement Australia’s foreign policy under the terms of austerity, the Joint Committee of Public Accounts was tasked with analysing the financing and administration of property owned or leased overseas as administered by the OOB for the DFA. In its initial findings the Joint Committee agreed with the Senate Committee and condemned the abolition of the OPB noting that the almost continuous administrative changes to the OPB had “detracted from the efficiency of the operation.”⁶¹ The report continued to outline the “unnecessary administrative complications” that now existed because of DAS having overall policy control while the DFA controlled the day-to-day running of posts.⁶² In taking evidence it was found that even minor matters needed to be referred to the PSB, DoF, Department of Construction and the OWB, as well as interdepartmental committees such as the Overseas Property Committee.⁶³

The Bangkok Chancery project was given as an example of this failure during testimony.⁶⁴ As lead architect on the project Ken Woolley had visited the site on 2 July 1973.⁶⁵ The three-acre block contained two dilapidated apartment buildings and a house

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” in *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1978).

⁶¹ Ibid., 2.

⁶² Ibid., 3.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 114-115.

⁶⁵ After protracted negotiations with the Thai government spanning over twenty years the site was purchased on South Sathorn Road in August 1972 at a cost of \$806,000. Having

which had been utilised as accommodation for a DFA officer. It was determined during discussions with the ambassador and Allen from the Overseas Property Section of the DFA that the positioning of the HOM residence in relation to the chancery was important in order to maintain privacy. Staff accommodation was also discussed as it was considered as an essential part of the planning by the Treasury who had demanded that the capacity of the site be maximised. This was rejected by the ambassador who believed that the size of the proposed accommodation derived from the standards would in fact be smaller than the properties available for foreigners to rent on the open market and would contribute to a morale issue amongst staff.⁶⁶ In spite of the ambassador's concerns, Woolley returned to Australia to undertake the design of the chancery and HOM residence under instruction from the DFA to include eighteen staff flats within the site by adding an additional floor to the chancery.⁶⁷

On his return, Woolley sent a letter to the Director General of the Department of Works, Alan Reiher, questioning why the time frame of the Bangkok project needed to be pegged to the Singapore Chancery when it was apparent that the Bangkok project involved a higher level of design detail to complete both a HOM residence and chancery. In his letter he recommended that a realistic programme be set so that the required design aims and quality specified in the brief could be achieved.⁶⁸ Even though this recommendation was accepted by Reiher, pressure was still exerted on the architects to finalise the sketch designs to gain funding approval. The DFA accepted the initial sketch design in October 1973, however concern was later raised as to the stepped design of the building and its

previously been visited by McMahon in 1970 the block, as one of the few remaining, was considered "eminently suitable" by the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) because of its location in an "acceptable part of the city. For the CDW comments see NAA: A1838, 1428/26/19 Part 3, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Minister Department of Foreign Affairs, "Proposed Purchase of Building Sites in Bangkok and Singapore," 9 March 1972. For the notes of the meeting held between Woolley and Allen refer to: NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Major Construction Projects," 4 June 1973.

⁶⁶ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/3/5 Part 7, Premises-Bangkok-New Chancery, 1974-1974; letter from D. Goss Counsellor Australian Embassy Bangkok to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "New Chancery Building," 4 April 1974.

⁶⁷ In order to free up much needed land on the site and to assure privacy for the HOM residence the architects proposed that the staff flats be included on the top floor of the chancery mimicking a living arrangement common in Thai office blocks. See Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," 111.

⁶⁸ National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs, Central Office, A1838, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series [Main Correspondence Files Series of the Agency]; 1428/3/5 Part 6, Premises-Bangkok-New Chancery-Australia-Thailand, 1973-1973; letter from Ken Woolley to the Director General Department of Works, "Australian Chancery: Bangkok," 22 June 1973.

implications for the security of the communication room. After extensive studies it was determined that the room could not be relocated without major changes to other aspects of the design.⁶⁹ Because of this delay the final design was presented at the offices of the OPB in January 1974 (Figure 6.1). In attendance were the DFA, Department of Housing and Construction (DHC), the Treasury and Overseas Trade.⁷⁰ The scheme was accepted as an appropriate solution to the problem of siting an HOM residence and chancery on a city block adjacent to a busy road.⁷¹



Figure 6.1. Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, 1973, model.

Although the design was accepted in principle, approval was again sought from the Treasury because of an increase in the estimated cost of construction and a reduction in the number of staff flats to thirteen.⁷² With an estimated cost of \$4.3 million and an adjusted completion date of December 1977, tenders were called on 17 March 1975 with

⁶⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 7, letter from P. West Security Section Department of Foreign Affairs to Overseas Property Bureau, "New Chancery, Bangkok: Communications," 28 May 1974.

⁷⁰ The Department of Housing and Construction replaced the CDW in November 1973.

⁷¹ NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 7, letter from C. Booth Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs to J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs, "Bangkok: Chancery and Official Residence Project," 15 February 1974.

⁷² Ibid.

the contract for construction awarded to the Union Development Company on 1 June 1975.

By mid 1977, two years after construction had commenced, the DFA realised that the flats that were being constructed on the top floor were above offices that contained sensitive material. In a memorandum to site on 9 November the DFA requested that the OOB cease construction of the floor by placing a stop work order on the builder. This led to a general slowing down of work on site as the labourers working on level five could not be re-allocated to another part of the site.⁷³ The DFA proposed sending Arthur Hillier from the OOB and an architect from the OWB to Bangkok to re-negotiate the contract because they had concluded that from a security perspective the flats needed to be removed.⁷⁴ However, by 29 November, the Minister for DAS in consultation with the DFA decided that construction should continue on the thirteen flats and that the DFA would resolve any security issues in the future.⁷⁵ Although the order was lifted directions on site remained unclear as a new schedule needed to be prepared by the builder.⁷⁶ This led to a scathing letter from Woolley expressing his frustration at the “lack of cooperation between departments.”⁷⁷

In the Joint Committee’s findings, the DFA admitted that they had neglected to examine the building plans closely at the time they were submitted because of a breakdown in communication with the OPB.⁷⁸ In response, the committee called for a less complex chain of control recommending the OPB be “reconstituted in similar form to that operating prior to December 1976.”⁷⁹ The report also questioned the continued use of external consultants and the relevance of the OWB now that construction activity on the overseas works programme had been reduced to a minimum. It was suggested that the staff of the OWB be transferred to the Department of Construction as the current environment did not warrant the existence of a specialist bureau. The commissioning of external consultants was labelled by the committee as a “duplication of expertise” and a

⁷³ National Archives of Australia: Department of Administrative Services [II], Central Office, A10755, Bound Volumes and Lever Arch Binders of Specifications, Drawings and Photographs Relating to Overseas Posts; 32 Part 3, 5/8 Chancery and Official Residence, 1974-1986; “New Chancery & HOM Residence-Bangkok, Progress Report No. 28,” November 1977.

⁷⁴ NAA: A10755, 32, teletext from OOB to Bangkok, “Visit by A. Hillier and K. Combey,” 22 November 1977. 7925

⁷⁵ NAA: A10755, 32, teletext from OOB and OWB to Bangkok, “New Chancery Project Bangkok,” 28 November 1977.

⁷⁶ NAA: A10755, 32, “New Chancery & HOM Residence-Bangkok, Progress Report No. 28.”

⁷⁷ NAA: A10755, 32, letter from Ken Woolley Supervising Architect Anchor, Mortlock & Woolley to Garth Setchell Overseas Works Branch Department of Housing and Construction, 18 April 1978.

⁷⁸ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 115.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

“significant drain on public funds” as the required professionals already existed in the Department of Construction.⁸⁰

Evidence was also taken regarding the cuts to maintenance funding with a letter being tabled from the ambassador of the newly completed Paris Chancery. The letter requested additional technical staff to maintain the “very large, most impressive and expensive asset” noting that the current allocation of three staff is “not sufficient to protect the Commonwealth’s investment.”⁸¹ Further evidence was submitted regarding an electrical fire that had occurred in the Accra Chancery and a major fire which had destroyed a significant part of the Moscow Chancery and HOM residence. Both the Foreign Affairs Wives’ Association and the Foreign Affairs Officers’ Association all commented on the adverse effects that cuts were having on the standard of living and staff morale. The committee determined that the government’s “stop-gap” policies and deferment of a routine maintenance programme was “illusionary” as it was a central principle of responsible property management that a certain level of funding was needed to protect property investments.⁸²

The report made a total of 26 recommendations which included the need to increase property ownership to 75 per cent as well as introducing a program of preventative maintenance which would be separate from the funding needed to pay for utilities. It was also proposed that the delegation of matters relating to accommodation standards and rents be transferred to the authority responsible for overseas property. The committee concluded that the Fraser government’s cuts and administrative changes to the overseas property programme were detrimental to Australia’s representational needs.⁸³

Bangkok Chancery and HOM Residence (1977-1980)

Because of the change in government and the restructuring of the OPB, and as a result of the highlighted departmental failures, the completion of the Bangkok Chancery was significantly delayed. On his five nation tour of Southeast Asia in 1974 Prime Minister Whitlam had announced that the building of an Australian chancery in Bangkok was an

⁸⁰ Ibid., 13. A total of \$2.8 million was spent on architectural consultant’s fees in 1974/1975. See NAA: A1838, 1428/1/35 Part 3, “Annual Estimates 1974-1975 Division 516/30/4 Fee of Private Architects.”

⁸¹ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” 99.

⁸² Ibid., 10.

⁸³ Ibid., 3.

opportunity to design an “an outstanding architectural landmark.”⁸⁴ However, a year later letters were being sent to Thai officials reassuring them of the Australian government’s “commitment to the project in the midst of financial and budgetary restrictions.”⁸⁵

Woolley approached the design of the chancery and HOM residence by using elements of the local context as a means of formulating a solution. It had been determined from earlier site investigations that the high-water table often resulted in the block flooding during heavy rain. To resolve this the modern building practice in Thailand was to raise the site with infill which, although fixing the immediate problem, accentuated flooding elsewhere in the city.⁸⁶ In an effort to preserve the qualities of the site and improve the local environment Woolley elected to draw attention to the elements of traditional Thai architecture in which buildings were raised on stilts to protect them from water egress.⁸⁷ To overcome the problems of flooding before they occurred Woolley proposed that the site be transformed into a pond and that the traditional stilts be reinterpreted in a contemporary way by raising the building on a grid of columns. In doing this the functional requirements of the spatial plan were also addressed as security and privacy could be controlled through the use of a single bridge that took the visitor over the pond and under the chancery structure terminating at the HOM residence which was located at the rear of the site. Several other islands were constructed to retain existing trees and to provide carparking areas (Figures 6.2 and 6.3).⁸⁸

The design of the chancery was planned around a central forecourt; an infilled island that allowed the visitor to take in the full height of the building. As a transitional space it acted as an extension of the lobby, giving the floors above an outlook away from the noise of the main street and access to ventilation.⁸⁹ The forecourt was paved with local grey slate

⁸⁴ Prime Minister Whitlam also visited Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. As part of the tour Prime Minister Whitlam visited the Kula Lumpur High Commission site on the 29 January 1974 and the Singapore High Commission site on the 8 February 1974. It was planned for Prime Minister Whitlam to lay a foundation stone at the site of the Bangkok Chancery however this was cancelled as it was believed that few dignitaries would be in attendance. NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 7, Cablegram from Australian Embassy Bangkok to the Department of Foreign Affairs “New Chancery,” 16 January 1974.

⁸⁵ National Archives of Australia: Department of Administrative Services [II], Central Office, A10755, Bound Volumes and Lever Arch Binders of Specifications, Drawings and Photographs Relating to Overseas Posts; 30 Part 1, 5/8 Chancery and Official Residence, 1974-1986; letter from E. Burtmanis Counsellor Australian Embassy Bangkok to Department of Foreign Affairs “New Chancery and Official Residence,” 10 November 1975.

⁸⁶ “Australian Embassy Bangkok,” *Architecture Australia* 74, no. 2 (March 1985): 42.

⁸⁷ “Australia Builds an Embassy on Stilts,” *Bangkok World*, 3 June 1975, 3.

⁸⁸ “Australian Embassy Bangkok,” 42.

⁸⁹ An article in the *Canberra Time* entitled “Embassy Flats ‘Unsuitable’” brought attention to concerns that the flats on the top floor would be uninhabitable due to their size and the noise from the street. This led the DFA and the OWB to conduct noise level tests on the flats that were facing the street. Bruce Juddery, “Embassy Flats ‘Unsuitable,’” *Canberra Times*, 30 June,

and landscaped with tropical plants that contrasted the yellow glazed elongated ceramic tiles which faced the external surfaces (Figure 6.4). Woolley specified these tiles as both a water proofing method and in reference to the traditional Thai temples which used the same coloured tiles. While being elevated in response to flooding the building form was also driven by climatic considerations. Each level of the chancery was designed to cantilever three metres over the floor below reversing the traditional image of a stepped Thai pagoda to provide sun shading to the interior spaces (Figure 6.5). Woolley also specified a series of concrete louvres for the top floor flats to reduce heat loading.

Although the lobby was smaller in scale than the lobbies in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore the interior had a certain visual interest because of Woolley's decision to continue using the yellow tiles inside to highlight the stairs (Figure 6.6). The display area, reception and theatrette were located on the first floor above the lobby with the offices planned around the perimeter of the square hollow plan (Figure 6.7). The material selected for the interior mimicked the architecture of the exterior of the building. By merging various elements such as local teak ceiling panels, white plaster walls and white and yellow tiles a contemporary atmosphere was created that avoided any reference to a particular architectural "style". This was elaborated on by Woolley who commented that:

The building will therefore reflect climatic and environmental qualities of that country without copying the intrinsic architectural style or without recreating an "Australian" style in a false context. The design is an assimilation of contrasting influences, approached in a totally contemporary manner.⁹⁰

An article published in *Bangkok World* described how the design of the new Chancery and HOM residence respected the Thai context by taking into account the special qualities of the site and local environment. It outlined how Woolley, "one of Australia's leading architects," had undertaken an assessment of the principles of traditional Thai architecture and adopted them as a means of directing "the functional modern approach into a distinctive visual form."⁹¹ In taking this approach the article noted the qualities of the site had been both preserved and amplified as the traditional principle of elevating a building on stilts within a water-scaped site had been used by Woolley as the basis for the design.⁹²

1978, 7; The *Bangkok Post* published their own interpretation in "A Home From Home?" *Bangkok Post*, 27 September, 1978, 1.

⁹⁰ NAA: A1838, 1428/3/5 Part 7, letter from Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley to C. Booth Overseas Property Section Department of Foreign Affairs, "Australian Embassy, Bangkok," 14 January 1974.

⁹¹ "Australia Builds an Embassy on Stilts," *Bangkok World*, 3 June 1975, 3.

⁹² Ibid.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 6.2. Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery and HOM residence, Bangkok, site plan, 1974.



Figure 6.3. Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, 1980, main elevation showing access bridge.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 6.4. Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, 1980, forecourt area.

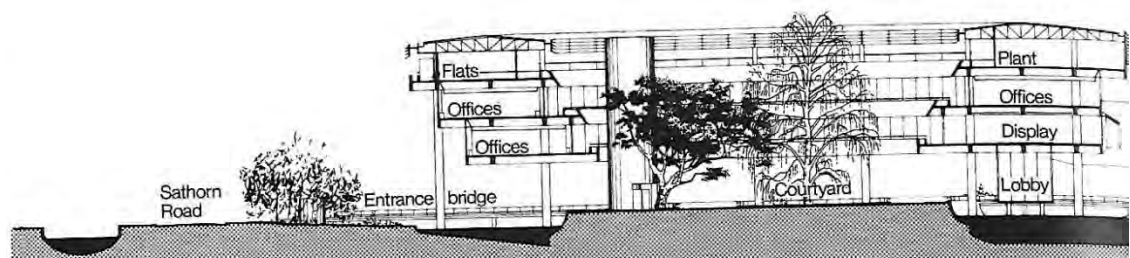


Figure 6.5. Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, section, 1974.

Figure has been removed due to copyright restrictions

Figure 6.6. Ancher, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, 1980, entrance lobby leading to first floor display area.

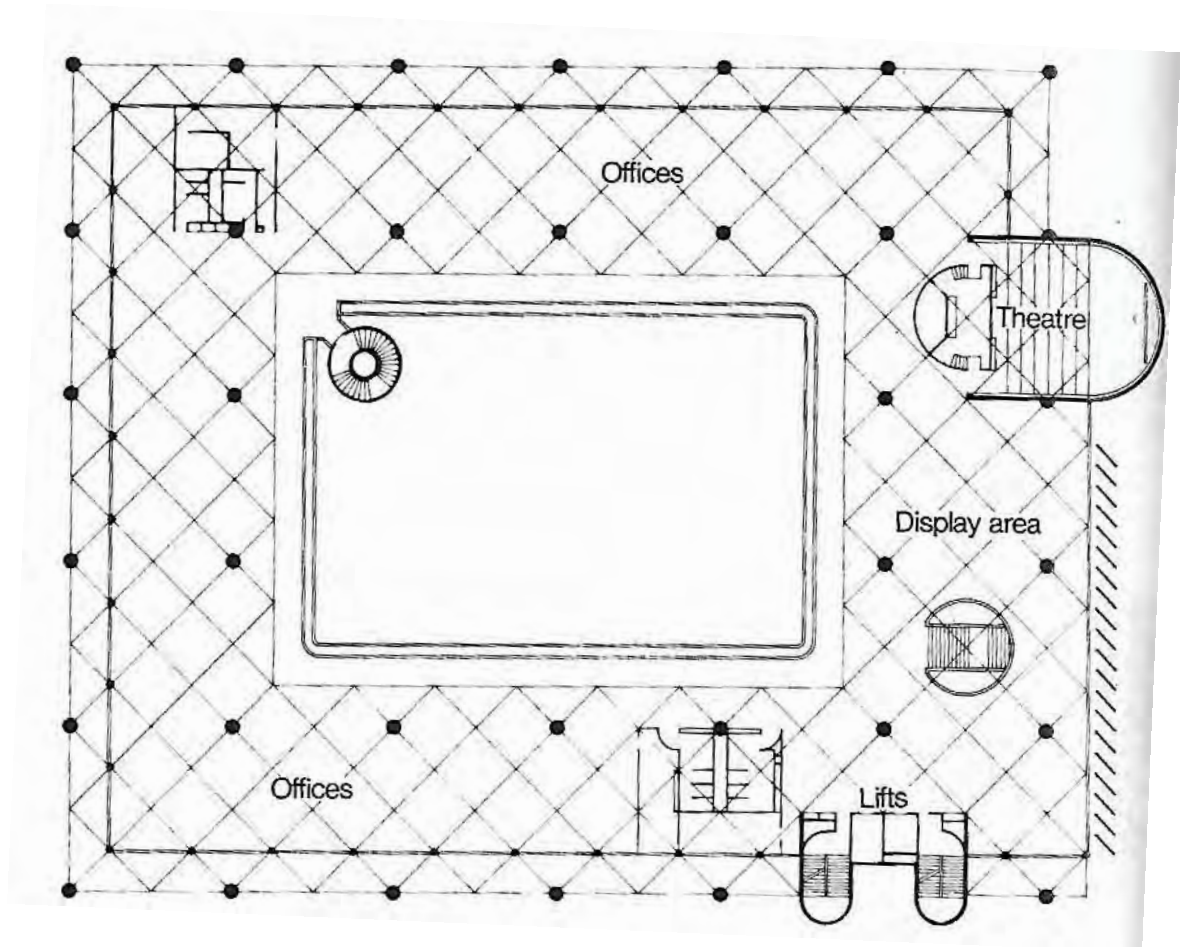


Figure 6.7. Anchor, Mortlock & Woolley, Australian Chancery, Bangkok, level two plan, 1974.

While the delays experienced in completing the Bangkok Chancery can directly be attributed to the administrative complications that arose from the restructuring of the OPB a letter sent from Woolley to Garth Setchell also highlights the unescapable difficulties of constructing buildings overseas:

It is apparent to me that every man here is only one quarter effective for his normal duties. One quarter is lost by the enervating climate, the difficulty of language and communications with Australia. Another is lost by having to do the builder's work for him, there being simply no coordination, problem solving or anticipation by the builder. The final quarter is lost by abortive work, backtracking, keeping tabs on partial information, created by constant changes in the client's brief as conveyed to us.⁹³

⁹³ NAA: A10755, 32, letter from Ken Woolley Supervising Architect.

The building was completed in 1980, four years after its initial estimated completion date and three years after the adjusted date signed off by the DFA and OPB. Shortly after the official opening an interdepartmental committee tasked by the DoF to undertake a wider investigation into the findings of the *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* made a submission to Parliament.⁹⁴

DAS and the Formation of the OPO

In its submission, the committee requested that the Minister of DAS, John McLeay, respond to the findings of the initial report in a statement to the House of Representatives. McLeay did so rejecting the need to move the overseas property portfolio back under the administration of the DFA commenting that Prime Minister Fraser had personally reviewed the matter and concluded that it was not preferable to alter the current arrangement because of the numerous changes that had occurred previously in the administration of the portfolio.⁹⁵ Instead, in a move to appease all parties, a new Overseas Property Office (OPO) was established on 23 March 1981 as part of DAS. The new office was divided into two branches - Property Management and Projects and Services - each administered by an Assistant Secretary. The Property Management Branch was accountable for the “efficient management of the overseas estate” and consisted of three sections responsible for the lease and purchase of accommodation, furniture and fittings and the purchase of motor vehicles overseas. The Projects and Services Branch was also divided into three sections - The Project Section administered the development and management of major projects, the Technical Services Section provided technical advice on all property matters and the Programming, Information and Purchasing Section planned and directed the financial programming and other administrative requirements.⁹⁶ While DAS was accepting of the new OPO it questioned the PSB on the continued amalgamation of the domestic and overseas property portfolios:

The management capacity currently available under the existing organisation arrangements is insufficient to cope with the major overseas issues. The

⁹⁴ The committee consisted of representatives from DAS, Defence, DFA, DoF, DHC, Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Prime Minister and Cabinet, Primary Industry and the PSB. See Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, “Finance Minute on Report 172- Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government,” in *The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Committee of Public Accounts, One Hundred and Ninety-Fifth Report* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1982), VIII.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3. For a diagram of the organisational structure of the OPO see Appendix XIII.

increasing complexity of administration of domestic property has placed undue stress on existing resources and in so doing has exacerbated the problem of meeting the demands of Government for more economic and efficient management of Australia's overseas estate.⁹⁷

In response, the PSB "agreed that some strengthening of the management structures for both domestic and overseas property functions was required."⁹⁸ To achieve this the OPO would continue to sit within the property directorate but be self-contained exercising delegations directly from the Minister DAS and the PSB. The PSB also endorsed that Wollaston's engagement be extended in an advisory role as a Special Consultant on Commonwealth Property. In this position it was envisaged that Wollaston would work alongside the Property Directorate and have direct access to the Deputy Secretaries responsible for both domestic and overseas activities. In announcing the engagement, the PSB and DAS stressed the importance of having access to private sector insights to help manage the complexity of the Commonwealth's property holdings. It was also announced that Hillier would be promoted to the head of the OPO and that Alan Fogg from the DFA would assume the role of Senior Assistant Secretary.⁹⁹

In giving his response McLeay readily agreed with the reports recommendation to increase the government's ownership of property announcing that as a priority a review subcommittee had been established in the OPO to assess the needs and priorities of construction and acquisitions at all posts on a regular basis.¹⁰⁰ He also recognised the importance of adequate maintenance announcing a substantial increase to funding that would be separate to the utility vote in the 1979-1980 and 1980-1981 financial year.¹⁰¹ Even though the *One Hundred and Seventy Second Report* had recommended the closing down of the OWB because of a duplication of tasks, both the PSB and the DHC supported the use of the Branch to work on smaller overseas projects and domestic work citing the benefit of retaining expertise in overseas construction in one organisational unit.¹⁰² The DHC also reiterated the current government policy of letting out 50 per cent of its work to private consultants noting that all the major chanceries in the past had been designed by "the best talents the country has to offer."¹⁰³ It believed that for future projects of a "prestige nature" that the selection of consultants by a panel consisting of

⁹⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰² Ibid., 11.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12.

members from the DHC, OPO and DFA would continue.¹⁰⁴ Whereas the majority of McLeay's responses were sufficient enough for the DoF it was recommended that further meetings be held in August and October 1981 to thrash out differences of opinion and to seek resolution to a number of outstanding matters. In asking for further information the DoF stated that the excessive length of time taken to receive a response was "not acceptable."¹⁰⁵

As part of the ongoing changes to the administration of overseas property the Public Works Committee Act of 1969 was amended on 5 March 1981 to empower the Public Works Committee (PWC) to scrutinise the development of overseas projects as undertaken by the DFA, DAS and the OPO. In amending the existing bill the new Minister for DAS, Kevin Newman, announced:

The exclusion of works of Commonwealth authorities and various overseas projects has meant considerable sums of money have been expended but not subjected to the same degree of scrutiny as expenditures falling within the meaning of the Public Works Committee Act. This Bill seeks to extend the role of the Committee to include within its purview a wider range of expenditures than at present.¹⁰⁶

Although the Act was amended to consider works outside Australia the PWC was not allowed to visit overseas sites but was limited to reviewing plans, models and statements of evidence from persons within Australia.¹⁰⁷ In October 1983 the Riyadh Chancery complex designed by Daryl Jackson was the first overseas project to be reviewed by the PWC under the new legislation and administrative arrangements. This would mark the beginning of a review process that often led to debates on the architectural merits of proposed buildings and the use of a "suitable" architecture to represent Australia.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The disagreements centred on three points: the level of authority that should be delegated to the HOM's at each post in regards to property administration; who should be responsible for the setting of rental ceilings; and the need for Australian-based officers occupying overseas accommodation to pay a bond. See Ibid., VIII.

¹⁰⁶ Department of the Parliamentary Library Legislative Research Service Bills Digest Information Service, "Short Digest of Bill," in *Public Works Committee Amendment Bill 1981*, (Canberra: Finance, Industries, Trade & Development Group, 5 March 1981), 1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2.

While the Whitlam government's policy framework had created an environment which fostered a rapid expansion of Australia's diplomatic network and encouraged spending on design as a means of representing Australia in the region it had come at a political cost. Subsequently, the new Fraser government sought to cut spending and streamline the public service as a means of restoring confidence in the machinery of government. As explained in this chapter, these fiscal decisions impacted many government departments including the DFA and resulted in a slowing down of the construction schedule. Even though expenditure on the overseas works programmes was reduced to levels deemed as being detrimental to Australia's representational needs Prime Minister Fraser stopped short of reversing the "Australian Policy." While the duplication of expertise was targeted as a cost saving measure it was recognised that the "prestige" nature of diplomacy was best communicated by employing architectural expertise outside of government. This demonstrates that while fiscal considerations were at the forefront of the Fraser government's agenda the importance of architectural representation as a means of communicating Australian interests in the region outweighed the financial gains that could have been made if the "Australian Policy" was reversed.

It is therefore interesting that the administration of these projects was not accorded the same consideration. Instead, in an effort to save money, the PSB elected to combine the overseas and domestic property portfolios by restructuring the OPB into the OBB. This again shows a failure by government to recognise the complexity of the overseas works programmes and the vast logistical differences that existed between both portfolios. As this chapter revealed, the change in administration directly affected the Bangkok Chancery and HOM residence. While this led to many delays during construction the completed building was of a quality that had been achieved in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur and one that meaningfully engaged with the local context. This can be attributed to the ability of the architect to drive an engagement with representation and traverse the line between architecture and politics.

The checks and balances that Fraser provided in the establishment of his economically responsible policies, although detrimental on the one hand, also held the DFA and DAS accountable in the future. It would be under this new balanced framework, a decade later, that Australia completed the construction of two new diplomatic premises in Asia. The following chapter will discuss the development of the Beijing and Tokyo Chanceries under the prime-ministership of Bob Hawke and the newly created administrative body - the Overseas Property Group (OPG). For the first time the government commissioned

the same architectural practice, Denton Corker Marshall (DCM), to design both buildings. In doing so, DCM would embed the new embassy buildings within the local context through a post-modern architectural interpretation of the traditional urban patterns of Chinese and Japanese cities.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MOVING FORWARD

This chapter introduces Robert (Bob) Hawke and the Labor government's return to power in 1983 under a promise of national reconciliation, national recovery and national reconstruction.¹ In order to achieve this, Hawke devised a policy of regional cooperation that focused on increasing trade and freeing the Australian economic market. While the Australian government had built a chancery complex in Tokyo (1964) and utilised a leased building in Peking since 1973 to meet its foreign policy objectives the capacity of both were stretched under Prime Minister Hawke's focus on Asia. The chapter will initially describe the early master planning investigations into developing an embassy complex in Peking in order to determine how the government departments involved chose to respond to political, economic and cultural factors.

In an environment where trade and foreign policy were becoming increasingly related Prime Minister Hawke instigated a major restructuring of government after the Stuart Harris *Review of Australia's Overseas Representation*. As part of the changes the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) was formed and the Overseas Property Group (OPG) was created. In its new form the OPG was given sole authority for the administration of the Commonwealth's overseas estate which simultaneously expedited existing processes, increased ownership and promoted a global approach to property management for the first time. The chapter will proceed with a study of the Tokyo project and the architectural response of Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) in meeting the government's brief before examining the much delayed and over budget Beijing Embassy complex. These final two projects are significant as they embody the culmination of modifications undertaken by government to streamline the administration and management of overseas projects and confirm the continued importance of representation within government.

Revisiting Asia

During Prime Minister Fraser's third term in government Australia underwent a further recession that brought to the fore the Liberal government's failed attempts to tackle departmental structural defects and to implement a much-needed courageous fiscal

¹ Robert Hawke, *Policy Speech Federal Election Campaign Launch*, ed. Australian Labor Party (Canberra: Australian Labor Party, 16 February 1983), 6.

policy.² Although Prime Minister Fraser blamed the drought, exponential wage growth and another worldwide economic downturn the Liberals lost the 1983 March election to Robert (Bob) Hawke and a Labor Party that was focused on restoring economic management and increasing foreign policy engagement. Hawke as Prime Minister worked in cooperation rather than against the machinery of the public service and sought to position Australia as an “activist middle-power” in world affairs.³ While the 1970s had seen Australia expand its policy of engagement with Asia under the banner of the Cold War, engagement during the 1980s was delineated by economic opportunity and a search for a regional identity.⁴ As an advocate and supporter of the American alliance Prime Minister Hawke also recognised the immense potential that the rising Asian economies had to increasing trade and investment and returning a vitality to the languishing Australian economy. To facilitate regional economic cooperation new international arrangements and institutional structures were needed.⁵

This was reiterated by Prime Minister Hawke in his speech to the Australian-Thai Chamber of Commerce in November 1983, in which he stated that significant changes were occurring in the way countries in the region were dealing with each other. He explained that the new government’s policies would be geared to ensuring that Australia is “an effective participant in the process of change rather than being wary of change,” calling for the region to work together in the preparation of multilateral trade negotiations.⁶ The move to greater regional integration was encouraged by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as through the development of free trade agreements between America and Canada and within the

² Paul Kelly, “John Malcolm Fraser,” in *Australian Prime Ministers*, 373.

³ Neal Blewett, “Robert James Lee Hawke,” in *Australian Prime Ministers*, ed. Michelle Grattan (Sydney: New Holland Publishers (Australia), 2013), 390-393.

⁴ David Goldsworthy, “Introduction,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy, Volume 2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 7.

⁵ Discussions between Japanese Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi and Prime Minister Fraser in 1979 led to the first major conference on regional economic cooperation being held in Canberra. Surprisingly, the conference was not organised by government but by the then Chancellor of the Australian National University, John Crawford. The conference included participants from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the US as well as the five ASEAN countries; Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Representatives from South Korea and a delegation from the South Pacific island countries were also present. While concern existed amongst the ASEAN nations as to the need for a Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) the 1982 conference held in Bangkok resolved to support the initiative. Further conferences were held that would recognise the importance of Japan as a regional economic leader and encourage trade liberalisation. See Roderic Pitty, “Regional Economic Co-operation,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy, Volume 2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 13-17.

⁶ Robert Hawke, “Speech by the Australian Prime Minister Australia-Thai Chamber of Commerce Bangkok,” 22 November 1983, accessed 7 March 2019. <http://pmttranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-6272>

European community. The economic strength of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore also demonstrated the need to formulate a collective that would operate at an intergovernmental level within Asia free of any outside influence.⁷

As part of this policy direction, Prime Minister Hawke, Foreign Minister Bill Hayden and Trade Minister John Dawkins administered a number of domestic policy reforms centred on adjusting attitudes towards Asia with the goal of creating a more “internationally competitive export oriented culture.”⁸ These reforms included an ambitious plan to reduce tariffs by one third and open Australia to foreign investment. As part of establishing this venture capital market the government backed the creation of the Cairns Group, a conglomerate of fourteen agricultural exporters to support the more open trading of agricultural produce in the region.⁹ However, as Treasury Secretary John Stone observed, the single most important step in economic policy was the decision to float the Australian dollar in December 1983 which in effect integrated the national economy with the rest of the world for the first time.¹⁰ Although this left Australia exposed to a worsening economic crisis it also pressured the government to expedite links with the region for economic security.¹¹ Central to this was the consolidation of relations with China which had begun under Whitlam and continued with Fraser. While a legation had been established in Chungking in 1941 it was not until the recognition of China by Whitlam in December 1972 that Australia established an embassy in Peking.¹²

Seidler in Peking (1975-1981)

Negotiations for land to build an embassy compound in China began in 1975 after the existing leased building which had been built by the Chinese Communist Party as a

⁷ The OECD attempted to open dialogue with the newly industrialised economies to draw them away from formulating an Asian OECD. See Pitty, “Regional Economic Co-operation,” in *Facing North*, Volume 2, 20.

⁸ Stuart Harris, “The Merger of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Departments Revisited,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 2 (2002): 224.

⁹ A crisis in world agricultural trade had been building for several years due to the Trans-Atlantic trade war and the subsidised and restrictive market access policies of major industrialised nations. Prime Minister Hawke described the member nations of the group as “innocent victims.” See Bob Hawke, *The Hawke Memoirs* (Port Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1994), 422.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹¹ Pitty, “Regional Economic Co-operation,” in *Facing North*, Volume 2, 18.

¹² Australia initially established a legation in 1941 in Chungking before it was moved to Nanking in 1946. Representation was withdrawn in 1949 after the Communist victory over the Nationalist Kuomintang and the subsequent establishment of the People's Republic of China. In 1966 Prime Minister Harold Holt would open an embassy in Taipei in recognition of the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan. This was closed after Whitlam recognised the People's Republic of China in 1972.

combined chancery and residential block became overcrowded forcing the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB) to build temporary pre-fabricated offices in the garden (Figure 7.1).¹³

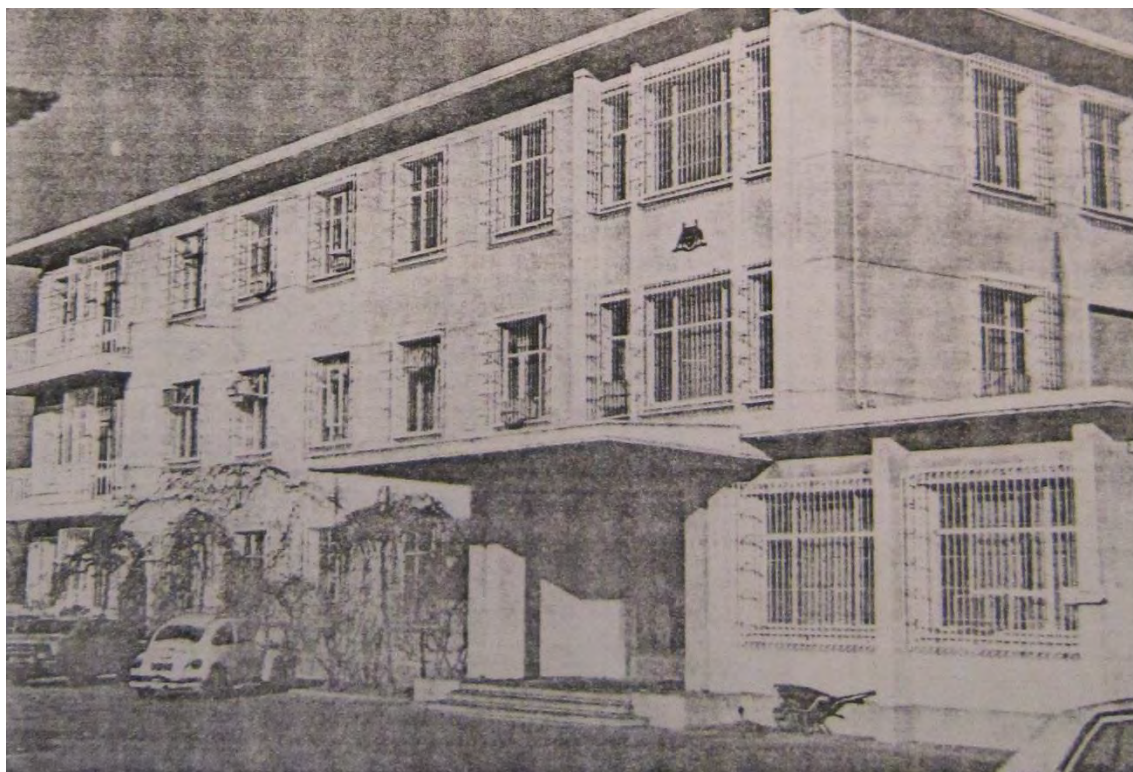


Figure 7.1. Australian Chancery, Beijing, 1973, as designed and constructed by the Communist Party of China.

After the capacity of these offices had again been exceeded the OPB proposed that studies be undertaken to determine the size of the block needed to house a new embassy complex which would contain a chancery, Head of Mission (HOM) residence, recreational facilities and residential accommodation.¹⁴ At the suggestion of Prime Minister Whitlam, Harry Seidler was sent to China in June 1975 to undertake site layout sketches, preliminary design concepts and indicative perspectives to establish the size

¹³ In anticipation of establishing diplomatic relations the Chinese developed several buildings to be leased to nations as chanceries. Clive Wade from the Commonwealth Department of Works (CDW) inspected the two-storey building that was offered to Australia in April 1973 and commented it was well designed and of a high standard of construction and finish. The building had a central reception area, one wing for use as the ambassador's residence and a second wing for use as an administration block. The embassy was manned by fifteen Australian-based staff at the time. See Commonwealth Department of Works, "Newsletter from the Director General (Mr A. S. Reiher)," no. 59 (April 1973), 2.

¹⁴ Other options that were analysed by the OPB included purchasing and redeveloping the existing embassy property, leasing a larger premises or continuing to operate the existing building and developing an additional site.

of the buildings that would be required to house Australia's diplomatic efforts in a country that was increasingly becoming more significant to Australia's trade and foreign policy objectives.¹⁵ It was hoped that by commissioning Seidler to undertake these studies that the Australian government's request to the Chinese for a 15,000 square metre block of land would be seen as genuine. The use of a reputable architect such as Seidler was a considered political manoeuvre and as noted by the Australian Ambassador, Stephen FitzGerald, generated a positive response amongst the Chinese officials.¹⁶

In undertaking the study of the site Seidler concluded that a block size of 15,000 square metres was needed to build the complex. The Chinese however were only willing to offer a block of 10,000 square metres commenting that prime agricultural land was being lost in the deal. In response the Australians noted that the Canadians and West German compounds had been given 12,000 square metres. In negotiating their position the Chinese authorities demanded a 16,000-square metre block in Yarralumla in exchange for Australia's requirements in Peking.¹⁷ Seidler wrote to the OPB in June 1976:

It is evident that unless some action takes place soon, the whole matter will be forgotten. To me, this seems a pity because the detailed local information I gathered is still fresh in my mind and should be turned to use in the way of an initial building design.¹⁸

He continued, conceding that if the Chinese were unwilling to provide a larger block he could design the compound on a 10,000-square metre site.¹⁹ Although these comments were made in good faith the Director of the Overseas Property Bureau, Malcolm Cowie, was wary of Seidler believing that he was trying to gain the commission for the project:

I think we need to be a little circumspect in our dealings with Seidler. I have the highest opinion of him as an architect – his performance for the Paris

¹⁵ National Archives of Australia: Australian Embassy, Peoples Republic of China [Peking/Beijing], A10028, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (first uniform post system) (Peking/Beijing); 515/17/1 Part 1, Facilities and Services-Premises: Proposed New Chancery Acquisition of Land, 1974-1981; letter from M. Cowie Director Overseas Property Bureau to Australian Embassy Peking, "Land for New Embassy – Peking," 2 December 1975.

¹⁶ NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, letter from R. Gardiner First Secretary Consul and Admin Australian Embassy Peking to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Land for New Embassy – Peking," 19 December 1975.

¹⁷ NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, "Chancery Accommodation and Building Programme."

¹⁸ NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, letter from Harry Seidler to Stephen FitzGerald Ambassador Australian Embassy Peking, "New Australian Embassy-Peking,"

¹⁹ Ibid.

Chancery has in my opinion been brilliant. But we must avoid any suggestion that we are in any way committed to him for the Peking Chancery.²⁰

Cowie wrote to FitzGerald to reinforce that Seidler had only been commissioned for preliminary design studies and that another architect would be commissioned to actually design the building.²¹ In justifying this comment Cowie noted that it was general government policy to share the commissions around as a number of eminent architectural firms “would love to have one.”²² Because of a lack of funds and the difficulties in obtaining a site the development of a preliminary design was cancelled.

DHC in Beijing (1981–1987)²³

Over the next four-years negotiations would continue with the Overseas Works Bureau (OWB) completing a building area study in April 1980 which recommended that nothing less than 13,000 square metres be accepted as Australian staffing levels had doubled since the earlier investigation.²⁴ Australia had led the way in strengthening ties with China through the signing of a cultural agreement in 1974, a family union agreement in 1976 and creating the Australia-China Council in 1978. There had also been an increase in high level delegations from both countries which saw Prime Minister Fraser visit China in 1976 and Vice Premier Li Xiannian visit Australia in May 1980. The Australian government recognised the visit of the Chinese Vice Premier as an opportunity to accelerate the negotiations for a site in an environment that David Goldsworthy described as a “China Bubble.”²⁵ Acting Foreign Minister, Michael MacKellar, met with Xiannian to discuss the potential for the exchange of land based on both countries needing to expand their existing embassies to facilitate the broadening range of bi-lateral

²⁰ NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, letter from M. Cowie Director Overseas Property Bureau to S. FitzGerald Ambassador Australian Embassy Peking, 22 July 1975.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Peking became known as Beijing after 1979 when the Pinyin method of conveying Mandarin in the Roman alphabet was adopted as a world standard. It continued to be referred to as Peking in government correspondence until the mid-1980s.

²⁴ This was partially due to Australian exports to China increasing eight-fold from \$97 million in 1973 to \$817 million in 1982. For a copy of the study refer to NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, report from the Overseas Works Branch Department of Housing and Construction, “Peking Chancery Complex Building Area Study,” April 1980.

²⁵ Goldsworthy suggests that the 1980s saw a romanticised view of China emerge amongst politicians, business people and the media which influenced the attitudes and policies of the government. This was contrary to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) assessment which stated that the relationship would remain “limited and vulnerable” unless significant efforts were made to broaden it. See David Goldsworthy, “Regional Relations,” in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy, Volume 2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 141.

relations.²⁶ While a consensus was not reached it did lead to a draft agreement being developed in March 1981 that offered Australia a block of 12,000 square metres in the San Li Tun diplomatic precinct in Dong Zhi Men Wai next to the proposed Canadian embassy with an option to retain and redevelop the existing chancery site of 6,000 square metres.²⁷ The site offered was only a short distance from the existing chancery and faced Tung Chih Men Wai ta Chieh, the future tree lined boulevard that led to the city centre (Figure 7.2).

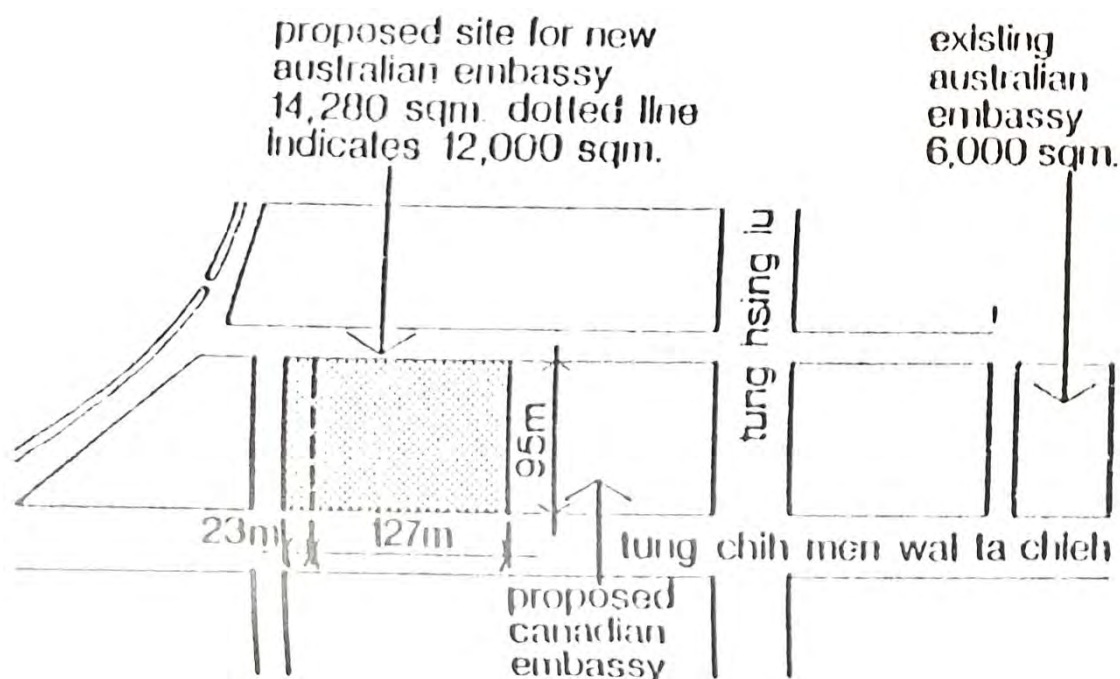


Figure 7.2. Australian Embassy site, Beijing, location plan, 1981.

In September 1981 project architect, Richard Johnson, from the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction (DHC), undertook a number of planning studies related to the various site options that were available to the Australian government.²⁸ These options included: (1) securing and developing the larger 14,280 square metre site

²⁶ NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, extract from the record of conversation between Acting Foreign Minister, Michael MacKellar, and the Chinese Vice Premier, Li Xiannian, which took place on 7 May 1980, "Chancery Accommodation Peking," 6 June 1980.

²⁷ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," in *17th Report of 1984*, volume 1984/176 (Canberra: The Commonwealth Government Printer, 1984), 6.

²⁸ Johnson would begin working with DCM as a director in 1985 and would be part of the team responsible for the Beijing and Tokyo projects. The Beijing team consisted of Tony Fabro, John Denton, Barrie Marshall, Bill Corker, Bob Nation and Adrian Pilton.

only, (2) retaining the existing 6,000 square metre site and developing the larger 14,280 square metre site as well, (3) accepting the 12,000 square metre site offered plus developing a different 6,000 square metre site in a diplomatic precinct a few kilometres away and (4) accepting the 12,000 square metre site offered plus retaining the existing 6,000 square metre site. The comprehensive study focused on providing a clear understanding of the potential and limitations of the sites in satisfying the brief requirements and took into account the planning restrictions and site characteristics. In analysing the local context Johnson established a number of clear planning principles that could be uniformly applied to each site option. These principles responded directly to the climatic conditions of Beijing by considering orientation, wind direction as well as functional aspects of living in a compound such as privacy, noise and views.²⁹

In the study Johnson determined that the best alignment for any future buildings was on an east-west axis as this took advantage of the length of the sites and maximised the usable area. By conforming to this arrangement any residential accommodation would be oriented north-south which was preferred as it maximised solar penetration and provided protection from the wind and dust.³⁰ In zoning the complex Johnson advised that a minimum separation of twenty metres should be planned between buildings of differing functions so privacy could be maintained and internal views achieved by creating landscaped courtyards.³¹ After a concept to develop the residential accommodation as an eight-level apartment complex was rejected, Johnson proposed that a maximum building height of three levels be imposed to reduce maintenance and prevent overlooking. A low-level proposal was also deemed preferable as it would rely on simple construction methods and materials which were readily accessible and also met the Chinese authorities' seismic regulations.

In concluding, Johnson recommended that the Australian government secure the largest site possible and avoid spreading accommodation over two sites for security and management reasons.³² Although a scheme could be developed on a smaller site it would mean a reduction in the number of residential units provided and a significant increase in building density.³³ With Chinese officials visiting Canberra and requesting

²⁹ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 178.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

³² Johnson also calculated the total area needed to accommodate all the brief requirements. It was determined that the amount of residential accommodation dictated the size of the site needed. If accommodation was provided in a three-storey terrace configuration a site of 18,000 square metres would be needed. Alternatively if a four-storey layout was used a site area of 16,200 square metres was needed. See *Ibid.*, 189-193.

³³ *Ibid.*, 195.

an increase in the block size allocated to them in Yarralumla, Australia held the upper hand in the negotiation process. The final Land Exchange Agreement was signed in August 1982 after the Chinese agreed to extend the eastern boundary of the original 12,000 square metre block bringing the area of the site to 14,648 square metres (Figure 7.3).³⁴ This was done on an understanding that the Chinese government would receive a 21,628-square metre block to construct their embassy in Yarralumla.³⁵



Figure 7.3. Australian Embassy site, Beijing, 1987, south-west view after being cleared of workers' housing.

The Beijing Embassy complex was given second priority by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) in the submission to cabinet for overseas works proposals behind the development of a chancery and residential complex in Riyadh. Cabinet approved the provision of funding in the 1981-1982 budget for design fees to enable the preparation of preliminary sketch plans and estimates to be formulated to a point where a proposal could be presented to the Public Works Committee (PWC).³⁶ Because Beijing

³⁴ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," in *17th Report of 1984*, volume 1984/176 (Canberra: The Commonwealth Government Printer, 1984), 15.

³⁵ The news that a block had been allocated to the Chinese in Yarralumla generated some concern amongst Australia's Commonwealth partners as it was located directly behind the New Zealand, British and Canadian High Commissions. See NAA: A10028, 515/17/1 Part 1, telegram from T. Goggin to the Australian High Commissioner in Ottawa, London, Wellington, Peking, "Land Allocation Canberra," 24 October 1980.

³⁶ Included in the list of major proposals behind Riyadh and Beijing was an extension to the chancery and provision of recreation facilities in Jakarta, the development of a chancery in Lagos, reinstating plans to develop a chancery and HOM residence in Brasilia and the

was considered as one of the hardest places to live due to harsh climatic conditions and a lack of facilities, a high level of importance was given to the needs of staff in writing the brief.³⁷ Consultations were carried out with the Foreign Affairs Association, Foreign Affairs Women's Association and the Australian Development Assistance Bureau. In addition, a consultant sociologist was commissioned to undertake an assessment of the religious, legal and cultural aspects of China and the relationship these had to the 'normal' expectations of both family and single lifestyles of Australians.³⁸

The architectural practice of Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) was appointed to document and supervise construction in January 1982. From the mid-1970s DCM had built up expertise in the master planning of urban projects for the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) in Canberra with the design of multiunit complexes such as Phillip Section 51 Housing (1974) and urban spaces such as Commonwealth Park (1976-1984) and the later Melbourne City Square (1976-1980). As noted by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, these early projects established an urban planning ethos within the practice.³⁹ As a result, DCM progressively moved towards approaching the city as a "continuous cultural project" where order could be established through an interpretation of a site's context, both future and past.⁴⁰ This planning method would continue into the Beijing project where the interpretation of the Chinese city and the planning principles established by Johnson would direct the placement of buildings within the complex.

A project team consisting of members from DAS, the Department of Transport and Construction and DCM visited Beijing to meet Chinese officials and obtain basic design and construction information with the goal of developing a preliminary design.⁴¹ The

construction of a chancery in Islamabad. Cabinet only approved funding to progress the designs of Riyadh and Beijing. Works under two million dollars that were approved included the development of twelve apartments and recreation facilities in Port Moresby, the provision of 25 units and recreation facilities in Bangkok and the construction of a chancery and HOM residence in Honiara. See National Archives of Australia: Cabinet Office, A12909, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Fraser Ministries-Cabinet Submissions (With Decisions); 4817, Submission No 4817-Overseas Property Works Proposals 1981-1982-Related to Decision No 15797 (B), 1981-1981; for Cabinet, "Overseas Property Works Proposals 1981-1982," Appendix 2 to Attachment C, "Proposed Peking Complex."

³⁷ Expatriates at the time suffered from extreme cultural isolation. Beijing had no English theatres, limited educational, sporting and medical facilities and only a small number of restaurants that foreigners could attend. Foreigners were housed in apartment complexes that were under surveillance and separated from the local population. See NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, "Briefing Paper."

³⁸ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 16.

³⁹ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall: Rule Playing and the Ratbag Element* (Boston: Birkhauser, 2000), 15.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The Department of Transport and Construction was formed in May 1982 and replaced the Department of Housing and Construction II. It would operate until June 1983 before it was replaced by the Department of Housing and Construction III.

project team was briefed on the functional requirements and life at the embassy by Ambassador Hugh Dunn in Canberra, who informed them that they would experience the harsh conditions of a Beijing winter first hand.⁴² Dunn also discussed the impression the building should convey through its design:

It should be a prestige building not only to create a suitable impression with the Chinese and other countries but also to sustain the morale of A-based staff serving here. It should not be too “grand” in design, but its visual effect is of primary importance.⁴³

On his return Johnson presented a number of preliminary planning options that had been developed in consultation with DCM to a new steering committee. The committee had been formed in an effort to reduce the correspondence between departments from an early stage and was tasked with the overall management of the preliminary stages of the project. The committee comprised of high level representatives from DAS, Transport and Construction, DFA, Department of Trade and Resources, Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Finance and the Public Service Board (PSB).⁴⁴ In the presentation Johnson outlined how the planning process had taken into consideration the opinions and recommendations of various associations and the sociologist as well as the climatic conditions and local building practices to provide a chancery, HOM residence, 35 residential units and recreational facilities within a walled complex.⁴⁵

The preferred schematic plan that was presented divided the site into three zones; official, residential and recreational, and introduced a north-south access that aligned the chancery entrance to the street. Although some concern was expressed about the distance between the two points it was noted by Johnson that the set back from the street created an imposing approach which was unlike any other embassy in China.⁴⁶ When

⁴² National Archives of Australia: Australian Embassy, Peoples Republic of China [Peking/Beijing], A10028, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (first uniform post system) (Peking/Beijing); 515/17/4 Part 1, New Chancery Site-Brief for Consultants (including correspondence and comments), 1981-1982; minutes of the meeting on the Peking Chancery project held in the conference room, second floor, West Block and commencing at 10:30am, “Brief by the Ambassador,” 3 February 1982.

⁴³ National Archives of Australia: Australian Embassy, Peoples Republic of China [Peking/Beijing], A10028, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (first uniform post system) (Peking/Beijing); 515/17/4 Part 3, New Chancery Site-Brief for Consultants (including correspondence and comments), 1982-1983; “New Embassy Complex.”

⁴⁴ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, report by J. Wollaston Special Consultant, “Peking 5.12.82-9.12.82,” 26 April 1983.

⁴⁵ The brief was based on the previous building area study undertaken by the OWB in April 1980 and was supplemented by Johnson’s design report.

⁴⁶ In order to overcome the distance the original position of the guard box was moved closer to the chancery entrance creating a forecourt that linked the complex to the street. NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 1, Steering Committee minute of meeting, “Peking Project,” 6 April 1982.

questioned on the materials that were to be used it was envisaged that DCM would adhere to economic, energy and security considerations in making the selection while ensuring that the exterior and interior were functional, practical and attractive.⁴⁷

Following the steering committee's approval of the preliminary plans and recommendation that they be developed to a presentation standard for the PWC hearing, the project team returned to Beijing in July. This was seen as a necessary step in obtaining approval in principle from the Chinese authorities and to finalise the cost of the project which had increased from an initial estimation of twelve million dollars to \$28 million.⁴⁸ In anticipation of the Australian delegation's arrival the Chinese prepared a draft management agreement which outlined the need for the Beijing Architectural Design Institute (BADI) to redraw the plans so that they could be understood by the labor force (Construction Unit Brigade no. 5) assigned by the Chinese Capital Construction Department.⁴⁹ Because of this and the perceived difficulties of constructing in China the estimated cost of the project rose to \$34 million. In order to reduce costs so an acceptable proposal could be made to Cabinet for funding, John Wollaston as Special Consultant on Commonwealth Property, was sent to Beijing in December to undertake an assessment of the preliminary design.⁵⁰

Central to this investigation was an assessment of the number of residential units that should be provided for Australian staff within the new complex. Before leaving Wollaston was instructed to undertake a general property overview and inspect a number of residential apartments provided to the foreign community by the Chinese government. Wollaston was also tasked with examining the quality of trades, materials and furniture

⁴⁷ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 1, "Peking Client Brief," revised 1 December 1982.

⁴⁸ The increase in cost was due to the initial estimate being undertaken without any onsite design information as well as presupposing that the scheme would be developed in accordance with an earlier design concept that retained the existing chancery for accommodation. The increase can also be attributed to the need to import a large quantity of materials and equipment from outside China. See NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, report by J. Wollaston Special Consultant, "Peking 5.12.82-9.12.82."

⁴⁹ There was concern as to the accuracy of the translation between the Australian and Chinese drawings and the need for this to occur. It was noted that this was standard practice in China and was done by the Chinese to further their technological understanding. In the PWC hearing it was commented that "I hope this is not to bug the place." See Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 75.

⁵⁰ It was noted that the extent of the project would need to be "severely pruned" to meet the requirements of Cabinet. See NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, letter from the Overseas Property Office to the Secretary Department of Transport and Construction, "Proposed Peking Chancery Complex-Cost Estimate," 31 December 1982.

in consultation with other expatriate contractors to determine the level of Australian supervision that would be required.⁵¹

Although Wollaston conceded that the standard of apartments provided was low and lacked privacy he felt that housing staff in a compound environment would not improve the situation.⁵² He felt this was offset by the fact that rent was cheap and that the Chinese were making an effort in improving the apartments provided.⁵³ In presenting his report Wollaston recommended that a minimum number of apartments be built as the existing arrangement adequately met the needs of Australian-based staff.⁵⁴ While removing the staff accommodation from the complex was investigated the cost saving was only seen as minimal when existing annual rent and maintenance costs were included.⁵⁵ Of more concern was the embarrassment that would be felt in informing the Chinese of the reduction in accommodation when the land provided had been done so on the understanding that the entire block would be utilised. As noted by Ambassador Dunn:

It would be highly embarrassing and perhaps unacceptable to the Chinese if we were not to build a reasonable number of residences on the site. I suppose one could argue that we could give part of the site back to the Chinese but we negotiated very firmly with the Chinese to achieve this block of land, and as it is part of a bilateral arrangement, and is something of considerable value to the Commonwealth of Australia, it seems to be an undesirable course.⁵⁶

In a separate briefing paper Dunn continued to further his argument politically by commenting on the symbolic importance of a Labor government constructing the new chancery as it had been Labor who had played a foundational role in establishing

⁵¹ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, report by J. Wollaston Special Consultant, "Peking 5.12.82-9.12.82."

⁵² This mimicked an earlier conclusion that was drawn by journalist John Fraser in his book *The Chinese: A Portrait of A People* in which he comments on the "unwanted isolation of the new foreigners' ghettos." See John Fraser, *The Chinese: A Portrait of A People* (Toronto: Collins, 1980), 66.

⁵³ The rental cost of residential and office accommodation over the four-year period from July 1980 to June 1984 was \$1.18 million with the cost of maintenance being \$498,000. See Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 4. For Wollaston's comments refer to NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, report by J. Wollaston Special Consultant, "Peking 5.12.82-9.12.82."

⁵⁴ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, letter from J. Clark Acting First Assistant Secretary Property Operations Department of Administrative Services to H. Dunn Ambassador Australian Embassy Beijing, 5 January 1983.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, letter from the First Secretary Australian Embassy Beijing to J. Clark Acting First Assistant Secretary Property Operations Department of Administrative Services, 26 January 1983.

relations with China.⁵⁷ While it is not clear if this resulted in expediting the project, Prime Minister Hawke announced in his address to Premier Zhao Ziyang in February 1984 the decision to proceed:

As a further reflection of the growth in Australia/China relations, I am pleased to announce tonight that we are to establish a consulate-general in Shanghai and to proceed with the planning of a new Australian Chancery in Peking.⁵⁸

Presenting the Concept

A further interdepartmental committee was formed to present the proposal to the PWC. In submitting evidence both the DFA and the Overseas Property Office (OPO) argued that the conditions of the existing chancery were well below a standard acceptable in Australia and that the need to build was justified in meeting the ever increasing demands of administering bi-lateral relations with China.⁵⁹ The masterplan of the complex drew on the earlier analysis and planning principles extracted by Johnson and reflected DCM's interest in the rules of spatial organisation and the importance of place making.⁶⁰ The plan axially grouped a sequence of low rise buildings around a series of open landscaped courtyards.⁶¹ By overlaying a system of planning rules related to the hierarchy of function the zones of activity on the site could be clearly defined (Figure 7.4).

⁵⁷ NAA: A10028, 515/17/4 Part 3, Ambassadors Brief, "New Chancery Project."

⁵⁸ Robert Hawke, *Prime Minister's Speech at the Return Banquet for Premier Zhao Ziyang at the Jianluo Hotel*, 10 February 1984, 3, accessed 22 March 2019, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-6320>.

⁵⁹ It was revealed that China viewed Australia as an independent, industrialised and influential country within the region. This had also been discussed in a meeting held by the Overseas Property Committee (OPC) into the consequences of not proceeding with the construction of a complex in China. In the meeting it was noted that "the Chinese place considerable emphasis on appearance and it is considered that our continuing to occupy a cramped inferior office could well be detrimental to Australia's interests by creating the impression that we place less than the desired importance on furthering relations." As a counter argument, it should be noted that the Chinese had recently deferred their chancery development in Canberra. For notes on the meeting see National Archives of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Central Office, A10028, Correspondence Files, Multiple Number Series (first uniform post system) (Peking/Beijing); 515/17/8 Part 2, New Chancery Project-Liaison with DSB on behalf of OPO (preparatory arrangements), 1987-1987; proposed information paper, "Overseas Property Committee on the consequences of not proceeding with the construction of a chancery complex in Peking," 1984. 7450. For the argument presented to the PWC see Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 4.

⁶⁰ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 17.

⁶¹ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 28.

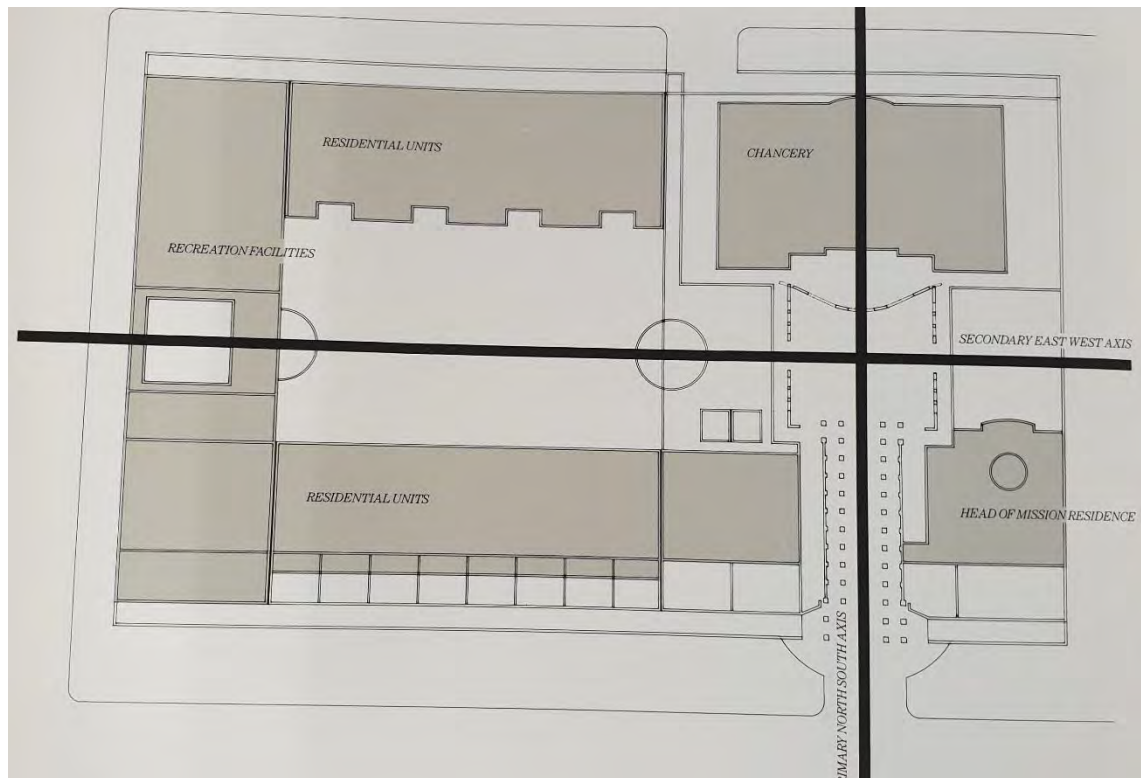


Figure 7.4. DHC, Australian Embassy complex, Beijing, schematic drawing showing axial arrangement, 1985.

Johnson argued that this had two benefits as it presented a unified and distinctive impression of the Australian embassy by creating a procession from formal to informal and from official to private but also reduced overlooking and noise nuisance from one area to another.

Within the complex the three-storey chancery was located at the rear on the northern boundary in the official zone which also included the HOM residence and two senior staff apartments. The zone was defined by a north-south axis which linked the entrance of the complex to the chancery through a forecourt area emulating the Chinese tradition of locating honorific buildings to the north and symmetrically locating the entrance to the south.⁶² This also allowed the HOM residence to be discreetly located in the formal zone while simultaneously grounding the residential axis that ran from east to west. By aligning the residential component along the east-west axis and positioning it at the edges of the complex all the units were able to have south facing courtyards which maximised solar gain and increased privacy. The two rows of accommodation were separated by an open landscaped courtyard that became the central focus of the zone and linked it to the recreation area located on the western boundary which consisted of

⁶² Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 17.

a pool, tennis court, squash court, sauna, playground and barbeque area (Figure 7.5).⁶³ The use of courtyards to mitigate climatic conditions was devised from Johnson's earlier assessment of the site, however can also be read as a reference to the Chinese tradition of building courtyard houses. The axial layout of the complex and the planning rules that were established show DCM's influence and their interpretation of Beijing's urban pattern of streets (or hutongs).⁶⁴

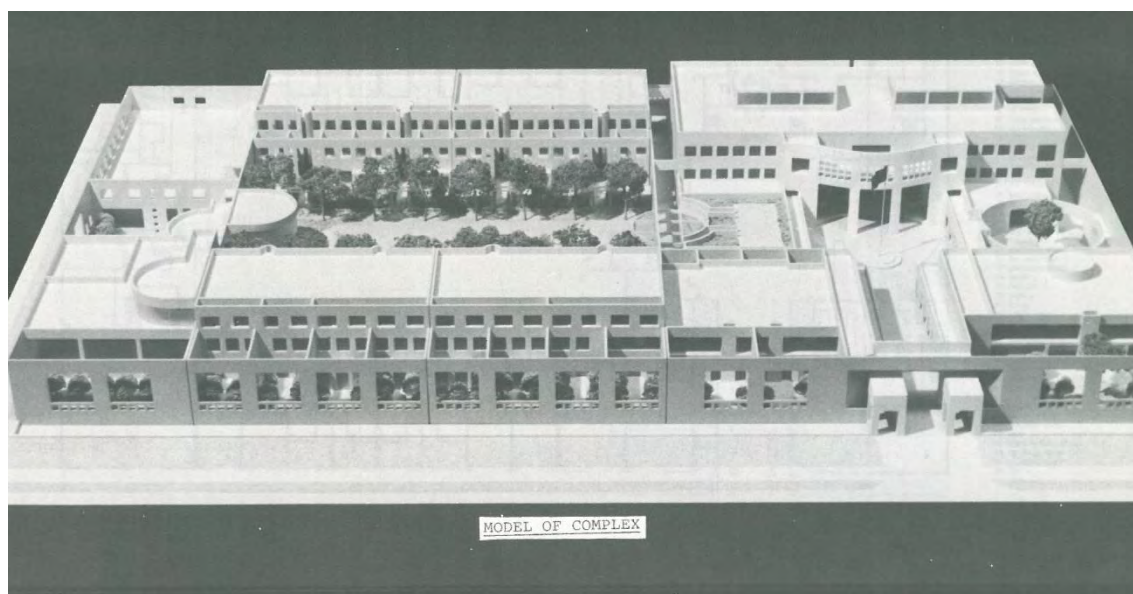


Figure 7.5. DHC, Australian Embassy complex, Beijing, 1984, model as presented to PWC.

In making a recommendation to Cabinet for funding approval of \$33.8 million the chairman of the PWC, Senator Dominic Foreman, concluded that there was a need for a new embassy complex in Beijing and that the site and design of the complex was satisfactory in meeting those needs.⁶⁵ Foreman further recommended that action should be taken immediately to provide an additional floor to the chancery for future expansion and that the use of an Australian construction management company should be considered for the project.⁶⁶ In presenting the report it was also made clear that the committee's decision process had been hampered by its inability to inspect the proposed site or the existing accommodation.⁶⁷ This comment would later become a point of

⁶³ John Denton is quoted as saying that the termination of this axis at the BBQ area is a tongue-in-cheek observation of the "Australian way of life." See Daniel Elsea, "Australian Embassy, Beijing," *Architecture Australia* 94, no. 4 (July/August 2005): 38.

⁶⁴ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 17.

⁶⁵ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Construction of Australian Embassy Complex at Beijing, People's Republic of China," 15.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

contention with DAS and be constantly referred to in future submissions for works overseas.⁶⁸

By August 1986 the estimated cost of construction had increased significantly from the \$33.8 million requested to \$62.5 million. This was due to the fluctuation of the Australian dollar against the US dollar and the rise of construction costs in China.⁶⁹ To keep the Prime Minister and the Treasury informed the Minister for DAS, Thomas Uren, wrote that the department had implemented strict cost management controls and were continually monitoring the economies of the development, stating:

The complex is a major development, is in response to conditions existing in China, and in terms of projection of our national image is comparable with Australian embassies constructed in Bangkok, Paris, Washington and Singapore during the 70s and should be considered in that context.⁷⁰

In an attachment to the letter a number of options were presented that outlined whether the project should be reduced in scale, cancelled, deferred or constructed in stages.⁷¹ While these options were considered the argument for proceeding with the project outweighed the increasing costs. As the Director of DHC, Richard Roennfeldt concluded:

Because of the advanced stage of the project and the extent of commitments and contracts now in place, any significant change to the scope of work will

⁶⁸ A total of \$272 million dollars was spent on overseas projects between 1983 and 1999. Out of the fourteen projects the PWC approved not one site was inspected by the committee. This would change in 2014 when a PWC delegation was formed to investigate the work undertaken on the construction of a new embassy in Jakarta and Bangkok as part of a policy of post implementation reporting introduced in 2010. For the initial PWC argument see Australian Parliament Standing Committee on Public Works, 62nd General Report of The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (Victoria: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1999), 8.

⁶⁹ It was calculated that a one cent drop against the US dollar saw the cost of the project increase by \$500,000. Because of this the estimated cost of construction steadily increased from \$48 million in March 1986 to \$57.7 million in July 1986. NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, ministerial submission from F. Murray First Assistant Secretary Corporate Management Division Department of Foreign Affairs, "New Chancery-Beijing."

⁷⁰ NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, letter from T. Uren Minister Department of Administrative Services to the Prime Minister."

⁷¹ It was determined that deferring the project by six months would cost the government \$3.32 million. If the project was cancelled a seven million dollar penalty would be incurred due to a contract already being let for one aspect of the project. While the DHC investigated the possibility of staging the project in two parts they also concluded that due to the cost of redesigning and redocumentation this was not a feasible option. See NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, letter from B. Franklin Acting Assistant Secretary Overseas Estate Branch Overseas Property Office to the Minister Department of Administrative Services, "Beijing Embassy Project-Situation Report," September 1986.

produce disproportionately high cost penalties compared with the total cost of the present complete scheme.⁷²

It was also noted by the OPO that proceeding with the complex as planned would ensure maximum cooperation from the Chinese because it would allow them to increase their understanding of modern building practices and train professional personal for future government projects.⁷³ With the building being slated for completion in June 1989 a sod turning ceremony was held on the 29th May 1987.⁷⁴ In the presence of Vice Mayor Zhang Beifa, the new Australian Ambassador, Ross Garnaut, outlined the significance of the relationship that had developed between Australia and the Chinese authorities in the construction of what promised to be a “beautiful building” which had been “specifically designed to symbolise a joint Australian-Chinese relationship.”⁷⁵

A Matter of Urgency

With the Beijing complex underway investigations into the redevelopment of the chancery in Tokyo were concluding. As part of this a task force had been formed to evaluate options in Tokyo including the possibility of consolidating the Commonwealth’s property holdings to fund a new complex.⁷⁶ While a number of architectural studies had been undertaken since 1972, including a scheme to develop a separate cultural centre, these had been dismissed.⁷⁷ With the chancery being deemed as inadequate to meet the Hawke government’s commitments in Asia it was proposed that a new chancery,

⁷² NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, letter from R. Roennfeldt Director Housing and Construction to the Secretary Department of Local Government and Administrative Services, “Beijing-New Embassy Project Options for Reduced Scope of Work and Staged Construction,” 15 September 1986.

⁷³ NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, letter from B. Franklin, “Beijing Embassy Project-Situation Report.”

⁷⁴ The original start date for the project was March 1987 however due to a delay in receiving the interpreted drawings from BADI and an issue with the adjoining Canadian embassy wall it was delayed three months to May 1987.

⁷⁵ NAA: A10028, 515/17/8 Part 2, address by Ambassador, “New Chancery Project.”

⁷⁶ The task force had members from DAS, OPO, Department of Finance (DoF), DCM and the Attorney General’s Department. See Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Services,” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1987-1988* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988), 20.

⁷⁷ An interdepartmental working party visited Tokyo in October 1972. The party conducted investigations into the possibility of constructing an Information/Cultural Centre in the heart of Tokyo. The Information and Cultural Relations Branch (IRC) and Department of Trade proposed that the centre would contain a theatre, display area, language teaching facilities, a library and meeting spaces. The proposal for an information centre was dismissed by the working party due to cost and security concerns. The working party recommended that all development should occur on the existing chancery site. An extension to the existing chancery was completed in February 1973 however further development of the site would cease due to the cut backs introduced under the Fraser government as discussed in the previous chapter.

HOM residence, 43 staff apartments and recreation facilities be constructed in a complex as was being done in Beijing. It was argued that this was the most efficient use of the site as it would consolidate all the government functions into one building while also returning a significant profit to government revenue. To expedite the project Uren proposed to Parliament that the development proceed without it being referred to the PWC citing urgency as grounds for exemption.⁷⁸ The Labor government believed that an element of urgency existed in that there were substantial cost savings and financial gain to be achieved from the proposed development.⁷⁹ The government was paying four million dollars in rental costs for accommodation and additional office space in Tokyo and any delays in finalising the project would reduce these savings considerably.⁸⁰ Although it was noted by Uren that the PWC had no objection to an exemption from the Act on the grounds of urgency, questions were raised in Parliament as to the motivation of the Hawke government in selling such a valuable asset.⁸¹ While being of monetary value to the government the site was also of heritage value to the Japanese as it included a traditional Japanese garden and moon viewing hill from the Edo period, believed to have been designed by Seitaro Aoki. The National Party opposed the measure on the basis of heritage noting that the Japanese garden was of significant value to the Japanese community and contributed a “great prestige” to the existing embassy.⁸² The Liberal Opposition argued against the proposal as it “shortened the procedures of Parliament” by circumventing the PWC and ultimately demonstrated the “government’s desperate need of money,” a comment that reflected the state of Australia’s weakening economy.⁸³

⁷⁸ Section 18 (8) (b) of the 1969 Public Works Committee Act states that a project can be exempt from review by the committee if “the House of Representatives resolved that, by reason of the urgent nature of the work, it is expedient that it be carried out without having been referred to the Committee.” See Attorney-General’s Department, *Public Works Committee Act 1969 Act No. 92 of 1969 as amended* (Canberra: Office of Legislative Drafting and Publishing, 9 November 2006), 15.

⁷⁹ It was in the interest of the government that the funds from the disposal of the land be received prior to the end of the 1987-1988 financial year so that they could be used under the new arrangement of Sell/Buy/Construct to fund the new project.

⁸⁰ Rationalisation and Redevelopment of Property Holdings in Tokyo Approval of Work: Public Works Committee Act, 29 May 1987, in *Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates: House of Representatives Official Hansard*, No. 155.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² The Haschisuka Mansion (HOM residence), CDW-designed chancery and three senior staff houses were demolished to make way for the new complex. It was determined that the Haschisuka Mansion’s concrete structure had deteriorated significantly since it was built. While the building was recognised as having some historic value it was not considered important enough to gain statutory protection. The garden however was preserved with particular attention given to the moon viewing hill. *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

With the international trading environment deteriorating and effecting the growth of other major economies a protectionist attitude towards trade began to emerge in the US and Europe. This not only effected the price of rural and energy based resources, which declined sharply, it also saw the Australian dollar fall to an all-time record low against the US dollar significantly increasing foreign debt and affecting Australia's triple A sovereign rating issued by both Moody's and Standard & Poor.⁸⁴ While Prime Minister Hawke sought to reassure the public the Liberal party played on financial mismanagement and increasing unemployment as a means of increasing the popularity of the Opposition.⁸⁵ In an attempt to rectify the situation, the Treasurer, Paul Keating, argued for the introduction of a mini budget in May 1987 with the aim of saving the government four billion dollars through a combination of spending cuts, asset sales and increasing tax.⁸⁶

As part of Keating's cost saving measures one third of Australia's land holdings (6150 square metres) in Tokyo was sold along with sixteen apartments located on a separate site. As part of the negotiated package, the purchaser, the Mita Consortium of Tokyo and their joint venture contractor, Takanaka Hazama, agreed that they would construct the new complex as well as a temporary chancery in exchange for the sixteen apartments. The agreement netted the Australian government \$607 million, significantly bolstering government revenue.⁸⁷ Keating believed that the mini budget would restore faith in the government's ability to reduce debt and return Labor to power if an early election was called. Although Prime Minister Hawke was against the idea of an early election the launch of the mini budget was seen as a resounding success by business and the general public forcing Prime Minister Hawke to adapt and call an election in July 1987.⁸⁸

Three days after winning the election Prime Minister Hawke announced a number of major administrative changes that would remove duplication and increase efficiency, coordination and responsiveness in government. As part of this restructuring the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) would be merged with the Department of Trade into

⁸⁴ Jim Stokes, "Background to the 1986 and 1987 Cabinet Records," accessed 31 March 2019, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/cabinet/by-year/1986-87/essay.aspx>

⁸⁵ Leader of the Opposition John Howard, "The Australian Economy: 1986 in Retrospect, 1987 in Prospect," (address to Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Boulevard Hotel, Sydney, 8 December 1986).

⁸⁶ Jim Stokes, "Background to the 1986 and 1987 Cabinet records."

⁸⁷ Other disposals during 1987-1988 included the sale of the former HOM residence in Paris and properties in Accra, Mexico City, Dar es Salaam and Addis Ababa. These sales generated revenue of \$21.1 million. Some of these funds were reallocated to the design and construction of twelve secure apartments in Port Moresby as well as to the design and construction of a new chancery in Honiara. See Department of Administrative Services, "Overseas Property Services," in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1987-1988*, 21.

⁸⁸ Alan Ramsey, *A Matter of Opinion* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009), 14-20.

one ‘mega department’ known as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).⁸⁹ While the structuring and size of government departments had been discussed earlier by the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, the role of the DFA in the light of increasing trade and economic responsibilities had been investigated by Stuart Harris in the report entitled *Review of Australia’s Overseas Representation*.

Harris Review

Stuart Harris, the former Deputy Secretary of the Department of Trade (1972-1975) and Secretary of the DFA (1984-1987), was recruited to both examine the existing departmental arrangements and make recommendations in line with the government’s objectives in foreign policy. In the report Harris recognised that the growing liberalism and pluralism of Australian society as well as a sense of the nation’s worth in the region had led to the pursuit of an independent and self-reliant role in the world though economic deregulation and participation in international change.⁹⁰ For this to be effectively administered however there was a need to have widespread overseas representation of a high quality which could be readily supported by domestic institutions.⁹¹ Harris believed that the previous government’s focus of cutting expenditure to meet “numerical targets” had put at risk matters of national interest as the ability of the government to make informed choices had been reduced.⁹² In tabling this information Harris referred to the “thinning out” of Australian based staff overseas since 1975 from 1534 to 1361 while the number of missions had increased from 94 to 101.⁹³ This led Harris to conclude that any further attempt at cost cutting would result in a “sizable lowering of Australia’s sights in its international relations.”⁹⁴

Harris summarised that the pressure on overseas representation would continue to grow noting that without adequate representation Australia would become reliant on its allies

⁸⁹ This was part of a bureaucratic re-organisation devised by David Block and supported by Dawkins. The review saw the reduction in the number of government departments from 28 to 18. It also saw the Public Service Board abolished. As discussed by John Nethercote, it was the most significant change to the departmental machinery of government in Commonwealth history. See John Nethercote, “Departmental Machinery of Government since 1987,” Research Paper no. 24 1998-99 for Information and Research Services (Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library, 29 June 1999).

⁹⁰ Stuart Harris, *Review of Australia’s Overseas Representation*, (Canberra: Australian Government Printing Services, 1986), xiv.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, xix.

⁹³ The location of these missions reflected Australia’s continued interest in the region since 1975. Nine new missions were opened in the Asia-Pacific and the Middle East while four missions were closed in Europe. See *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxi.

for information which would be counterproductive to Australia's distinctive needs.⁹⁵ Interestingly, Harris recommended closer departmental ties between the DFA and the Department of Trade but stopped short of endorsing a merger believing such a restructure might limit policy debate. Although the merger was not driven by policy concern it led to the strengthening and increased prominence of trade objectives in diplomacy which, as noted by Australian academic Roderic Pitty, had already been elevated by the creation of the Cairns Group in August 1986.⁹⁶

The new department's resources were organised efficiently to support the operations of government in an increasingly intertwined and complex international trading environment which involved political, social and economic considerations.⁹⁷ The department was structured into three divisions with specific geographical foci to emphasise the links with the Western Pacific region, the Trans-Atlantic and the developing world. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Minister for Trade Negotiations were given the responsibility to advise government on a wide range of issues which included strategic and political security, treaties and trade agreements, bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade policy, international trade and commodity negotiation, international legal advice as well as advice on information and cultural programs run both overseas and at home.⁹⁸ At Australia's embassies staff were tasked with increasing their level of contact and representation with host governments and trade authorities to glean a greater understanding of local trade policies and economic issues.⁹⁹ As Prime Minister Hawke summarised, "Increasingly foreign policy is trade policy and trade policy is foreign policy."¹⁰⁰

Overseas Property Group

As part of the administrative reshuffle the management of the overseas property portfolio underwent further change with the OPO restructured into the Overseas Operations Division (OOD) before being reestablished in July 1987 as a separate sub program of

⁹⁵ Harris defined this as a need to both seek an understanding of our neighbours while also explaining our differing cultural values and social systems. *Ibid.*, xvi

⁹⁶ Pitty, "Regional Economic Co-operation," in *Facing North*, Volume 2, 18.

⁹⁷ These geographical divisions would undergo further restructuring in May 1988 to achieve more efficient coordination of foreign and trade policy. See "Machinery of Government Changes and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade," *Australian Foreign Affairs Record* 59, no. 6 (June 1988): 231.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ The launch of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) concept by Prime Minister Hawke in Seoul on the 31st of January 1989 has been touted as an example of the successful integration of trade and foreign policy. Bob Hawke, *The Hawke Memoirs*, 421.

DAS known as the Overseas Property Group (OPG).¹⁰¹ In its new form the OPG, like the earlier OPB, was only concerned with overseas property and no longer operated as part of an amalgamated domestic and overseas property division. Funding for the OPG was provided through the Appropriation and Supply Act which allowed the OPG to undertake medium and minor works as well as to acquire properties overseas.¹⁰² In addition to this, Sell/Buy/Construct (SBC), a non-budget programme, was introduced to give greater flexibility in financing projects overseas.¹⁰³ SBC was designed to maximise economic benefits by allowing funds to be raised for the purchasing or constructing of accommodation at one post by selling property at another.¹⁰⁴ This new scheme reflected a global approach to resource allocation and allowed the OPG to effectively carry out its task by providing a flexibility to the management of the property portfolio which had been lacking in the past.¹⁰⁵

As part of the OPG function property strategies for each post were devised with the DoF that took into account the exiting property holdings, economic and political factors at posts and the future direction most likely taken for each mission based on an understanding of the government's global priorities.¹⁰⁶ As had been done previously the OPC would continue to provide the OPG with advice however the day to day running of posts was delegated to DFAT under a common service arrangement. This allowed the

¹⁰¹ DFAT continued to propose that the function of the OPG be returned to the administration of the department. This was also supported in Harris' review of overseas representation. The overseas property function would be returned to DFAT in 2001 when the OPG was restructured into the Overseas Property Office II (OPO II).

¹⁰² A scheme to charge clients fees for the services provided by the OPG and rental costs associated with housing staff was dismissed after the DoF identified that cost recovery would be unlikely to generate any significant savings. For a discussion on cost recovery see National Archives of Australia: Cabinet Office, A11116, Hawke Ministries-Cabinet files, Single Number Series with 'CA' Prefix; CA3391 Part 1, Operations of the Overseas Property Group (OPG), 1989-1990; Cabinet Minute no. 14358, "Memorandum 7170 – Overseas Staff Housing – Costs and Benefits of Cost Recovery," 20 August 1990.

¹⁰³ Sell/Buy the predecessor of SBC was initially established in 1986 as a means of rationalising underutilised assets in the overseas estate by taking the proceeds from the sale of surplus properties to buy other premises at the same post in the same financial year. Australian National Audit Office, "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," 46.

¹⁰⁴ SBC was found to be an effective solution to the management of overseas property as it increased flexibility and reduced unwanted properties. Between 1989 and 1992 nineteen million dollars was appropriated from the sale of unwanted properties which were mainly residential. See *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Department of Administrative Services, "Overseas Property Services," in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1987-1988*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ A comprehensive summary of legislative and regulatory requirements was published by the OPG in the *Manual of Overseas Property*. The manual was considered as the primary source of reference for overseas property policy and an authoritative guide for the management of the Commonwealth's property portfolio. See Overseas Property Group, "Estate Management" *Manual of Overseas Property* Volume 2 (Canberra: Department of Administrative Services, 1991), 1.

OPG to focus on giving technical, policy related and general property advice to posts. In its first year of operation the OPG had 51 staff and managed property activities in 95 posts with an expenditure exceeding \$101 million.¹⁰⁷ In 1989 the government confirmed the OPG as the central agency for the “provision of overseas real property and related facilities to all budget-funded clients and for the management of the overseas estate.”¹⁰⁸ The government also gave the responsibility for the review and determination of rental ceilings and accommodation standards to the OPG noting that it was a long term goal to increase the ownership of property from the current level of 23.1 per cent for office accommodation and 36.1 per cent for residential accommodation to 70 per cent.¹⁰⁹ As part of the increased focus on strategic management the OPG developed a Corporate Plan which included a mission statement as well as a list of goals and principle actions to be taken during the plan’s three-year term.¹¹⁰ Key to this plan was the need

To provide efficient and cost-effective accommodation overseas for clients in a coordinated way, and to manage the Commonwealth’s overseas property estate so as to maximise the overall economic benefits to the Commonwealth.¹¹¹

To assess the performance of the OPG a set of indicators were established to track the number of projects completed on time and on budget and determine the level of client satisfaction with the completed projects. In addition to this the average cost of rented accommodation was calculated along with the percentage of properties owned in the estate and the amount of funds spent on administration.¹¹²

As the central agency responsible for the development of major projects overseas the OPG maintained a list of consultants willing to undertake these projects. As a minimum the OPG was instructed to examine three consultants before a selection was made.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Services,” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1987-1988*, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Services,” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1988-1989* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989), 32-33.

¹⁰⁹ Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Services,” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1988-1989*, 34. For figures relating to the percentage of properties owned vs leased by the Australian government between 1981-1991 see Appendix XII.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹¹ Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Group” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1989-1990*, (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1990), 142.

¹¹² A quarterly report was also generated on the properties devolved and purchased under the SBC programme. *Ibid.*, 143.

¹¹³ Concern existed in the DHC as to the future role of the department with talk in government of devolving the functions of the DHC and allowing departments to directly commission

In order to control cost during construction a project director was posted to site on the proviso that the project was completed as efficiently and economically as possible within the contracted period.¹¹⁴ As part of this process monthly site reports were to be submitted to the client outlining any contract variations, changes to onsite personnel, progress made and an up-to-date cost analysis. The Project Director responsible for Beijing was Richard Hancock and for Tokyo was Robert Beecroft.¹¹⁵

Tokyo Chancery Complex (1990)

The new embassy complex in Tokyo was designed by DCM in association with Japanese architectural firm Ashihara International.¹¹⁶ The site on Mita Avenue was in an area where large 19th-century neo-classical villas still remained surrounded by landscaped gardens. As John Denton describes in the magazine, *Architecture Bulletin*, the practice elected to respect this context by maintaining a classical formal plan that reinforced the chancery as the principle address (Figure 7.6).¹¹⁷ In taking this approach the different elements of the complex (residential, office, recreational) were massed together into an E-shaped plan to form a single “grand” building which reinforced the block and projected an image of Australian “national confidence and significance” through its scale and use of cutting edge materials and construction techniques.¹¹⁸

The use of massing to define a street frontage had been foregrounded by DCM in the design of One Collins Street in Melbourne (1981-1983). In this project the practice blended contemporary and historic forms into one unified whole by respecting the scale of the existing historic building located on the corner of the site which fronts Collins Street and Spring Street. This was achieved by interpreting the classical compositional devices of the historic building’s base, piano nobile, attic storey and pediment.¹¹⁹ To further

consultants. Department of Housing and Construction, *Architecture Inhouse* 2, no.2 (November 1986): 1.

¹¹⁴ Overseas Property Group, “Construction Management” *Manual of Overseas Property* Volume 3 (Canberra: Department of Administrative Services, 1991).

¹¹⁵ Department of Administrative Services, “Overseas Property Services,” in *Department of Administrative Services Annual Report 1988-1989*, 33.

¹¹⁶ Although the *Manual of Overseas Property* specifies that three consultants should be examined before a selection was made there is little evidence of this occurring. It is possible to draw the conclusion that as the government was trying to expedite the project as a matter of urgency this was not undertaken and that DCM was commissioned based on their experience working on the Beijing Embassy complex.

¹¹⁷ John Denton, “The Australian Image in Japan,” *Architecture Bulletin* (February 1991): 11.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, “Denton Corker Marshall: A Critical Analysis by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper,” as part of the *Australian Architects Series*, no.3, ed. Royal Australian Institute of Architects (Canberra: Canberra Press, 1988), 17.

reinforce the block and the position of the two new buildings within the urban context of Melbourne DCM expressed the structure and mass of the buildings through the relationship of window to wall. While the embassy complex's scale is also reinforced through massing, DCM further defined the individual character of each function through the use of materials and by continuing to experiment with structure and mass.

In selecting the materials for the embassy complex DCM again chose to reference the classical tripartite composition of heavy to light in the residential blocks by using black concrete at the base, grey aluminium panels for the body and a white steel frame and glass structure for the top (Figure 7.7).¹²⁰ To contrast this the formality of the chancery was defined by articulating the surface through the application of a uniform reflective stainless steel cladding to the entire elevation and by minimising the number of openings. To designate the entrance DCM cleverly reinterpreted the security requirements of the brief by using black metal blast screens as a porte-cochere supported on slender steel columns. As Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper attest, the openness of the residential elevation and the formality of the chancery not only acknowledge the scale and the rhythm of the existing street but continues DCM's experiment with the wall as an abstracted plane and its reduction into a conceptual element.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Deyan Sudjic, "Australian Embassy, Tokyo: Architects Denton Corker Marshall," *Blueprint Extra*, no. 2 (1991): 6.

¹²¹ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 89.

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Figure 7.6. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Tokyo, plan showing HOM residence (blue), chancery (red), residential wings (yellow) and recreational facilities (green), 1984.



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Figure 7.7. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Tokyo, 1990, chancery entrance flanked by east residential wing.

As in Beijing with the punctuated external wall, the idea of transparency and openness is achieved by allowing the passer-by a vista through the chancery to the Japanese garden beyond. This view designates the primary axis of the chancery which begins at the entrance and passes through the entry forecourt and internal courtyard to the building's foyer. This sequence of spaces is also delineated by the placement of sculptures designed by Japanese-Australian artist Akio Makigawa. A sculpture depicting the birth of the moon located in the entry foyer centres the space while two further sculptures placed in the garden beyond represent the moon and sun. In placing the foyer at the rear of the building privacy is incrementally ensured along the axis allowing the visitor access to the functions of the chancery through separate entrances located in the internal courtyard which are defined by two other sculptures.

A secondary axis is established from the HOM residence to the moon viewing hill in the garden beyond which also conceals the recreational facilities. In a post-modern manner elements from the demolished Haschisuka Mansion are re-appropriated within the new HOM residence and garden as a reminder of the history of the site (Figure 7.8).



Figure 7.8. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Tokyo, 1990, original porte-cochere used as a gazebo in the garden.

The project was completed in 26 months at a cost of \$122 million (covered by the developer) and opened on 19 September 1990 by Prime Minister Hawke who in his speech chose to reinforce the government's commitment to the nations and economies of the region by praising the new embassy as a way of providing a "greater understanding and even closer friendship" with Japan.¹²² The Ambassador, Rawdon Dalrymple, acknowledged the regret felt by many at the loss of the old Haschisuka Mansion

¹²² *The Australian Embassy Tokyo*, ed. Information Section Australian Embassy Tokyo (Tokyo, 1990), 1.

commenting that a plaque had been placed in the foyer of the new building that commemorated the older structure.¹²³

Opening Beijing (1992)

Even though the strategy undertaken by DCM in designing the two embassy complexes was similar the way they were constructed differed substantially. The Tokyo Complex was constructed with a highly skilled workforce and the latest in modern pre-fabricated cladding techniques, whereas the Beijing complex relied on rudimentary construction skills and basic materials. This contrast is clearly evident in the time taken to complete each project. While construction of the Beijing complex had begun in 1987 it was not completed until April 1992, three years late and approximately \$40 million over budget.¹²⁴ Although this was the case many of the delays can be attributed to events outside the control of the OPG in realising the project including the need to evacuate non-essential personnel during the Tiananmen Square protests in June 1989.¹²⁵ By the completion of the project 30 Australian staff were employed full time to supervise construction on site in an effort to deal with the erratic workforce levels which fluctuated according to festival holiday periods, New Year's Eve celebrations as well as the opening of the Asian Games.¹²⁶ The difficulty was summarised with the statement:

¹²³ Ibid., 2.

¹²⁴ The cost blow out would lead to new financial restrictions being implemented during the 1990s on chancery developments in Jakarta (1993), Suva (1994), Port Moresby (1997), Hanoi (1997) and Islamabad (1997). To save money the government would not utilise external architectural consultants but rely on the newly-formed Australian Construction Services (ACS) to design and manage the projects. ACS replaced the function of DHC in mid-1988 after DHC had been abolished in 1987 as part of Prime Minister Hawke's administration reshuffle. The ACS began charging clients commercially competitive fees for its project management services from 1 July 1988 and for its asset management services from 1 July 1989. It was expected that ACS would achieve "full cost recovery for its services by 1991." Any shortfall between revenue and cost in the interim was met with a budget subsidy. See Department of Administrative Services, *Australian Construction Services: Corporate Profile* (Canberra: Government Printer, 1990).

¹²⁵ Australia's Ambassador to China at the time, David Sadleir, supported Australia continuing its relationship with China even after the killing of pro-democratic activists. He was quoted in the *Canberra Times* as saying "It is important for us to maintain the ability to have dialogue with it (China) on a warmer or cooler basis depending on circumstances. But we have to maintain that ability." See Keith Scott, "Retain Links with China 'even in difficult times,'" *Canberra Times*, 1 August 1984, 4.

¹²⁶ The workforce would vary from a full-strength contingent of 1200 people to as little as 30 people on site. As an example see correspondence held in: National Archives of Australia: Department of Administrative Services [III], Central Office, A10755, Bound Volumes and Lever Arch Binders of Specifications, Drawings and Photographs Relating to Overseas Posts; 67, Monthly Site Report No 13, 1988-1988.

That is building in China. It is not an easy country in which to build the sort of facility that we want and to make the kind of statement that we want.¹²⁷

In its completed form the complex quickly gained approval from the local architectural community as a “compelling contemporary building” due to its contextual nature and its connection with Beijing’s urban character through the use of a robust containing wall, north-south axis and courtyard planning.¹²⁸ Although the wall was a prerequisite set by the Chinese authorities, DCM chose to increase the scale and thickness to create a “contextual container” which would hold the various programmatic elements of the embassy.¹²⁹ In order to communicate the openness of Australian society DCM elected to puncture the outer skin of the wall with large openings to allow a curious Chinese public the opportunity to glimpse the inner courtyards of the accommodation units, a response that contrasted with the fortress mentality of many embassy compounds. When viewed from the street the openings form an exaggerated architectural order and help to designate the public front of the building (Figure 7.9).¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, “Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of Australian Embassy Jakarta,” in *4th Report of 1991* (Canberra: Government Printer, 1991), 79.

¹²⁸ Daniel Elsea, “Australian Embassy, Beijing,” *Architecture Australia* 94, no. 4 (July/August 2005): 38.

¹²⁹ It should be noted that the Chinese government required all diplomatic compounds to have a two to three-metre high boundary wall to provide security and to separate the local community. *Australian Embassy Beijing: A Project for the Australian Government by the Overseas Property Office, Department of Local Government and Administrative Services*, ed. Department of Housing and Construction (Canberra: Department of Housing and Construction, 1985), 21.

¹³⁰ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, *Denton Corker Marshall*, 87.



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Figure 7.9. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Beijing, 1992, street view showing punctured outer wall.

The chancery itself is clearly visible at the termination of the north-south access with its white marble face contrasting the heavy monolithic grey wall (Figure 7.10). As a building that was required to house the functions of the embassy and represent Australia in a foreign context the architects needed to address both organisation and representation in the built form.

Similarities can be drawn with DCM's earlier entry for the Australian Parliament House competition (1979-1980) which also required these issues to be resolved. The competition entry was driven by the idea of legibility and a desire for the building to look like a Parliament building.¹³¹ To achieve this DCM referred to historic Parliament buildings which were derived from an "inflated palazzo type" and compositionally made of symmetry, axis, entrance porch and ceremonial forecourt.¹³² By abstracting the historic form and applying the compositional rules of the type DCM argued that their proposed design would result in a legible and culturally familiar building.¹³³

Perhaps it was because of the comparable semantics that exist between the representation of government in its own national capital and the representation of government in a foreign context similar compositional rules were used by DCM in

¹³¹ Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, "Denton Corker Marshall: A Critical Analysis," 59.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

generating the form of the Beijing Chancery. The building's axial placement at the end of a ceremonial forecourt and the use of symmetry in the façade establishes a formality signifying the presence of government. The incorporation of an entrance porch is an abstract reference to a colonnaded palazzo. Although monumental, the "porch" acts as a transition space between the forecourt and chancery foyer.

In planning the chancery DCM also applied the compositional tactics that directed the external form by arranging the public functions of the embassy around two landscaped internal light courts to flank the foyer space (Figure 7.11). This arrangement continues the north-south axis into the building and also introduces a cross axis as a means of providing symmetry and a formality to the floor plan. The display and library area is located on one side of the main foyer space while an auditorium was located on the other. The courts act as lobby spaces for both functions. Australian art was commissioned from contemporary Aboriginal artist Ginger Reilly specifically for the embassy and hung in the lobby area.



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Figure 7.10. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Beijing, 1992, entrance of the chancery.

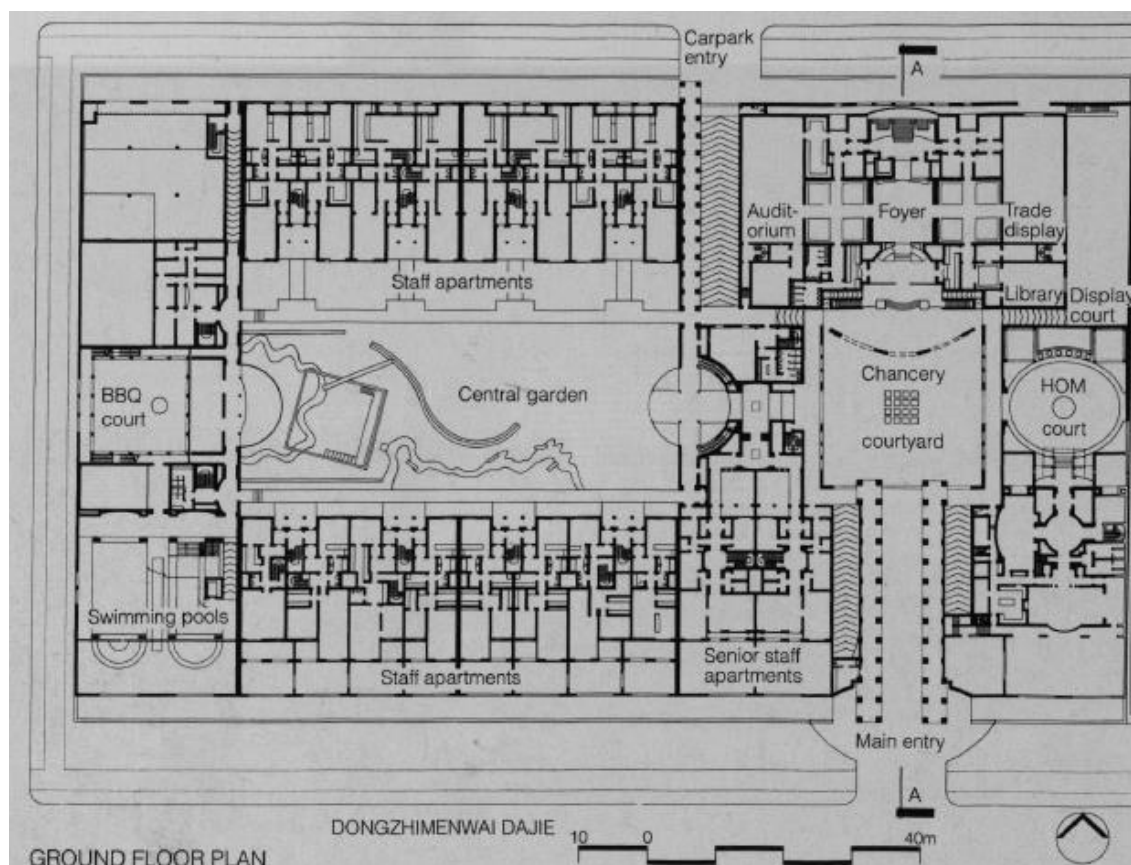


Figure 7.11. DCM, Australian Embassy complex, Beijing, plan, 1992.

The completion of the Beijing Embassy prompted Sydney-based architectural historian and critic Philip Drew to write a general appraisal of recent embassy buildings constructed by the Australian government. In a 1994 article he condemned the government for its lack of a distinct design profile in its embassies in Paris, Riyadh and Tokyo commenting that the buildings presented a complex, unrecognisable architecture “in a style that turns its back on our culture.”¹³⁴ This, he believed, was because Australian architects were “either incapable or afraid” of expressing their culture abroad.¹³⁵ By comparison, Drew commended the British, French and Germans for their embassy buildings which he believed embraced a corporate national identity through “unambiguous, simple and consistent” design.¹³⁶ In rebutting Drew’s argument, the OPG pointed out that two of the Australian embassies he had been so critical of had in fact won major architectural awards from the RAIA.¹³⁷ This was supported by the PWC which

¹³⁴ Philip Drew, “Ambassadors with Odd Accents,” *Business Review Weekly* (18 April 1994): 103.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ The embassy complex in Riyadh, designed by Daryl Jackson, was awarded the International Award at the 1991 RAIA National Architecture Awards. The embassy complex in Beijing was

concluded that the finished building in Beijing was a good design that represented Australia successfully in the local context.¹³⁸

The completion of the Tokyo and Beijing Embassy complexes marked thirty years since the decision to expand Australia's diplomatic network through the construction of new purpose-built premises. While the overseas works programmes under the Fraser government had seen a dramatic reduction in funding, the Hawke government's recognition of the Asian economy and its importance to the future of Australia ensured its continuation. In an environment where trade and foreign policy were becoming increasingly related Prime Minister Hawke instigated a major restructuring of government. Even though this could have led to more cuts and administrative confusion, as had been experienced previously, the ability of Prime Minister Hawke to work with the machinery of the public service to both streamline and support the development of Australian embassies overseas ensured a positive outcome demonstrating that the role of government as both client and creator is fundamental in both directing the focus of Australia's diplomatic projects and in dictating the extent to which architecture is used as a representational tool. As part of these modifications the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) was formed and the Overseas Property Group (OPG) was created.

As the new administrative body solely responsible for Australia's overseas works programmes the OPG was imbued with a global focus which encouraged ownership and allowed the financing of projects to be achieved outside the purview of Treasury for the first time. While the OPG did not reach the near impossible heights attained by the OPB during the "favourable" Whitlam years it can be regarded as the closest embodiment of

awarded the International Award at the RAIA National Architecture Awards in 1992. In awarding DCM juror Jamieson Allom commented that the finished building was "far removed from the twee nationalistic imagery of so many embassies; here is a fine building of the modern world." See "Beijing Embassy: Denton Corker Marshall," *Architecture Australia* (November/December 1992): 42. For the OPG rebuttal refer to: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of an Australian Embassy Complex in Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam," in *5th Report of 1994* (Canberra: Government Printer, 1994), 135.

¹³⁸ This was noted at the end of a PWC hearing into the proposed construction of an embassy complex in Hanoi. During the meeting the ACS architect, Paul Platt, was criticised by the chairman of the PWC, Colin Hollis, for the finished design and the image of Australia it was trying to project. In an amendment to the meeting notes Hollis commends the OPG on what was achieved in the Beijing and Suva Embassy complexes noting that these were buildings Australia could be proud of. See Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, "Minutes of Evidence Relating to the Construction of an Australian embassy Complex in Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam," 143.

it within the framework of this thesis. During its fourteen years in operation the OPG successfully administered the development of eight chanceries including two of the largest - Tokyo and Beijing.

Both these projects are significant as they not only represent Australia through an architecture cultivated by DCM in their response to both brief and context but also reaffirm the value that Australian-based architects and their practices brought to the creation of Australian diplomatic buildings as was seen during the 1970s. While the Tokyo development was successfully completed under the guidance of the OPG the delays encountered in finishing the Beijing complex further demonstrates the unavoidable difficulties in constructing buildings overseas.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated the procurement of Australia's diplomatic buildings in the Asian region from 1960 to 1990. As an architectural history written from the point of view of the government as both client and creator the thesis offers an assessment outside the confines of a more traditional architectural or political history. This thesis has demonstrated that a study of government processes and policy is a way in which an examination of Australia's diplomatic buildings can be carried out. In undertaking this study the thesis has concentrated on the topic of representation and how this has been considered from different viewpoints. In doing this the complex relationships between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture have been brought to light.

It has been found that the main challenge to achieving adequate representation is the pressure on resources due to fiscal constraints and the unwillingness of government to support the development of diplomatic buildings due to budgetary concerns. This factor is consistently present at a departmental level throughout the period studied and is first identified during the early projects undertaken by the Department of External Affairs (DEA). While the need to expand Australia's diplomatic network became a key consideration of government during the 1950s the reluctance to spend money on constructing purpose-built diplomatic premises is apparent in the government's decision to lease substandard properties to meet the functional requirements of diplomacy. Although this allowed the government to expand Australia's diplomatic network quickly, the failure of the Treasury to support the construction of new premises emphasises a fiscal focus.

This began to alter after both the quality and financial viability of leasing buildings began to be questioned. In the post-war years and as other nations embarked on embassy building programmes it became evident that the way Australia represented itself overseas in physical form hampered its diplomatic efforts on the world stage. In response, the Treasury became receptive to building residential accommodation as a way of reducing excessive rental costs and alleviating accommodation shortages. As the first diplomatic project to be constructed overseas since Australia House in 1918, the Head of Mission (HOM) residence in New Delhi embodied the early processes and interactions of government as the importance of providing adequate representation became a consideration of government. The Department of External Affairs (DEA)

sought to blend the functional considerations of diplomacy with a more representational focus by recalling the colonial architecture of Australia in early concept plans. Even though these schemes were rejected under the belief that engaging local architectural expertise would be necessary in ensuring the success of the project, the recognition that architecture could be used as a form of representation began to be readily discussed within departmental areas. Central to this was the notion of creating an architecture appropriate for the “dignity” of diplomatic office and practice. This became an overarching theme in conveying Australia’s early interests overseas as demonstrated in the design of the New Delhi HOM residence.

The direct relationship between the DEA as client and Joseph Allen Stein as the architect has been identified here as the first rudimentary interaction between the Australian government and an architect since the completion of Australia House forty years prior. This can be considered as the start of a growing recognition by the government of the value that architects could bring to the creation of diplomatic buildings. Under restrictive processes implemented by the Treasury and Public Service Board (PSB) to control the cost and scale of the New Delhi project, Stein’s skill as an architect instilled him with the aptitude to operate alongside bureaucracy and to design a building of distinction that communicated an image of Australia through a modern regionalist aesthetic. However, the promulgation of using architects and architecture to represent Australia was overshadowed in these early interactions by the lack of accountability and structure in the management of this project. Although Stein was often blamed, it was the government’s inexperience in managing overseas works that was responsible for the extensive delays and cost overruns. Key to this was the lack of an administrative infrastructure to support the management of the project. This has been identified as a further challenge to achieving adequate representation.

The control exerted by regulatory departments would continue in the development of the Tokyo and Djakarta Chanceries. The changing role of the DEA however resulted in a refinement of administrative processes. While the DEA had been directly responsible for commissioning Stein and managing the relationship with him, for the Tokyo and Djakarta projects it relegated this control and instead relied on the Commonwealth Department of Work’s (CDW) existing “expertise” to design and manage these projects in association with reputable international architectural practices. This could have improved existing processes, however the CDW’s position within the machinery of government meant that the controls exerted by the Treasury and the PSB directly stifled the department’s ability to deal with the increasing complexity and scope of the overseas works programme. As such, the CDW designs for the Djakarta and Tokyo Chanceries

were more concerned with meeting complicated functional requirements than architectural expression. Even though the architecture of the completed buildings was not as expressive as the New Delhi HOM residence there was an attempt to convey Australian interests in the region by gesturing towards a regional vernacular and by presenting more composite interior schemes.

The CDW designs for the Tokyo and Djakarta projects show a tentative engagement with representation and architecture. Both projects also reveal a government still divided by departmental priorities, interdepartmental conflicts and bureaucratic manoeuvring. This began to change when a number of key adjustments were made in the 1960s and early 1970s that elevated the construction of diplomatic buildings from a departmental concern to a governmental priority. Central to this was the decision by Prime Minister McMahon in 1971 to consolidate the relevant property functions of individual departments into a single agency known as the Overseas Property Bureau (OPB). This centralisation reduced the departmental wrangling that had occurred in the past, signalling the beginning of a more professional approach to the administration and development of the overseas works programmes.

Another adjustment was when the Gorton administration introduced an internal government policy referred to as the “Australian Policy.” This policy ensured that Australian architectural practices would be commissioned for future projects as a means of introducing an Australian visual character abroad and increasing the representational quality of the buildings.

While these two developments are significant, the cultural, political and economic independence established under the Whitlam government’s policy framework created an environment which fostered a rapid expansion of Australia’s diplomatic network and allowed the OPB to thrive. At its peak from 1973 to 1975 the overseas works programmes operated under optimum conditions, administered by a centralised body with access to unprecedented funding and Australia’s leading architectural practices. The buildings completed during this period in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur exemplify what could be achieved when all the processes of government were aligned and the value of Australian-based architects and their practices was recognised and supported.

The idea that “prestige” could be communicated in the design of interior space is a representational theme that can be seen in the projects completed under the Whitlam government. The ability of the architectural practices to respond to the local environment through the use of form and materials ensured that the finished designs were distinct in

nature and represented Australia through a consideration of scale and design that had not previously been possible.

The enforcement of austerity under Prime Minister Fraser was detrimental to Australia's representational needs. The restructuring of the OPB in 1976 and the failure of government to provide funding diluted the support and management available, ultimately slowing the construction schedule. The restrictive financial controls exerted by the Fraser government can be read as a reversal from the highs of the Whitlam era however the resilience of the departmental infrastructure that had been created since the formation of the OPB ensured that the architecture produced was still appropriate to Australia's needs. This was seen in the completion of the Bangkok Chancery and HOM residence which, although delayed, were still of a quality that had been achieved in the earlier Singapore and Kuala Lumpur projects.

Even though Prime Minister Fraser could have reversed the "Australian Policy" to remove a duplication of expertise with the Department of Housing and Construction (DHC) it was recognised that the prestige nature of diplomacy was best communicated by employing architectural expertise outside of government. This was reinforced under the administration of the Hawke government which not only commissioned Denton Corker Marshall (DCM) to design the Tokyo and Beijing Embassy complexes but also elected to bolster the existing departmental infrastructure by creating the Overseas Property Group (OPG). In its new form the OPG was given sole authority to administer the Commonwealth's overseas estate simultaneously expediting existing processes, increasing ownership and promoting a global approach to property management for the first time.

The aim of starting the conclusion with this review is to summarise the changing political and governmental mechanics that have informed the creation of Australia's diplomatic buildings. As this thesis has described, there has also been a change in thinking around how diplomatic buildings as representations of Australia in Asia relate to the local context. This is seen in a shift from a consolidation of regionalism and response to climatic conditions to a focus on urbanism and urban contextual design. Although the designs of the finished buildings can be attributed in some way to this shift the architectural richness of the completed projects was affected by the interactions that occurred between politics, government bureaucracy and architecture.

In revealing these interactions it is clear that a series of conflicting views existed that centred on the nexus of architecture and politics. These views dealt with representation as well as the fiscal concerns of government. How the government as both client and

creator chose to prioritise these considerations ultimately directed the focus of Australia's diplomatic projects overseas and in turn dictated the extent to which architecture was used as a representational tool. These deliberations initially occurred at a departmental level however the introduction of the "Australian Policy" and the creation of the OPB moved architectural representation to the forefront of government thinking. The picture that emerges therefore is one of change as processes were streamlined and the representational importance of architecture to diplomacy was recognised.

The level of support given by the government determined the extent to which the commissioned architects traversed the line between architecture and politics and drove an engagement with representation. As a high point the Kuala Lumpur and Singapore projects designed by well-regarded Australian architectural practices relied on form and architectural expression to communicate Australia through design. These buildings contrasted vastly with the functional designs produced by the CDW in Tokyo and Djakarta under the control of multiple departments focused on limiting expenditure. Although architecture was used as a form of representation in both instances the richness of the completed projects in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore is more potent in its representative quality because of the fiscal support provided by the Whitlam government and the administrative infrastructure that was present.

It can therefore be concluded that the willingness of government to prioritise representational considerations over fiscal constraints and develop processes to effectively administer and support the development of diplomatic premises directly impacted the architectural richness of the completed projects. While both high and low points are evident, the richness of the completed projects is seen to increase with the growing recognition by government of the role that architecture can play in communicating Australian interests to the region. This richness increases significantly when Australian-based practices are commissioned and a professional approach is adopted to managing the overseas works programmes.

These conclusions bear important implications for the study of Australia's diplomatic premises. Both political and architectural historians need to recognise the role that politicians and architects have played in the development of Australia's diplomatic structures and the way in which these different professions have interacted in the creation and procurement of these buildings. Authors such as Goldsworthy and Edwards have considered Australia's engagement in the Asian region from a political viewpoint. This thesis contributes new material by linking both architecture and politics through a consideration of the diplomatic premises constructed and the interactions and processes

that occurred. In doing so Goldsworthy's investigation can be expanded upon as the evidence presented verifies that architecture was used as a representational tool by government as the importance of diplomatic engagement grew in the region. As such, the completed projects carry an undeniable political agenda that also needs to be considered by architectural historians. While the role of the architect and the completed buildings were described and represented in the architectural media these projects can be understood in greater detail if the viewpoints and ideas that government brought to these projects are also considered.

Even though this investigation is limited to a time period that ends in the early 1990s, it is now possible to begin to consider developments beyond this as government records and archives become accessible to the public in the coming years. The 1990s would again herald an era in which economic considerations were a priority and the design of Australia's embassy buildings would be completed by utilising the government's construction body - Australian Construction Services (ACS) - as a cost saving measure. The research and findings presented by this thesis lay the groundwork and historical context by which to consider more recent developments once archival material becomes available. With this in mind a few notes about each of Australia's new embassy buildings are presented below to set the scene.

The recent opening of new embassy complexes in Jakarta (2016) and Bangkok (2017) usher in the latest era of diplomatic buildings erected under new constraints and policy foci. The most notable are the implications that increased security requirements have had on both the planning and massing of buildings.¹ The diplomatic premises as discussed in this thesis encouraged an interaction with the public in the name of diplomacy. This interaction, however, is now tightly controlled through the "security-in-depth" principle.² High perimeter fencing, thick walls and small windows are all requirements of the modern embassy building. Although this could be considered as

¹ Funding to improve security requirements at Australian missions has increased significantly since 9/11 and the 2002 Bali bombings. A further \$591 million was given to boost security measures in 2004 after the Australian embassy in Jakarta was bombed. This led to the release of Australia's first white paper on terrorism entitled: *Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia* (2004). The Post Security Task Force (PSTF) was also established in 2004 to specifically deal with chancery security. It was also announced that any mission that could not be made secure would be relocated. See Auditor General, "Protecting Australian Missions and Staff Overseas: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Trade Commission," in *Audit Report no. 28 2004-2005 Performance Audit* (2005).

² The "security-in-depth" principle is a term adopted from the military and relies on different security measures "combining to support and complement each other." Reference to the "security-in-depth" principle can be found in the *Protective Security Policy Framework* which outlines the Commonwealth's protective security policy. See Attorney-General's Department, "Entity Facilities," in *Protective Security Policy Framework*, accessed 12 August 2019 <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/physical/Pages/default.aspx>.

moving away from the idea of engagement, the architect is now required to integrate these new security requirements into designs that can still be perceived as being representative of Australia. This complexity was recognised by Fiona Tan in her review of the Jakarta Embassy complex when she stated that the building was “exceptional in its assimilation of potentially conflicting requirements and succeeds in an evocation of ‘Australianness’ for disparate audiences.”³

In designing the new Jakarta embassy complex DCM continued to experiment with the juxtaposition of structure and mass and the utilisation of metals as cladding. This approach was used in the Tokyo embassy complex to indicate functional differences. In Jakarta DCM also selected materials based on their ability to represent Australia and present an image of the country’s underground assets.⁴ An emphasis on representation continues to be explored in new ways.

The most recently completed Australian embassy complex in Asia is in Bangkok. Designed by Bligh Voller Neild (BVN) the complex blends Thai and Australian precedents as a means of communicating the cultural relationship between both countries.⁵ Like Ancher, Mortlock, Murray & Woolley’s earlier chancery design, water is used as a key component of the complex separating the HOM residence and chancery and providing much needed cooling in the internal atrium spaces. The selection of red bricks as the main building material is also a historic reference to the material used in the construction of traditional Thai temples in central Bangkok and emulates Woolley’s selection of yellow tiles in the 1970s. BVN elected to communicate an image of Australia through the building’s undulating and curved form which commentators consider mimics the characteristics of Australia’s natural landscape and terrain.⁶

These new buildings in Jakarta and Bangkok also have close ties to governmental and bureaucratic concerns and are constrained by policy directions and decisions that occur at a federal and departmental level. This thesis has shown how a study of these interactions can be carried out and offers a framework through which the creation of these buildings can be understood.

³ Fiona Nixon Tan, “Australian Embassy Jakarta,” *Architecture Australia* 106, no. 1 (January/February 2017): 96.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Tom Heneghan, “Australian Embassy Bangkok,” *Architecture Australia* 107, no. 2 (March/April 2018): 27.

⁶ Ibid. Heneghan suggests that the building’s form when silhouetted against the sky is evocative of Uluru.

Apart from applying the focal points of this thesis to any future study of more recent buildings, it is also possible to extend and develop the analysis of Australia's embassy buildings more generally in several ways.

The thesis relies heavily on archival material in the investigation of government policy, bureaucracy and departmental interactions. While this methodology is justified because of the scope and focus outlined, it is recognised that oral history research would be a fruitful future avenue of investigation. This might involve interviews with former ambassadors, senior diplomats, public servants and the architects associated with the design and construction of Australia's diplomatic premises. It is likely oral histories would provide useful leads that have not been uncovered or examined here. They also may allow for a greater insight into individual opinions and aspirations connected to the idea of 'image building' that lay outside what can be found in the archive.

An evaluation of Australia's embassy buildings in comparison to buildings created by the United Kingdom and the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s would be useful. As indicated by this thesis, embassy buildings are often built within close physical proximity to each other. Their contrasting designs, while of tangential interest here, is an area of investigation that deserves greater attention. The decisions made by governments to select designs that best represent their nation on the world stage has resulted in forms being constructed that range from a mimicry of historical architectural styles to employing the latest in architectural thinking. These contrasting approaches provide further insight into representation and how architecture has been used to serve political ends.

Although the thesis deals directly with Australian embassy buildings in the Asian region the overseas works programmes were administered worldwide and as such the study of Australia's diplomatic architecture can now be opened up to include the development of other premises throughout the world. This could include an investigation into the Washington, D.C and Paris Chancery buildings as the underlying political processes and bureaucratic machineries, as uncovered by this study, can be considered in relation to these buildings.

In undertaking research for this thesis it became apparent that other representational mediums were explored by the Australian government in connection to its embassy buildings. The government introduced a 'total information' concept in the 1970s which involved the inclusion of library, theatre and display spaces in the final buildings. A number of travelling exhibitions have been held in the exhibition space in the Paris Chancery including "Old Continent New Building: Contemporary Australian Architecture" in November 1982. The exhibition's merits in promoting Australian architecture as part

of the Australia Council's Design Arts Board drive has been examined by Paul Walker and Karen Burns, however a comprehensive study of the significance of these exhibitions to representation and the fulfillment of Australian foreign policy has yet to be undertaken.⁷ Such a study could be expanded by documenting the art and films which were selected for permanent display and by examining the processes and requirements behind making these selections.

A further possible area of enquiry is the heritage aspect of embassy buildings. As a result of increased security concerns and the physical limitations posed by older embassy buildings, Australia, like many other nations, has taken the opportunity to review the performance of its existing embassy network in an effort to refresh the image presented by these structures. This has resulted in the demolition of three of the chanceries presented in this study and has also seen the recent sale of the Bangkok Chancery and HOM residence.⁸ The announcement by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, in November 2016 that the Australian chancery in Washington, D.C. (1969) was to be demolished to make way for a "bold yet elegant, innovative yet practical and expressive yet dignified" building is another example of this.⁹ Even though the new Washington, D.C. Chancery will again be designed by Bates Smart, the original building marks a shift in government thinking away from the traditions of the Empire and the beginning of a 75-year relationship with the US. Interestingly, the HOM residence in Washington, D.C. - 'White Oaks' - was considered as having significant heritage value and has been placed on the Commonwealth Heritage List as the second diplomatic premises to be listed behind Australia House in London.¹⁰ A guide to some of the key issues in heritage assessment is Jane Loeffler's recent discussion of the politics of heritage and why few US embassy buildings have been recognised as having heritage value by the US State Department.¹¹

⁷ Paul Walker and Karen Burns, "Constructing Australian Architecture for International Audiences: Regionalism, Postmodernism, and the Design Arts Board 1980–1988," *Fabrications* 28, no.1 (March 2018): 25–46.

⁸ The 1967 Jakarta Chancery was replaced in 1993. The Tokyo Chancery as discussed was replaced in 1990 while the New Delhi Chancery was replaced in 2007 by a building designed by Woodhead International.

⁹ Overseas Property Office, "Australian Embassy Project Washington DC, USA; Fit-out of Temporary Embassy Accommodation; Demolition of Existing Embassy Building and Construction of a New Embassy Building on the Existing Site; Statement of Evidence for the Presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Submission 1," ed. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Canberra: Government Printers, 2016), 1–2.

¹⁰ Hon Julie Bishop MP and Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, "Commonwealth Heritage Listing for the Residence of the Australian Ambassador in Washington," news release, 5 October, 2016.

¹¹ Jane Loeffler, "The State Department and the Politics of Preservation: Why Few U.S. Embassies are Landmarks," *Future Anterior* XIII, no. 1 (Summer 2016): 99–124.

The 2012 report into Australia's overseas representation concluded that "person to person contact remains the corner stone of diplomacy."¹² Because of this no government to date has been willing to disassemble Australia's embassy network. Instead the most recent White Paper on Australia's foreign policy advocates for an expansion of Australia's diplomatic network on a scale not seen since the Whitlam era.¹³ This thesis offers a timely analysis of the processes and role of government in developing Australia's diplomatic premises and is an important record that contributes a deeper understanding of these buildings within a continuing discourse.

¹² Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's Overseas Representation - Puching Below Our Weight? Inquiry of the Foreign Affairs Sub – Committee* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, October, 2012), x.

¹³ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Canberra: CanPrint Communications, 2017), 17.

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The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade², the Parliamentary Library³ and the National Archives of Australia⁴ also publish regular research papers on the development of Australian foreign policy and regional engagement as well as on the history of government, diplomacy and individuals within parliament. Other online resources that were accessed include the *Architects of South Australia* database at the

¹ <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/>

² <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/publications.aspx>

³ https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library

⁴ <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/publications/papers-and-podcasts/index.aspx>

University of South Australia.⁵ The data base, *PMTranscripts* contains all the speech transcripts from the Prime Ministers of Australia.⁶ The Australian National University's online resource *Australian Dictionary of Biography* was also used.⁷ The University of Melbourne's digitised online collection provided a valuable resource,⁸ as did the RMIT Design Archives.⁹

⁵ <http://www.architectsdatabase.unisa.edu.au/>

⁶ <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/>

⁷ <http://adb.anu.edu.au/about-us/>

⁸ <https://digitised-collections.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/18>

⁹ <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-locations-and-facilities/facilities/research-facilities/rmit-design-archives>

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APPENDIX I

Australian Prime Ministers¹

Sir Edmund Barton, PC, GCMG, KC	1 Jan 1901-24 Sep 1903
Alfred Deakin	24 Sep 1903-27 Apr 1904
John Christian Watson	27 Apr 1904-17 Aug 1904
George Houston Reid, PC, KC	18 Aug 1904-5 Jul 1905
Alfred Deakin	5 Jul 1905-13 Nov 1908
Andrew Fisher	13 Nov 1908-2 Jun 1909
Alfred Deakin	2 Jun 1909-29 Apr 1910
Andrew Fisher	29 April 1910-24 Jun 1913
Joseph Cook	24 Jun 1913-17 Sep 1914
Andrew Fisher	17 Sep 1914-27 Oct 1915
William Morris Hughes	27 Oct 1915- 9 Feb 1923
Stanley Melbourne Bruce, PC, CH, MC	9 Feb 1923-22 Oct 1929
James Henry Scullin, PC	22 Oct 1929-6 Jan 1932
Joseph Aloysius Lyons, PC, CH	6 Jan 1932-7 Apr 1939
Sir Earle Christmas Grafton Page, PC, GCMG	7 Apr 1939-26 Apr 1939
Robert Gordon Menzies, PC, KC	26 Apr 1939-29 Aug 1941
Arthur William Fadden	29 Aug 1941-7 Oct 1941
John Curtin, PC	7 Oct 1941-5 Jul 1945
Francis Michael Forde, PC	6 July 1945-13 July 1945
Joseph Benedict Chifley, PC	13 Jul 1945-19 Dec 1949

¹ "Appendixes I-IX," in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, ed. Peter Edwards and David Goldsworthy, Volume 2 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 333.

Robert Gordon Menzies, Pc, KC	19 Dec 1949-26 Jan 1966
Harold Edward Holt, PC, CH	26 Jan 1966-19 Dec 1967
John McEwen, PC	19 Dec 1967-10 Jan 1968
John Grey Gorton, PC	10 Jan 1968-10 Mar 1971
William McMahon, PC, CH	10 Mar 1971-5 Dec 1972
Edward Gough Whitlam, QC	5 Dec 1972- 11 Nov 1975
John Malcom Fraser, PC, CH	11 Nov 1975-11 Mar 1983
Robert James Lee Hawke, AC	11 Mar 1983-20 Dec 1991
Paul John Keating	20 Dec 1991-11 Mar 1996

APPENDIX II

Ministers and Secretaries of Departments Responsible for External/Foreign Affairs, 1921-1987²

Ministers for the Department of External Affairs (II), 1921- 1970:

Rt Hon. William Morris Hughes	21 Dec 1921- 9 Feb 1923
Rt Hon. Stanley Melbourne Bruce	9 Feb 1923-22 Oct 1929
Rt Hon. James Henry Scullin	22 Oct 1929- 6 Jan 1932
Rt Hon. John Greig Latham	6 Jan 1932-12 Oct 1934
Senator the Rt Hon. Sir George Foster Pearce	12 Oct 1934-29 Nov 1937
Rt Hon. William Morris Hughes	29 Nov 1937-26 Apr 1939
Hon. Sir Henry Somer Gullett	26 Apr 1939-14 Mar 1940
Hon. John McEwen	14 Mar 1940-28 Oct 1940
Hon. Sir Frederick Harold Stewart	28 Oct 1940-7 Oct 1941
Rt Hon. Herbert Vere Evatt	7 Oct 1941-19 Dec 1949
Hon. Percy Claude Spender	19 Dec 1949-27 Apr 1951
Rt Hon. Richard Gardiner Casey	27 Apr 1951-4 Feb 1960
Rt Hon. Robert Gordon Menzies	4 Feb 1960-22 Dec 1961
Rt Hon. Sir Garfield Edward John Barwick	22 Dec 1961-24 Apr 1964
Rt Hon. Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck	24 Apr 1964-11 Feb 1969
Hon. Gordon Freeth	11 Feb 1969-12 Nov 1969
Rt Hon. William McMahon	12 Nov 1969-6 Nov 1970

Secretaries

Percival Edgar Deane	21 Dec 1921-31 Dec 1928
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² "Appendixes I-IX," in *Facing North*, Volume 2, 334.

John Gilbert McLaren	1 Jan 1929-2 Mar 1933
John Henry Starling	3 Mar 1933-11 Nov 1935
Lt Col William Roy Hodgson	19 Nov 1935-21 Jun 1945
William Ernest Dunk	10 Sep 1945 - 25 Mar 1947
John Wear Burton	27 Mar 1947-17 Jun 1950
Sir Alan Stewart Watt	19 Jun 1950-24 Jan 1954
Sir Arthur Harold Tange	25 Jan 1954-4 Apr 1965
Sir James Plimsoll	5 Apr 1965-Apr 1970
Sir (John) Keith Waller	6 Apr 1970-5 Nov 1970

Ministers for the Department of Foreign Affairs, 1970-1987:

Rt Hon. William McMahon	6 Nov 1970-22 Mar 1971
Hon. Leslie Harry Ernest Bury	22 Mar 1971-2 Aug 1971
Hon. Nigel Hubert Bowen	2 Aug 1971-5 Dec 1972
Hon. Edward Gough Whitlam	5 Dec 1972-6 Nov 1973
Senator the Hon. Donald Robert Willesee	6 Nov 1973-11 Nov 1975
Hon. Andrew Sharp Peacock	12 Nov 1975-3 Nov 1980
Hon. Anthony Austin Street	3 Nov 1980-11 Nov 1983
Hon. William George Hayden	11 Mar 1983-24 Jul 1987

Secretaries

Sir (John) Keith Waller	6 Nov 1970-3Jan 1974
Alan Philip Renouf	3 Jan 1974-18 Feb 1977
Nicholas Fancourt Parkinson	18 Feb 1977-4 Sep1979
Peter Graham Faithfull Henderon	4 Sep 1979-3 Sep 1984
Dr Stuart Francis Harris	3 Sep 1984-24 Jul 1987

APPENDIX III

Australian Diplomatic and Consular Post Appointments in Asia Referred to in Text, 1901-1990³

China

Chungking/Nanking

28 Oct 1941 Sir Frederic W Eggelston, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary

(Diplomatic Post opened at Chungking)

25 Feb 1944-15 Oct 1945 F. K. Officer, Charge d Affaires ad interim

1 Jan 1946 D. B. Copland, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary

(Diplomatic Post returned to Nanking, 5 Jun 1946)

15 Nov 1948 F.K. Officer, Ambassador

(Diplomatic Post withdrawn, 17 Oct 1949)

Beijing (Previously Peking)

22 Apr 1973 S. A. FitzGerald, Ambassador

9 Dec 1976 C. G. Woodard, Ambassador

3 Apr 1980 H. A. Dunn, Ambassador

21 Apr 1984 D. W. Argall, Ambassador

21 Nov 1985 R. G. Garnaut, Ambassador

3 Mar 1988 D. M. Sadleir, Ambassador

22 Aug 1991 M. D. Lightowler, Ambassador

³ "Appendixes I-IX," in *Facing North*, Volume 2, 341.

India**New Delhi**

Mar 1944	Lt Gen. Sir Iven Mackay, High Commissioner
Dec 1948	H. Roy Gollan, High Commissioner
9 May 1952	W.R. Crocker, High Commissioner
22 Apr 1955	P. R. Heydon, High Commissioner
13 Nov 1958	W. R. Corcker, High Commissioner
10 Mar 1963	Sir James Plimsoll, High Commissioner
4 May 1965	Sir Arthur Tange, High Commissioner
17 Apr 1970	Sir Patrick Shaw, High Commissioner
16 Nov 1973	B. A. Grant, High Commissioner
27 Feb 1976	P. C. J. Curtis, High Commissioner
18 Feb 1980	G. N. Upton, High Commissioner
7 Jul 1984	G. B. Feakes, High Commissioner
11 Nov 1990	D. W. Evans, High Commissioner

Indonesia**Jakarta** (previously Djakarta)

24 Jun 1950	J. D. L Hood, Ambassador
11 Mar 1953	J. C. G. Kevin, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary, Charge d Affaires ad interim
7 Apr 1955	W. R. Corcker, Ambassador
28 Jan 1957	L. R. McIntyre, Ambassador
6 Mar 1960	P. Shaw, Ambassador
6 Nov 1962	K. C. O. Shann, Ambassador
6 Apr 1966	H. M. Loveday, Ambassador

7 Mar 1969	G. A. Jockel, Ambassador
1 Mar 1972	R. W. Furlonger, Ambassador
3 Mar 1975	R. A. Woolcott, Ambassador
17 May 1978	T. K. Critchley, Ambassador
18 Mar 1981	F. R. Dalrymple, Ambassador
28 Apr 1985	Hon. W. L. Morrison, Ambassador
2 Feb 1989	P. J. Flood, Ambassador
6 Apr 1993	A. R. Taylor, Ambassador

Japan

Tokyo

24 Dec 1940	Sir John G. Latham, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary
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(Diplomatic relations ceased on the declaration of war)

24 Mar 1947	W. Macmahon Ball, Head of Mission
2 Sep 1947	P. Shaw, Head of Mission
29 Nov 1949	W. R. Hodgson Head of Mission
13 Jun 1952	Dr E. R. Walker, Ambassador
14 Apr 1956	Sir Alan Watt, Ambassador
16 May 1960	L. R. McIntyre, Ambassador
19 Jun 1965	Sir Allen Brown, Ambassador
6 Apr 1970	Gordon Freeth, Ambassador
20 Feb 1974	K. C. O Shann, Ambassador
3 Mar 1977	J. L. Menadue, Ambassador
25 Mar 1981	Sir James Plimsoll, Ambassador
30 Sep 1982	Sir Neil Currie, Ambassador

26 Aug 1986	W. G. T. Miller, Ambassador
28 Jun 1989	F. R. Dalrymple, Ambassador
8 Dec 1993	Dr A. T. Calver, Ambassador

Malaya

Kuala Lumpur

7 Sep 1955	H. M. Loveday, High Commissioner
22 Dec 1955	T. K. Critchley, Commissioner
31 Aug 1957	T. K. Critchley, High Commissioner

(Malaya became Malaysia after uniting with North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore on the 16 September 1963)

Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur

16 Sep 1963	T. K. Critchley, High Commissioner
12 Dec 1965	A. J. Eastman, High Commissioner
9 Jul 1969	J. R. Rowland, High Commissioner
8 Feb 1973	A. R. Parson, High Commissioner
28 Apr 1976	G. B. Feakes, High Commissioner
29 Apr 1980	C. G. Woodard, High Commissioner
15 Feb 1984	D. W. Evans, High Commissioner
21 Apr 1987	C. O. F. Hogue, High Commissioner
10 May 1990	F. C. Murray, High Commissioner

Singapore

16 Sep 1963 R. A. Woolcott, Deputy High Commissioner

17 Jan 1964 W. B. Pritchett, Deputy High Commissioner

(Singapore became independent from Malaysia on 9 August 1965)

Singapore**Singapore**

Sep 1941 V. G. Bowden, Official Representative

(Post evacuated on 14 February 1942)

21 Mar 1946 C. Massey, Commissioner

16 May 1950 L. R. McIntyre, Commissioner

11 Apr 1951 T. K. Critchely, Commissioner

9 Nov 1952 L. R. McIntyre, Commissioner

23 Mar 1954 Sir Alan Watt, Commissioner

7 Apr 1956 R. L. Harry, Commissioner

19 Dec 1957 D. W. McNicol, Commissioner

5 Nov 1960 G. A. Jockel, Commissioner

(See Malaysia for period between 1963-1965)

13 Aug 1965 W. B. Pritchett, High Commissioner

26 Mar 1967 A. R. Parsons, High Commissioner

24 Jun 1970 N. F. Parkinson, High Commissioner

1 Mar 1974 R. N. Birch, High Commissioner

18 Apr 1977 L. Corkery, High Commissioner

11 Jan 1978 G. J. Price, High Commissioner

27 Apr 1981 K. McDonald, High Commissioner

22 Dec 1983 W. P. J. Handmer, High Commissioner

9 Mar 1988 M. R. McGovern, High Commissioner

4 Sep 1990 A. D. Brown, High Commissioner

Thailand

Bangkok

16 Dec 1945 A. J. Eastman, Political Representative

16 Sep 1946 A. J. Eastman, Consul-General

9 Oct 1949 A. H. Loomes, Consul-General

22 Oct 1951 A. H. Loomes, Charge d Affaires, as interim

14 Apr 1952 B. C. Ballard, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister
Plenipotentiary

21 Feb 1955 D. O. Hay, Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary

6 Dec 1955 D. O. Hay, Ambassador

6 Jun 1957 J. K. Waller, Ambassador

29 Apr 1960 M. R. Booker, Ambassador

27 Jun 1963 A. H. Loomes, Ambassador

9 Jun 1968 D. W. McNicol, Ambassador

12 Nov 1969 T. K. Critchley, Ambassador

4 May 1974 M. L. Johnston, Ambassador

17 Feb 1978 G. A. Jockel, Ambassador

23 May 1985 R. J. Smith, Ambassador

6 Jan 1989 R. W. Butler, Ambassador

29 Apr 1992 J. P. McCarthy, Ambassador

APPENDIX IV

A Brief History of the Administrative Bodies Responsible for Australia's Overseas Works Programme ⁴

Prior 1971	Individual departments responsible for the procurement of premises overseas. CDW acts as technical advisor
April 1971	OPB established under the management of the Vice-President of the Executive Council. To be advised by the OPC
May 1971	OPB transferred to the Department of the Environment, Aborigines and the Arts. Interim staffing level of six.
December 1972	OPB transferred to the Department of Services and Property. Concern expressed as to operational capacity of the OPB
November 1973	OPB assumes progressive responsibility for property management at overseas posts
April 1974	OPB assumes property management services at all overseas posts
September 1974	OPB transferred to Department of Foreign Affairs. OPB organised into an operational area, a policy and planning area and a technical area. Staffing increase to 56
December 1976	OPB transferred to the Department of Service and Property and restructured. The domestic and the overseas property function are amalgamated into the Property and Survey Division. The overseas property function is carried out by the OOB (Operations) and the Planning and Review Branch (Policy Development and Projects)
May 1978	Staffing numbers for overseas property function fall to 48
March 1981	Following an internal review OPO established

⁴ "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," in *Australian National Audit Office Audit Report, 1992-93*, ed. Rod Nicholas (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992), 116.

July 1984	OPO restructured along functional lines rather than regional lines, creating an Overseas Estate Branch and an Overseas Provisioning Branch. Strategic planning is the responsibility of the Overseas Estate Branch
November 1986	OPO reviewed and becomes the OOD comprising the Overseas Estate Branch and the Overseas Construction and Services Branch.
July 1987	OOD renamed the OPG and becomes a separate sub programme with the Department of Administrative Services
April 1989	The government confirms the OPG as the central agency for the provision of overseas property related functions and service to all budget funded clients and for the management of the estate. OPG also confirmed as the agency responsible for the setting of office and residential standards and rent setting. DFA argues for OPG to be returned under its administration.
July 1989	OPG takes over administration of rent ceilings for residential accommodation
November 1989	Minister for DFAT proposes that the OPG be transferred to his department. This rejected by the Minister for DAS.
August 1990	Government confirms that a cost recovery regime for overseas staff housing would not be effective

APPENDIX V

Department of External Affairs Capital Works Projects-Overseas Buildings Estimated Cash Requirements 1960-1965⁵

			Estimated Cash Requirements				
Project	Requirement to 1965	Estimated Cost	1960-1961	1961-1962	1962-1963	1963-1964	1964-1965
Accra	Purchase or build official residence	£40,000	£2,000	£38,000			
Bonn	Purchase or build official residence before present lease expires	£50,000			£50,000		
Colombo	Purchase or build joint office	£50,000		£50,000			
Djakarta	Build joint office	£80,000			£5,000	£5,000	£70,000
Karachi	Probable office and staff housing at new capital-Rawalpindi	(e)					(e)

⁵ NAA: A1838, 1428/4/12 Part 2, "Department of External Affairs Capital Works Projects-Overseas Buildings Estimated Cash Requirements," 21 February 1961.

Manila	Purchase or build official residence	£40,000			£40,000		
New Delhi	Build new official residence (already started)	£75,000	£41,000				
	Build new Joint offices (including electricity sub-station)	£60,000 (c)	£10,000	£50,000			
Paris	Purchase joint office	£250,000	250,000				
Phnom Penh	Purchase office	£28,105 (c)	£12,105	£16,000			
	Build or purchase official residence	£40,000			£40,000		
Rio De Janeiro	Build staff quarters with temporary office	£20,000	£2,500	£17,500			
	Build permanent office and official residence	£60,000				£5,000	£55,000
Tel Aviv	Buy or build an official residence	£30,000					
Tokyo	Build joint office (Including electricity sub-station)	£63,125 (d)	£13,125	£50,000			
Vientiane	Build or buy an official residence	£30,000		£30,000			

Washington	Build joint offices	£720,000	£5,000	£185,000	£245,000	£285,000	
Provision for other staff	Leave bungalows in different environments	£200,000	£2,000	£25,000	£23,000	£50,000	£100,000
Other new works at posts	Additional and replacement furniture, equipment and transport, alterations and additions	£963,000	£263,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000	£175,000
Total		£2,799,230 (a) (g)	£350,730 (b) (f)	£636,500	£578,00	£550,000	£400,000

(a) Include £34,000 expended in 1959/60 in New Delhi

(b) Includes approximately £43,000 re-voted from 1959/60

(c) Liability accepted

(d) Project approved in principle

(e) Probable commitment for which estimate is not yet possible

(f) Does not include provision for Paris purchase proposal pending outcome of investigations now in progress

(g) Includes estimates for Paris purchase proposal

APPENDIX VI

Schedule of Necessary Approvals, Agreements & Proposed and Actual Progress of Project Development⁶

Item No	Stage of Development	Action Required by or from Official or Department								
		(A) Secretary	(B) Minister	(C) Cabinet	(D) OBC	(E) PSB	(F) Treasury	(G) Works	(H) DEA	(I) Post
1	Investigation of need to build & availability of site		Approval if travel involved				Informed	Make architect available for inspection if required	Prepare advice to other departments. & the submission to OBC	Recommend to DEA
	(a) Target date									
	(b) Actual date									
2	Requisition of land	Approval to approach B or C	Approval OR Approval				Funds	Make report on inspection to DEA	Prepare necessary submissions	
	(a) Target date									
	(b) Actual date									

⁶ NAA: A1838, 1428/19/10 Part 5, "Schedule of Necessary Approval, Agreements and Proposed and Actual Progress of Project Development," 1966.

3	Determination of accommodation requirements	Approval			Agreement	Approval	Agreement	Advice if required	Prepare	
	(a) Target date									
	(b) Actual date									
4	Sketch Plans & Preliminary estimates of cost (See also 5)	Approval to approach B	Approval		Agreement to sketch plans & method of document & preliminary estimate	Approval on basis of D	Funds for engagement of consultant	Prepare architectural submission. Prepare preliminary estimates, if possible necessary recommending	Prepare necessary submission	Security required Scheduled Att: OS posts to comment on sketches prior to OBC consideration
	(a) Target date									
	(b) Actual date									
5	Engagement of architect & preliminary estimates of cost. (see also 4)				Endorse or query estimate			Engage architect & other consultants as & if necessary	Prepare necessary submissions	
	(a) Target date									
	(b) Actual date									
6	Raising project to programme status		Approval Or Approval to order of expenditure of letting of contract on basis of initial OBC agreement				Admission of overall liability & granting of cash requirement	Recommend on all aspects of tenders		

APPENDIX VII

Functions of the Overseas Property Bureau⁷

- (a) Formulate appropriate annual programmes of overseas property requirements having regard to-
 - 1. Needs of various departments, and priorities indicated by them;
 - 2. Relative merits of rental, purchase and building arrangements;
 - 3. Maintenance requirements
- (b) Purchase and hold land, office and residential accommodation on behalf of the Commonwealth.
- (c) Dispose of land, office and residential accommodation which is surplus to the Commonwealth's requirements.
- (d) Arrange for the construction of office and residential accommodation.
- (e) Arrange leases and act as lessor/lease on behalf of the Commonwealth in respect of land, office and residential accommodation.
- (f) Arrange for the repair and maintenance of office and residential accommodation.
- (g) Arrange for the provision and maintenance of furniture and fittings required for offices and residences.
- (h) Determine and promulgate standards for office and residential accommodation, including furniture and fittings.

⁷ NAA: A3211; 1974/122 Part 1, "Functions of the Overseas Property Bureau."

APPENDIX VIII

Scheduling for Joint Chancery Projects⁸

Chanceries	Bangkok	Kuala Lumpur	Singapore	Saigon	Jakarta
Schematic Design	Jun/Jul 1973	Jun/Jul 1973	Jun/Jul 1973	Jun 1973	Jun/Jul 1973
Design Development	Aug/Oct 1973	Aug/Oct 1973	Aug/Oct 1973	Jul 1973	Sep 1973
Contract Documentation	Nov 1973/ May 1974	Nov 1973/ May 1974	Nov 1973/ May 1974	July/Oct 1973/	Sep 1973/ April 1974
Tenders	May/Jun 1974	May/Jun 1974	May/Jun 1974	Nov 1973	Apr/May 1974
Construction Start	Jul 1974	Jul 1974	Jul 1974	Jan 1974	Jul 1974
Construction Finish	Feb 1976	Feb 1976	Feb 1976	Jul 1974	Jul 1976

⁸ NAA: A1838, 1428/1/51 Part 2, letter from J. Ryan First Assistant Secretary Management Services Division Department of Foreign Affairs to the Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs, "Major Construction Projects," 4 June 1973.

APPENDIX IX

List of Buildings Suggested by W. Millar⁹

Building	Architect	Location
A.I.A Bank	Palmer & Turner (American Firm)	Jalan Ampang
Bangkok Bank	Eric Taylor & Associates	Jalan Bandar
Brunei Istana	Booty Edwards	Jalan Ampang
Chartered Bank	Booty Edwards	Jalan Ampang
E.P.F Building	Booty Edwards	Federal Highway, PJ
International Airport	Booty Edwards	Subang
Kwong Yik Bank	T.S. Leong	Jalan Bandar
Lee Wah Bank	Iversen Van Sitteren	Old Market Square
Ministry of External Affairs	Seow, Lee & Heah	Jalan Hose
Mercantile Bank	Booty Edwards	Jalan Pasar Besar
National Mosque	P.W.D.	Lake Gardens
National Museum	Ho Kok Yew	Jalan Damansara
Parliament House	P.W.D.	Lake Gardens
Rubber Secretariat Building	Swan & Maclaren	Jalan Ampang
University	Various	Petaling Jaya
Thai Embassy	Various	Jalan Ampang

List of Other Buildings Noted by J. Wade

Turf Club	Ipoh
Malayan Finance Corporation	Old Market Square
C. E. B. Building	Bangaar Road
Government Offices	Petaling Jaya
Dragon Court, Merlin Hotel (Roof only-detailed photographs if possible)	
Indonesian Embassy	Singapore

⁹ NAA: A1838, 1428/73/6 Part 2, report from F. Robertson, "Visit-Mr. J. C. Wade 16-17 May 1966."

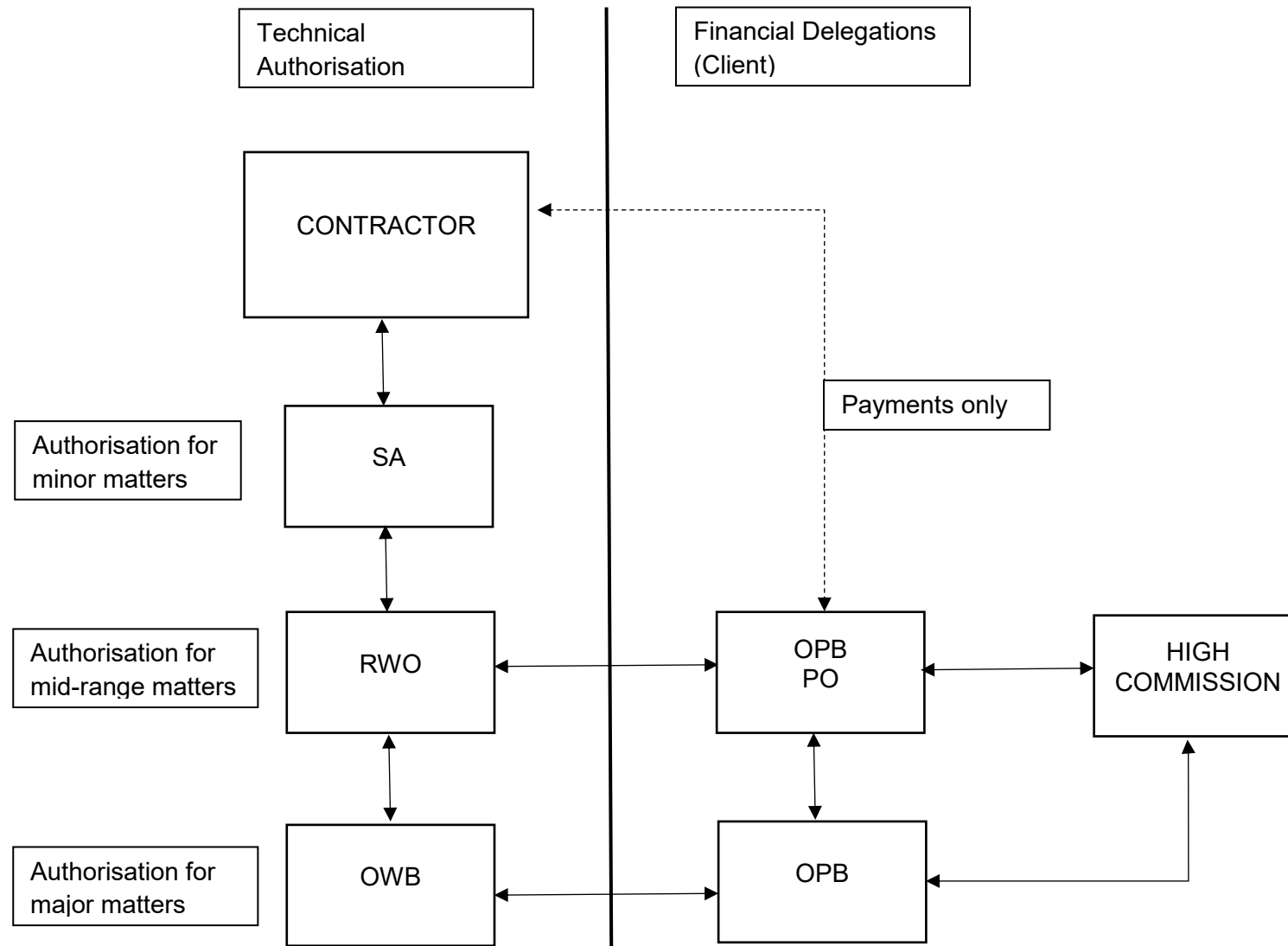
APPENDIX X

Contract Admin & Supervision Basic Relationship Diagram¹⁰

Key:

SA	Supervising Architect (Consultant or O.W.B. Construction Group)
RWO.	Overseas Works Branch Regional Works Officer
OWB.	Overseas Works Branch (Sydney)
OPB PO	Overseas Property Bureau Project Officer
OPB	Overseas Property Bureau (Canberra)

¹⁰ Department of Housing and Construction Overseas Works Branch, *Australian High Commission: Singapore Construction of New Chancery Contract Administration Procedure* (Sydney: Overseas Works Branch Construction Group, April 1975).



APPENDIX XI

Owned and Leased Properties Overseas as at 31 December 1974-1977¹¹

	Chanceries (including Offices)		Residences		Total	
	1974	1975	1974	1975	1974	1975
Owned	18	18	277	320	295	338
Leased	109	112	935	941	1044	1053
Total	127	130	1212	1261	1339	1391
% Owned	14.2	13.8	22.9	25.4	22.0	24.3

	Chanceries (including Offices)		Residences		Total	
	1976	1977	1976	1977	1976	1977
Owned	20	23	324	363	334	386
Leased	110	104	896	830	1006	934
Total	130	127	1220	1193	1350	1320
% Owned	15.4	18.1	26.6	30.4	25.5	29.2

¹¹ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," 58.

APPENDIX XII**OPG Number of Properties by Type at all Posts¹²**

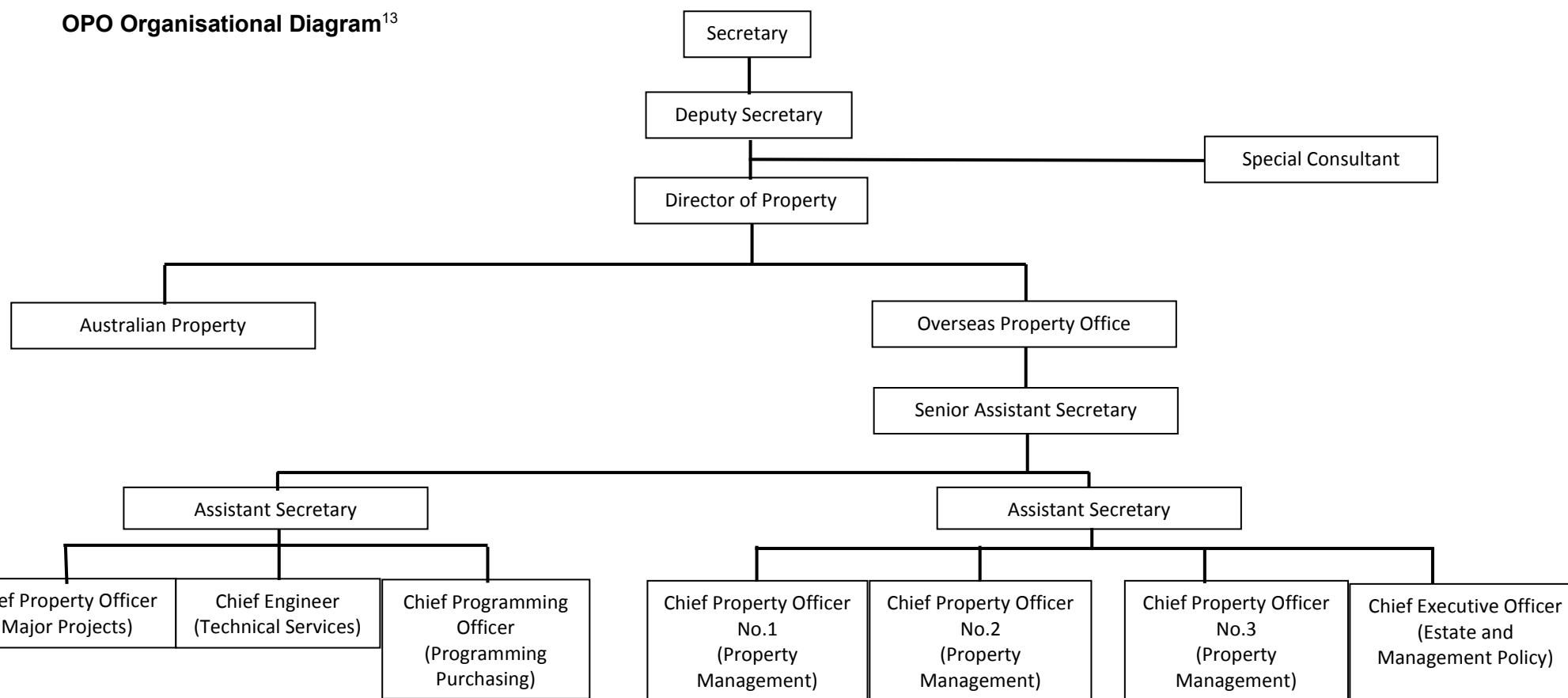
Property Type	1981-1982			1986-1987			1990-1991		
	Owned	Leased	Total	Owned	Leased	Total	Owned	Leased	Total
Chanceries	24	96	120	25	91	116	24	78	102
HOM				42	31	73	51	37	88
Staff Residence	417	841	1258	397	746	1143	428	796	1244
Recreation Facilities	11	24	35	10	30	40	10	30	40
Vacant Land	16		16	7		7	11		11
Other-storage/garage				4	5	9	1	20	21
Total	468	961	1429	485	903	1388	525	961	1486
Percent Owned vs Leased	32.8%	67.2%		34.9%	65.1%		35.3%	64.7%	

¹² "Efficiency Audit, Department of Administrative Services, Overseas Property Group," in *Australian National Audit Office Audit Report*, 8.

APPENDIX XIII

OPO Organisational Diagram¹³

Department of Administrative Services
Overseas Property Control



¹³ Australia Parliament Joint Committee of Public Accounts, "Finance Minute on Report 172-Financing and Administration of Property Owned or Leased Overseas by the Commonwealth Government," 31.