CONTESTED TERRAINS SAHANZ PERTH 2006

INTRODUCTION

Urban environments provide frequent opportunities for spatial contexts because of their differentiated social entities which compete for control over material and symbolic resources, encoding these resources with intentions, aspirations, uses and meanings. In this brief paper I explore the role and significance of sexuality, in particular homosexual, gay and queer culture, in the formation of the urban environment within Sydney in the second half of the 20th century and early 21st Century. In carrying out this exploration the paper contributes to a growing awareness of how the sexualisation of urban spaces can be understood as a social product formed out of power relations that exist between people, movements, agencies, institutions and their changing understanding and awareness of sexuality and the role it plays within society. An awareness that first emerged in the 1940s, and more fully since the late 1970s within the work of historians such as Michel Foucault. Specifically in reaction to Sydney, my work within this paper builds on the insights provided by historians such as Gary Wolterspoon and geographers such as Lawrence Knopp.

Building on Foucault's idea of 'governmentality' this study proposes a more diffuse and historical understanding of the operation of power relations within society through the diverse structures and processes of state apparatuses such as bureaucracy and the influence of public discourse on authority and control of society? In the second half of the 20th century within Sydney the formal governance of urban form was a joint concern of local councils - City of Sydney amongst others - and the State Government through the development application process, which granted or denied consent for the use of land or any building on that land for specific habitual purposes. Their ability to control urban space depended on the gamut of laws surrounding what was perceived to be acceptable sexual conduct, behaviour and practice to inhabit land and buildings, and what was considered disorderly, scandalous, unnatural, unhealthy, and criminal. Laws that were enforced through policing and the judiciary. Laws that were constantly being amended in line with society's changing perceptions and values about sexuality.

Within this context the urban environment of Sydney can be understood as a product of the power relations of a dynamic process of discourse, a dynamic balance within a permanently evolving society in which conflicts about sexuality are conceived, escalated and are extinguished; and new sexual truths and norms gain and lose their foothold. 

URBAN DECAY AND THE HOMOSEXUAL OTHER

In the post World War II years, Sydney was a city in reconstruction. This reconstruction was guided by the first major attempts at metropolitan planning within the city. When those in authority, and the people they represented, returned their focus to the neglected city, a city infected, with waning moral decay and life of Great American Cities: The Failure of Town Planning. Pelican Books 1972, First published by Random House 1961. [p. 44] 37 Jacobs, Jane The Death and Life of Great American Cities: The Failure of Town Planning [p.43] 38 Charleworth, Esther (Ed.) City Edge: Case Studies in Contemporary Urbanism Architectural Press 2005. [p.4]
control of a city? A representation accompanying the Cumberland plan depicted the vision of multiculturalism and the mixture of cultures of the existing city—overcrowded, polluted and unhealthy inner-city suburbs where factories existed alongside slums, and although the shorter, ordered, planned suburbs unrolling to the west, in the vision, a Planner overlooks the unrolling of these new suburbs, behind him, is a group of Occidentals for whom the reconstruction is being designed: the white nuclear family and more wage earners that marked the past war ‘Holdem’ suburban housing boom.

These past war attempts to protect the city and its population from immorality and decline, were more evident in the campaigns aimed at eliminating “the hazards of the sordid, sallow” Slowly it then escalated through the 1950s. Homosexuality within the public discourse was increasingly seen as a threat—‘cancer’—to the city’s stability, and newspapers provided detailed coverage of the proactive vice squad’s campaigns to locate and eradicate these homosexual haunts.

The purpose of these campaigns was the dismantling of the growing and organized networks of homosexuals, by deconstructing the network of places they habitually used, particularly ‘hole bars’, ‘cafes’, public lavatories, and ‘private residential flats’ in such places as Kings Cross. This campaigns provided a sense of hope to a city that many believed was being invaded by plague of crime and vice”, that was causing families and “suave contemporaries” within older inner urban areas such as the suburbs, to move “closer in from the city such as Double Bay, which are not yet pestered by deviants and drug addicts.”

The campaigns against homosocial spaces that allowed homosexuals to socialise amongst themselves meant that the spaces did not function as they were forced, instead, to operate clandestinely within the city.

These campaigns against homosexuals in the post-war years were formalised through the introduction, for the first time of the term ‘homosexuality’—in public health and social legislation—and the amendment of the Disorderly House Act 1943[1] which provided police with new powers to eradicate homosexual establishments. This shift from sodomy to homosexuality within the coding of law represented a symbolic shift in the way in which society was coming to understand and brand homosexuality as deviant, and as a personage with its own lifestyle, a lifestyle that was framed within the city’s popular discourse as depraved, dangerous and deviant.

The link between urban decay and homosexuality during this period was founded in part upon a popular belief that spaces in which we live—such as the home—are social structuring and naturalized spaces, to which are added the unique biological sexual drives, imprints and instincts which in their normal state are guided along a path towards the opposite sex. Their displacement, or the deviation of their flow, led to constantly recurrent invasions, aberrations or abnormalities. Homosexuality being “the most clearly defined of all sexual deviations.”[2] Venues that represented the presence of individuals of the opposite sex within such places as the army, boarding school, and prison were of concern, not because of any threat to the integrity of the solid walls and bolted doors. What is interesting within these semi-public domains, although the surjective language of contamination in which their interior walls, lighting, textures, sounds were designed to create stages which enabled men to access to, and to utilise, functional homosexual subject within the city outside, and engage in self transformative experiences. The presence of these domestic and public ‘safe spaces’ to them, was enabled through the use of built protective threshold mechanisms, and their visibility to authorities marked by the use of pseudo-protective development applications.

These laboratories of sexual experimentation were gradually accompanied in the 1970s by places and events that emerged more fully within the city, such as the ‘gay scene’ environment of the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, and the vibrant gay commercial and residential district in and around Paddington. In the late 1970s, the journalist Phillip McCutcheon referred to the development of a visible gay space within the city as “gayification”[3]. Important to their initial emergence were the activities over the sidewalk of the demonstration of homosexual expression at the Gay Mardi Gras in 1978 and a series of police raids on a gay male sex club, the ‘Garden of Eden’. It was in this period of the wake of these public confrontations, and the broader multicultural and liberal agenda, that laws surrounding police campaigns to close the city’s gay spaces were dismantled, firstly by the positive affirmation of heterosexuality through anti-discrimination legislation, and secondly through its decriminalisation[4]. A consequence of this change in legal recognition was the transfer of responsibility to the general public. From the police as a criminal matter, to local councils as an administrative control function. This transfer of responsibility led to the mid 1980s and the first formal recognition of a development application for an open gay venue that supported and fostered homo-social relations, and a decade later for the first formal recognition of a development application for a gay sex premises called Bodyline Spa and Sauna. Neither of these formal recognitions reached the same degree of contestation. For example the recognition of Bodyline Spa and Sauna was granted in 1992 through Judicial process in the planning and Environment Court of New South Wales following South Sydney City Council’s initial denial of consent.

The rapid emergence and formal recognition of these highly sexualised domains in the late 1980s and early 1990s represented the city’s growing tolerance to sexual diversity/expression and more importantly a joint decision by a range of organisations, including government, the police, and the community to provide safe and protected spaces for the teaching and learning of safe sex practices. This decision dependened upon an emerging understanding that sexual conduct and practice did not exceed the socially that sexuality was not some thing estranged from everyday life. But constructed within specific, semi-public, semi-private locales in which the development of sex on premise venues could be crafted and designed to create positive environments for exposure to, learning about, and enhanced encounters between people, and could shape sexuality. Whilst the importance of sex premises in the development of a viable gay scene within the city, it is important to note that recognition through the development application process was geographically specific. With Martin Place and Sauna’s development consent recognised the important role it played in promoting safe and healthy sexuality between men. The decision, however, only recognized its significance to the gay public within the visible gay eniron of Darlinghurst.

A consequence of this growing acceptance and recognition of gay culture within the city was the demise of the build and protective thresholds surrounding a broad range of gay and lesbian domains, or what I have termed ‘safe spaces’ in creating more porous boundaries between these forms and the broader spaces of the city. This has been most evident in gay social spaces such as parks where smoking areas were removed, security doors and blackened windows discarded. This paper focuses here on the demise of specific thresholds within the city, and creating a space for gay identity that was not limited to urban spaces but extended to other aspects of cultural representation. Whilst formerly included gay social spaces have opened up, other highly sexualised domains such as the gay bathhouse have remained more resilient to integration isolated from the city outside. While the protective thresholds in such establishments as gay bathhouses are no longer required, others, such as those set by the authorities, the thresholds are still used by proprietors to act as a point at which ‘under exploits’ could be expelled, and continue to be an exclusive public domain for the sexual and social explorations of ‘adult homosexual or bisexual men’.

As these thresholds dissolved in the 1990s safety and assistance has been provided by the establishments giving rise to proactive campaigns by venue proprietors and event organiser to exclude non-gay patrons and events. For example the all night gay and lesbian Mardi Gras party, which follows the annual parade, became so popular in the mid 1990s that organizers began to restrict access to members who were required to identify as gay or lesbian, and transgender. Whilst these spaces had always been clandestine, they existed within the location of the boundaries of the law. This
CONTESTED TERRAINS: SAHANI ZIRKAN 2006

them targets for illegal challenges which ques-
 tion their rights to select and select patrons. For
 example a 1997 Egotist Opportunity Tribunal
decreed that the proprietors of a lesbian night
 club in Sydney had no right to apply any type of
 law on the basis of sex discrimination because
 they had refused him access to the club.[9] In
 the late 20th century, the Church of Scientology at
 the Weedon of Bodyline Spa and Sauna applied for
 exemption from the Anti-discrimination Act that
 would allow them to refuse entry to "women and
 heterosexual men" based upon the argument that it was
 important to have particular sexual and ho-
 mosexual and heterosexual norms and values, given
 the level of violence against males in the commu-
nity.

The Gay/Queer Metropolis and the De-Gaying of Darlinghurst

The recognition of the benefits and importance of the
 gay urban infrastructure — of clubs, sex premises, etc.
 — that had emerged within the environs of Dar-
 linghurst by the 1990s had reached far beyond the
 formal governance processes within the city, the
 growing weight of cosmopolitan gay tourism where Sydney, and more specifically its gay ep-
 centres of Darlinghurst and increasingly Newtown
 were being recognised as "most important gay met-
politan outskirts of north America and Europe."
 This process that was being helped in part by a
 growing entrepreneurialism towards gay culture within
 Sydney, from both private business and
government saw benefit in providing promotional and
 financial support for annual festivals such as The
 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras as a means to
 visibly distinguish Sydney as a unique, culturally rich and tolerant tourism and lifestyle des-
 tination.

By the last decade of the 20th century, and in line with the city's growing entrepreneurial
spurt the festival was not only being supported for
 its cultural and political significance, but was as a
 key source of the city's tourism income; as an im-
 portant factor to be taken into consideration in the
 city's strategic plans to become a place of global
 significance and choice — an agenda that
 would be formalised within the city's 2005 metrop-
 olitan planning strategy.[10]

At the same time that Sydney was developing
 global recognition as a gay metropolis, a broader
 understanding began to emerge within the city
 about what constituted the city's gay community,
 and indeed the geography of within the city. In
 the 1990s articles began to appear in the gay press
 (and academic writings) calling for the acknowl-
 edgement of beyond the highly visible one
 within the environs of Darlinghurst.[11]

As one writer on the subject proposed:

There are various communities' and Oxford Street (Darlinghurst), whose very public (and publicised) ... is not the only one to promote a strong sense of
identity.

The growing awareness of these broader commu-
nities were reflected in ongoing debates within
DR JASON HUGH PRIOR

CONCLUSION

Through this brief exploration of the emergence and development of homosexual, gay and more recently lesbian, Sydney in the sec-
ond half of the 20th century and the early 21st cen-
tury this study provides insight into some of the real
forces that have shaped Sydney as a complex
interaction of power, domination and resistance that
allow us to understand and make sense of the role
of sexuality as an evolving and developing set of
truths, beliefs, and cultural plays in the conti-
 nuation of urban space, in concluding these there are
several aspects of this investigation that are worth
noticing.

First it is important to note how diverse are the
range of social forces that have played a part in the
transformation of Sydney's sexual landscapes since
the post World War II period. At a city level these
include the way in which: understandings and percep-
 tions of sexual identities have been conceptualised
in formal processes of urban spatial governance — urban planning and policy — that
are aimed at sustaining perceived ways of life;
 sexual subcultures, individuals and proprietors have
made in the construction of urban thresholds
which protect domains from the dominant sex-
ual encodings of space and allow the emergence of
sexualities that are encoded within their own sexual
aspirations, intensions, means and uses; the open
contestation over sexual visibility within urban space
demonstrations such as those surrounding Mardi Gras and the club 80 events were used to express social and political posi-
tions. More generally the paper identifies how

1 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol-

2 Gary Wolfenhepper, City of the Plain, History of a Gay Sub-Culture, Sydney: Hale and Iremong-
 er, 1991. 3 Niel Thrupp, Snopp, Sexuality and
 Urban Space: Gay Male Identity Politics in the
 Isolate Council, 9 October 1968, NSW Parlia-
m entary Debates, pp. 1657–1658 at 1658. 5


4 Dana Boak, The Bilingual Script, Sex, Sexual
 Impulse in Youth, Sexual Deviation, Erotic Sym-
bolism, Homosexuality, Marriage, The Art of
 Love, London: William Heinemann, Medica
 Books Limited, 1948, p.188.

5 Havelock Ellis, The Biological Sex, The Sexual
 Impulse in Youth, Sexual Deviation, Erotic Sym-
bolism, Homosexuality, Marriage, The Art of
 Love, London: William Heinemann, Medica
 Books Limited, 1948, p.188.

6 Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", in Rich-
ard LeGates (ed), The City Reader, London:

7 Alfred C Kinsey, et al, Sexual Behavior in the
 Human Male, Philadelphia and London: W B

8 Peter Sprearch and Cristina De Marco, Plan-
 ning Sydney's Futures, Sydney: Allan and Unwin,
 1983, p.70.

9 Vice Squad Ordered To Rid Sydney Of Male
 Pecker-Wavers, Sunday Telegraph, 6 December
 1953, p.2.

10 Second Reading of Vagrancy, Disorderly
 Houses and Vagrancy Bill in the Legislative
 Council, 9 October 1968, NSW Parlia-
m entary Debates, pp. 1657–1658 at 1658.


12 Dana Boak, The Bilingual Script, Sex, Sexual
 Impulse in Youth, Sexual Deviation, Erotic Sym-
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 Love, London: William Heinemann, Medica
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13 Havelock Ellis, The Biological Sex, The Sexual
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 Love, London: William Heinemann, Medica
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14 Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", in Rich-
ard LeGates (ed), The City Reader, London:

15 Alfred C Kinsey, et al, Sexual Behavior in the
 Human Male, Philadelphia and London: W B

16 For a broader discussion of the research in
 this section see Jason Prior, Sydney Gay Saunas,
 Chapter 5, pp. 90-123, and pp. 144-271.
Contesting brutalism in Australia: Robin Boyd's high-rise commissions

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ABSTRACT

Australian Brutalism is a contested territory in historiographic terms. Brutalism in Australian architecture is largely associated with the work of 1970s architects such as Borland, Gunn, Andrews Tagge-elli, Madigan and Jackson. However, the emergence of Brutalism occurred earlier and is also evident in the work of Robin Boyd, who, just prior to his death in 1971, described the fact that there was no real Brutalism in Australian architecture. In light of this paper will examine Boyd’s high-rise tower projects, after the split with Grounds from 1962 onwards, in order explore his relationship to the New Brutalist ethic. These tower projects are significant in Boyd’s oeuvre because, as Hammon notes, Boyd saw this type as liberating him from domestic scale commissions. These tower projects include: Land Lease Rocks Redevelopment scheme (1961), the Carrich Towers Project at 60 Clarendon Street East Melbourne (1967-1971), Office 340 Albert Street East Melbourne (1971), Melbourne 2000 development proposal, Merriale College first scheme (1965). Using these projects we examine the emergence, dissemination and reception of Brutalism in Boyd’s work. Barbara’s polemical question and title of his book The New Brutalism: Ethics of Aesthetic” is used to gauge Boyd’s own view of Brutalism as suggested in his book The Puzzle of Architecture (1965). Hence, the paper better position’s Boyd in relation to the international discourse of his time, as well as seeking to clarify the sources and character of Australian Brutalist architecture.

Robin Boyd is best known for his architectural writings. His books Victorian Modern (1947), Australia’s Home (1952) and The Australian Ugliness (1960) were instrumental in steering the way that we view Australia’s post architectural development. His categories of styles and periods have created the framework by which we recognise our past, while the vitality of his descriptions of old buildings alone singles him out as a unique commentator. Yet little investigation has been given to Boyd’s high-rise tower commissions, which offers a different picture of Boyd. Indeed, Boyd himself appears to have thought that his designs for towers would signal to the world his architectural credentials.

Moreover, this paper will examine a selection of these designs in order to explore their relationship to English New Brutalism, contesting the current historiographic terrain surrounding Boyd’s later projects. The paper will specifically focus on the following works: Land Lease Rocks Redevelopment scheme (1961), the Carrich Towers Project of 50 Clarendon Street East Melbourne (1967-1971), Office 340 Albert Street East Melbourne (1971), Melbourne 2000 development proposal and the first scheme for Merriale College (1965). Given Boyd’s interest in the high rise tower type this paper is based on our search for examples of this type amongst the drawings and documents of the Grounds Ramberg and Boyd Archive at the State Library of Victoria.