

INTERVIEW WITH GRAHAM BLIGH

20 AUGUST 2012

JM

00:00:03 Well, welcome Graham Bligh. Graham you're being interviewed today by myself, John MacArthur, Robert Riddell and Janina Gosseye. It's the 20th of August 2012 and we're at University of Queensland at St Lucia.

00:00:23 We've got a number of questions we'd like to run through with you, but really, the interview can take any kind of form. So, perhaps you'd like to begin by telling us about how you decided to become an architect and what you made of your studies when you began and what teachers you remember from that period.

GB

00:00:44 Well, I think I was probably influenced by the fact that my dad was an architect, because when I was running around four, building sandcastles on the beach, I used to pretend that they were houses or something and get the old man to look at these, and I've just always been going to be an architect. And, what as the rest of that question?

JM

00:01:11 So, you started studying at UQ?

GB

00:01:14 I started studying at UQ, I should say that it's relevant to it that it was hard to get into UQ from Churchie and I had to do geometrical drawing part time at the Commercial College in order to get in. That took a whole year. So, everyone getting in had to do extra studies to get into it.

JM

00:01:50 And, that's because the Churchie curriculum was more academic or?

GB

00:01:53 Oh yes, I vowed I'd never send my kids to Churchie, but it's changed a lot since those days.

JM

00:02:03 And, the Central Tech was still offering architecture then, but you chose - - -

GB

00:02:06 No it wasn't offering, it was doing geometrical drawing.

JM

00:02:13 But, Central Tech were offering diplomas in architecture, but you chose the university over the - - -

GB

00:02:20 Yes, yes. I had a bursary – is a bursary – or a Commonwealth scholarship, which – as most students did have a university Commonwealth scholarship. I mean, I only got three Cs and two Bs getting through Churchie, so I was low – lower academically at Churchie – but I changed when I started architecture.

JM

00:02:55 It says here you worked in Conrad and Gargett for a little while?

GM

00:03:00 Yes, it was a six year course at the university and the first three years were full time and the last three years were part time and in that period – in the part time – I worked with Conrad and Gargett.

JM

00:03:17 As did I. Some years later. Because your father's an architect, you grew up in an architect's house, which has some influence I would have thought too. Do you remember that house?

GM

00:03:36 Oh, very much.

JM

00:03:37 And, do you remember it being built or was it already - - -

GM

00:03:39 No, I was too little for it to be built. The house was – I don't know whether you've see it – but it's - - -

JM

00:03:49 Yeah, I did see it.

GM

00:03:50 In Crombie Street. Yeah, with its [00:03:52]. It was a good house to grow up in. It was exciting sort of interiors and the way the stairs went and the relationship to the outside, it was - - -

RR

00:04:13 Sorry, I don't want to get out of context John, I haven't seen your questions, so...

JM

00:04:18 Janina, can you show Rob these?

RR

00:04:21 I'd better stick to the script.

JM

00:04:24 It's fine for us to wander really, whatever interests us, but I suppose if we keep roughly to chronological order, it's a good question about your immediate environment and your family home.

JM

00:04:37 Where was the house?

GB

00:04:38 In Clayfield.

JM

00:04:39 It came up for sale, last year I think, and I went and had a look at it and it was one of three I understood that your father had designed in a group and I think two of them remained and one had gone.

GB

00:04:53 There was one on the corner opposite and one on the down side next door.

JM

00:04:59 And the down side one had gone. And, these were houses that were, sort of, what you'd call old English houses I suppose, at least the one that - - -

GB

00:05:09 French.

RR

00:05:11 French.

GB

00:05:12 Well, I read that in – I seem to remember reading that in a Women's Weekly comment or something.

JM

00:05:20 Anyway they were stylish houses and very much of their time and I'm not sure what their time was, I guess it's the 30's is it?

GB

00:05:32 I don't know either.

JM

00:05:36 When you came to study, do you remember any of your teachers in particular? Any of them were - - -

GB

00:05:42 Doing architecture?

JM

00:05:43 Yeah.

GB

00:05:44 Oh well, yes. The course had only been going a short while and it was started by Bob Cummings, with Bruce Lucas, and I think in our first year there were six students and then in our last three years we amalgamated with the Central Technical College and I think that gave us nine students.

JM

00:06:25 Do you remember Cummings as a teacher. Did you have a particular interest that he - - -?

GB

00:06:30 Cummings was – he did a little bit of teaching – as far as I was concerned. He was a bit of a – I thought he was a bit remote – unless you were interested in football.

JM

00:06:46 Football?

GB

00:06:47 Yes. He and Bruce Lucas were – I thought – were good architects. Bruce Lucas I had more – he did more teaching shall we say and he was a memorable teacher. The other teachers I had were Athol Bretnall, Stan Marcus Kyle, particularly Stan Marcus Kyle, who took the first year and the second year.

JM

00:07:22 And, was Langer on the staff at the time?

GB

00:07:24 Lamb.

JM

00:07:26 Langer, Karl Langer?

GB

00:07:26 No. I didn't have any teaching from Karl Langer. I think he did some things there, for...

JM

00:07:38 Landscape and Planning, I think he was teaching some courses in the - - -

GB

00:07:43 Oh mate, I might have done one, I don't remember him as a teacher.

JM

00:07:50 And, who were your fellow students, that you recall?

GB

00:07:55 There was Peter White, no he went down to – he worked with Commonwealth Defence, and went up to New Guinea and spent most of his time there. I picked up again with Peter, there was Pat Moroney and Pat gave up architecture strangely. You know, he won a prize, he won a lottery I think and did sculpture somewhere, and he's just been doing his life out of sculpture, but he was a good architect. There was Trevor Sinnamon.

RR

00:08:48 Ian we call him.

GB

00:08:49 Ian, yes.

RR

00:08:50 It's Ian Trevor.

GB

00:08:51 Well, I never know whether to call him Ian or Trevor, but Trevor is what I – Don Roderick, who has died, Tony Henzell – I don't know what Tony's – Malcolm Bunsley – Malcolm Bunsley is still alive, he went on to do landscape architecture with the State Government. They're the ones I remember.

JM

00:09:24 And, you went on to do further study.

GB

00:09:28 The years went on and then I got my master's degree in 1997, 1995 or 1996. Maybe it was 1995.

JG

00:09:49 I thought it was 1958. It said in the documents.

JM

00:09:54 You graduated from UQ in '58.

RR

00:09:57 Yes, but this was later.

GB

00:09:59 This was my master's degree from UTS.

JM

00:10:03 Oh, I see, yeah, okay. I'm missing my script here.

RR

00:10:08 It comes into another script.

JM

00:10:16 You – after working for Conrad Gargett for a few months, you went to Europe.

GB

00:10:23 Then I went to – once I'd graduated – I, worked with Bligh Jessup and Partners, for almost a year. Then I got married, then I went overseas and spent two years there

and I had the view that my two years working for Max Fry in London was worth more than six years studying architecture.

JM

00:10:54 We're very keen to hear about that, but can we just go back one step? What were you working on before you went overseas? Any particular projects, with Bligh Jessup or with Conrad Gargett?

GB

00:11:04 Yes. I remember at Conrad and Gargett I was working on the Women's College competition. Those were the days when you drew in pen and ink. I remember we were working there at about three o'clock in the morning and I was holding the bottle of ink and we were all – about this many people or more – were dipping into the ink and we're doing the grass. Putting dots in the ink.

RR

00:11:37 Did it have a happy ending?

GB

00:11:39 No, and, then because the night got on, my hand, sort of, slipped somehow and it went – and the drawings had to be in the next morning, so my ink went right over it. So, the partner – Conrad and Gargett – called me a dreadful name - - -

JM

00:12:03 Does he have a name?

GB

00:12:04 Yes, it stuck and from that, 'He's a bloody blotso' and if I see Lew Hally now, Lew still calls me Blotso, and anyway we cleaned it off and won the competition. And, I did my first house with Conrad and Gargett under Lew's tutelage.

JM

00:12:30 As did I. Which house was that?

GB

00:12:35 It was house that Clifton – Clifton House – I think it was at Newmarket. It's still there I believe. I forget the name of the street, it might be Clifton Street. It's been added to, you wouldn't recognise it.

JM

00:12:56 Lew Hally was the one who was in charge of me – for want of a better word – he was interested I guess and each of the partners there took a number of the students and gave them things to do.

GB

00:13:11 Yeah, they gave you responsibility.

JM

00:13:14 They certainly did.

GB

00:13:16 That was my first experience really with doing dimensioning and do you think I could get those dimensions to add up. I never made it, but it was important for me because it got me into being aware of dimensional co-ordination and then in the practice we did mostly dimensional co-ordination.

JM

00:13:47 Did that house have a flat room?

GB

00:13:49 No.

JM

00:13:50 Because, that was a bone of contention in the – the house I did have a flat roof.

GB

00:13:56 Oh, you're modern.

JM

00:13:58 And, I can remember Ben Gargett saying, 'We don't do flat roofs here, flat roofs leak,' and that caused me to say, not straight away, but, I need to go and find out about these things in other places. I would like to work in a lot of firms; I don't want to spend my whole life here. And, that really upset people, like Lew, who thought, he'd taught me everything and now I was useful and I was going off.

00:14:32 And, projects with Bligh Jessup?

GB

00:14:36 I don't remember exactly what was 1949 – I'm not sure where 1975 comes into it. In the questions it's got – *which buildings constructed in Queensland between 1945 and 1975 do you consider significant?* Anyway, I'll just ramble on.

00:15:14 I think, important and early one, were the Amoco Service Stations. Bob might remember those.

RR

00:15:24 I do.

GB

00:15:25 They were important for – it was from the Amoco Service Stations that I learnt one of my memorable learnings and after we had got these going, we did a whole lot of them. And, other service stations started to put up awnings like ours and I complained to the client about different services stations that were taking our idea and he said, 'Graham it's better to be copied than to be ignored.' Even to this day I remember that. But, it was important for that – I know a lot of them have been demolished since.

JM

00:16:21 So, you were working on these just before you went to Britain and to Fry's office?

GB

00:16:26 No, they took us through – that would be close to the 1970 – I remember there was a – was it the Whitlam recession? Anyway there was a building recession and these took us through the recession.

JM

00:16:48 So, starting as early as '61 but right through to the '70s.

GB

00:16:50 Okay, yeah.

JG

00:16:52 The commission was in 1961 but I imagine the building was through [00:16:56].

GB

00:16:56 I didn't realise it was that early.

JM

00:17:00 So, tell us then about your adventures in Europe and working with Fry.

GB

00:17:05 I worked all the time with him, I worked with the Pilkington head office in Liverpool and I became entirely focused on the canteen building which was next to the lake

and again memorable experiences there. I can still see the detail; I particularly remember doing a detail of the building wall, as coming up to the lake with the waterproofing going down, and my boss – who I'm still in touch with, who is a couple of years older than me – I had a detail which worked but it wasn't aesthetically suitable. You know, things didn't really line up and Peter chews my ear about that and I said, 'But, Peter, it's all under the water.' He said, 'I don't care where it is.' And again, I've remembered that and, you know, it's the integrity of the quality of dimensioning and the detail. That's just one little thing.

JM

00:18:29 Were there other projects going on in the office at the time? Were they working in Africa then?

GB

00:18:33 Well, for this building, we had a whole building – Regent's Park – for the team working on it. It was a big, big building.

RR

00:18:52 But, an office building or a factory?

GB

00:18:54 That was an office building. It was Pilkington's head office and I guess there was a factory and other things there, but I only remember the tower and the canteen building. But, I think, working there it was like a mini United Nations. There were people from all round the world – with different values – and, being Australia and there was a Scottish there too and he and I were just about the most productive in the whole team.

JM

00:19:36 So, you found your education was appropriate to the work you were doing in Britain? Were there difference with architectural age and seniority in the Fry outfit?

GB

00:19:48 No, my education from the university prepared me to understand and learn more about architecture. You know, as a responsible architect, I wasn't at all capable of holding a [Moniker 00:20:09] architect. But, after there, I was. From the work I think and from the understanding of architecture in our society and the maturity that I, you know, I grew up an awful lot in those two years.

RR

00:20:33 According to our information, after that, you travelled through Europe on a scooter?

GB

00:20:36 Yes. Yes.

RR

00:20:40 True?

GB

00:20:41 Yes, my wife and I spent three months on a scooter, with one change of clothes and we spent only two nights under cover.

JM

00:20:51 So, in a tent?

GB

00:20:53 In a tent.

JM

00:20:56 I did something similar, but on a fairly large BMW. Where did you travel and what were you hoping to see? You were looking at architecture I guess. What struck you?;

GB

00:21:07 We were just looking, looking at Europe. We took where we could. Where the wind was blowing because we had a screen on the bike and our planned route was heading into the mistral wind and that was hopeless. You know, all sorts of experiences.

JM

00:21:28 But were there pieces of architecture that you would have headed for, because you knew about them.

GB

00:21:32 Yes, particularly Ronchamp.

JM

00:21:37 And did it satisfy you?

GB

00:21:38 Absolutely. Gobsmacked. We'd stopped at Marseille to see the [Unite 00:21:47] on the way over there. I don't remember any other contemporary memorable bits of architecture, other than just the urbanity of where we were.

RR

00:22:06 But you didn't particularly go to Milano or anywhere to look at what was happening there?

GB

00:22:13 No. We were very broke. You know, we couldn't afford to stay in Paris, even though we were on our tent and we spent three months and it cost us \$175 all up for everything.

JM

00:22:36 Not bad going.

GM

00:22:40 We were pretty skinny when we got back, but, you know, over there I earned £11 a week and Silvia earned £9 a week and we arrived there, we didn't have our fare home, so we saved Silvia's and used mine and the room cost us £3.5, I think it was, a week.

JM

00:23:12 Were there places that you visited on your trip that really struck you? Particular cities or towns or landscapes? Which route did you take? You went down to the South to Marseille?

GB

00:23:23 Yeah, we headed South and then we changed because of the mistral and we got a little bit further south of the Ronchamp and then headed West and then dropped back again through the [Furger 00:23:37] Pass I think and then back.

JM

00:23:42 That was all in France, or did you go into Spain?

GB

00:23:45 Didn't go into Spain. Didn't go into Spain at all. So, it was France – Northern Italy and Germany, Finland. I called it, I called at Aalto's office, I wanted to see Aalto's - -
-

RR

00:24:10 So, this is the same trip you went on the scooter up to Finland?

GB

00:24:13 Yep. So, we wanted to see into Aalto, so I called into Aalto's office and he was there I think, but we were met by an American gentleman. Which I remember – who spoke to us with his eyes closed in a most - Oh the master is, sort of something or other –

RR

00:24:48 Sleeping.

GB

00:24:51 Well, I understand when he died, they actually left him in his chair, and the wake he was – he wasn't stuffed or anything – but he was in his chair.

JG

00:25:03 I've heard this story from another architect in Belgium. I think the same story.

GB

00:25:08 But it was after I was there. So, anyway, Aalto's work was right up there for me and we did get a list of buildings – and saw those buildings.

JM

00:25:23 Would those have been the architects that you'd learn to admire back in Brisbane. Aalto, Le Corbusier. Who were the star architects for your generation, when you were graduating?

GB

00:25:35 Aalto – yes. Richard Neutra, Gowdy has always fascinated me up there, but I – he's more a representative of what goes on between my ears sometimes I think. And locally of course was – what's his name – got a mental blank.

RR

00:26:15 Where in Brisbane?

GB

00:26:16 He did Riparian.

RR

00:26:18 Seidler?

GB

00:26:19 Yeah, Seidler. I remember - - -

RR

00:26:24 He's from Sydney, he's not local.

GB

00:26:26 I remember going to a group of our students – Peter White and Pat Moroney and Barry Ainsley – who's since died – and myself, we drove down there to see Seidler's house for his mother – Rose – and , you know, held that in, sort of, an awesome experience.

RR

00:26:53 So, that's when you were students you did that?

GB

00:26:54 When we were students. Yeah.

RR

00:26:56 Sort of a pilgrimage to Sydney.

GB

00:26:57 Yes.

RR

00:27:02 And, the Opera house was - - -

GB

00:27:03 I don't know that – I think Carlo Scarpa – he came to me more after I'd graduated as a student. You know, the usual names, Corb was there, and Max Fry – the reason I worked with Max Fry was because of the book he'd written on tropical architecture, from his experience in Africa.

JM

00:27:39 And, was tropical architecture – those words and those ideas – part of your education here? Did people talk about?

GB

00:27:46 No, they weren't – at least I'm not conscious of it as being specifically aware of – I've noticed in my senior years and particularly going to the university for a [00:28:05] and of the final year work, I think, you know ten years ago or something or other, and, you know it disturbs me still to have architecture focused on things, on the look of a building, ahead of – and the sort of inured feeling from everyone to aspire to do these things, rather than understand the planning and responsibility of it and all that.

JM

00:28:48 The environment it makes?

GB

00:28:49 Yeah.

JM

00:28:52 According to our spies here, in 1960 you spent some time looking at university science buildings?

GB

00:29:00 No, it don't know what that was – what that's?

JG

00:29:02 It mentions – I don't know what it is - it just mentioned literally you went to a couple of months - you came to USA to look at university science buildings, is what it mentioned literally.

GB

00:29:13 No, I don't know how that?

RR

00:29:15 Sounds like the sort of thing you put down to justify a trip overseas.

GB

00:29:23 Nineteen fifty-nine and 1960 I was away, so I came back in 1960 - - -

JM

00:29:34 Sixty-one it says. You think '60?

GB

00:29:36 Sixty-one? And, I would have been a raw sort of young man, wanting to change the practice and I not getting on with the old man, and, you know.

JM

00:29:56 You must have been a bit of a hot shot coming back from Europe, having worked with Max Fry.

GB

00:30:01 Well, yeah, I thought so, I remember coming back and arriving in Sydney and seeing my brother in Sydney and, with Sylvia, and the first night he had some friends over and the friend who I knew from before we went over, you know we were talking and he says, 'Shut up and don't talk until you can speak Australian.' So, you know, I would have come back with a, you know, a bit full of myself probably.

RR

00:30:39 So where was the firm when you joined it? In Upper Edward Street or somewhere else?

GB

00:30:45 Yes, in Upper Edward Street.

RR

00:30:48 So, that would have been – I went there in 1969 and I spent a year working there, it was the same premises at that time?

GB

00:30:58 Yes. It was, in a converted terrace house and then the terrace house, as the firm grew, it had a drafting room over the garage out the back and then that was all demolished, in the hay day of progress and things, and we moved then – because that was the entrance, but we moved to be on top of the Astor Terrace car park.

RR

00:31:37 Well, that was later.

GB

00:31:40 Yeah. So, but all my time, when I went to work, part time or after Conrad and Gargett, it was at 445 Upper Edward Street.

JM

00:31:57 What was the firm and Brisbane architecture as a whole like to someone who spent a couple of years in Europe, did it seem dowdy or? You said you wanted to change everything, what didn't you like and what did you want to do?

GB

00:32:08 No, it did seem a bit – a bit of a lay by or still water, but it goes right through all the creative sites in Brisbane at the time and music and art, you know the period of John [Mallbig 00:32:32] and people like that and, the Flying Art School. You know, there were forces there which were ready to move up. But, it's just growing and the architecture was – in some ways architecture was – in order to get a job, it was the people you knew and there was lots of wining and dining and, you know, all of - - -

JM

00:33:10 Golfing and clubbing and - - -

GB

00:33:12 Yes, yes, that's how you got people and you got jobs and the fees were sort of six percent and I don't think the architects were really terribly professional in a lot of the work they did and it was, you know, it's not unusual for projects to be above budget and above time and I think this problem with the movement into project management, which came with a thud from the state government, after the – correct me if I'm wrong – after the Performing Arts with Barclays, built, I think that was hugely over budget and I think Llew Edwards was the treasurer then or something and anyway – and I think this movement of project management came in - - -

JM

00:34:26 Mid '70s.

GB

00:34:28 Yeah, were the rush.

RR

00:34:30 Well, you were doing major projects like the Supreme Court during that period.

GB

00:34:35 Yes, but we were doing the Supreme Court as an extension of Qbuild, of the government architects office. The first one was – I forget his name - - -

RR

00:34:57 District Court?

GB

00:34:58 Yeah, the District Court had – he went down to South Australia – anyway, was chief architect and we were an extension of there and then Supreme Court, we were again an extension and it were made quite clear that that was our position, that they would take over client liaison and - - -

RR

00:35:27 But not design.

GB

00:35:29 Not design. But, the principals of design, yes we had to – we were a specialist arm of the government and I think one of the troubles with that building, we had a huge problem in the Supreme Court in actually having an organised client relationship and the clients wouldn't have a relationship, they were too pure and mighty to bother to talk to an architect. And, Wally Campbell then took it on himself – so we never really had a client group. The government through their ways got the instructions or the approvals and did the briefing.

JM

00:36:40 Back in then, through the sixties period, which firms in Brisbane did you see as your intellectual rivals, who do you think was doing work of your sort of standard?

GB

00:36:54 Well, I think in that period Hayes and Scott were memorable.

RR

00:37:03 And yet their practice wasn't doing major projects like yours.

GB

00:37:05 No

RR

00:37:06 I mean they were doing houses.

GB

00:37:09 No, well houses were the main thing, and there was John Dalton, again it sort of – its houses – and when Hayes and Scott got into bigger work they tended to drop off a bit and that was I think, Eddie Hayes and Cam Scott had – Cam Scott was a very good teacher – and he was probably the intellectual drive behind the firm and I don't know, tended to just fade off in a way, because I think Cam just stopped doing architecture. Eddie Hayes did some contract work for Conrad and Gargett and then John Dalton, when he got into bigger work too, again in this contract bid with the state government and it just didn't come out, it didn't – particularly the university up at Toowoomba.

JM

00:38:25 The university buildings here are quite good I think, the Frank White building, the QUT ones are interesting too, but they didn't take that really far.

GB

00:38:33 No.

JM

00:38:33 It's interesting what you said about houses. There's some fine houses from your firm too, but you made a break into the institutional building quite early.

GB

00:38:44 It's just that's what the practice did. And, I didn't really, I haven't really done many houses.

JM

00:39:01 There's a house there called O'Neill – House for O'Neill - - -

GB

00:39:03 Yes, which had been knocked down.

RR

00:39:06 And, which O'Neill was that? Tim O'Neill was it?

GB

00:39:12 It came from, he lived up in Central Queensland. No, no, it wasn't – yes that's it. It was a good house.

JM

00:39:28 So, there's a lot of prestige within the profession around house design?

GB

00:39:34 Well, they were the main things built and any commercial work or bigger work always seemed to have a – for many, many years – have a Southern impact on it. You know, a Southern – corporations or things were all run from Sydney and for a long while I thought – and in some ways it still is – Brisbane was a branch office city. I don't paint that as an excuse, but one of the reasons we went down to Sydney to open was because we were, you know I had all these firms coming up, like Cox Rayner and Daryl Jackson - - -

RR

00:40:33 Hassell.

GB

00:40:34 Hassell. You know they were all coming up and taking our work, and so John Voller and I had the idea, okay, we'll the only thing we can do is to go down there and the only way you can do it is for the Principal to go down to Sydney. Which is why I went and that John Voller went down to Melbourne. And, I think that was good for BVN. And, it was – in fact I think it was probably good for the profession up here to have someone go down and think a bit bigger.

JM

00:41:21 A national firm that began in Brisbane.

GB

00:41:22 Yeah.

JM

00:41:29 Just coming back to the Supreme Court for a minute, there were three components to that as I remember. The District Court got done first - - -

GB

00:41:36 Yes.

JM

00:41:37 Who would you say was the design person responsible for that building? Was it you or was it somebody in the firm?

GB

00:41:47 No, it was me and working with this fellow from the – the principals of the striated facade were pretty much worked out with this architect who went down there.

RR

00:42:07 Went to?

GB

00:42:07 Went down to South Australia.

RR

00:42:09 From the government?

GB

00:42:10 I forget his name.

RR

00:42:12 Or from your firm?

GB

00:42:12 No, from the government.

JM

00:42:14 Was he in charge of the public works.

GB

00:42:16 He was in charge and he was a hands on - - -

JM

00:42:20 I think I know who you mean, but I can't think of his name either.

GB

00:42:23 Yeah

JM

00:42:24 Who had some real skill. And, then came the major building, which is the Supreme court, which was quite different in many ways, but, got done some years later. Then there was the Magistrate's Court and I worked on that with Don McNiven. And, Don McNiven had come into the firm from that Catholic firm, I can't think, that did work at Nudgee and - - -

GB

00:42:51 Donohue, Cusick and Edwards or?

JM

00:42:54 No, it will come to me, but, and I mean, Don seemed to be working pretty much on his own on that project and I was kind of watching, but, is that how those – you saw it or was there some kind of master plan about all this – how that group of building was - - -

GB

00:43:19 There was a master plan and that's how this thing eventuated and the Magistrates Court was over here I think.

JM

00:43:31 Well, it was where Adelaide Street came eventually through the site and it never got built.

GB

00:43:36 Yes, and then they put that through and, you know, the street was extended which made this whole plan defunct, so, that was all past tense.

JM

00:43:53 But what got built doesn't look like that either.

GB

00:43:55 No, no.

JM

00:43:58 What did get built, who would you think is responsible for the design of the building that did get built? It's a - - -

GB

00:44:07 Well me.

JM

00:44:10 And, you're responsible for both those buildings, and the third one if it had happened.

GB

00:44:16 The third one was moved off to another site. The Magistrates Court is up opposite the Roma Street Railway Station. That's where it went, but at some other time.

JM

00:44:35 But, I mean, as far as Don McNiven, did he have a role in determining what that building was to look like, or did you already have an idea about what that building was going to look like?

GB

00:44:45 Well I had that – the back of my brain was Meyer.

JM

00:44:56 Because he was using images of the Boston City Hall and sort of doing drawings that we kind of based on that. Inverted ziggurat concrete with big cantilevers - - -

GB

00:45:12 I'm not familiar with that.

JM

00:45:15 I know because I made a model of it at the time.

GB

00:45:17 I don't remember that.

JM

00:45:20 I never saw it go beyond a certain point because I didn't stay there long enough, but I just wondered how these things come about. They're quite different buildings when you look at them as a group, but maybe there was - - -

GB

00:45:35 I don't remember the Magistrates Court. I know that there was one.

JM

00:45:40 But you're saying you were looking at Meyer, like Gropius and Meyer or? You were thinking about the form of the building?

GB

00:45:48 No, not that one, in the one that's being built. And, it's using the same material but it's so many different functions between the two buildings and one of the driving things was to keep the floor levels the same. Which, didn't necessarily work with the bigger courts and anyway there are a whole lot of other issues with it.

JM

00:46:26 When we were talking before about your contemporaries and working in Brisbane at the time, you didn't mention Jim Birrell, but you were working on campus when Jim was the architect here.

GB

00:46:37 Yes.

JM

00:46:37 And the firm did one of the Hennessey pavilions up around the Great Court.

GB

00:46:43 Yes.

JM

00:46:43 What was it like working with Birrell? Did you have much to do with him or was it?

GB

00:46:49 Yes, we did what was called the first stage of the physics building and it had to be in concrete in – bush hammered concrete – and the next two floors were going to be built on top. That was Jim Birrell's thing. Again, we were like a – very much a contract – to James Birrell at the time. Personally, I don't have a great deal of regard for what he's done, I think Lauren Cully, that he worked with, yes an enormous and I think they did some absolutely wonderful buildings together. And, he couldn't have done it without Jim, but I think once Jim was by himself it didn't quite get there. Or didn't get there.

JM

00:47:59 The project at Gatton for the Agricultural College which is now part of UQ, was a big project and the buildings there are very fine I think. Can you tell us something about that project?

GB

00:48:12 Yes. I don't know the dates, but that was - - -

JM

00:48:18 It says '64 in our crib sheet here. It started from '64.

GB

00:48:21 Right. That was – the Principal there – Neil Britton – had a good relationship with my old man and he was – Neil Britton was an autocrat – and my old man was a bit of an autocrat too I guess, anyway those two got on and between the Gatton College and our firm, we had things ready and so that government funding was like this and Neil Britton always managed to have some money in the drawer. At the end of a financial year Neil Britton would have a project ready to go, when at the end of the financial year, when all this money hadn't been spent, the power that be from government would say, here I've got \$5 million or \$10 million, what's a building that I can do, and Neil Britton would say, "I've got one here." And we had working drawings ready to go. But, that was a thing where I actually ended up sitting on the Building and Grounds Committee and there was very clear briefing, you know, we were able to do between them and us with Neil Britton, who was a hands on sort of fellow, if we were doing the Animal Industry Building, then we got to talk to the people who were teaching and running animal industries and what it had to do and we did things largely on budget and on time. Which is why we kept on going. So, Neil Britton got his campus there, we did the campus plan and that's how it all grew.

JM

00:51:01 during that period through the '60s when you were doing these projects, who were the significant people in the office apart from yourself? I mean, who was talking a lead on things? Who do you remember as being good colleagues?

RR

00:51:15 Well there were the three senior partners.

GB

00:51:17 There were three senior - - -

RR

00:51:19 It was Ron Voller.

GB

00:51:20 There was my old man was the Principal and there was Col Jessup who was hands on, and Col had only ever worked with my old man. When my old man retired, Col did. Then Ron Voller came in I think and then Athol Bretnall. And, then it became Bligh, Jessup, Bretnall and then our partners expanded with Bernie Ryan and myself coming in with Jack Parkinson and then John Voller came and a few others, who were the people, the design people?

JM

00:52:32 Yeah, who were the design people?

GB

00:52:38 I can't, I remember John Neylan, that's in, so the Commerce Building here and the Jetset House in the city I did very closely with John Neylan. Rodney Christmas worked on that thing with me.

JM

00:53:07 I don't know either of those names, did they continue with the firm?

GB

00:53:11 Rodney Christmas has died.

RR

00:53:14 He was principal at James Cubitt.

GB

00:53:16 Yeah.

RR

00:53:17 Post, lately. His father was the estate on the Gold Coast who was very prominent.

JM

00:53:23 He knew my father actually.

GB

00:53:25 He was a good architect, Rod Christmas.

RR

00:53:29 He'd spent time in Britain too, hadn't he?

GB

00:53:31 Yeah, which I was – and in Africa.

RR

00:53:36 Because he had one of those accent too. Didn't talk Australian.

GB

00:53:50 You've got me, I can't remember.

RR

00:53:56 Well, Don McNiven was the one I remember.

GB

00:53:57 Don McNiven yes.

RR

00:53:59 But, I don't know how long he was there.

GB

00:54:00 Brian Murphy. Murph the Surf. He's memorable because he was working away on something and my old man was chewing his ear about something and he took exception to that, so he stood up and closed whatever he was doing and said to my old man, 'You can shove your job up your arse.' and walked out.

RR

00:54:41 That's fairly definite isn't it?

GB

00:54:42 My poor old man, he was a bit stunned by that.

JM

00:54:50 You've done some teaching throughout your career.

GB

00:54:52 Yes.

JM

00:54:52 You were lecturing at QIT.

GB

00:54:55 Yes.

JM

00:54:56 What were you teaching there and what took you back to teaching?

GB

00:55:00 I was in studio, studio design work, I had a second year go and a fourth year – year four – I think were very important for me personally. And, I think it was important for the students too, because I still get people commenting to me about what experiences they gained.

JM

00:55:31 Did you have a particular approach or particular kinds of projects that you set or?

GB

00:55:36 I don't know. I always tried to get into the way the person was thinking, you know, and I used to be – I had the belief that if you were there for – if you're getting paid for two hours you've got to put four hours in and I saw the students outside the course time and at the end of an evening I'd be absolutely buggered because you've got to switch your thinking from one sort of direction to another sort of direction.

JM

00:56:18 You'd already had a full day.

GB

00:56:21 Yes. Yes.

JM

00:56:22 But usually those things were done in pairs or groups. I used to work with Barry Walduck and teach down there.

GB

00:56:30 I was one to one.

JM

00:56:32 One to one, okay.

GB

00:56:32 Yeah and it was smaller groups than you would have had and I remember in second year one time, I was trying to explain to them or get them interested in the fourth dimension, you know, and then I said to the group, "put up your hands anyone who's been to the ballet" and no one had been to the ballet, so I think there were 16 in the group and I'd arranged then for us to attend a rehearsal of Queensland Ballet and we all attended and I was able to explain, you know, what happens to space when people are moving through it and people find that, still you know, being pretty **00:57:38** experience.

JM

00:56:38 Shocking for some architecture students.

GB

00:57:39 Yes.

JM

00:57:42 What years were you teaching at QIT?

GB

00:57:48 I don't know.

RR

00:57:50 Well I didn't come across you so it wasn't during my time which was '64 to '66 or '67. I don't remember you being there, but you could have been in another year I suppose.

GB

00:58:04 I think I was at University of Queensland, but some that I did do - - -

JM

00:58:12 I think you might have given me a clip when I was a young man. That would have been the late '70s or something, so.

GB

00:58:20 I could have come in a guest critic at some time.

JM

00:58:24 Yes, I think that might be right.

GB

00:58:25 In the '70s I would have been doing something, yeah.

RR

00:58:31 There's a building that I've seen that I didn't know that you done, or the firm had done, the Mt Gravatt Teachers College. Do you remember that one at all?

GB

00:58:41 Yes, I do, with Peter [Prestupa 00:58:43] and the fellow who I had working with me there was a fellow called Patrick Houlihan. Patrick Houlihan was a contemporary of Daryl Jackson and he left us to go to – he worked in Boston – and he ended up as being a Professor of Architecture at University of California, Berkley. And, he was a particularly fine architect. You probably don't know Patrick. Anyway, Patrick worked with me on that teacher's college. It's an interesting building I think.

RR

00:59:40 It is and I've looked at it lately because they're considering doing some work on it and it's a concrete building and it has a timber roof that has been termite attacked and they're saying - - -

GB

00:59:58 It's a timber space frame.

RR

00:59:59 Yes, and so they're saying well let's get rid of that and put a new roof on it and not have any timber in it because the site out there is constantly surrounded – because it's got bush all around it – you're never going to get rid of the termites, they're always there. Anyway, it's quite an interesting building I thought.

GB

01:00:22 Yes.

RR

01:00:23 One that I'd never seen.

GB

01:00:25 No, well it's that sort of position; I've hardly seen it since we finished. It's an area where you don't go to.

JM

01:00:35 It's on top of a hill and it's got this gigantic sign saying Griffith on top of it, so it's meant to be seen, but it's sort of – you can see it from the freeway presumably, but I never have.

GB

01:00:46 It's got some zinc lining in the – if I remember rightly – in the lecture rooms and in some of them. Would you have seen perforated zinc? Zinc sheeting?

JM

01:00:58 Well, it's probably heavily disguised if it's still there.

GB

01:01:03 Unless it's been painted.

JM

01:01:04 Of those buildings that appear we've been talking about.

GB

01:01:08 I forgot that one.

JM

01:01:11 Which ones do you think were most successful? Which are you most pleased with? Of the ones that we've been talking about, the Supreme and Gatton projects?

GB

01:01:22 I've always liked the Commerce Building down there.

JM

01:01:25 The Commerce Building at UQ?

GB

01:01:26 Yeah.

JM

01:01:28 It's a fine building, yeah.

GB

01:01:30 Now that this one, the teacher's college, I think that's a – I like what we did there, it was fairly – at the time was fairly out there. I still think that Jetset House is one of the better high rise buildings, and that's a long time ago. But it was interesting because there are no columns in it.

JM

01:02:01 It's all permitter area is it?

GB

01:02:02 Yeah, and you know, so to achieve that we worked very closely with the engineers and it was just a very successful sort of interrelationship and Doug Watkins wanted – he, well a bit like architecture – he didn't see why all the decent buildings were going to Southern contractors, so he decided that they had to build a building, so they developed the whole building and did this building.

JM

01:02:35 On that, we've covered a couple of times about Queensland and Southern control, I understand that from in terms of the commercial issues at stake, but there's other kinds of issues aren't there, about the self identify, the profession here in Queensland. What are your thoughts? Do you think there is a particular architectural culture in Queensland or in South East Queensland?

GB

01:02:59 I think there probably is, I think, in my time, I think the period here by Brit Andresen, Mick Henagar, Peter O'Gorman and their teaching, because I had a son going through in that time, it's been – its of seminal importance to the profession here and I think that's being picked up unbeknownst to many people, it's been picked up and it is kept work here, that's sort of Queenslandy. It's interesting when you look at paces in that TV program, Dream Build.

JM

01:04:00 Yeah, Lindy Atkin and Bark Design.

GB

01:04:02 And the first one could have been anywhere, it was, you know, interesting what they've done, but this last one, the one that was featured last night was sort of - nevertheless it was a Queenslandy sort of building.

JM

01:04:23 Did you see that one that was Bark Design.

RR

01:04:24 I didn't see it last night? But it's a timber building.

GB

01:04:27 Guthrie?

JM

01:04:28 Stephen Guthrie and Lindy Atkin.

RR

01:04:33 It's a timber building?

GB

01:04:33 Yeah, built at Maleny. Timber and - - -

JM

01:04:39 That was, I guess from our point of view, looking at this period, like finishing in '75 where what you're talking about now really began – Brit came here in '77 – taught me in my first year, sort of, subsequent to that, I guess we're interested in how much the ground was prepared through that period by yourself and architects we're now talking to.

01:05:05 It's interesting you say that you learnt tropical design through Fry, because Cummings was working on concepts of tropical design with Raphael Cilento in like, '38 – '39 thinking that there had to be a climatic adaptability of Queensland architecture and Langer was doing all the sun chart kind of stuff, so I guess we're sort of – from our point of view it seems that if you look at retrospectively it's a generations long interest in the particularities of the landscape and the climate here that go through – people like yourselves, Hayes and Scott, Dalton.

GB

01:05:42 I'm not – still not terribly recollecting of much that Bob Cummings brought into the course on that. There was Stephen Zoccoli who was very important I think. And, I actually did start at a first masters with Stephen and I only did a year of that, but it was – so he – maybe the message just wasn't getting through or maybe I, you know, my fellow practitioners – now it's different, I think now it's different – but it wasn't, in architecture it was still this 'I am' sort of feeling with the buildings.

JM

01:06:43 That period you're talking about the end of the period, we're really stating that '75 is the beginnings of post modernism and a general sense that there were lots of the doctrines and modernism had gone awry and in Queensland and around the world – but I remember it here, a renewed interest in traditional environments and rediscovery of what we thought then as a vernacular building tradition. Do you recall much of that time. Did it seem like a big break in architectural culture? Were people in the firm sort of denying modern tenants and - - -?

RR

01:07:20 Yes, there was this thing where you had someone – people like Steve Trotter – doing International House here and the Tower Mill Motel, which we always thought, and joked about these buildings with hats on, was the way that you adapted the climatic aspects which seem to be not as serious as what we're always doing with the J D Storey Building or Union College, which seemed to be a completely different language and more sophisticated really I suppose.

GB

01:08:06 Oh yes. I think with – when I went overseas – it was fairly adventurous. You know, there weren't – and architects, I remember Ian Charlton had been overseas and Ron Percy gave Sylvia and me the lowdown for it on going to London, and I think probably there's architects from that time were seeking – I don't know how it came about – but were seeking more inspiration or whatever and it was exciting and adventurous to do the overseas trip and then it became more, it happened more and more and Steve Trotter won the Sisal Craft Scholarship. The Sisal Craft Scholarship – was it the Sisal Craft?

JM

01:09:17 Yes, that's right.

GB

01:09:18 Took him to South America and other parts because he was studying light and that one of is with a big roof on it, opposite Perry Park, I think is the best building he's done.

RR

01:09:40 I've got him, but we didn't know that.

GB

01:09:43 Yeah.

JM

01:09:44 Near Perry House.

GB

01:09:45 Not Perry House, Perry Park, Abbotsford – just off Abbotsford Road. Anyway, that's a – so, I think there's some sort of development or picture there of the – and things became more accessible too, it was easier, there were – we could go over to England and not have a job and pick up a job because architects from Australia were held in such demand.

RR

01:10:27 That was because they knew how to work. I mean, they were good value.

GB

01:10:30 They knew how to work, yes.

RR

01:10:32 And the ethic there was very different. The places where I worked I was just amazed that people thought they could come in a 10:00 o'clock and then they could have coffee and then they could read the paper and they didn't get around to doing anything until after lunch.

GB

01:10:46 Exactly, no and then it wasn't worth. I remember there was one guy in my team, his brother was pretty good but he – the Hennesseys – and he was very good at doing caricature sketches, I can't remember any work he actually ever did.

RR

01:11:11 Well, I can remember Don Cunnington telling me he was in a senior position in some firm over there and you shouldn't come in until 10:00 o'clock, that's not the thing to do. So, it was a very different ethic and they soon found out that if you come from Australia you could draw and you could turn out drawings and you were very useful.

GB

01:11:40 We had one fellow, which is just a sideline, in our team from Austria and he hopped in and he was doing all this dimensioning and things, but he did his dimensions in imperial in one dimension and in metric in the other dimension.

RR

01:12:01 By mistake?

GB

01:12:03 I think it was intentional, but, the sort of madness that - - -

JM

01:12:15 So, you brought along a piece of paper there and I'm wondering if we've not asked you any questions you prepared an answer for?

GB

01:12:22 No, no I haven't. No, that's what I brought.

RR

01:12:29 I've got a question and it's to do with the image of the firm and you know the premises that you redesigned, you eventually built a building on the site in Upper Edward Street that's quite a large one, and you built the car park behind it, your competition would have been Fulton Collin I imagine in the early days and they built quite an interesting piece of architecture on Astor Terrace as a kind of demonstration of what they did. It was one of the first roof decked buildings built. So, technically it had interest and it was a piece of modern architecture. Whereas, Curro Nutter and Charlton for instance, they were working out of a detached house, but one of a row of three as I remember and near, in Ivory Street, underneath the Story Bridge almost, now, how did you firm see itself as making kind of a statement in Upper Edward Street, you had Conrad and Gargett at the top of the hill working out of an old house and working out of a little – quite modest little brick box of a building, which was – had a name but I can't think what it is – Needham House was it?

GB

01:13:58 Needham House, yeah.

RR

01:14:02 Did Fulton Collin therefore take the whole thing more seriously in terms of what people that they did? By building themselves a bit of architecture, whereas the other firms just kind of existed out of what they could rent cheaply, seemingly, or and then did you firm see the opportunity to redevelop Upper Edwards as something they could put their stamp on and do what they wanted?

GB

01:14:34 Yeah, we had a, my old man had a – not a benefactor – but an important client who would - Donald MacKenzie, a grazier – and he used to do investments and he did Camden.

JM

01:15:00 Oh, which is not insignificant.

GB

01:15:02 No, no and Jack Parkinson did that. Fortunately the high rise bit wasn't approved later.

JM

01:15:12 So there was more to come?

GB

01:15:15 There was a bigger version of what's there.

JM

01:15:18 Is that the building that's curved?

GB

01:15:21 No. It shouldn't be on – I didn't have anything to do with it. Was that it?

JM

01:15:29 We were wondering what that building – the curved building is, but that's Camden, isn't it?

GB

01:15:35 That's Camden, this was about twice that height.

JM

01:15:40 That's similar.

GB

01:15:41 Similar. Yeah, there, that thing.

JM

01:15:48 So that would have been, sort of, of the scale of Torbreck?

GB

01:15:51 Yeah.

JM

01:15:51 In those days. And, I mean what did you think of Torbreck?

GB

01:15:57 I thought it was, architecturally I wasn't all that keen on Torbreck, in hindsight I think it's been a very important building and I was pleased that this one wasn't built

because this would have stuffed that Toorak Road, you know the historical buildings and the hill. But, Torbreck was the first high rise residential building in the city wasn't it? Oh, no, no. There was others, Craigston and - - -

RR

01:16:40 Yeah, well they're much different in their time.

GB

01:16:43 The contemporary sort of thing.

JM

01:16:45 Glenfalloch, I think - - -

GB

01:16:51 Glenfalloch was before Torbreck was it?

JM

01:16:54 About the same time. It might have been a couple of years later.

RR

01:16:56 But Torbreck was lift slap, as I remember, and that hadn't been used before in Brisbane, so they'd pour slap and then they'd jack it up and then they'd pour another one on top of that and then they'd jack it up and so they went.

JM

01:17:13 But you found, you said you weren't so keen on Torbreck architecturally, you found it a bit featurist or?

GB

01:17:18 No, I think it's, you know, I'm being an architect looking at another architect's work and I think the work of Bob Froud, you know Job and Froud was good, I think Bob Froud was a good architect and who did some interesting smaller things. But, I think Torbreck, again it's much the same problem as this would have been, it's the historical nature of the - - -

JM

01:17:53 Where you put it.

GB

01:17:54 Of where you put it, yes.

JM

01:17:57 Well what about things like Lennon's Broadbeach Hotel which was in the middle of nothing, it was just sitting there in completely, flat featureless part of the Gold Coast when it was built. Do you remember that building?

GB

01:18:13 Vaguely.

JM

01:18:14 It was a building that I remembered so well, because we used to holiday near it, and you couldn't avoid it really, and kept on sneaking in there to get a better look. But I mean, that was Karl Langer and that was about that time, about '59 – '60. And, again a very sophisticated foreign language that was being used there, which certainly appealed to my generation, and wanting to be part of it really. And, really not knowing very much about the whole tradition of what had gone on where you lived, that comes later.

GB

01:19:04 I think Brisbane was very – we benefited from Karl Langer being here. I think in this, his intelligence or what he'd done or his urbanity if you like and Gert his wife too. Is it Gertrude?

JM

01:19:27 Gertrude yeah. Was that widely acknowledged though at the time or was he - - -

GB

01:19:35 At the time no.

JM

01:19:39 And that was because he was seemingly coming from Germany or because he had Jewish affiliations or, I mean it was Gertrude who was Jewish, he wasn't.

GB

01:19:51 He wasn't really in the network I suppose.

JM

01:19:54 No, he was foreign in every way. But, I just wonder how did the profession make sure that he didn't get beyond a certain point. Was he - - -

GB

01:20:13 No I don't think – there wasn't, I don't think that the profession did anything to hamper him.

JM

01:20:27 But he wasn't acknowledge in a way that he might have been, the way Seidler was in Sydney.

GB

01:20:37 Well even Seidler wasn't for some years. At that time, I don't think, Seidler had done the Rose Seidler House and a couple of others, but he wasn't wholeheartedly embraced by the profession at that time.

JM

01:20:59 Well Blues Point Tower got him into all sorts of trouble. I mean, the people hated it.

GB

01:21:06 I like it.

JM

01:21:07 Then he wanted to redevelop the Rocks and, you know - - -

GB

01:21:11 Fortunately he didn't.

JM

01:21:14 Well I think we're heading toward the end of our questions, but while we've got the tape on, perhaps we should quickly wrap the story up and so, after 1975, what happened, because you went on to make a substantial national firm, so perhaps you could pick up that story about going to Sydney and making the national firm and some of the later work that's really outside out study, but it would be great to have on tape for the record.

GB

01:21:42 The Commonwealth, the Olympic Games were coming and through Phil Tait, we had put in a submission with HOK to do the stadium – the big stadium. And, that was while we had this partnership with Noel Robinson, and then in 1990 I think it was, or '91, 1990 or something, that partnership was dissolved and the partnership came about because a feeling that John Voller and I shared was that the firm was in a rut, you know, we've got these firms coming from down south and picking up work – but we in ourselves were in a rut. We needed to change the premises, we needed to change our image, we needed to just change. So, we thought we should get a bright young architect in with us and understanding – fully understanding the demerits of

joining Noel, we went ahead and we had – and it was a good thing we did, I don't regret that all – but we had a lively three years, we picked up our – the fact that we'd moved and we'd said goodbye to 445 Upper Edward Street and, you know, things were all buoyant and in the mood of being buoyant, anything was possible and we continued with this and we won this competition.

01:24:05 However, the partnership didn't continue and we just were mutually unsuited I think. But, in that period we got our eye off the ball, financially, and then the recession we had to have hit us in 1991 and we were just hanging on by our fingertips and we had some people advise us that we should declare ourselves bankrupt – we worked all of '90 – '91, John, Bob Gardiner and I, we received no income and our wives worked for the firm, my wife was the receptionist and she also started a business teaching piano and we got a border, so we had an income of two lots of \$60 and we hung on, we through our little beach house in the fire and boat in the fire and we hung on and I wasn't – I didn't believe that we should go bankrupt and some of the staff took 25 percent cut in salary and stayed there, so we had a core of about up to 20 of us and at the separation all the staff – except for one – stayed with us. It was their vote as to what they wanted to do

01:26:06 So, we're hanging on there and then this job comes about, in Sydney, and we thought, well we've got to change, we've got to keep going and do this and things will move out right. So, we started up in Sydney, we just had to do that because we were with Multiplex and so we opened the office there, we got someone there and slowly things started to change. We just kept things going, we kept this mood of, you know, we're still here. There was sort of awful rumours going that we'd hit the dust and so we engaged Malcolm Enright to do a poster for us which we sent out, and that one the Australian Silver Medal in graphic design and slowly by keeping a positive view, we kept there. The Sydney thing, I just had to stay down there, in fact, Multiplex told me there that if I don't stay there they want me there – this was after I'd not negotiated by settled some dispute that they had with our practice.

01:27:45 So, I stayed there. I didn't do anything on the building but the fact that I was there and – anyway and so it all changed and who would have thought that '90- - '91 we were hanging on by our coat tails.

JM

01:28:04 Two thousand you were building the olympics.

GB

01:28:08 Yeah, and the firms now got 300 people. So, that's the way fortune changes. It made a difference to us too and we did that, Lawrence knew it was doing the tennis stadium and Lawrence had been a mate of mine for some years, soon after he came back to Australia from YRM together I'd forgotten this – we made a play for doing some hospital work up in here, and we did three small hospitals, but we kept a

friendship and he was of a mind that there was only one practice that he would join and that was with John and me and then James Grose – you know James – James said one time, ‘If I ever have another house to do, I’ll go mad.’ And he agreed to join with our firm with Lawrence and he was – again, he wouldn’t have joined with anyone else other than John and me or Lawrence. He’d been thinking that that’s what he’d do.

01:29:40 So, all the pieces in the jigsaw came together and off we went.

RR

01:29:45 And, up here Chris Clarke joined you?

GB

01:29:48 Yes, yeah. After working with us on Expo. We did have a practice, Bligh McCormick ’88, with James MacCormick and I invited James to do Expo with me, with us, which he did and so that was an experience. It wasn’t all together positive, we would have been sacked on that job had I hadn’t been able to straighten Jim up. Anyway, we kept on and - - -

JM

01:30:39 But there was some other projects, like Brisbane Airport, which must have happened about that time too.

GB

01:30:44 Yes it did. That was where it pointed directly from Canberra on that. From Federal Works, so we had – we did the Australian Defence Headquarters. That came about because of a little office that we had there that Noel started, to do a little housing job in Canberra. So, when we separated we agreed to take – we didn’t want this useless little office, but we did, we kept it and low and behold this comes about. Huge mother of a job.

JM

01:31:33 Well, I think we’re getting close to time and Bob’s got to give a lecture to our second year students.

JM

01:31:53 Now, I was going to ask you something and I’ve forgotten. I worked at one stage on the documentation of a job that you’d done for Hyatt Coolum, which has been in the news lately, with its new owner. Was that a job that you remember fondly or was that?

GB

01:32:16 Yes. Very fondly.

JM

01:32:18 Because it was quite an exciting time. It must have been about 19 - - - It's just below Mt Coolum isn't it.

GB

01:32:31 Yes, it was done about the time of Expo.

JM

01:32:33 Coeur de Lion they called it to start with.

GB

01:32:38 Yes, that was the – that Coeur de Lion, big heart or something. Heart of the lion and no, we did that, we got that one – working on the planning of it from Vic Faros I think, we helped on the planning, anyway, I forget how that all came about, and the Wimberley Allison Tong and Goo, the American architects, were required to work on the job by Hyatt and [Helba Hastur and Horn and Camura 01:33:17] were the landscape architects and we had a lovely relationship with those people.

JM

01:33:30 I'm just recalling that you did Iwasaki back in '68 so you've had a longer track record in the tourist based developments.

GB

01:33:37 Yeah, because we'd had the Iwasaki thing, ostensibly we knew about – a bit about these sort of things, which we didn't particularly, but that job was the first Hyatt village resort in the resort, so it had, you know, a lot of attention from Hyatt and the developers of that.

JM

01:34:06 Well I remember they had sent out consultants to tell you what furniture would go in each room and you know, it would all have to be absolutely precisely determined.

GB

01:34:22 Absolutely.

RR

01:34:23 You couldn't do anything other than use this stuff and therefore the rooms had to be the size and there were things like, in the houses that I worked on, which were the ambassador houses which were the top of the line, you had to have two

bedrooms that were exactly equal so that you could have business conferences without have a best bedroom and another bedroom, it had to be two that were exactly the same. I've never come across this before.

GB

01:34:53 No, you would have worked.

JM

01:34:54 Which we'd understand anyway.

GB

01:34:55 You would have in that exercise, you probably would have remembered David Weisbsurg the American architect responsible for the interiors.

RR

01:35:05 Yes, I can't remember him well, but I know he was there.

GB

01:35:07 He died, some years ago now. No, but I do have fond memories of all of that.

RR

01:35:16 And, Graham Davis I know was working on that too and he was, sort of brought in.

GB

01:35:20 And Phil Follent.

RR

01:35:22 There were a lot of, suddenly there was a bit documentation job to be done and you didn't have enough staff and so you got all these little practices to help, and we were very glad of the work. I'm trying to think of other things, post Expo is another thing that I worked on with your firm, as a consultant.

GB

01:35:48 Post Expo, that – on the submission that didn't get there.

RR

01:35:53 The submission and you spent quite a lot of resources to put it up and you know.

GB

01:36:02 Des Brooks won the day.

RR

01:36:03 Des Brooks jumped on the table and did his act and that was enough.

GB

01:36:07 And then they've since knocked it down.

RR

01:36:08 Yes. And reinstated something that was much closer to what you proposed in the first place.

GB

01:36:18 But he did do that swimming pool and I think that swimming pool has been - - -

RR

01:36:23 I agree and it's been - - -

GB

01:36:24 I humbly agree that every - - - yeah.

RR

01:36:27 The canals and the freeway and the - - -

JM

01:36:31 The electric gondolas and - - -

GB

01:36:32 Yeah, that was a bit of a – it was hard not to laugh every time you saw it yes.

RR

01:36:42 Yeah, well Des Brooks was that kind of character.

GB

01:36:45 Yes and he knows he was and is.

RR

01:36:48 He was a showman, you know, he used to - - -

GB

01:36:50 Yeah, he enjoyed that.

RR

01:36:54 Am I just dreaming this or did he actually wear Mickey Mouse ears when he gave a presentation?

GB

01:37:01 I don't know, he would have worn a white suite.

RR

01:37:03 I have this image of him, for the Cairns Casino which we were involved with, and he jumped onto the table with his Mickey Mouse ears and gave this presentation. And everyone had never seen anything like it. Anyway, it did the job.

GB

01:37:21 He's a nice fellow Des, yeah.

JM

01:37:25 Okay, we might call it quits there; I think we need a photograph though to go with the tape.

END OF TRANSCRIPT