

The National Museum, Canberra, and its Garden of Australian Dreams

RICHARD WELLER

The Commonwealth of 'Australia' is almost a century old and it is frantically planning its birthday. Exacerbated by Republicanism, Millennialism and the Sydney Olympic Games, the production and contention of symbolism appropriate to the occasion are rife. Consequently, several high-profile public projects have been presented as open design competitions. More than just commemorative titles or disinterested markers in time and space, projects such as Federation Square in Melbourne, Federation Garden in Sydney, and The National Museum of Australia in Canberra are focused moments that not only extend the internal intrigues of design discourse, but also apprise the nation's future as an historical project and which expect to cast such thinking into public space. The projects must, at some level, engage with aspects of national identity and national edification, even if only to negate aspects of nationalism and parochialism. Such projects present ideological and aesthetic risks. Meanings are at stake. Such projects must trade on all levels, they are popular spectacles, educational narratives, tourist attractions and academic texts. They are also, of course, built for posterity.

Room 4.1.3, a design group that Vladimir Sitta and myself direct, has submitted designs for the three projects. It produced finalist landscape designs for Melbourne's Federation Square (1998), was awarded second place in Sydney's Federation Garden competition (1999) and is now constructing a winning landscape design of the National Museum of Australia on the Acton Peninsula, Canberra (figures 1 and 2).¹ Structured around three themes — land, people, nation — the National Museum is primarily concerned with the popular culture of Australia. Through this material it is charged with representing the meaning of Australia, a situation significantly complicated

by its coupling with the Aboriginal Gallery of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

National landscapes

In the fine arts and popular culture, Australians have drawn on landscape as the prime referent for their identity and mythologies. Now, however, that land is almost wholly deconstructed and technologically manipulated. The threads of empire, in grids, did not seamlessly extend over the Australian continent as maps would suggest. New maps and Old World landscape images were forged, then superimposed on a landscape otherwise thought to be monstrous and on Aborigines thought outside the economy of salvation. Indigenous culture, which understood the landscape as a flow of spirit, was (temporarily) written out of history. But the ground and voices bear evidence of erasures and layered inscriptions. The blank ground of *terra nullius*, the legal doctrine of an empty place before British colonization becomes palimpsest. But 'palimpsest', while technically correct, is not a violent metaphor. Australia is and always has been a violent place.²

In the vernacular, the land is simplified and mythologized as either beach, outback, bush, suburbia or city, but it is increasingly appreciated that Australia is a mosaic of different, interconnected and fragile bio-regions. Similarly, recent maps that show the wandering lines of over three hundred Aboriginal nations have complicated the nation's relatively simple cartographic self image (see figure 10). It is also well known that contemporary Australia is an amalgam of over two hundred cultures that have coalesced here mainly

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, CANBERRA, AND ITS GARDEN OF AUSTRALIAN DREAMS

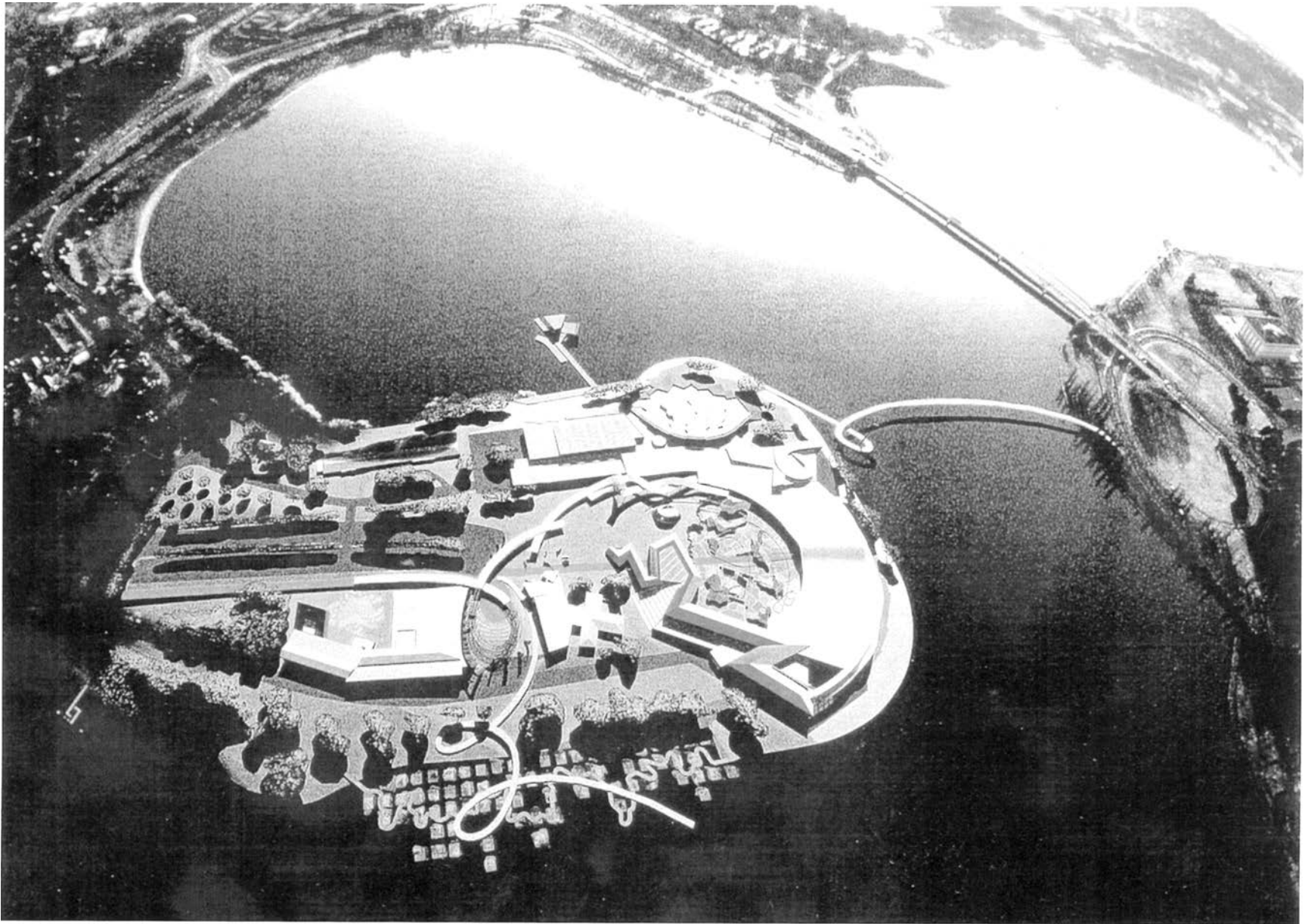


FIGURE I. *Original masterplan for the National Museum of Australia, the Aboriginal Gallery of Australia and AIATSIS on the Acton Peninsula, Canberra, 1997 (courtesy ARM).*

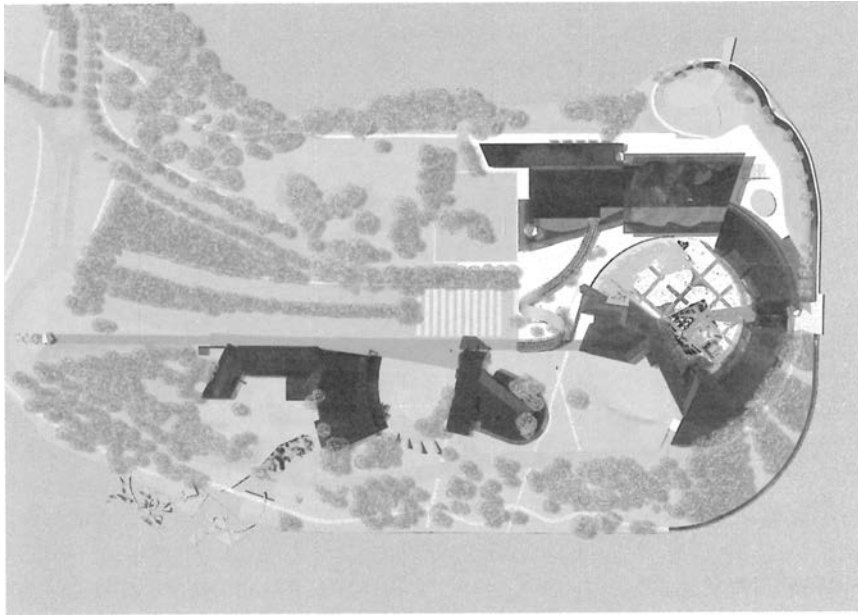


FIGURE 2. *The latest masterplan reveals a loss of some of the scheme's calligraphic qualities, upon which an interweaving of architecture and landscape spaces depended.*

during the calamitous course of the twentieth century. At the close of that century, in a nation of diversity networked into a global sense of the local, one wonders to what extent the Australian landscape can continue as a stable or pre-eminent register of immigrant identities. Nonetheless, all immigrants adopt the new country and therefore inherit its cultural and natural history, which is to say they inherit the landscape.

Even if the land is no longer a stable reflection of our progress and fewer people actually work the land, the nation's grounding in ecological and metaphysical terms will remain considerably landscape-based for several reasons. First, the presence of landscape no matter where one is in Australia is strong. It leaks through large gaps in most Australian efforts at town planning. This presence also bears deep time and its ghosts. Second, Australian history is if not a socio-political epic then certainly a monumental collision of modernity and environment, so any future history is constructed on that ubiquitous condition. This is also aesthetic, for the shrapnel is

everywhere. Australian developments seem out of place, unlike in Europe where culture and nature appear on the surface to have resolved their differences and settled for the acquiescence of the garden. Third, many of Australia's ways of life are bound into the use of open space. It is an outdoors nation with a healthy disrespect for architectural enclosure and its authority. Fourth, its ecosystems are ravaged. The equation of people to place is now unbalanced. It is well known and well documented that the Australian landscape mocks settlement and quietly destroys those who break its rules. Even though ecological metaphors tend to victimize 'nature', in Australia the land simply salinates and slips into oblivion. Finally, white and black Australia can only reconcile where land is involved. Perhaps the largest and most hysterical issue in Australian culture today is that of native title land rights and its potential to coexist with pastoral interests.³

This nation's fate will continue to be bound up in how it legislates, manages and represents its various landscapes and built environments. The manner in which this is conducted is dependent on how the nation represents and confronts its history. If the landscape is to be an honest register of identity, then the ground needs to be constantly scrutinized and rewritten. Shifting cultural constructions of landscape need be ongoing, for otherwise lies become truths. The design for the landscape and architecture of the National Museum of Australia has been concerned creatively to embody shifting cultural constructions of landscape and identity.

Bending the rules: site planning of The National Museum of Australia, The Aboriginal Gallery of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Canberra is affected by two landscape styles, both of which are key signatures of power. One is traceable to the British Picturesque, whereby the small prototypes of estates like Stourhead in Wiltshire have been writ large in the artifice of Lake Burley Griffin and in the placement of buildings within landscape 'scenes' which mark out a nationalist narrative. The second style is that of the Cartesian where such grand axes as those found at the Palace of Versailles near Paris and at Washington, DC, literally direct the City of Canberra toward major local landscape features. The axes emanating from

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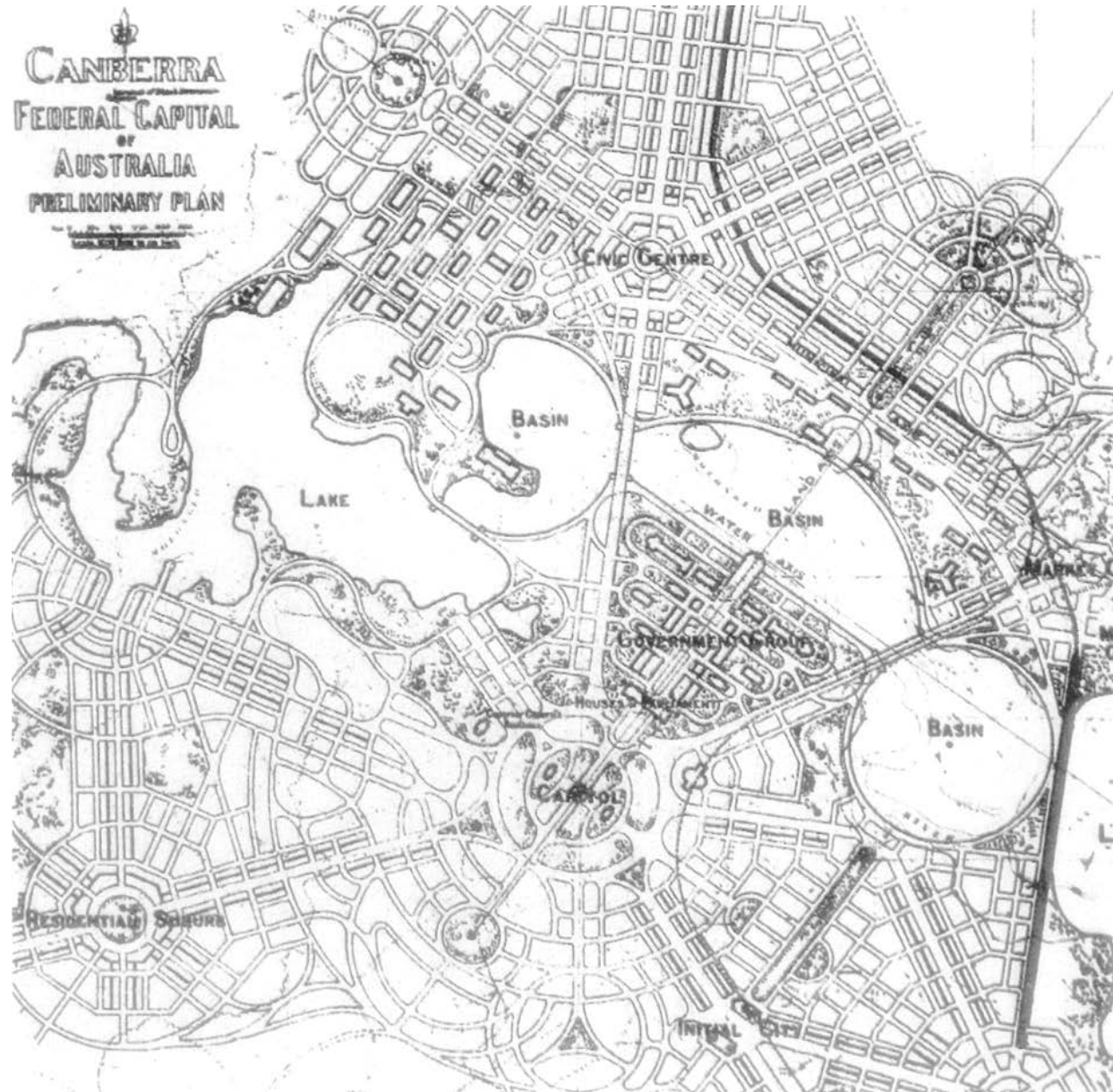


FIGURE 3. Canberra, plan showing Walter Burley Griffin's axes radiating from what is now the site of the National Parliament.

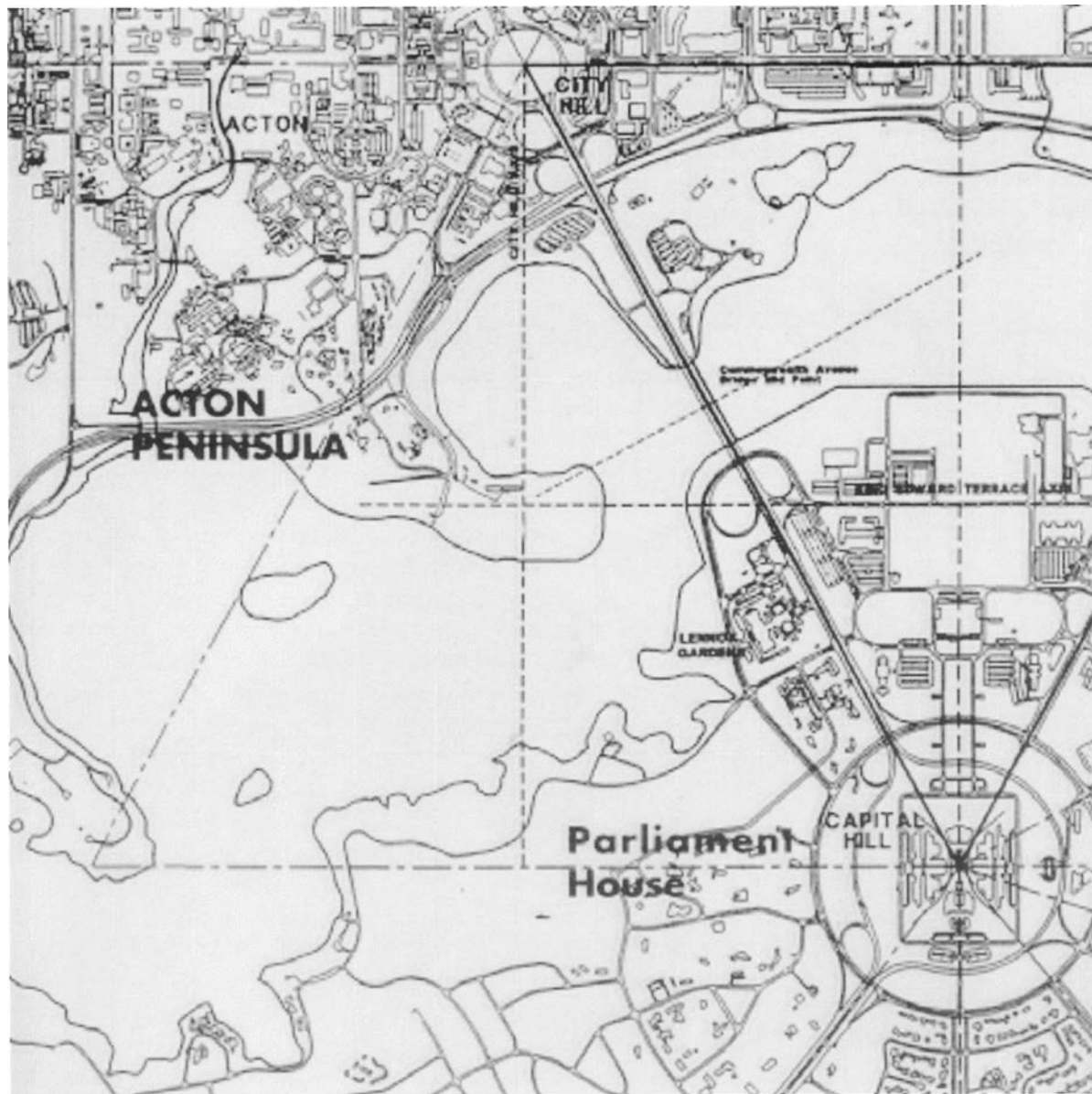
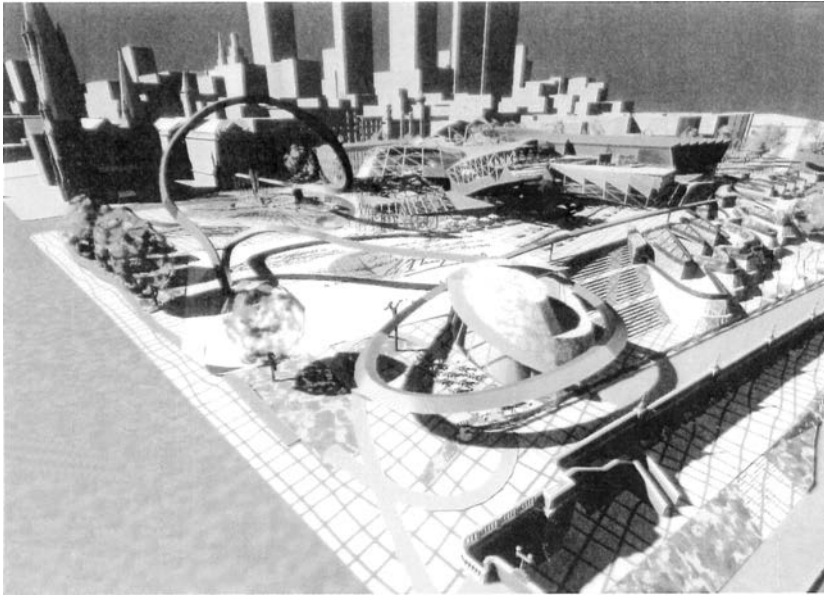


FIGURE 4. Diagram from the brief showing how a symmetrical extending of Walter Burley Griffin's geometry lines could act as development guidelines for the Acton Peninsula. It is these great imaginary axes that the masterplan has taken and looped them in and out of one another.

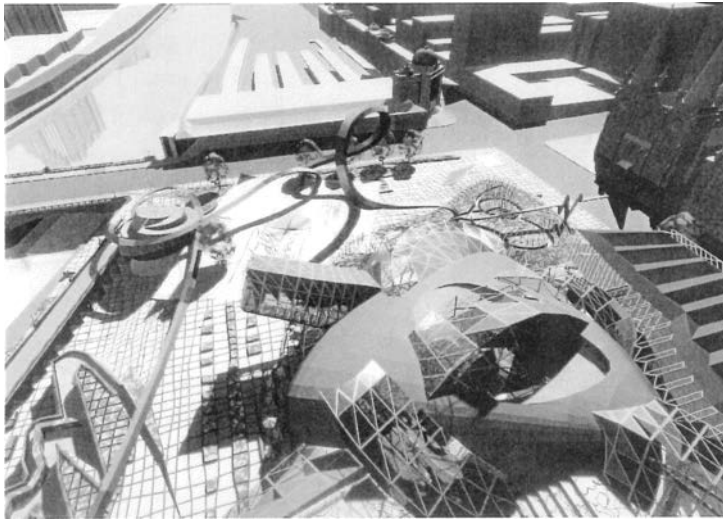
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, CANBERRA, AND ITS GARDEN OF AUSTRALIAN DREAMS



(a)



(b)



(c)

FIGURE 5. Ashton Raggatt McDougall's architecture and Room 4.1.3's landscape design for the Federation Square competition in Melbourne. The scheme illustrates the vibrant potential of thinking of architecture as 'knot' and landscape as 'fabric', both of which are literally 'written' into the city.

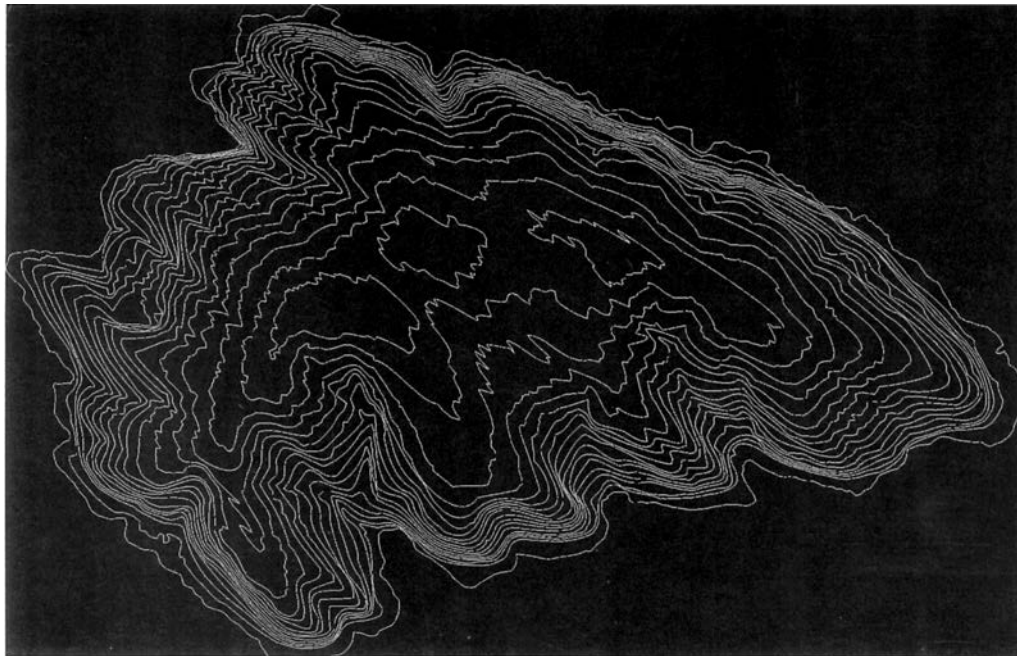
the Federal Parliament (Capital Hill) in Canberra were also intended to align with the nation's other far-flung State capitals, in this sense inscribing a (meta)physical geomancy at the nation's prosthetic heart (figure 3).

If Walter Burley Griffin sought the best of the British and the best of the French, then he was also obsessed with the indigenous landscape. Canberra attempts a grand synthesis, although subsequent designers and planners have

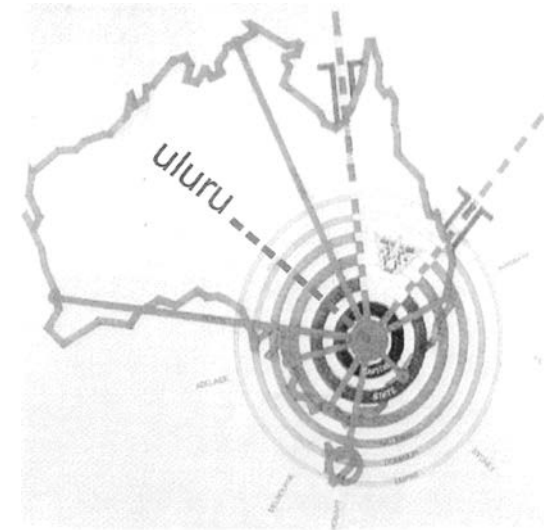
exaggerated its picturesque and Arcadian qualities. Griffin's Canberra was a stiffer attempt to interweave the warps and wefts of urban structure with the existing topography. For Griffin, this may have constituted a grand dialectic with a view to achieving a higher synthesis between culture and nature, the nation and its landscape. The awesome Australian landscape, at the feet of which Griffin wanted the nation to lie, is now somewhat harder to



(a)



(b)



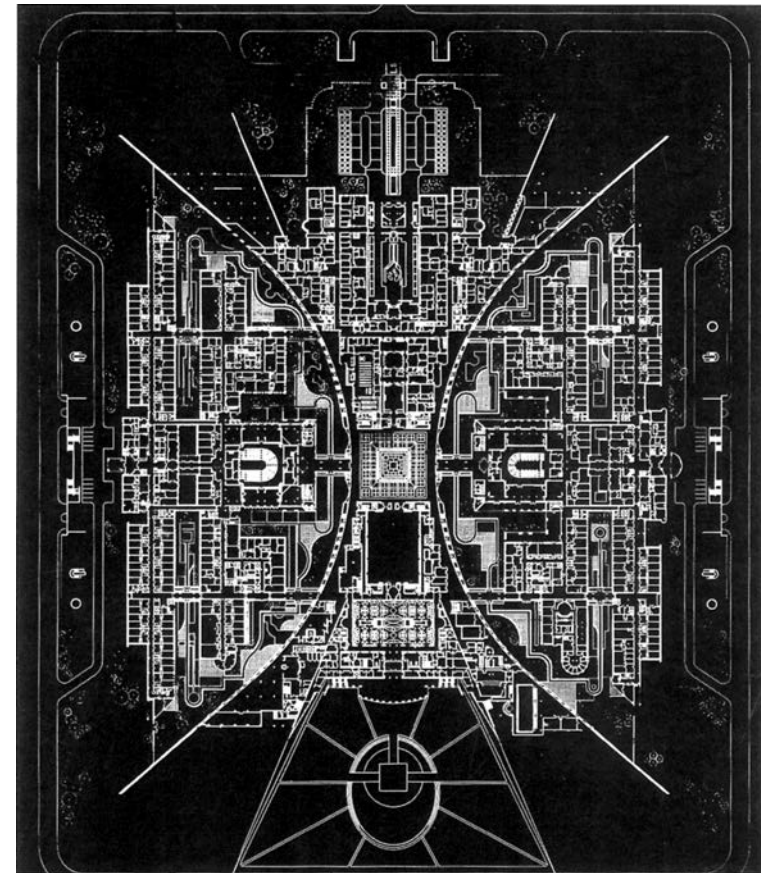
(c)

FIGURE 6. *Uluru and a map of Australia showing the axis connecting Uluru and Canberra.*

romanticize as capable of redeeming modernity's spiritual exhaustion or of correcting its technological excesses.⁴

Transcendent Cartesian landscapes overrule the land with Platonic geometry, symmetrical rationalism in plan, and are absolutely perspectival on the ground. English landscape gardens overwrote Cartesian geometry with Arcadian text and supplanted a preened mimesis of landscape painting — scenic, circuitous and fluid. Modern landscapes in their abstract manifestations owe allegiance to the grid or else they signify a bucolic, pacified 'nature' and stand aloof from heroic architectural objects, whereas postmodern landscapes have seen the grid buckle, distort and fragment, being emblematic of late modernity's anxieties. Postmodern landscape architecture sought to correct modernism's dystopia with ecologically informed aesthetic regionalism and site specificity. Some postmodern design work quotes design traditions (and the recent impact of environmental art) as rhetorical devices most simply to plagiarise them for swift commercial purposes, filling space with geometry and souvenirs seemingly bereft of creative intelligence. Too puritanical and intellectually slothful for postmodernity, Australian landscape architecture since the 1970s conflated a love of land with truth, beauty and authenticity, arguing that design methodologies such as logical site analysis could determine appropriate design solutions. This translated into ecological Calvinism, which, since it valiantly represented 'nature', need not concern itself too much with culture. On the other hand, a systematic, methodological sensitivity to a given place was also commercially expeditious and community-friendly; hence, there has been much building and scarce writing.⁵ What then is a landscape design rationale suited to this specific project in this specific time and place?

The brief for this project provided a neat diagram of how one could join the dots and symmetrically extend Griffin's existing mandala so that it would provide straight guidelines for the new developments on the Acton Peninsula. (figure 4). Considering this to be inappropriate for the end of the twentieth century, these imaginary axes have been playfully bent, stretched and knotted into one another.⁶ This, or just the idea of a single straight line being taken and formed into a tangle, lends itself to metaphor and rhetoric, which are important design generators. For example, a line looping back onto itself can be understood as denoting a condition of *feedback*, a process crucial to the self-organizing of complex systems. This is contrary to the linear logic of *trajectory* described by the mechanics of ballistics that organized Versailles. A knotted line returning and bending back on itself traces a dance



(a)

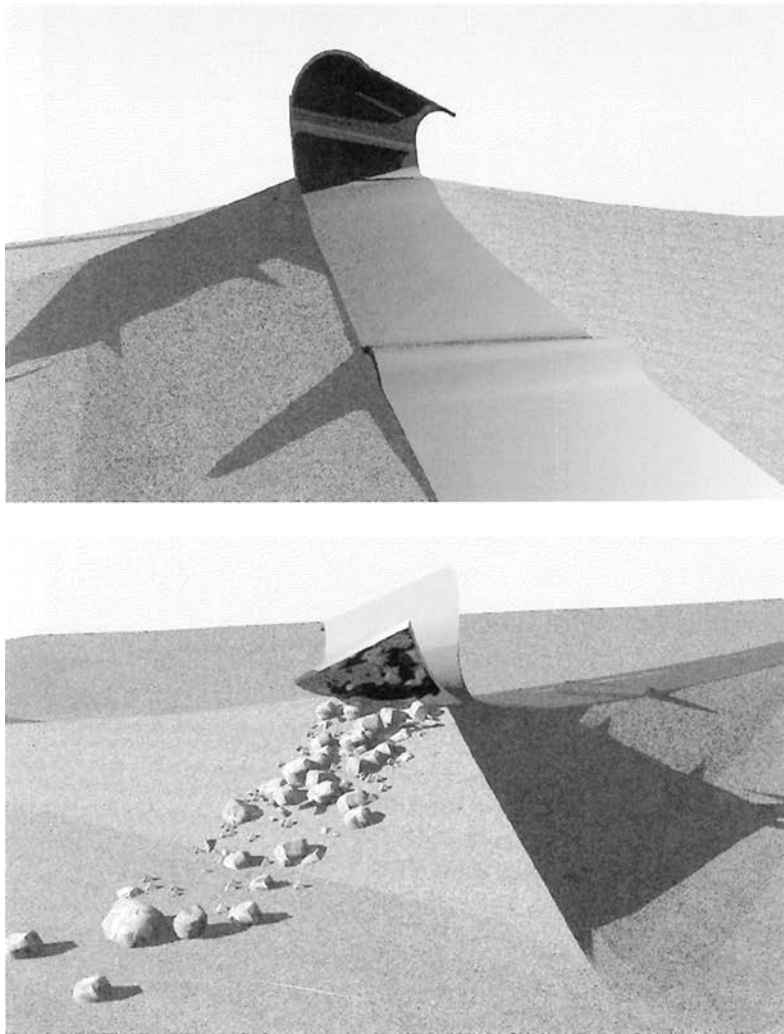


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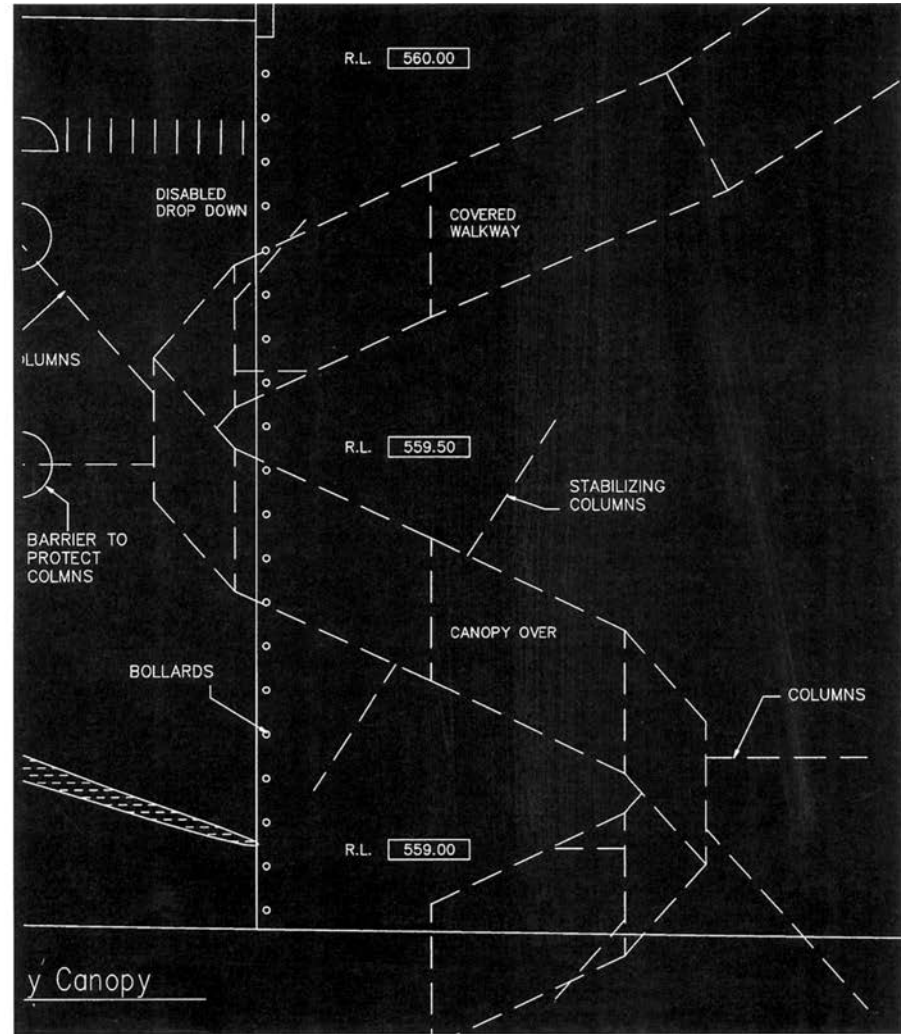
FIGURE 7. Parliament House, Canberra, plan and elevation.

rather than the straight line's march of progress. This teasing of intersecting axes is also to approach modernity at its sacred centre, the intersection of x- and y-axes that bind grids.

This weaving of axes then generates a series of loops as guidelines to configure the buildings and landscape spaces for the new institutions to be sited on the Peninsula. These curving, interwoven lines move beyond



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 8. Two ends of the Uluru axis on the Acton Peninsular. It forms a giant loop at the entry to the museum, while at the other end it forms an earthwork off which it peels upward and back onto itself.

traditions of the curvilinear (William Hogarth's *Line of Beauty* or Confucian organics), signifying only landscape, which in turn has signified nature and the feminine in both Eastern and Western paradigms. The wandering lines of the scheme are not crafted mimicry of visible nature. Rather, they are generated and knotted by the algebraic logic of computation used to model non-Euclidean geometry.⁷

This manipulation of straight lines into wandering tangled forms also posits architecture as *knot* and landscape as *fabric*, which is to re-imagine architecture and landscape as coextensive rather than as emblems of culture and nature juxtaposed. Designed places, especially cultural clots like museums, can be understood as complex knots (built and semiotic), intensifications emerging from the material and immaterial fabric of the broader landscape (figure 5).⁸

Calligraphy of the in between

At Versailles, the main axis connected Louis XIV and infinity; in Griffin's Canberra, the axes connect the nation's main cities and their federal centre. As if to write further into Griffin's orientations, but with far less confidence in axes as meaningful signatures, we have inscribed a new axis along the length of the Acton Peninsula. This new line is orientated toward Uluru, known as Ayers Rock at the centre of Australia (figure 6). This axis became known as the Uluru line and leads the imagination along well-trodden historic and contemporary quests to find the heart and soul of Australia. More than just a parched romance with Australia's interior, the Uluru line brings the centre of the country into conversation with the nation's political and bureaucratic headquarters.⁹ Even though this new axis does not exactly point toward Parliament house, its scale, form and function set it in similar stead to Uluru. Both are great monuments and the meanings that cluster around them set the terms of reference, the dialectical conditions within which this project is couched.

First, we are not suggesting that Uluru is a pan-Aboriginal symbol or a local one; rather, that Uluru operates in contemporary popular culture as a potent shared symbol at various (high and low) levels of cultural production. Uluru, the cliché, remains a powerful carrier of meaning, just as Parliament House does. Both are sites of pilgrimage, ritual and taboos.¹⁰

Accepting a dualistic structure for the moment, Canberra is culture and the desert is nature. Canberra is monumental architecture and the desert is monumental geology. Canberra is political centre and Uluru political periphery. Canberra is constitutional monarchy and the desert is aboriginal law. Canberra is reason and the desert is mysticism. Canberra is picturesque and the desert is sublime. But, an axis only really ensures a duality, making nothing of it. The rigidity or determinism of an axis depends upon the fixity of its two terminal referents and yet as one approaches either fixed end, one finds only shifting meanings. The turbulent knotted figure of the scheme (see figures 1 and 2) then centripetally absorbs these disparate geographic and metaphoric centres, interlocking them at the heart of the project. The axis is thus partially effaced, complexified and explored by the knotted figure of the masterplan and no doubt the workings of the intended institutions it shapes.

And that is the point. The Museum, the Aboriginal Gallery and AIATSIS (the nerve centre of indigenous culture and research in this country) are positioned as occupying the in between, something enframed by dialectics, but increasingly hybridized and emergent. The Uluru line and the knotted configuration of buildings over and across it symbolically trace Australia's

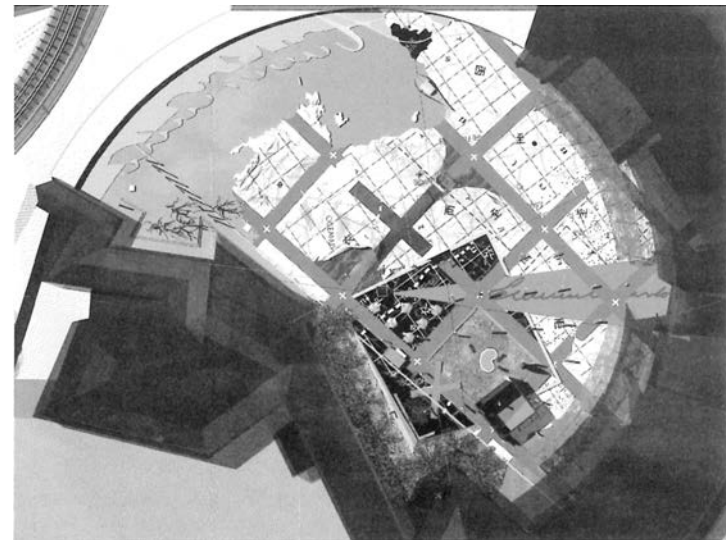


FIGURE 9. *Garden of Australian Dreams, plan.*

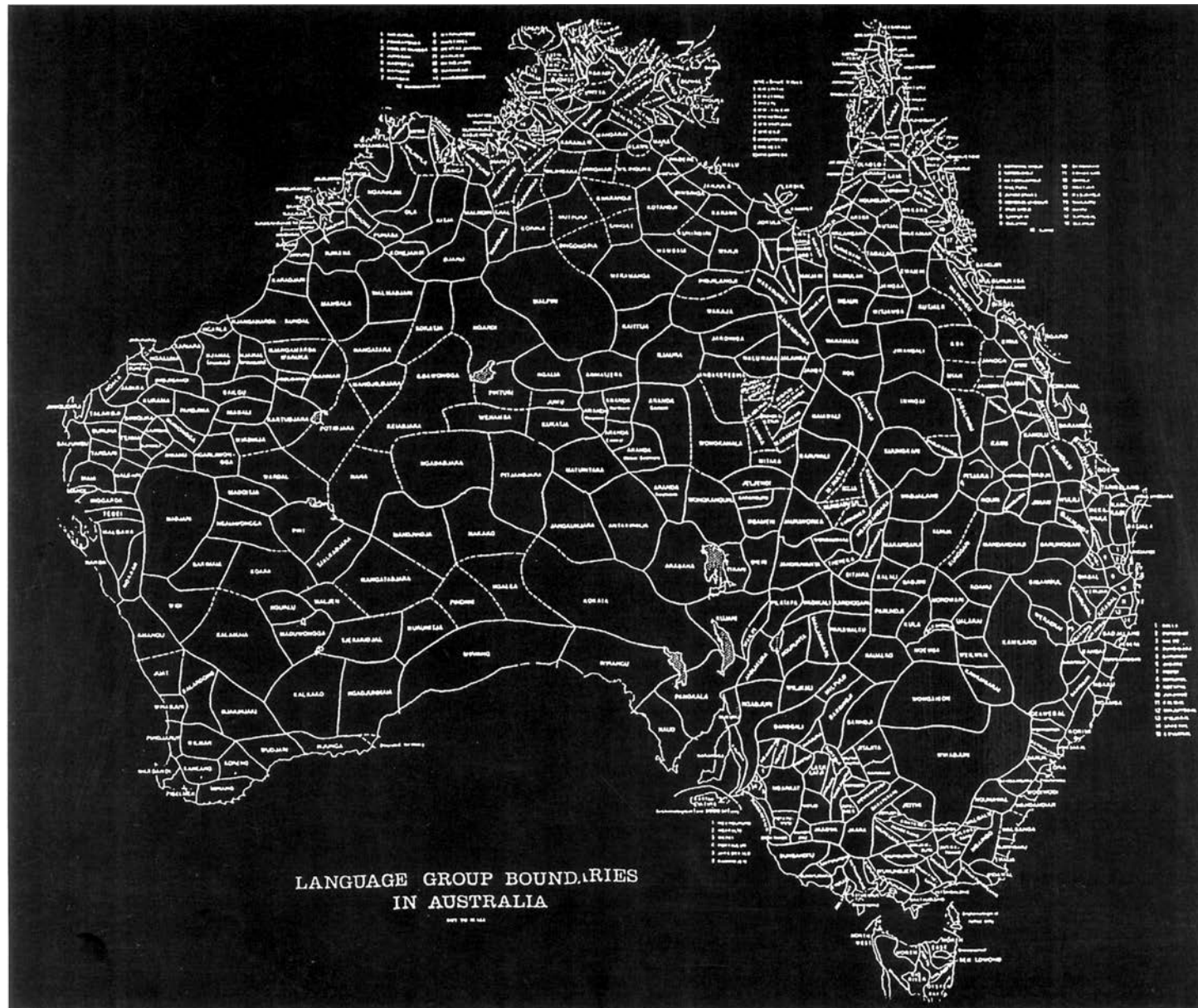


FIGURE 10(a). Two main maps used in the creation of the surface of the Garden of Australian Dreams.

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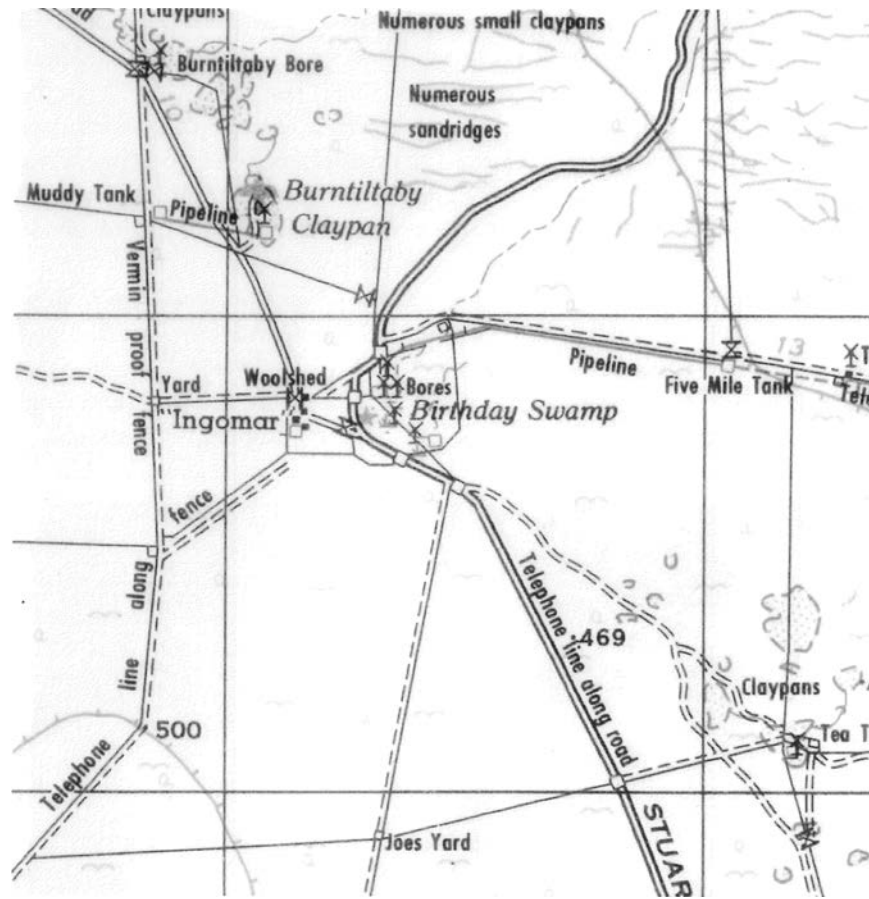


FIGURE 10(b).

introspection to its own inner cultural contradictions, as opposed to the dialectic of the colony and the motherland which frames much of Australia's previous history.

Even though this is somewhat esoteric and the symbolic legibility of site planning is limited, perhaps the new developments at Acton Peninsula will be recognizable and become accepted as configurations of cross-cultural complexities in contemporary Australia. To this end, it should be noted that such themes are repeated and reinforced in the details of the architectural

and landscape designs. The boldest signature of this is the logo of the project, a 30-metre-high pixelated loop designed by the architects as the entrance feature of the museum. This giant loop aligns with and is an extension of the Uluru axis. Furthermore, unlike normal landscape axes, the other end of the Uluru line, while orientated toward the heart of the country, rises up and peels back on itself (figure 8).

Finally, in reviewing some of Griffin's original drawings, we have been impressed by his intention to take urbanity to the water's edge and so the normative post-Griffin typology has been inverted.¹¹ That is, instead of placing a monumental architectural object within a skirt of Arcadian, pastoral or recreated indigenous landscape, we have used the calligraphy of the knotted and looping axis to interweave anti-monumental architecture with landscape spaces, breaking down the orthodox stand-off between architecture and landscape. The main figure of the National Museum also follows and frames the edge of the Acton Peninsula.¹² This inversion, placing buildings where Canberra expects trees, created a well-defined 'inner' space for the museum complex — a space that lends itself to the rich artifice of the garden: the Garden of Australian Dreams (figure 9).

Garden of Australian Dreams

Maps

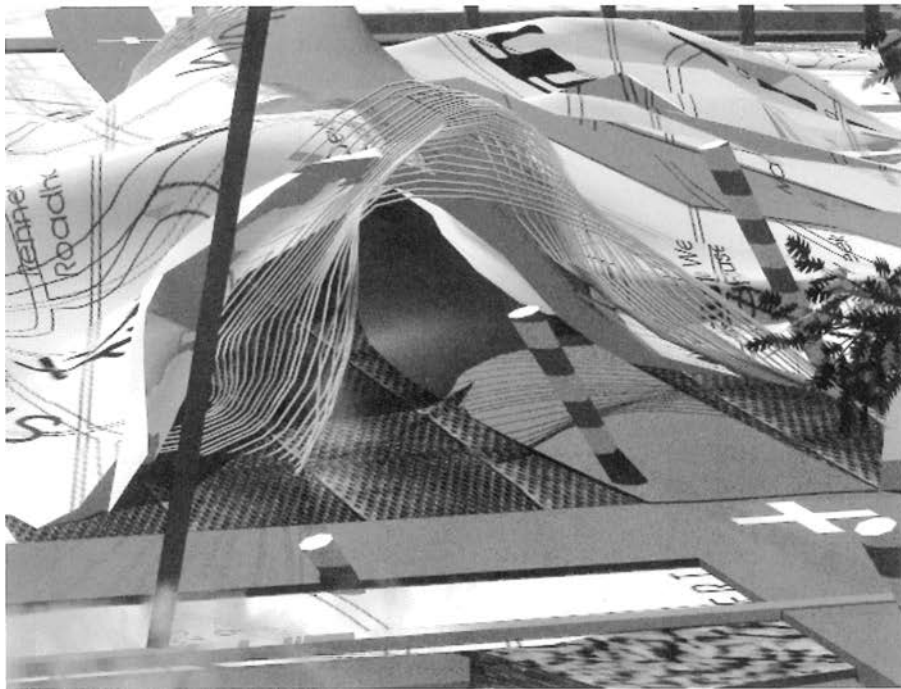
The Garden of Australian Dreams is not a verdant horticultural design, nor is it a set design of a 'dreamscape'. It is a map of Australia upon which the public can walk and read complex layers of information. It is a richly patterned and written concrete surface, the size of a small sports oval made to look like a crumpled paper map or a map printed on fabric. The buildings of the National Museum of Australia and the Aboriginal Gallery of Australia form the space for this.¹³ This dialectical framing, an intensification of issues affecting the whole site planning as already discussed, led us to think of the space as a theatrical interweaving of both the 'Great Australian Dream' and the Aboriginal 'Dreaming'. The former being the ideal of acquiring a cornucopian suburban property and the latter a mystical system of mapping and a comprehensive set of creation myths vested in landscape. Both are landscape-based mythologies; both concern defining boundaries and kinship. Both are profound systems of orientation.

Hence, the two main maps used are a standard English language map of Australia (which reveals virtually no traditional aboriginal presence) and Horton's map of the linguistic boundaries of indigenous Australia (which reveals Australia as an extra complex mosaic of over three hundred aboriginal tribes or nations (figure 10). The names and lines of these two world views clash, interweave, erase and overlay one another, implying a difficult but nonetheless shared cartography. Well known as instruments of power inimical to the colonial project, maps are currently Australia's most contested symbolic terrains. The notion of making a landscape design as a map also suits the context of the nation's political and bureaucratic centre that abstractly compresses all of Australia into its paper trails.¹⁴

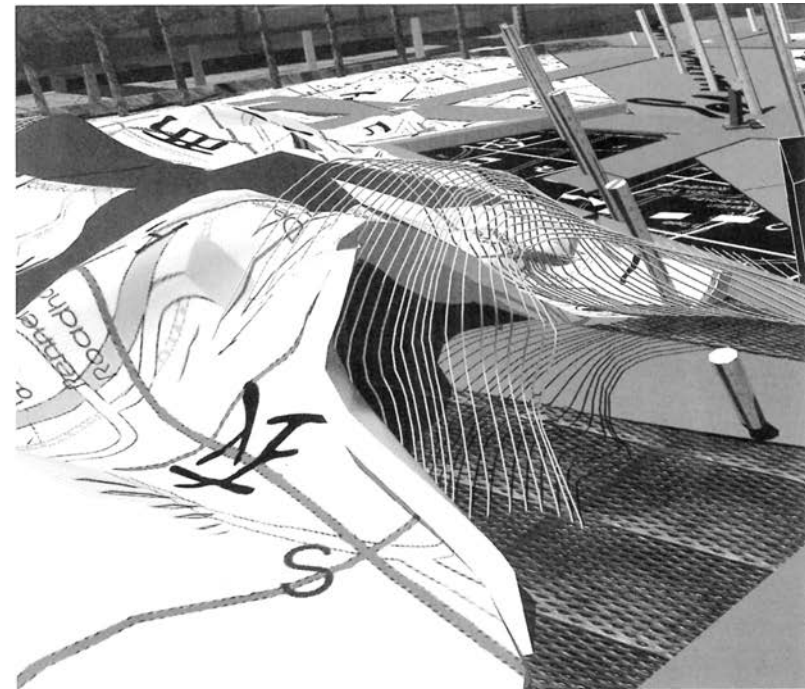
Other mapping information used to form the surface of the Garden includes vegetation, soil and geology maps, electoral boundaries, maps of the

Australia's history of exploration, road maps, a weather map taken from Australia Day 1998, a Japanese tourist map, and various cartographic oddities such as the Dingo Fence and the Pope's Line. The Dingo Fence is the world's longest continuous structure and it runs a few thousand kilometres — from the South Australian to the Queensland coasts — to prevent the wild dogs from moving east. Pope's Line is the Western Australian border, originally a line inscribed on a globe by Alexander VI in 1496 to divide Spanish and Portuguese interests in the Asian region.¹⁵

Finally, some information from sites removed from the actual landmass of Australia is included. Fragments of a map of Gallipoli where Australian blood was spilled in abundance on Turkish soil in the First World War. Maps of the Moon are also overlaid; the moon, a beacon of the Dionysian and Apollonian, reminds one of this century's most humbling and ennobling



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 11. *The tunnel under the map.*

events — not because of the technological prowess required to get there, but because of the views of the Earth. While the garden is about a nation's introspection, inscriptions of lunar cartography register a commonplace late twentieth-century extroversion that transcends the nation. Laid over all this information are two grids: the Mercator binding the Australian Continent to the world, and a local survey grid that attempts to order the chaos of the garden's surface information.

The map provides a continuous ground sheet but it is not always flat. The concrete map surface folds and in part pixilates.¹⁶ The folds form a tunnel so visitors can, in one brief passage, pass under the layers of information (figure 11). In being opposed to the written surface, this tunnel under the map lends itself to different interpretations of place, possibly aural.¹⁷ The word 'home' is carved through the roof of the tunnel so that light can enter. 'Home', translated into the various languages spoken in contemporary Australia, is repeated randomly and intermittently across the surface of the whole map.

Signatures

The map is an official document, a kind of social contract and so it bears various written signatures. As Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton's signature is writ large (figure 12). Barton was largely responsible for the success of the process that federated the Australian colonies into one nation. In contrast to Barton's signature, a red x is also inscribed on the surface of the garden (figure 13). It is (un)common knowledge that many aboriginal people signed (and still do sign) documents with an 'x'. The x is a sign made under duress by someone who could often neither read nor write. The x is simultaneously a mark of negation and absence, the signature of a non-identity. Aborigines have learnt to be suspicious of signing anything.

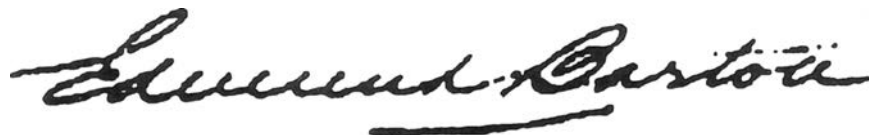


FIGURE 12. Edmund Barton's signature writ large on the ground.

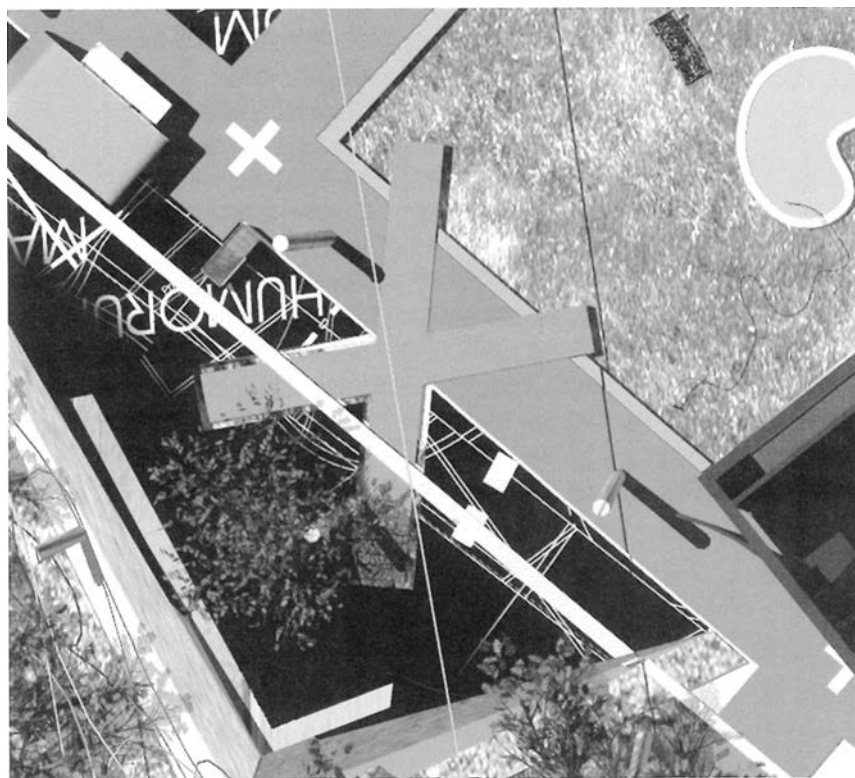


FIGURE 13. The x signature.

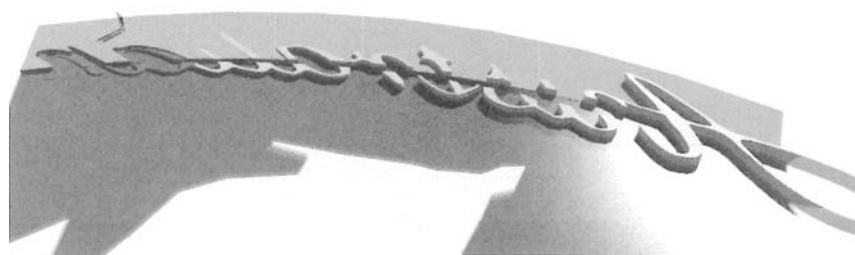


FIGURE 14. The word 'AUSTRALIAN' as a built element.

At the northern water's edge (where Asia would begin on a world map) is a mirror image of the word 'AUSTRALIAN' (figure 14). An 'N' has been added to AUSTRALIA to imply a question or at least a difficult adjective. The word has been forged from our national currency and written into the site large enough for people to meander through the spaces of each letter. This

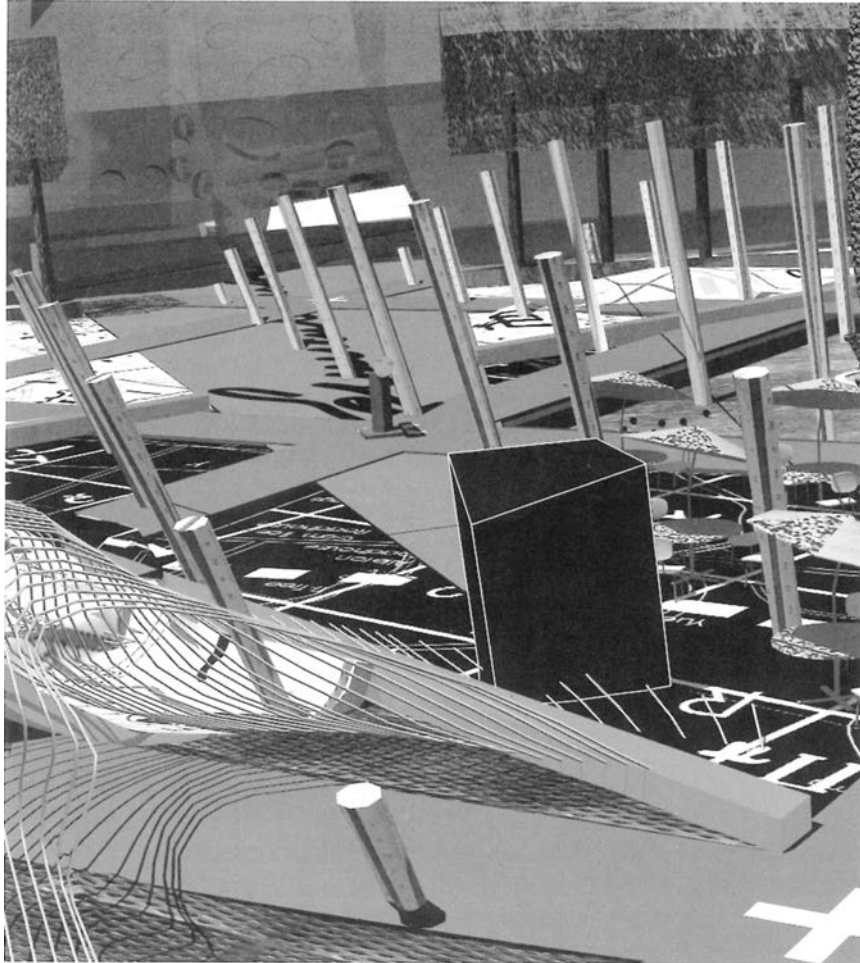


FIGURE 15. *The camera obscura (or black box).*

counterfeit recalls the fact that several of Australia's early painters such as Thomas Whatling and Joseph Lycett were convicted of forgery and hence sent to Australia where their art remained fraudulent in so far as they strained to find the Claudian picturesque in the unruly scribbles of the Australian landscape — a landscape which, as Marcus Clarke suggested, seemed to be made by a nature just learning to write. Inscribed in the ground following the arc of the AUSTRALIAN signature are the various alternative titles applied to this Continent over the course of its imaginary and early cartographic existence.¹⁸

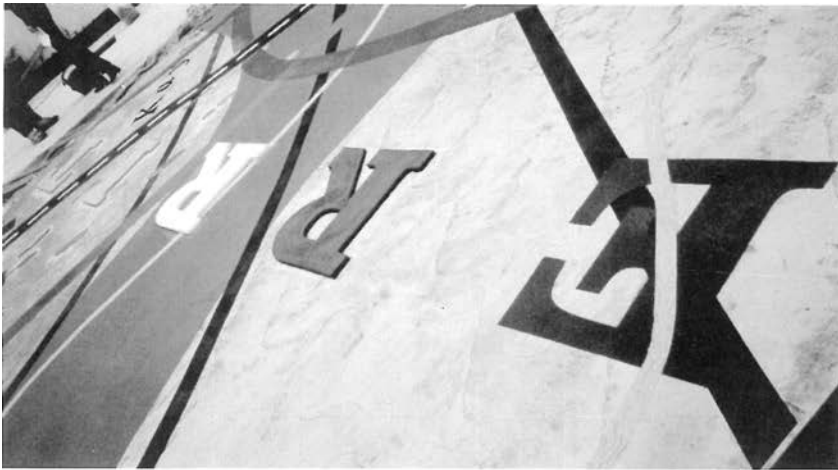
To further these themes of naming, writing, painting and mapping the country, a *camera obscura* is situated in the centre of the map. The *camera*



FIGURE 16. *An Antipodean garden gnome.*



FIGURE 17. *A grid of surveyor's staffs.*



(a)



(b)



(c)

FIGURE 18. Recently constructed test panels of the map surface.

obscura is designed as a black cubicle that can be entered (figure 15). On top of the cubicle sits the garden's gnome, a likeness of a medieval sketch of an antipodean, out of the monstrous humans thought to live in Australia (figure 16). Inside the 'black box' of the *camera obscura* is a small image of the outside view, inverted as happens on the human retina or through the pinhole of a camera. The pinhole is set in an image of landscape painting hung on the exterior of the black box. Fanning out from this point-like ray of vision is a red wedge at the end of which Lake Burley Griffin is glimpsed out of the Museum complex. The red wedge can be understood as a continuation of the Uluru axis that dominates the broader site plan beyond the specific frame of the garden. Set across from the *camera obscura* is a telescope into which is inserted a slide of Australia's interior desert, not a view to Uluru but to a horizon devoid of objects. The *camera obscura* and the telescope see each other seeing Canberra and the desert.

Garden?

There are three landscape or garden types that add to the project's symbolic scope and assist in ameliorating what would otherwise be an overly harsh space. Adjacent to the Aboriginal Gallery is a dense stand of *Eucalyptus*

mannifera gum trees set in burnt ground. In this thicket of ghostly gums are eight blue-painted poles set according to the angles of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, a painting controversially acquired by the Australian Labor Government for the Australian National Gallery in Canberra in the early 1970s.

Adjacent to and following the arc of the National Museum's façade is a line of European trees. As if set in photographic frames of an otherwise smooth movement, each tree is staked so that it leans precisely with the Museum's vertiginous façades. The *allée* of trees is then a waving form mimicked by the earthwork in which they are planted, a sculptural slash through the map surface.

In the midst of the mapped surface is an area of well-kept grass, a small swimming pool, a barbecue and a *Phoenix canariensis* (palm tree) — clichés of Australian suburbia. The x signature cuts into the crisp grass yard. Fronting this grass allotment is an empty room open to the sky, a minimal intimation of Australian domestic space. An 8-metre cube with adjustable components,

this space is reserved for art installations, theatrical events and garden parties served by a café nearby. A grid of surveyor's staffs (calibrated poles) is set out across the area of the grove of Eucalypts, the grass yard and some way into the adjacent map surfaces (figure 17). Finally, the garden includes the use of mist jets at the water's edge in which some twisted dead trees are placed. A thin steel trough at the water's level is designed to be filled with fuel and ignited in the evenings so that a jagged line of fire races across the water and through the dead trees, an outline of the Aboriginal Gallery of Australia's building.

The National Museum of Australia and its centrepiece, the Garden of Australian Dreams, is currently under construction and is due for completion in March 2001 (figure 18).

University of Western Australia

NOTES

1. Senator Richard Alston announced the architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall and Robert Peck von Trethowan in association with Room 4.1.3 as the winning team of the national design competition for the Museum in October 1997. Our finalist scheme for Federation Square in Melbourne was at the behest of the architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall, whose initial scheme placed them in the final five, round two of the competition. Room 4.1.3's entry for the Federation Garden in Sydney's Centennial Park (the park in which Australia initially celebrated its Federation) was thought through in partial collaboration with Paul Carter of the Australia Centre at Melbourne University. The National Museum is financed from a Federation Fund established specifically for expenditure on a range of celebratory events.

Those responsible for Room 4.1.3's productions are Richard Weller, Vladimir Sitta, Elizabeth Burt, Maren Parry, Karl Kullmann, Daniel Firms and Paul Moravcik. Special thanks to Tatum Hands who has assisted our projects and edited this paper.

2. I am grateful for Sister Veronica Brady's brief yet resonant account of psychological and theological tensions between white and black Australia. She explains how Aborigines were placed beyond salvation once they had reneged on the terms of the (impossible) social contract the Europeans offered them. Those terms were a complete loss of identity and land in exchange for Christianity and civil society; V. BRADY, *If These Bones Could Live* (Sydney: Federation Press, 1996).

3. The Mabo decision in 1992 held that the doctrine of *terra nullius* was a fiction. *Terra nullius*, meaning

'empty place', enabled the British effectively to settle Australia without regard to aboriginal interests. If *terra nullius* is a fiction, then it follows that native title over land still exists. Further to this, the Wik people of northern Cape York pressed for and gained recognition that their native title to land could coexist with the pastoral leases in the area. This position was subsequently overturned by legislation.

4. The original indigenous landscape of Canberra is primarily used as a backdrop to the artificial lake and its eclectic edge-planting scheme. Christopher Vernon (University of Western Australia) and James Weirick (University of New South Wales) are both Griffin scholars who have explained aspects of Canberra which were useful at the sketch design stages of this project.

5. This is not to say that Australian landscape architecture remains as it has been described here. A new generation of landscape architects and educators is keenly aware of theoretical and historical concerns. I am also not suggesting that design, which locates its rationale and methods in language and cultural studies rather than in positivistic readings of sites, has proven to be a more successful *modus operandi*. Nonetheless, a critical appraisal of local design practices and recent design history is long overdue and it can only lead to a more sophisticated and relevant design culture.
6. While I am referring to 'we' and 'our' as befits a team collaboration, it should be noted that the main figure of the masterplan was gesturally established by the architects in a stage one submission and it emerges from their recent research. The landscape architects (Room 4.1.3) have then entered the scheme, interpreted it and extended its abstract ideas. I do not claim to speak authoritatively for them. For more on this subject, see HOWARD RAGGATT, 'Howard Raggatt', in N. DAY and L. VAN SCHAİK (eds), *Fin de Siecle? and the Twenty First Century: Architectures of Melbourne* (Melbourne: RMIT Publ., 1993), pp. 113–73.
7. Such geometric gymnastics are increasingly available to designers because of computer-aided design. The manipulation of complex shapes and mathematically sophisticated templates for architecture and landscape architectural form is meaningful unto itself and constitutes formal design research. However, as well as this pure pursuit of what is called here a hyper-naturalism, I have found it useful also to read these forms socio-politically.
8. A conversation about buildings as knots and landscape spaces as fabric began in our work at Federation Square. We have explored the potential of tangled lines as guidelines for buildings and landscape spaces as continuous events. In some instances, tangled lines have literally been used to form a kind of writing and written large-scale text into our designs.
9. On Federation in 1901, artistic attention was drawn toward the Bush as the seat of Australia's uniqueness. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, as the Bush has been poetically exhausted and literally cleared, the 'real' Australia has been relocated to the country's vast interior deserts. This is comprehensively documented in R. HAYNES, *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
10. Uluru is a site to which most Australian's believe they must travel. The mystique of the geological anomaly is well documented in B. HILL, *The Rock: Travelling to Uluru* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1994). More extraordinary accounts of the area relate to the infamous saga of the disappearance of the child Azaria Chamberlain. One of the items in the National Museum of Australia's collection is the child's christening gown; P. REYNOLDS, *The Azaria Chamberlain Case: Reflections on Australian Identity*. Working Paper 47 (St Lucia, 1989).
11. Griffin did not propose buildings at the water's edge of Acton Peninsula but instead proposed buildings at the water's edge of the Parliamentary Triangle, which in turn have been used here to validate our approach to Acton.
12. The site plan has lost ground since the original competition submission. Various community groups supported by landscape heritage academics wishing to save certain trees have forced us to move the buildings from the water's edge. Similarly, as budgetary concerns took shape, the scheme has lost much of its calligraphic complexity and the legibility of weaving built elements into landscape spaces has decreased accordingly.
13. The buildings surrounding the Garden of Australian Dreams are partially formed by knotted guidelines. Some guidelines are built as positive forms, but many of them are used to carve out voids from the architectural volumes.
14. Our concern to build a map as the main landscape design gesture for the Garden of Australian Dreams is influenced by the attention cartography has recently received in Cultural Studies as well as in Australian politics. For example, we have valued S. RYAN, *The Cartographic Eye* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Most recently, Dennis Cosgrove scanned the academic and historical terrain that the Garden of Australian Dreams in part attempts to embody; D. COSGROVE (ed.), *Mappings* (London: Reaktion, 1999).
15. R. HUGHES, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia 1787–1868* (London: Collins & Harvill, 1987).
16. For a fulsome account of the theory and technique of virtual terrain modelling used to form the undulating areas of the Garden of Australian Dreams, see D. FIRNS, 'The Terrain in the Machine', pp. 8–15, *Kerb: Journal of Landscape Architecture*, VI (1999).
17. It is the wish of the authors to commission Paul Carter to compose an installation for this space.
18. The many titles applied to Australia in the past include The Great South Land, Terra Incognita, El Spiritu Santo and New Holland.