



Fabrications

The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfab20>

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To cite this article: Philip Goad (2021) New World: Harry Seidler, Brazil and the Australian City, Fabrications, 31:1, 54-84, DOI: [10.1080/10331867.2021.1925490](https://doi.org/10.1080/10331867.2021.1925490)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10331867.2021.1925490>



Published online: 02 Aug 2021.



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ARTICLE



New World: Harry Seidler, Brazil and the Australian City

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ABSTRACT

In 1948, en-route to Australia from the United States, young Viennese-born architect Harry Seidler spent just over six weeks in Brazil. There, he worked briefly for Oscar Niemeyer and visited numerous examples of Brazilian modernism. Settling in Sydney, Seidler became one of Australia's foremost modernist architects. His output quickly shifted from deference to the work of his mentors Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer to formal experiments determined by the peculiarities of Australia's geography and climate. He increasingly adapted elements that reflected his South American experiences. As his practice gained larger commissions, Seidler's engagement with the Australian city was similarly affected. His urbanism - as it developed - ran counter to the Australian city's Anglo-American trajectory that had shaped its form and character since the 1850s. This paper places Seidler's interests in Brazil within the Australian context, where Iberico-American modernism was known and understood but appeared in isolated examples with little or no urban reference. Seidler, instead, proposed a new vision for the Australian city, one that extended Giedion, Sert and Leger's wartime call for a new monumentality and combined architecture, art and landscape in a unified response: it was his answer to an urbanism for the New World.

Introduction

In Australian architectural histories, the prospect of “South-South” dialogues between South America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand has been little studied. Only very recently has there been a concerted effort to document nineteenth century trans-Tasman exchanges in architecture between Australia and New Zealand in an effort to overcome previously national-focussed studies.¹ Nonetheless, the geographically expanded connections between Australia, South Africa and South America have been overlooked almost entirely – partly because such connections tend to fall outside those engendered by the dominant networks with the British Empire and the United States. Travel alone would suggest that those en

route to Australia by ship – before the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the Panama Canal in 1914 – would have stopped off for supplies in Cape Town and, often prior to that, in Rio de Janeiro, a phenomenon noted by James Broadbent in his various accounts of early colonial life in Australia. Most accounts of the return route to England via the dangerous so-called “Clipper Route” past Cape Horn focus on the dangers of icebergs and rounding the Horn rather than any significant landfall or exchange in South America. Similarly, research conducted on the passage of goods, people and ideas from South America to Australia in the nineteenth century, specifically in relation to architecture, building and urbanism is limited.

Similarly, documentation of twentieth century architectural connections between Australia and South America is slight. Christopher Vernon has discussed the relationship between two New World capital cities, Brasilia and Canberra.² Otherwise, connections with South America have been given only cursory attention, mostly with passing reference to the work of Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer (1907–2012) through visual aspects of style and form but little else. In this regard, the name of Sydney architect Harry Seidler (1923–2006) is invoked again and again. In every monograph on Seidler, his early contact with Niemeyer in 1948 has been noted but never examined in any depth nor for its potential longevity as a career-informing influence. Remarkably, the idea of Brazilian modernism as a possible theme in the development of modern architecture in sub-tropical and tropical Queensland in the 2015 book *Hot Modernism* was not entertained at all nor did it feature in Gevork Hartoonian’s 2011 disquisition on Seidler’s approach to the city.³ In 1980, Donald Leslie Johnson in *Australian Architecture 1901–51* described Seidler’s interest in Niemeyer as a “fleeting romance.”⁴

This article argues the opposite. It places Seidler’s interests in Brazil within the Australian context, where knowledge and familiarity with the forms and ideas of Iberoamerican modernism were known and understood, but appeared only in isolated examples. By contrast, Seidler’s Brazilian experience was profound and it gave him the tools to adapt his modernist language to the Australian climate without compromise and to realise his ultimate project for the Australian city: a modern Baroque in the Antipodes. He proposed a new vision for the Australian city, one that extended Sigfried Giedion, Josep Lluís Sert and Fernand Leger’s wartime calls for a new monumentality that combined architecture, art and landscape in a unified response.⁵ It was his answer to an urbanism for the New World.

From the outset, it should be noted that from a “South-South” perspective, Seidler’s interest in South American modern architecture, especially that of Brazil, was not unique. In histories of post-World War II modern architecture in South Africa, strong synergies between South Africa and

Brazil have long been identified and recorded. In 1998, for example, Melinda Silverman wrote of the influence of Philip Goodwin's book, *Brazil Builds* (1943) on architecture students in Pretoria and the enduring marks it left on the city.⁶ She also noted Nikolaus Pevsner's 1953 labelling of Johannesburg as "a little Brazil within the Commonwealth".⁷ Arthur Barker has suggested that it was not only awareness of, and travel to, Brazil by architects such as Norman Eaton, Barrie Biermann and German émigré Hellmut Stauch amongst others, but also the 1948 election of the National Party (NP), which, while committed to initiating the divisive strategy of apartheid, an architect like Stauch looked to Brazil for government buildings to convey a progressive image of modernity.⁸ In Australia, this complex combination of mobility, proximity and politics was not present. Interest in the architecture of South America arose from multiple concerns, many of them similar, not the least of these being personal and individual passions – and this is where Seidler's engagement with Brazil can be sustained as more than "a fleeting romance."

Journey to South America

On 20 April 1948, Viennese-born architect Harry Seidler disembarked from the SS Argentina in Rio de Janeiro.⁹ He had just finished working in Marcel Breuer's New York office and was travelling en-route to Australia to design a house for his parents Rose and Max Seidler on an as yet unspecified site in Sydney. The young 24-year old had an impressive pedigree. He took a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Manitoba and a Master's degree from Harvard where he studied under former Bauhaus director Walter Gropius; he completed a summer course under Josef Albers at Black Mountain College; he was a registered architect in Canada; and he had worked for nearly two years as chief assistant to Marcel Breuer and managed the 88th Street office while Breuer was working in Argentina and Colombia for two months in 1947. When the time came for Seidler to travel to Australia it is highly likely that Breuer encouraged him to travel south rather than west across the States, to visit Buenos Aires and, significantly, also Rio de Janeiro, which Breuer had missed visiting on a recent trip.¹⁰

Seidler brought with him drawings from the Breuer office to prove his worth and immediately approached and found work in the Rio de Janeiro office of Brazil's most famous modernist, Oscar Niemeyer.¹¹ His employer spoke little English but was generous and hospitable and soon put the young architect to work on a linear block of elevated north-facing housing units at the Instituto Tecnológico de Aeronáutica (ITA), the new aeronautical school at São José dos Campos and brainchild of Air Force Marshal Casimiro Montenegro (1904–2000). Niemeyer took Seidler on a site visit to the campus in his convertible Packard.¹² They also visited São Paulo

where Seidler accompanied Niemeyer at a meeting with newspaper mogul Assis Chateaubriand (1892–1968). Perhaps in jest or as an indirect, socially acceptable way of indicating his interest, Niemeyer asked Seidler to intervene on his behalf and encourage Chateaubriand to award him the remodelling commission of the Urca Casino (Cassino da Urca) in Rio as a possible TV station.¹³ Seidler did this but instead Chateaubriand was more interested in the press interviewing the young “North American architect” about his and Pietro Maria Bardi’s modern art collection that later became the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP).¹⁴ Then housed on the second floor of the *Diários Associados* newspaper building on 7 de Abril Street, Seidler, Niemeyer and Eduardo Knesse de Melo (President of the Brazilian Institute of Architects, São Paulo Chapter) visited the collection and Seidler was reported in the Brazilian press as being impressed with Lina Bo Bardi’s inventive hanging of paintings on vertical steel tubes.¹⁵

Seidler made the most of his short time in Brazil. He visited Pampulha, hired a rowboat and photographed Niemeyer’s buildings from the lake and was especially impressed with the casino, the restaurant “Baile” with its umbilical cord-like canopy and the butterfly-roofed yacht club (Fig. 1) that he found “quite extraordinary and flamboyantly rich in form”, as well as Niemeyer’s Church of St Francis Assisi.¹⁶ What struck Seidler most was the appearance of solidity through the use of reinforced concrete and, in some cases, stone facing: it was a complete contrast to the modest scale and lightness of Gropius and Breuer’s timber houses in Massachusetts. Back in



Figure 1. Yacht Club, Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1940-2. Architect: Oscar Niemeyer. Photograph taken by Harry Seidler on a rowboat on Lake Pampulha, 1948, Seidler Collection. Copyright Penelope Seidler.

Rio, staying at the Hotel Atalaya on Copacabana and, though paid hardly anything, Seidler returned “to work with Niemeyer even more devotedly and absorbing everything he had to say and write or do”.¹⁷ He became familiar with Niemeyer’s Day Nursery at Gavea (1937) with its adjustable vertical louvres, the recently completed Boavista Bank (1946), and two buildings he’d specifically expressed interest in seeing, Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer et al’s Ministry of Education and Health (1936–42) and Marcelo and Milton Roberto’s ABI Building (1936–39) with its fixed screen of concrete louvres.¹⁸

Importantly, and what would have been new to Seidler in experiencing these Brazilian buildings was their landscape settings and urban design features. The ITA project, on which Seidler worked, was a collection of objects disposed artfully in a landscape field to create an aesthetically unified campus. Niemeyer’s buildings at Pampulha in Belo Horizonte were combined with the designed landscapes of Roberto Burle Marx and juxtaposed against the artificial lake, Lagoa da Pampulha, with its sinuous curving inlets and gently rising banks. Adding to Seidler’s “urban” experience there was that he encountered Niemeyer’s church, casino and yacht club not from the “street” but from the water, from the position of landscape. Add in the experience of sculptures and murals of Cândido Portinari, Paulo Werneck, Alfredo Ceschiatti and José Pedrosa amongst others and Seidler would have felt that he was experiencing in the flesh, the subject of Henry Russell Hitchcock’s 1948 book, *Painting Toward Architecture*, the title of which Seidler would borrow for his 1949 article on the same topic.¹⁹ Seidler would have also been aware of the new and unique urban design features of the Rio buildings: Niemeyer’s Boa Vista Bank presented a sinuous curving wall of glass brick at ground level, recasting the idea of the urban portico with Baroque assurance; the ABI Building occupied a prominent urban street corner, emphasising its three-dimensional perforated prismatic form held aloft on pilotis and crowned by a setback sculptural rooftop; and most striking of all, the monumental Ministry of Education and Health with its accompanying urban plaza, rooftop landscape by Burle Marx, *azulejos* (tiled) mural by Portinari and sculpture by Celso Antônio unequivocally redefined what a new urban landscape might be. In 1948, these would be formative experiences for Seidler. But arguably, the urban implications of these experiences and their synthesis would only be realised some three and a half decades later.

After leaving Brazil, Seidler went to Buenos Aires, where he reconnected with a Mexican actress he met on the boat to Rio. Together they visited the architect-engineer Eduardo Catalano (1917–2010), Seidler’s friend from his Harvard days and Breuer’s recent collaborator (together with Carlos Coire) on the Ariston Club at Mar del Plata (1947). They visited some of Catalano’s factory buildings, which Seidler considered “quite remarkable”.²⁰ However,

a tight itinerary prevented a side trip to Mar del Plata.²¹ He flew on to Santiago and from there took multiple flights to Antofagasta, Quito, Panama, Managua, Mexico City, and finally Los Angeles where he met John Entenza, editor of *Arts and Architecture*, before heading to Australia, where he arrived at Sydney's Mascot Airport on 15 June 1948. Taken directly to his parents' "very pathetic apartment" on Anzac Parade in suburban Maroubra, close to the airport, Seidler was, initially, completely unaware of the beauty of Sydney's harbour landscape. He was appalled and recalled thinking, "My God, what have I come to?"²² Brazil, let alone New York, seemed far, far away.

Australian Context

In post-war Australia, Brazilian modernism was well-known through books like MoMA and Philip L. Goodwin's *Brazil Builds* (1943), Henry-Russell Hitchcock's *Latin American Architecture since 1945* (1955), Henrique Mindlin's *Modern architecture in Brazil* (1956), Stamo Papadaki's *The Work of Oscar Niemeyer* (1950), Niemeyer's *Works in Progress* (1956, with Stamo Papadaki) and the plethora of South American buildings published in the English-speaking architectural press like *Architectural Review* (including its special issue in March 1944) and *Arts and Architecture* during the 1940s and 1950s. The French journal, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (to which Seidler subscribed²³) had special features on Brazil in September 1947 (No. 13–14), August 1952 (No. 42–43), which was profusely illustrated with buildings by Niemeyer, Costa, Mindlin, Affonso Eduardo Reidy amongst others, and June–July 1960 (No. 90) which focussed on Brasilia.

Locally, journals like the Melbourne-based *Architecture and Arts* also featured the work of Niemeyer in its sporadic reviews of global architecture, as well as a 1956 article by George Landau on contemporary Brazilian architecture, and Niemeyer's words were translated for the journal's June 1957 editorial.²⁴ *Architecture* (later *Architecture in Australia*), the official journal of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, gave space to Niemeyer's involvement in the design of the UN Headquarters in New York as early as 1948 and in 1949, and reprinted work by Niemeyer previously published in *The Architectural Review*.²⁵ That same year, just a few months later (slightly more than a year after he had arrived in Sydney), Seidler's article "Painting Toward Architecture" was published in *Architecture* in October 1949.²⁶ Seidler illustrated the piece with images of work by prominent modernist architects and artists, included the *brise-soleil*-covered northern façade of Niemeyer's Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro, which he described as an "honest skeleton structure", along with the "painter's forms" of Niemeyer's Church of St Francis Assisi at Pampulha.²⁷

Although it invariably occurred without first-hand experience, local interest in South America increased for three reasons: climate, urbanism and the search for new form. For example, in his government-sponsored book, *Homes in the Sun* (1945), Sydney architect Walter Bunning, then Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Housing Commission, used images of Bernard Rudofsky's Arnstein House, São Paulo (1939–41) and Lucio Costa et al's Ministry of Health and Education in Rio de Janeiro (1936–43) as appropriate climatic parallels to the verandahs of Australian homesteads. For Bunning, the Arnstein House, "illustrates perfectly the principle of opening out a house to allow good air circulation in a hot climate", while the *quebra sol* (brise soleils) adjustable louvres of the Ministry of Education presented "another idea for application to Australian housing."²⁸

Others like Melbourne architects Frederick Romberg and Best Overend proposed a vast office complex of three 13-storey wings with recreation facilities and catenary-arched exhibition hall inspired by the forms of modern Brazilian urbanism and set within the reconfigured gardens of a demolished Royal Exhibition Building.²⁹ On a smaller scale, the exotic landscaping and catenary arched forms of Robin Boyd's supermarket and Wood House at Jordanville (1952–3) appeared inspired by Brazil, although the technology was not. The patented corrugated Ctesiphon system arches of Boyd's buildings and the Rice House at Eltham (1952–3) by Kevin Borland (who had worked briefly for Seidler) were derived from British engineer J.H. de Waller's patented system.³⁰ More convincing in its debt to the forms and ideas of Brazilian modernism was ICI House, Melbourne (1955–58) where architects Bates, Smart & McCutcheon worked with landscape designer John Stevens, a devotee of the garden designs of Roberto Burle Marx (as Andrew Saniga confirms in this issue) and sculptor Gerald Lewers to produce a convincing ensemble of office slab and landscaped plaza that nodded both to Rio's Ministry of Education and Health (a glazed curtain wall with attached sunshades replaced the adjustable *brise-soleils*) and to Niemeyer et al's UN Headquarters in New York (1948–52).³¹

In sub-tropical Brisbane, James Birrell's kiosk and restaurant at Centenary Pool (1959) echoed the aerial amoebic forms of the Ariston Club in Mar del Plata. Yet it was a one-off experiment by Birrell, a formal choice to complement the three swimming pools around it that he would not repeat again in his career.³² Where the forms of South American modernism were most commonly found was in religious buildings. Inspired by the churches of Felix Candela and Oscar Niemeyer that offered daring new alternatives to the Gothic vault, Australian architects across the country from 1950 to the early 1960s like Alan Robertson in Melbourne, Curtin & Cameron and Gibbons & Gibbons in Sydney, Douglas & Barnes in Brisbane, and Ian Ferrier in Darwin explored the catenary arch and folded concrete forms in different ways for the same end: to describe a new

language for the post-war modern church.³³ Ironically, this search for a new monumentality reached its apotheosis not with a church but in a project dedicated to science: Borland, Murphy and McIntyre's 1956 entry in the limited design competition for the Australian Academy of Science in Canberra was a series of parabolic arched shell vaults sheathed in copper with infill walls of mosaic tiles, stained glass and bronze screens and a ventilating "spire" for the basement plant room.³⁴ However, such interests in plastic dynamism did not continue.

It is important to note however that a small number of Australian architects visited South America and experienced first-hand examples of Brazilian modernism in the period 1945–1960. One of the first was Commonwealth Department of Works architect Charles V. Howard, who visited North and South America with H.V. Reilly, Architect in Charge of Commonwealth Bank Works as part of a government-sponsored fact-finding mission in the second half of 1945. They met Brazilian architects Marcelo Roberto and Oscar Niemeyer, visited buildings like the ABI (Brazilian Press Association) Building, the Ministry of Education and Health, and Niemeyer's own house in Rio de Janeiro as well as his buildings in Pampulha at Belo Horizonte. Howard's commentary focussed mainly on these architects "who are responsible for designing and building some of the most modern structures in the world" and their adoption of tropical design elements aimed at climatic control.³⁵ Melbourne-based architect Arthur Stephenson travelled extensively in South America on his 1949–50 world tour investigating contemporary hospital design in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Peru.³⁶ Likewise, Reuben Lane (1931–2012) worked in Niemeyer's Brasilia studio for eight months in 1958 and later produced the formally exuberant Apollo Gate House at Cronulla in 1973.³⁷ Nonetheless, it was Harry Seidler who offered the most convincing, original and sustained recasting of Brazilian modernism in Australia. In 1952, just four years after Seidler's arrival in Australia, Boyd remarked on the influence on Seidler of Gropius, Breuer and Niemeyer that had been "welded with understanding sincerity by an imaginative disciple".³⁸ This perceptive observation needs to be borne in mind when considering Seidler's work more broadly. Throughout his fifty-year career, he synthesised, reworked and recast many ideas as he developed – over time – his own metier through the pursuit of consistent themes. His experience, memory and the lessons of Brazil were among these many ideas, but this paper argues that the appearance and relevance of those South American themes have not been sufficiently emphasised in previous scholarship. In doing so, this has underplayed a richness evident in Seidler's modernist oeuvre, especially his work of the 1980s, at a time when the local profession and planning authorities regarded him – at times – as a pariah in an emergent postmodernist architecture culture in Australia.

First Phase: Houses, Buildings, Projects, 1948-1963

Seidler's first completed project in Australia was the house he designed for his parents in Sydney's outer bush suburb of Wahroonga. The Rose Seidler House (1948–50), as it became known, was described by American architect Paul Rudolph as “the Harvard House incarnate”, as embodying the formal ideals of his mentors Gropius and Breuer, that it had “jumped from Cambridge, Mass to Sidney (sic), Australia, without any modifications whatsoever.”³⁹ While undoubtedly frank and not without insight, Rudolph's criticism overlooked other aspects of the design such as the house's dramatic ramp that led up to a sun deck that was graced by a vividly coloured abstract mural – two elements that did not appear in any of Seidler's mentors' residential works.⁴⁰ Seidler's first Australian work reveals a tendency to draw creatively from a consistent modernist palette. The ramps of Lucio Costa and Niemeyer's Brazilian Pavilion in New York (1939) and Niemeyer's yacht club at Pampulha (1942), as well as Candido Portinari's *azulejos* mural at Rio's Ministry of Education and Health come to mind as potential references.⁴¹ However, Seidler rationalised the pavilion's ramp into a straight line (like the yacht club) and he painted the mural himself, drawing partly on Portinari but also on his experiences with Albers at Black Mountain College.⁴² Portinari's murals were never completely abstract, they were always figurative.⁴³ It could also be argued that Seidler's mural draws from Paulo Werneck's abstract mosaic mural on the external shells of S. Francis of Assisi.⁴⁴ At Wahroonga, though, Seidler's mural is not painted to adorn a plane, instead it is an integral component of Seidler's *de Stijl* composition, it is a third “wall” to the living room.

Moreover, other scholars have neglected to point out that the deck of this house faced out towards an untouched bush landscape: the indigenous landscape of the Kuring-gai Chase National Park. Seidler's fourth wall is a framed view of landscape and an extended spatial field beyond the boundary of the building (Fig. 2). It is at once something to be viewed as a panorama in the Corbusian tradition of framing a view but also to be read as intrinsic to the building's embrace of a larger realm beyond itself. As Seidler's commissions increased in the coming decades, this claiming or harnessing of the Australian landscape, both as framed panorama and as extended spatial field, became a trademark not just of Seidler's houses but also of his city towers from the 1960s and beyond.

The welding of modernist sources, almost as a language, was Seidler's skill and one that would increase with sophistication as he learned more and quickly about Australia's unforgiving climate, especially the force of its sun. Almost immediately, Seidler began adding louvres and sunshades as a way of modulating and imparting shadow to his modernist box houses.⁴⁵ Even

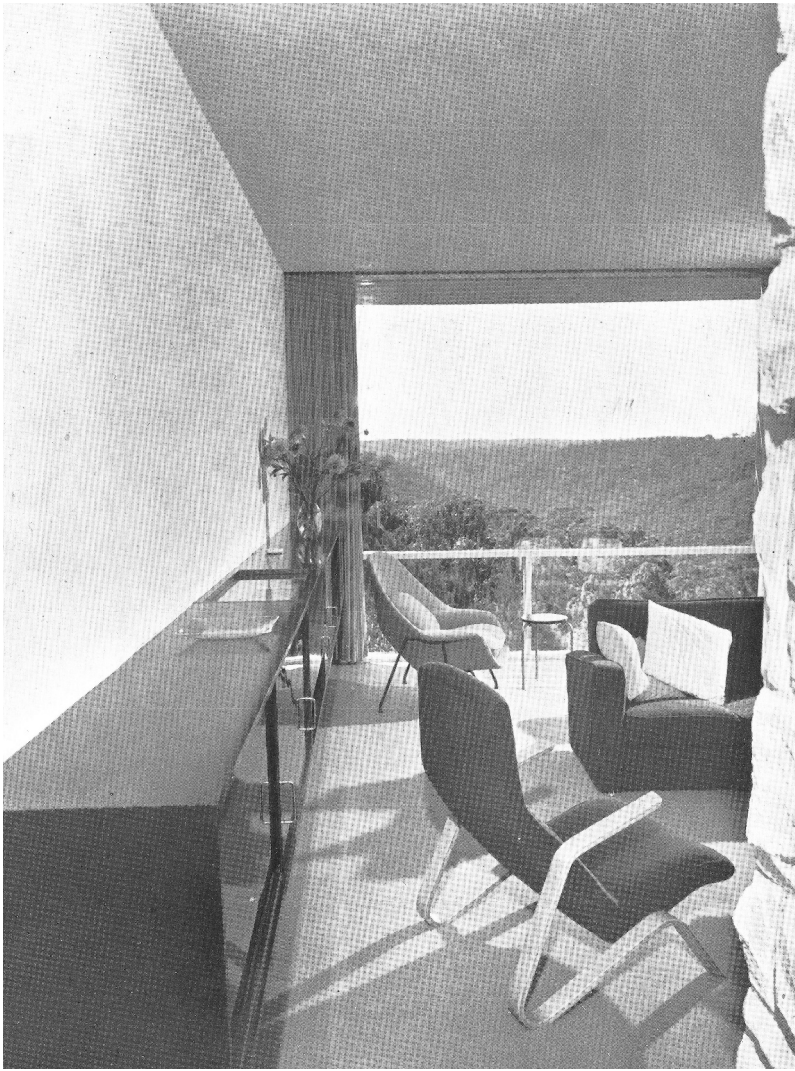


Figure 2. Panoramic view of landscape from the living room of the Rose Seidler House, Wahroonga, New South Wales, 1948-50. Architect: Harry Seidler. Photograph by Marcell Seidler. Source: Harry Seidler, *Houses, Interiors, Projects* (Sydney: Associated General Publications, 1954), 7.

more significant, he began to push the plan back into the box: very quickly the north faces of all his houses took the form of protective shaded visors (Seidler often referred to this element as a “covered terrace”), a tactic employed not just by Niemeyer but many Brazilian architects at the time.⁴⁶ The deep shadow of the elevated hollow rectangular box-form of the Rose Seidler House at Wahroonga (1951) typified his shift and became emblematic of Seidler’s increasing use of this tactic (Fig. 3).⁴⁷ The visors of



Figure 3. Rose House, Wahroonga, New South Wales, 1949-1951. Architect: Harry Seidler. Photograph by Max Dupain. Copyright Penelope Seidler.



Figure 4. Adjustable louvres and mural by Harry Seidler at the Marcus Seidler House, Wahroonga, New South Wales, 1949-51. Architect Harry Seidler. Photograph, 1953 by Marcell Seidler. Source: National Gallery of Australia (NGA2001.250). Copyright Penelope Seidler.

these houses framed the panorama and they laid claim to the landscape beyond. He also used murals at a house in Beecroft and, significantly, at the Marcus Seidler House (1949–51) in the same compound at Wahroonga, where Seidler’s abstract mural (Fig. 4) was complemented by blue-grey vertical moveable louvres, a butterfly roof, and a deep north-facing elevated visor now labelled as a “terrace”. Likewise, the initial model for the Meller House at Castlecrag (1950) had hollow terra cotta pipe screens like those at Lucio Costa’s Parque Eduardo Guinle housing in Rio de Janeiro (1948) in addition to the now familiar louvres and deep shading visor that underscored the dramatic profile of the house’s butterfly roof. There were echoes here not just of Niemeyer’s yacht club and Kubitschek House (1943) at Pampulha but also the form and internal ramps of Le Corbusier’s Errázuriz vacation house at Zapallar, Chile (1930) and Niemeyer’s own home at Gavea (1942), which Seidler visited in 1948. Art and architectural tactics to deploy shade functionally and artistically were the lessons of South America: Seidler used them all to acclimatise his modernism.

Response to climate soon became a preoccupation, and Seidler was a fast learner. On a visit in 1953 to Surfers Paradise in Queensland to promote a new block of apartments that were financed by businessman Lin Corr, Seidler spoke to residents and made comparisons with the climates of Brazil, Florida and southern Queensland, showing slides of buildings in Rio de Janeiro as appropriate future models for the Gold Coast.⁴⁸ However, this was as far, urbanistically, that Seidler was able to reach in 1953. For the most part, preoccupied with a burgeoning practice and dozens of residential commissions, he was intent on finding the appropriate language with which to manage climate, and like other architects at the time, to devise shading devices that were either attached or integral to a building’s form.

In particular, Seidler explored the louvre in timber, aluminium, and concrete, as well as in movable and fixed form. He deployed this shading device in series as a complete sculptural screen in large and small projects (some were built, others were not), such as his 1955 proposal for the Fuller House at 200 Little Collins Street in Melbourne (Fig. 5), and his 1961 Lend Lease House on Circular Quay in Sydney (Fig. 6).⁴⁹ Seidler’s first monograph on his Australian work, published in 1954, featured projects for a textile factory at Regent’s Park (ca. 1953) and an office building for Associated General Publications, Sussex Street, Sydney (1954), where louvres became the dominant formal element of the building’s façade. At the Paspaley House in sub-tropical Darwin (1959), Seidler transformed the visor into a double-storey *brise-soleil*, while for the Printers Union in Sydney (1959), the egg-crate concrete façade read both as an Albers-like *matière* and as a supremely practical response to shading an all-glass façade. Given Le Corbusier’s increased adoption of the large-scale concrete *brise-soleil* at Chandigarh and the publication of Fry’s and Drew’s books on design in

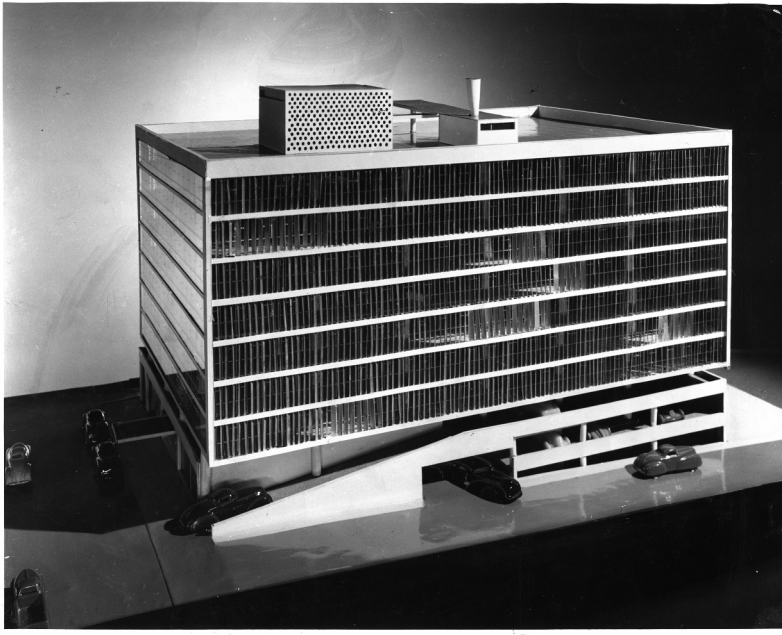


Figure 5. Model of Fuller House, 200 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 1955 (unbuilt project). Architect: Harry Seidler. Photographer: unknown. Copyright Penelope Seidler. Courtesy *Cross-Section* Archive, Architecture Library, University of Melbourne.

the tropics, by the late-1950s, the louvre as a linguistic device was no longer geographically restricted to South America.⁵⁰ Instead, it had been absorbed into the general language of post-war modernism. Seidler's interest in the louvre never wavered and, unlike Breuer, Seidler's interest in "sun and shadow" was not just an abstract concept of aesthetic opposites.⁵¹ It was a practical, technical and artistic task driven and determined by the necessities of place, evidenced later in the monumental louvres of his Maclaren Street office building for North Sydney (1971) and his own offices at 2 Glen Street, Milsons Point (1973, 1984, 1994).

Soon after arriving in Australia, Seidler also drew upon the other attraction of Brazilian modernism: the search for new form. Though few of these early projects were realised, each indicate Seidler's desire to experiment with the technological and aesthetic potential of reinforced concrete. Working with engineer Peter Miller, his 1952 entry for Melbourne's athletics stadium for the 1956 Olympics was a structural tour-de-force with its elliptical dish emerging from the earth and connected to a shell concrete restaurant building, echoing a similar structural and compositional strategy employed by Niemeyer in his unbuilt scheme for a National Athletic Centre in Rio de Janeiro (1941). Similarly, Seidler's 1952 entry for Melbourne's Olympic swimming stadium was a dramatic ovoid concrete shell, its ends to be clad

Figure 6. (top image) Associated General Publishers, Sussex Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 1954. Architect: Harry Seidler. Photograph: Max Dupain. Copyright Penelope Seidler. Source: National Gallery of Australia (NGA 2001.228).

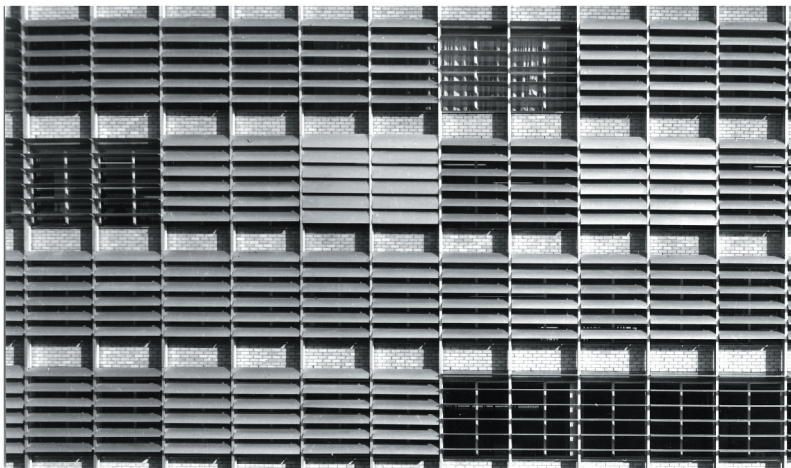
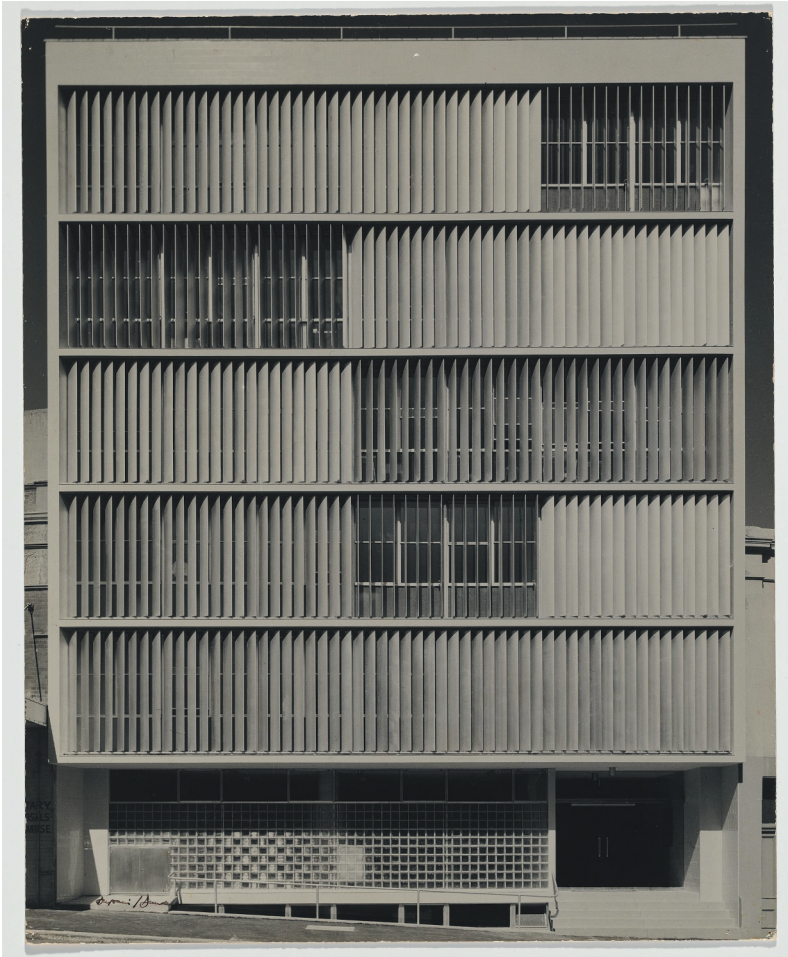


Figure 6. Detail of adjustable adjustable sun-louvres on vertical aluminium mullions, Lend Lease House, Sydney, New South Wales, 1961. Architect: Harry Seidler. Photograph: Max Dupain. Copyright Penelope Seidler. Courtesy *Cross-Section* Archive, Architecture Library, University of Melbourne.

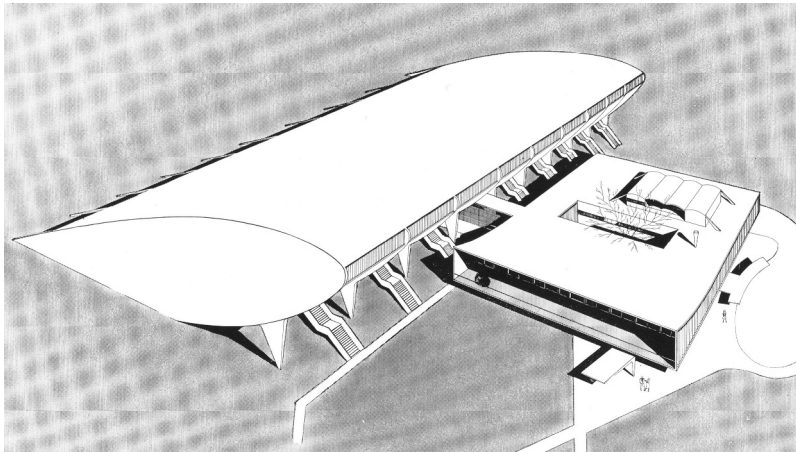


Figure 7. Competition entry, Olympic Swimming Stadium, Fawkner Park, South Yarra, Melbourne, Victoria, 1952. Architect: Harry Seidler. Harry Seidler, *Houses, Interiors, Projects*, 1954, 154. Copyright Penelope Seidler.

in coloured ceramic tiles and propped up on one side by a series of tapered concrete legs (Fig. 7). Its dynamic form did not mimic but foreshadowed the same expressive form-making that Niemeyer would later deploy when configuring the tear-drop shape of his Colégio Estadual Central auditorium

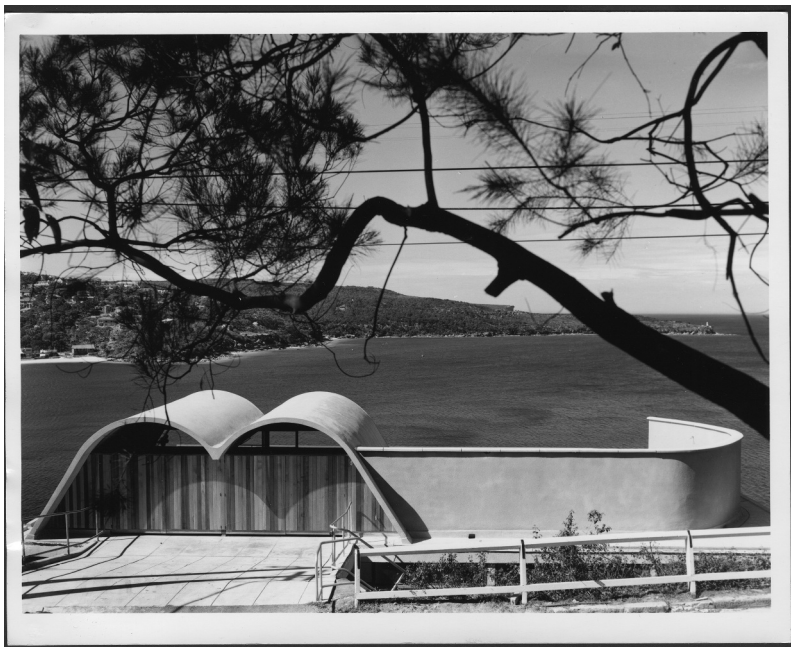


Figure 8. Williamson House, Mosman, New South Wales, 1951. Architect: Harry Seidler. Photograph: Max Dupain. Copyright Penelope Seidler.

at Belo Horizonte (1954). The most convincing of these formal explorations was the Williamson House at Mosman (1951), where Seidler, to take advantage of panoramic views across Middle Harbour, inverted Villa Savoye and placed the cars on the roof beneath a double parabolic arch shell structure. Niemeyer used a similar strategy in his unbuilt scheme for the Tremaine House, Santa Barbara (1948) where he placed cars beneath a triple catenary arch structure but on the ground.⁵² Seidler then pushed the glazed wall back into the box to form a visor, while concrete *pilotis* negotiated the precipitous rocky landscape below (Fig. 8). If there was ever a Brazilian reference in Seidler's work, this was it, especially when matched with the seductive curves of the harbour landscape.

Seidler's radical proposal for a student hostel at the University of Sydney (1950) combined a shell concrete roof structure, fixed vertical fins, pivoting sun awnings, terra cotta screens, a "dominating mural", and a linear block elevated off tapered *pilotis*.⁵³ Though unbuilt, this project was a skilful melding of forms and ideas from Le Corbusier, Breuer and Niemeyer. Nonetheless, Seidler's ambition was obvious: to use mass construction associated with reinforced concrete and build modernist apartment buildings and transform Sydney's urban fabric. Projects like his Glenvue apartments at Tamarama (1954, completed by others) and Ithaca Gardens (1954–60) prefigured the proposal by Seidler and a team of colleagues for the complete redevelopment of McMahon's Point in 1957, a Brazilian-inspired Ville Radieuse of slab towers, maisonettes, concrete sound-shell, community and commercial structures on the northern side of Sydney Harbour with its serpentine coastline evoking the curves of Lagoa da Pampulha (Fig. 9). Only a few years later, on the other side of the harbour, Seidler's daring proposal for The Rocks Development (1962),



Figure 9. Photographic collage of the McMahon's Point Redevelopment, North Sydney, New South Wales, 1957. Architect: Harry Seidler, Lyle Dunlap, Harry Howard, Richard Fitzhardinge, Ivan Seifert, Andrew Young, Philip Jackson, Douglas Gordon and Michael Boyle. Source: *Harry Seidler 1955/63 (Sydney: Horwitz Publications, 1963), 195*. Photograph: Max Dupain. Copyright Penelope Seidler.



Figure 10. Model of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Scheme, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW, 1962. Architect: Harry Seidler & Associates. Photograph: Max Dupain. Source: National Gallery of Australia (NGA 2001.240). Copyright Penelope Seidler.

a 10,000 person community adjacent to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, was a series of undulating curving slabs held aloft on tapered columns and splayed V-shaped prongs that stepped across the contours of the harbour landscape (Fig. 10).⁵⁴ Had both schemes been completed, each would have joined across the water as a fully resolved, unified modernist ensemble of architecture and landscape, worthy of the urban forms of Rio de Janeiro and not least, the maritime setting of Pampulha but expanded and inhabited by large-scale residential blocks. More significantly, the landscapes of both projects were topographically driven. These urban spaces were continuous landscapes, where the contours and serpentine curves of the harbour coastlines were given preference and enhanced. In 1957, Seidler proclaimed to Sydneysiders that their city was “matched possibly only by the Brazilian capital of Rio de Janeiro” and that Sydney could “boast several hundred miles of harbour coastline, with views and building sites, which are the envy of the world.”⁵⁵ It was a belief that would stay with him and guide his urban ideas – the key was a design response predicated on landscape, panorama and a ground plane that implied, as much as possible, an unencumbered pedestrian and sculptural field.

Second Phase: Towers, Buildings, Projects 1964-2005

Although these grand urban projects that envisaged Sydney as an Antipodean Rio de Janeiro were never realised, Seidler's career blossomed in the 1960s and his overtly Brazilian references appeared to fade from view. This was partly due to Seidler's diversifying aesthetic interests and the increasing scale of his commissions, especially with the design and completion of the office complex of Australia Square between 1960 and 1967. Seidler's interests in concrete expanded dramatically (as they had done with his former employer Marcel Breuer⁵⁶) following Seidler's collaboration on this project with Pier Luigi Nervi. Additionally, Seidler intentionally included the most up-to-date works of modern art in all future urban projects and his urban gestures in scale, form and material, while unwaveringly faithful to the modernist goal of opening up the city at ground level, also increasingly referenced the urban spaces of Baroque Rome. Even before Australia Square was complete, Seidler claimed that:

Above all, true architecture can be born as free-standing sculpture in space, with the relationship of individual buildings and the spaces created between them of equal, if not higher, aesthetic importance than the buildings themselves.⁵⁷

Of particular fascination for him was the composition and urban spaces created by Borromini's S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane and Bernini's Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, both of which he visited in October 1963, and to which he subsequently referred in the 1973 monograph on his work.⁵⁸ In 1976, as a guest professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Seidler ran a seminar devoted to the Baroque. At a time when modernism was coming under attack from a diverse range of sources, the Baroque, socially and theoretically, as championed by Sigfried Giedion in *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (1941), represented for Seidler an historic bulwark for the modern project.

Seidler had not been immune to an emerging critique of modernism in the previous decade nor had his work stalled in development during this period. Throughout the 1960s, as scholars have noted, he grew increasingly interested in megastructural systems and changing-section T-beams as a way of creating uninterrupted column-free office space.⁵⁹ At the same time, curves began to appear in the plans of Seidler's buildings and in his prestressed concrete beams from a variety of sources, including the paintings of Frank Stella and the sculptures of Norman Carlberg, the isostatic lines of Nervi's structures, and, significantly, the geometries of the Baroque. All derived from a rational mathematical basis, yet in his project for a condominium in Acapulco, Mexico (1969–70), the basis of the free-form curves of garden walls at ground level does not reflect Peter Blake's 1973 reference to the building's curved balcony ends – they are more about

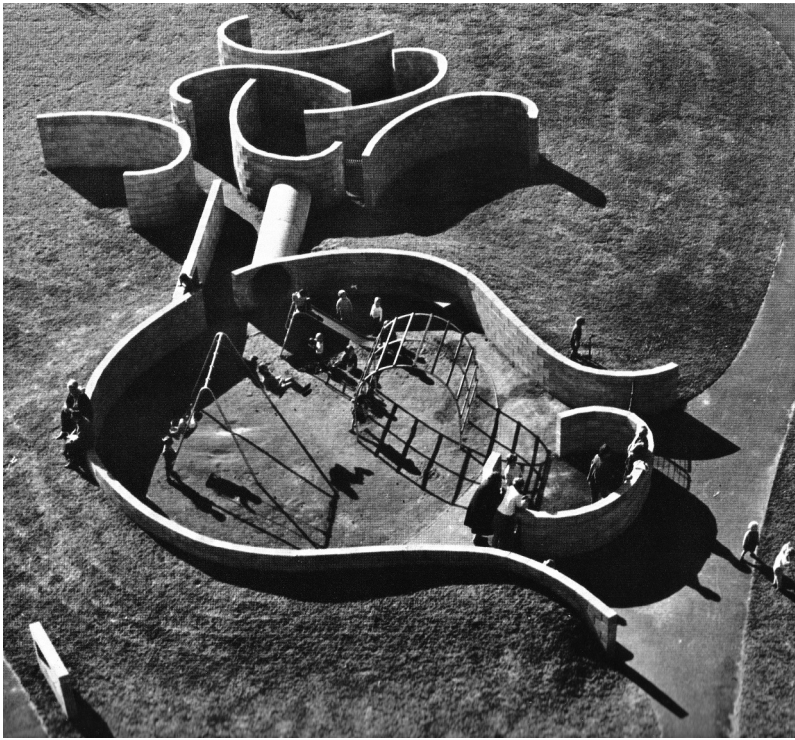


Figure 11. In 1973, American critic Peter Blake described the walls of the children's playground at the NSW Housing Commission apartments, Rosebery, Sydney, New South Wales, 1964-67 as "a maquette of a different kind of city". Architect: Harry Seidler & Associates. Photograph: Max Dupain. Source: Peter Blake, *Architecture for the New World: the work of Harry Seidler* (Sydney: Horwitz Australia Ltd, 1973), 39. Copyright Penelope Seidler.

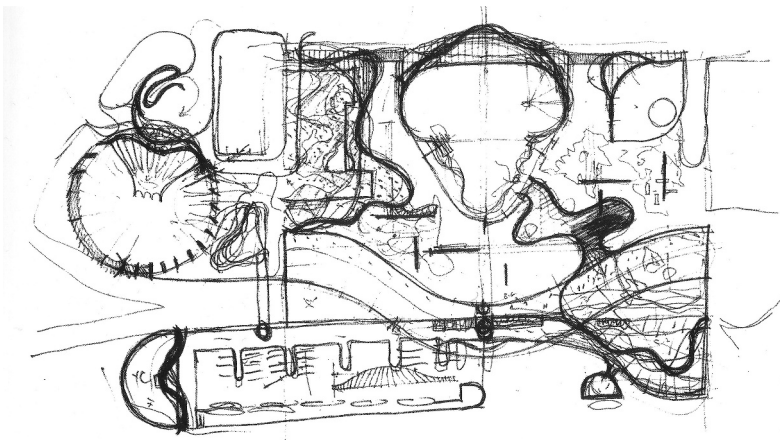


Figure 12. Early sketch of stages 1 and 2, Riverside Centre, Brisbane, Queensland, 1983 showing a cylindrical hotel (left), low-rise undulating structure at the riverfront and lozenge-shaped tower behind. Architect: Harry Seidler & Associates. Source: *Harry Seidler & Associates: Towers in the City*, (Milan: Edizioni Tecno, 1988) Copyright Penelope Seidler.

landscape and space.⁶⁰ Even earlier, in the labyrinthine, free-form walls and curved enclosures of Seidler's children's playground for the NSW Housing Commission apartments at Rosebery (1964–67) (Fig. 11), Blake observed that:

... this labyrinth is about as free a departure from 20th century urban design as has been built in some time.

For it is, of course, not really a labyrinth for children to play in, but (as suggested above) a maquette of a different kind of city.⁶¹

From the late 1970s, Seidler, now in his fifties, began to explore “a different kind of city”, especially since he received commissions to design numerous large, urban-scaled projects not only in Australia but also in tropical Asia.⁶² Located in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong, where he completed the Hong Kong Club in 1984, these projects signalled his mastery of Borromini-inspired façades and Baroque interior spaces. Nonetheless, the full realisation of Blake's words is most clearly evident in the design and construction of Riverside in Brisbane (1983–86). The initial scheme for this project included a cylindrical hotel, a marina, a low wave-shaped building, and a main multi-storey office tower surrounded by a lush riverbank landscape of planting beds and walls shaped according to amoebic curves (Fig. 12).⁶³ The final scheme, which resulted in the 40-storey tower and a modified landscape of restaurants and terraces nevertheless constituted, as Kenneth Frampton noted:

... the first landscaped complex, anywhere, to pick up where Niemeyer and Burle Marx left off in the late 50's ... Riverside may be read as a tectonically rigorous but topographically inflected work ...⁶⁴

In effect, Seidler had created the ultimate personal synthesis here in this work: his Baroque intentions were realised not through historic reference but through a personally inflected language that resulted in part from his study of Borromini and his collaborations with Breuer and Nervi.⁶⁵ However, his sphere of references also now included the landscapes of Burle Marx and the largely unrealised urban visions of Costa and Niemeyer, whilst remaining true to the undeniable Seidler trademark (Fig. 13). Riverside was his solution to the problem of urban space in Australian architecture and it was a strident counter to planning controls elsewhere in the country that demanded a return to the street wall of buildings that had characterised Australian cities between the 1920s and the 1950s. Thanks to his injection of ideas from another Southern hemisphere source, Seidler's urbanism, as it matured in the 1980s, ran counter to the Anglo-American trajectory that had largely shaped Australian cities since the 1850s.

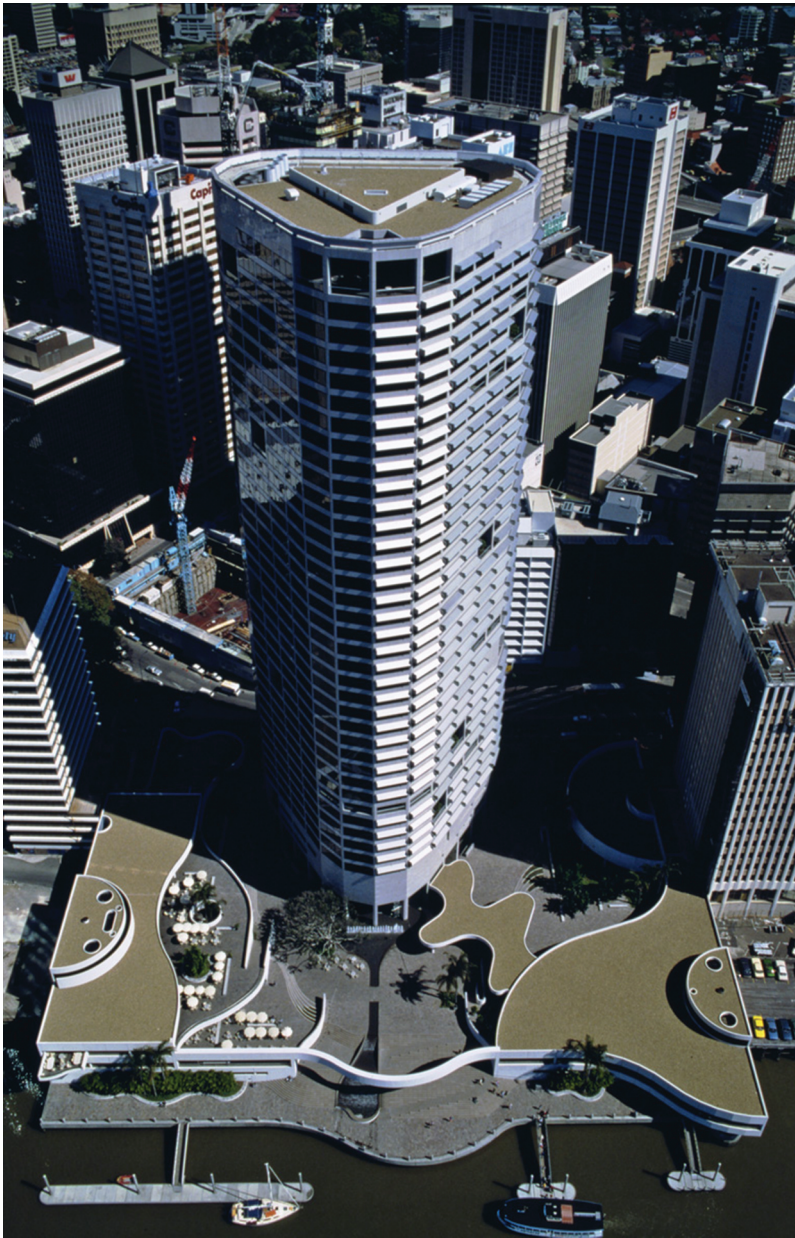


Figure 13. Aerial view, Riverside Centre, Brisbane, Queensland, 1983-6. Architect: Harry Seidler & Associates. Photograph: John Gollings. Source: *Harry Seidler & Associates: Towers in the City*, (Milan: Edizioni Tecno, 1988).

Seidler remained unflinchingly loyal to Giedion's celebration of the Baroque as "a new power to mold space, and to produce an astonishing and unified whole from the most various parts", as well as to Giedion's

interpretation of Borromini's "undulating wall [as] the natural accompaniment to the flowing spaces of the flexible ground plan".⁶⁶ He also stayed faithful to the ideas about monumentality that Giedion developed in collaboration with Josep Lluís Sert and Fernand Léger, who stated that an office building like the Ministry of Education in Rio might signal a new fusion of architecture, art and landscape in the service of monumentality, and that:

Elements of nature such as trees, plants and water, would complete the picture. We could group all these elements in architectural ensembles . . . Man-made landscapes would be correlated with nature's landscapes and all elements combined in terms of the new and vast façade, sometimes extending for many miles, which has been revealed to us by the air view.⁶⁷

It is not hard to understand the impressionable young architect's fascination with the idea that the Australian landscape might just be "the new and vast façade" where the realisation of such a new urbanism, with all the spatial fluidity and aesthetic and ideological unity of purpose of the Baroque might be realised.⁶⁸ Achieving this new urbanism required a lifelong project that synthesised the modernist language in structure, space, art and as a unifying landscape of the *topos*.

Not without his critics, thereafter Seidler's urbanism from the 1980s reached a new maturity with a brace of office buildings, apartments and single houses across the nation that reveal Seidler's mastery of curvilinear forms.⁶⁹ In Melbourne, for example, the form of the Shell Building (1985–9) was inspired in part by Niemeyer's Copan building in São Paulo (1957–66), but also by the topography of a sloping site and an underground rail tunnel below. As always, Seidler strove to bracket out the historic city and harness the site's unparalleled views of the larger landscape. The last two decades of his life were his most productive and culminated in his last large-scale building. Arguably one of his best towers, Riparian (2000–2005) was a multi-use building, again located on the Brisbane River, that incorporated a stunning Burle Marx-inspired landscape at ground level.

Most remarkable, throughout his career, was Seidler's persistence in exploring consistent design themes and the doggedness of his syncretic approach to the making of the city. This can be traced not just through his building but also his occasional writing. For example, in September 1966, following a visit to Tapiola in Finland, Seidler wrote on his return:

There exists a beautiful relationship between groups of widely spaced buildings with the fine natural setting untouched between them. It makes one very envious.⁷⁰

Seidler could have been talking about his towers of the 1980s and beyond. For him, the landscape of Sydney Harbour offered an urban field that had not been realised in Rio de Janeiro. This is perhaps why Seidler also felt so strongly about Utzon's Opera House: its engagement with the landscape of

Sydney's harbour was the constituent and intrinsic aspect, Seidler believed, of Sydney's urban identity just as the river was in Brisbane – an identity that was not the palimpsest of styles and complex spatial grain of the historic city. If one accepts Seidler's understanding of the Australian landscape as its potential "city", the sheer difference of his work, its quality and ultimately its resilient popularity in the Australian urban setting has created a uniquely Australian sense of "sun and shadow".

That the validity of Seidler's urbanism has never been documented nor tested theoretically points not only to the narrowness of urban design scholarship in Australia but also to the power of aesthetic benchmarks for the city in the 1970s and 1980s.⁷¹ This lacuna foregrounds the false assumption that, while in favour of pedestrianisation and reclaiming the right to the city, the models almost always came from Europe, and never from the similar geographies, climates and post-war modernism of South America. In the 1980s and 1990s, Seidler's dogged resistance to what he believed to be overly constrictive urban design guidelines was well known.⁷² On numerous public occasions in the 1980s, he openly expressed his disdain for "a dictate to 'retain the street wall'" and claimed that "Australia is falling victim to the anti-modernist hysteria supported by the American architectural media".⁷³ It was a position that earned him detractors and frequently full-blown opposition.

However, even if one admits the need to acknowledge a city's complexity and that the palimpsest of history imbues a city with richness, and even if aspects of the urbanism of the New World of South America might be found to be flawed, the fact of its scholarly neglect in an Australian setting parallels an earlier lacuna. It would take multiple decades for architectural history to properly acknowledge Le Corbusier's lifelong debt to South America, with extensive revisionist scholarship in the first decade of the 21st century.⁷⁴ The same might be said of Harry Seidler: that Brazil was a lifelong interest, only fully synthesised and realised in built and urban form in the last two decades of his life.

However, that was not all. On Seidler's part, he considered his connection to Brazil to be personal. He continued to visit Niemeyer over the years: in 1974; with his wife Penelope in 1981; and again in 1993; as well as writing on Niemeyer in *Werk, Bauen and Wohnen* in 1994⁷⁵ and reviewing the Museum of Modern Art at Niteroi after visiting the building with Niemeyer during its construction.⁷⁶ A photograph of the pair together in Rio de Janeiro in 1993 – Niemeyer at 86, Seidler at 70 – accompanied Seidler's article in *Werk*. As a preamble to Seidler's article, Niemeyer contributed briefly, acknowledging with near self-critical pathos that Brasilia had developed into both a "monument" and a "monster", a city that was both a "monument to a future that seemed so limitless" and "a monster of social isolation, the ghetto of an establishment".⁷⁷ Seidler, who had been in

Brazil to attend the São Paulo Biennale, wrote glowingly of Niemeyer's exhibition hall and other buildings that dated from the early 1950s and were disposed like sculptures across the lush tropical setting of Ibirapuera Park. Seidler also wrote of Brasília, coming to its defence, arguing that it was reaching a new level of maturity. In the previous three decades, Seidler had, perhaps unconsciously, avoided writing about the monumental sculptural tableau that was the Brazilian capital. But in 1994, Seidler – now himself the target of postmodern revisionism in Australia – defended it, arguing that many of the city's critics had never even been to Brazil. Inclined – as always – to argue on the basis of experience, Seidler by 1993 had visited Brasília and was able to confidently talk about its life in the streets and residential areas and its car-free pedestrian landscapes. As if in reflection on his own career and more recent buildings that might have earned labels of Baroque flamboyance, Seidler too spoke of the aesthetic mantle, which Niemeyer's work had carried since the early 1940s, when Gropius had labelled him as the architectural world's "bird of paradise": "his work was considered to be something unbelievable – rather unworldly – admirable and at the same time despicable" and "that the image of the forbidden fruit clung to him, constantly forced to justify himself."⁷⁸ Clearly, their careers had had ultimately different trajectories, but Seidler empathised with the veiled and unveiled criticisms that followed Niemeyer's work throughout his career. Significantly in the article, Seidler noted his working for Niemeyer in 1948, and his observation then that Niemeyer worked like a painter or sculptor "in contrast to the European-American method" he knew: "sketches, intuitive gestures, ideas – presented in a way that every rationalistic designer must fear".⁷⁹ The exuberant curves of Seidler's unbuilt urban schemes of the early 1960s and his skyscrapers, apartment buildings and urban landscapes from the early 1980s certainly showed no fear.

That Seidler possessed a lifelong admiration for Niemeyer was further demonstrated by his attendance with his wife Penelope Seidler on 23 November 1998 at the presentation of the RIBA Gold Medal to Oscar Niemeyer at the Palácio da Cidade, Rio de Janeiro. While in Rio, the Seidlers visited an exhibition of Niemeyer's work and also Roberto Burle Marx's garden at Barra de Guaratiba.⁸⁰ There is some further irony in the fact nearly four decades earlier in 1960, a journalist said "Six or seven years ago it might have appeared that Harry Seidler was to be the Frank Lloyd Wright of Australian architecture. Now it seems that he may make his contribution as an Oscar Niemeyer."⁸¹ It was statement that was ultimately prophetic.

Notes

1. For example, the special issue titled 'The Architecture of the Tasman World, 1788–1850' *Fabrications: JSAHANZ*, 29, no. 3 (November 2019), edited by

- G. A. Bremner and Andrew Leach and which included important papers by Philippa Mein Smith, Stuart King, Harriet Edquist, Robin Skinner and William Taylor.
2. Christopher Vernon, "Canberra and Brasilia: Constructed Landscapes of Identity," in Anthony Gardner, ed., *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations* (Melbourne: The South Project Inc., 2013): 307–330.
 3. John Macarthur, Deborah van der Plaats, Janina Gosseye and Andrew Wilson, eds., *Hot Modernism: Queensland Architecture 1945–1975* (London: Artifice, 2015); Gevork Hartoonian, "Harry Seidler: Revisiting Modernism," *Fabrications: JSAHANZ*, 20: 1 (2011): 30–53.
 4. Donald Leslie Johnson, *Australian Architecture 1901–51: Sources of Modernism* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980): 191.
 5. See Sigfried Giedion, "The Need for a New Monumentality," in Paul Zucker, ed. *New Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944): 547–568; and Josep Lluís Sert, Fernand Léger and Sigfried Giedion, "Nine Points on Monumentality," 1943, originally meant for publication by the American Abstract Artists but which never materialised until its publication in Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me: The Diary of a Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958): 48–51.
 6. Melinda Silverman, "'Ons bou vir die bank': Nationalism, Architecture and Volkskas Bank," in Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavic, eds., *blank – architecture, apartheid and after* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 1998): 129.
 7. Nikolaus Pevsner, "Johannesburg: The Development of a Contemporary Vernacular in the Transvaal," *The Architectural Review*, 113: 678 (June 1953): 361, 382.
 8. Arthur Barker, "Modern Movement Mediations: Brazilian Modernism and the Identity of Post-War Architecture in Pretoria, South Africa," in Dossiê Brasil-África do Sul. *Paranoá*, 18 (2017): 18pp.
 9. I am grateful to Professor James Weirick, University of New South Wales, who through online ancestry and newspaper database research enabled these travel dates to be determined. These dates were supplied to Polly Seidler, who then kindly passed them onto me.
 10. Margaret Firmage, letter to Nilo Mindlin, dated 12 August 1947. Marcel Breuer Digital Archive, University of Syracuse, see <https://breuer.syr.edu/xtf/view?docId=mets/2230.mets.xml;query=mindlin;brand=breuer> Breuer originally intended to stop over in Rio de Janeiro on 1 August 1947 for two days and at Bernard Rudofsky's suggestion was to have stayed at the Hotel Gloria. See Marcel Breuer, letter to Nilo Mindlin, dated 22 July 1947. Marcel Breuer Digital Archive, University of Syracuse, see <https://breuer.syr.edu/xtf/view?docId=mets/39363.mets.xml;query=mindlin;brand=breuer> The name "Nilo Mindlin" is actually a mistake made by the Breuer office at the time. The addressee was actually Brazilian architect Henrique Mindlin (1911–1971), whose office was located at Nilo Peçanha Avenue in Rio de Janeiro. Mindlin was the author of *Modern Architecture in Brazil* (London: Architectural Press, 1956).
 11. The exact location of the Niemeyer office in Rio de Janeiro at this time is not known. Niemeyer moved to his iconic address in the Edifício Ypiranga on Avenida Atlântica in Copacabana around 1951. Just before this time Niemeyer worked for a short while in his Canoas house, however Brazilian scholars have yet to confirm his actual office address between 1945 and 1951. See Bruno Topia Caldas, "Hoje, o passado de amanhã. Arquitetura em Oscar Niemeyer," PhD Thesis, PROARQ-UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2017, 289–291.

12. Staying overnight in primitive conditions at the ITA campus, Seidler also became acutely aware of the pitiful working circumstances and illiteracy of the local construction workers. See Harry Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects," Part 4, 30 January 1994, cassette recording interview by Penelope Seidler. Cassette in possession of the Seidler family.
13. Seidler in recollecting his meeting with Chateaubriand said that the media tycoon was considering turning the Pampulha casino into a radio station. See Harry Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects," Part 4, 30 January 1994, cassette recording interview by Penelope Seidler. Cassette in possession of the Seidler family. This recollection was not entirely correct. At the time, Chateaubriand was considering opening TV stations (later named TV Tupy) in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and these opened in 1950 and 1954 respectively. In Rio, a possible location for the TV station was the old building of the Urca Casino, which had been vacant since 1946 and which Chateaubriand bought sometime between 1946 and 1952. TV Tupy opened there in 1954. The author is grateful to the anonymous referee for this clarification of detail.
14. Harry Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects," Part 4, 30 January 1994, cassette recording interview by Penelope Seidler. Cassette in possession of the Seidler family. See also "Declarações de um arquiteto norte-americano," *Diario da Noite*, 17 May 1948.
15. "Architect Seidler visits the S.Paolo Museum", undated newspaper clipping, Harry Seidler Scrapbook, volume 1, 1948–56, State Library of New South Wales. Lina Bo Bardi famously further developed her innovative hanging system, using vertically tensioned wires at the São Paulo Museum of Art, São Paulo, Brazil, 1956–68, which she also designed. See Stephen Mark Caffey and Gabriela Campagnol, "Dis/Solution: Lina Bo Bardi's Museu de Arte de São Paulo," *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 13(1): 5 (2015): 1–15.
16. Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects".
17. Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects".
18. "Canadian Praises Rio Architects," *Brazil Herald*, undated newspaper cutting, Harry Seidler Scrapbook, volume 1, 1948–56, State Library of New South Wales.
19. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Painting Toward Architecture* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948).
20. Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects".
21. Eduardo Catalano, letter to Marcel Breuer dated 21 June 1948, Marcel Breuer Digital Archive, University of Syracuse, see <https://breuer.syr.edu/xtf/view?docId=mets/2498.mets.xml;query=catalano;brand=breuer> Additionally, Seidler did not warm to Buenos Aires, mostly because of how he had experienced the visible and obvious presence of former Nazi SS officers who'd sought refuge in Peron's Argentina. See Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects".
22. Seidler, transcript, "Harry Seidler Reflects".
23. Colin Griffiths, interviewed by Philip Goad and Elizabeth Musgrave, 3 September 2020.
24. For example, Niemeyer's work was featured in "The Ideal Home," *Architecture and Arts* (March 1955): 27–33; and a feature on new buildings, *Architecture and Arts* (November 1955). See also George Landau, "Contemporary Brazilian Architecture," *Architecture and Arts* (March 1956): 30–35 and Oscar Niemeyer, "Editorial," *Architecture and Arts* (June 1957): np.
25. "UNHQ Building, New York," *Architecture* (October 1948): 48–50; "Trends in Design," *Architecture* (July 1949): 92–93.

26. Harry Seidler, "Painting Toward Architecture," *Architecture*, 37: 10 (October 1949): 119–124.
27. Seidler, "Painting Toward Architecture," 120, 123.
28. Walter Bunning, *Homes in the Sun: The Past, Present and Future of Australian Housing* (Sydney: WJ Nesbit, 1945): 59.
29. "Architects Plan for Government Offices," *The Age*, March 3, 1948: 3.
30. "The 'Ctesiphon' System of Construction," *Architect's Journal* (30 November 1950): 463. See also Philip Goad, "Shells, Spires and a Dome: Science and Spirit in the Space Age," in Ann Stephen, Philip Goad and Andrew McNamara, eds., *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Australian Modernism* (Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press and Powerhouse Publishing, 2008): 130–143, 223.
31. Philip Goad, "Moderate Modernism 1945–77," in Philip Goad, ed., *Bates Smart: 150 Years of Australian Architecture* (Port Melbourne: Thames and Hudson, 2004): 175.
32. Philip Goad, "One of the Lost Tribe: James Birrell and that Other Tradition," in Andrew Wilson and John Macarthur, eds., *Birrell: work from the office of James Birrell* (Melbourne: NMBW Publications, 1997): 19. The Ariston Club was featured in *Architectural Record*, *Motels, Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* (New York, Architectural Record, 1953): 135–137.
33. Churches that draw influence from the forms and structures of Latin and South American modernism include: St. John's Catholic Church, Mitcham, Victoria, 1952 (architect: Alan G. Robertson); St. Bernard's Catholic Church, Botany, New South Wales, 1955 (architect: Curtin & Cameron); St. Mary's Star of the Sea Cathedral, Darwin, Northern Territory, 1955–62 (architect: Donoghue, Cusick & Edwards, design: Ian Ferrier); St. Kevin's Catholic Church, Dee Why, New South Wales, 1959–61 (architect: Gibbons & Gibbons); and Holy Family Church, Indooroopilly, Queensland, 1960–63 (architect: Douglas & Barnes). For an overview of Australian post-war churches, see Elizabeth Richardson, "Worship," in Hannah Lewi and Philip Goad, eds., *Australia Modern: architecture, design and landscape architecture, 1925–1975* (Port Melbourne: Thames & Hudson, 2019) 260–267. A late example of Oscar Niemeyer's influence on Australian church architecture can be seen at the Lutheran Church of St. Andrew The Apostle, 25 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, Queensland, 1976 (architect: Barry Walduck). See Macarthur et al, eds., *Hot Modernism*, 160–161.
34. See Goad, "Shells, Spires and a Dome: Science and Spirit in the Space Age," 135–136. A possible Latin American source for the Borland, Murphy & McIntyre design is the Church of la Medalla de la Virgen Milagrosa, Mexico City, Mexico (1953) by Enrique de la Mora and Felix Candela.
35. C.V. Howard, "Architectural Mission to the Americas: Report," 1945, 31. The report was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Works and is held by the National Archives of Australia. See <https://nla.gov.au/443/tarkine/nla.obj-99537218> I am extremely grateful to Elizabeth Musgrave and Daniel Ryan for drawing this publication to my attention.
36. Route map, A.G. Stephenson's overseas trip, 1949–50. Stephenson & Turner Architectural Archive, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.
37. Aviva Lowy, "Architect of Depth and Vision," *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 27, 2012. See also Christopher Vernon, "Exchange: A Southern Design Dialogue," *Architecture Australia* (September 2010), published online at *architectureau*, 1 September 2010.
38. Robin Boyd, *Australia's Home* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1952): 181.

39. Paul Rudolph, "Regionalism in Architecture," *Perspecta*, 4 (1957): 13. Seidler would acknowledge and scholars later identified that the Rose Seidler House was very similar to the unbuilt project for the Thompson House, Foxborough, Massachusetts (1947), designed by Seidler with assistance from Rolland Thompson and published in *Arts and Architecture*, 64 (January 1948): 32–33. A photograph of the model of the Thompson House was used to illustrate the Rose Seidler House in Harry Seidler, *Houses, Interiors Projects* (Sydney: Horwitz, 1954): 2. See Philip Drew, "The Migration of an Idea, 1945–1976," in Kenneth Frampton and Philip Drew, eds., *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992): 20. See also Vladimir Belogolovsky, *Harry Seidler Lifework* (New York: Rizzoli, 2014): 42–44.
40. The presence of the ramp in the Thompson House (1947), designed before Seidler's visit to South America in 1948, suggests a prior interest in Niemeyer's architecture. Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian Pavilion (1939), for example, at the New York World's Fair was featured in Philip L Goodwin, *Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old 1652–1942* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943): 194–195.
41. Seidler would also have seen at Niemeyer's yacht club at Pampulha murals by Portinari at the rear of the lounge and another by Roberto Burle Marx at the club's entrance hall. Both were strongly figurative and not as abstract as Seidler's mural at the Rose Seidler House.
42. See Philip Goad, "New World Bauhaus: Harry Seidler, Harvard and Black Mountain College," in Philip Goad, Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara, Harriet Edquist and Isabel Wünsche, eds., *Bauhaus Diaspora and Beyond: Transforming Education Through Art, Design and Architecture* (Carlton, Vic. and Sydney: Miegunyah Press with Power Publications, 2019): 101–115.
43. See *Portinari: His Life and Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940); *Portinari: Retrospectiva* (São Paulo: MASP: Projeto Portinari, 1997). All the Portinari murals, for example, illustrated in Stamo Papadaki, *The work of Oscar Niemeyer* (1950) were figurative, including those for St. Francis Assisi, Pampulha (1943), the Academy for Boys at Cataguazes, Brazil (1946) and the Monument for Ruy Barboza, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1949).
44. Brazilian muralist Paulo Werneck (1907–1987) completed abstract murals for the exteriors of Niemeyer's St Francis of Assisi, Pampulha (1943) and MMM Roberto's IRB Headquarters, Rio de Janeiro (1944) before Seidler's arrival in Brazil in 1948. Seidler would not have seen Werneck's mural at Seguradora Edifício, Rio de Janeiro (1950) illustrated in Vladimir Belogolovsky, *Harry Seidler: Lifework* (New York: Rizzoli, 2014): 30.
45. For example, Seidler's next house, the Waks House, Northbridge, New South Wales (1949–51) had a bank of fixed timber louvres and attached sunshades to its north face.
46. Such as Niemeyer's Morais House, Gavea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1943–9); housing for technical assistants at ITA, São José dos Campos, Brazil (1947–); Capanema House, Gavea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1947) and Niemeyer's weekend house, Mendes, Brazil (1949).
47. Other early Seidler-designed houses that employ the tactic of the "visor" included the Fink House, Newport (1949–50); Bowden House, Canberra (1950); Lowe House, Mosman (1950); Rubensohn House, Quirindi (1951) and Landau House, Whale Beach (1952).
48. "New Ideas in Architecture," *The South Coast Bulletin*; August 19, 1953, n.p. and "Advanced Building Style for Coast," *The South Coast News*, undated and

- unpaginated. Harry Seidler Scrapbook, volume 1, 1948–46, State Library of New South Wales.
49. For example, Lowe House, Mosman, NSW (1950); Fuller House, 200 Little Collins Street, Melbourne (1955); Lend Lease House Offices, Sydney, NSW (1961).
 50. Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, *Tropical Architecture in the Humid Zone* (London: BT Batsford, 1956).
 51. Marcel Breuer, “Sun and Shadow,” in Marcel Breuer, ed., *Sun and Shadow: The Philosophy of an Architect* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1955): 32–35. Breuer’s title is deceiving – it is not at all about the literal aspects of sun and shadow but the broader aesthetic potential of contrast across all quantitative and qualitative aspects (e.g. open/closed; transparent/solid; form/space; building/landscape etc.).
 52. Oscar Niemeyer, beach house for Mr and Mrs Burton Tremaine, project, Santa Barbara, California, 1948. Drawings held by the Museum of Modern Art, New York (SC76. 1966).
 53. Harry Seidler, *Houses, Interiors and Projects* (Sydney: Associated General Publications, 1954): 142.
 54. *Harry Seidler 1955/63: Houses, Buildings and Projects* (Sydney: Horwitz Publications, 1963): 208–215.
 55. Harry Seidler, “Ruining the Finest Harbour in the World,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 12, 1957, 9.
 56. See Barry Bergdoll, “Marcel Breuer and the Invention of Heavy Lightness,” in Barry Bergdoll and Jonathan Massey, eds., *Marcel Breuer: Building Global Institutions* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2018): 45–63.
 57. Harry Seidler, “The problems of piecemeal development,” *The Age*, March 29, 1965.
 58. A view looking up into the dome of Borromini’s S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome (1634) appears in a double page spread on “Free-Form Systems” along with images of the children’s playground, NSW Housing Commission estate, Rosebery, NSW (1964–7); swimming pool area, condominium apartments, Acapulco, Mexico (1969–70); and curved segmental slab buildings, Bushy Park, Singapore (1973). See Peter Blake, *Architecture for the New World. The Work of Harry Seidler* (Sydney: Horwitz Australia Ltd, 1973): 38–39. Bernini’s S. Andrea al Quirinale, Rome (1658) is paired with the forecourt and enclosure of the Memorial to Martyrs, Rookwood, NSW (1969). See Blake, *Architecture for the New World*, 40.
 59. See, for example, David Saunders, “Homes for the Bureaucrats,” *Architecture Australia* 65: 3 (July 1976): 62–70.
 60. Blake, *Architecture for the New World*, 59.
 61. Blake, *Architecture for the New World*, 39.
 62. For example, Tuggeranong Offices, Canberra (1974–76); Australian Parliament House competition, Canberra (1979); Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank, Hong Kong (1979); Office and Apartments, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1980); Hong Kong Club and Office Building, Hong Kong (1980–84); CRA Development 2, Melbourne (1984); and the Circular Quay East Development, Sydney (1984).
 63. While the landscape consultants for Riverside in Brisbane were Belt Collins & Associates of Hawaii, the Seidler office led and dictated the design of the project’s hard landscaping.
 64. Kenneth Frampton, “Seidler at Riverside: a Retrospective Synthesis,” in *Riverside Centre: Harry Seidler*, (Cammeray, NSW: Horwitz Grahame Pty Ltd, 1988): 8, 10.
 65. Seidler’s connection with Pier Luigi Nervi should also be linked to Italian engineers Antonio Nervi (Nervi’s son) and Mario Desideri, who stepped in and continued working with Seidler after Nervi’s death in 1979. For detailed elaboration of Nervi’s

- collaboration with Seidler, see Paolo Stracchi, *Designed in Italy Made in Australia: The Australian work of Pier Luigi Nervi*, exhibition catalogue (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2019).
66. Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1941): 43, 47.
 67. Sert, Leger and Giedion, "Nine Points on Monumentality" (1943) in Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me*, 51.
 68. Ibid.
 69. For example, Hannes House, Cammeray, New South Wales (1983–84); Grosvenor Place, Sydney (1982–88); Shell Headquarters, Melbourne (1985–89); Casino and Hotel Competition, Darling Harbour, Sydney (1986); QV1 Office Tower, Perth (-1987–91); Hamilton House, Vaucluse, New South Wales (1989–91); and the ABC Apartments (Horizon), Darlinghurst (1990).
 70. Harry Seidler, "Finland stops sprawl," *The Sun-Herald*, September 4, 1966.
 71. A rare and early acclaim for Seidler came in 1964 from James Birrell, who declared of Seidler's Australia Square and The Rocks Development proposal that "These are the first real townscape proposals in an Australian city for fifty years." See James Birrell, "Harry Seidler 1956/63 – A review of Seidler's new book," *Architecture and Arts* (October 1964): 35.
 72. See for example, Harry Bechervaise, "The Two Harry's Show," *Urban Design Forum*, 11 (June 1990), City Image Supplement: 3.
 73. Harry Seidler, "Planning and Architecture at the end of our Century," written transcript based on Seidler's 1984 lecture at the RIBA, London and the 1987 Habitat Lecture at the Centre for Human Settlements, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. See <https://seidler.net.au/index.php?id=100>, accessed 21 September 2020.
 74. For example, just within English-language architectural history, see Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World: Studies in the Modern Architecture of Latin America 1930–1960* (London: Verso, 2000): 9–11, 151–164, 250–255; Zilah Quezado Deckker, "Le Corbusier and the Brazilian Style" and "Conclusion," in *Brazil Built: The Architecture of the Modern Movement in Brazil* (London: Spon Press, 2001): 172–187, 207–8; Adnan Morshed, "The Cultural Politics of Aerial Vision: Le Corbusier in Brazil (1929)," *Journal of Architectural Education*, 55: 4 (May 2002): 201–210; Fernando Perez Oyarzun, "Le Corbusier: Latin American Traces," in Jean-François Lejeune, ed., *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003): 98–107; Kenneth Frampton, "Le Corbusier and Oscar Niemeyer: Influence and Counter-Influence, 1929–1965," in Carlos Brillembourg, ed., *Latin American Architecture, 1929–1960: Contemporary Reflections* (New York: Monacelli, 2004): 35–49; and importantly, the special issue, "France-Brazil: Round Trip," *DOCOMOMO Journal*, 34 (March 2006) with its important contributions by Hugo Segawa, Anat Falbel, Maria Stella Martins Bresciani, Mônica Junqueira de Camargo, Yannis Tsiomis, Robert Segre and Gerard Monnier.
 75. Harry Seidler, "Seidler über Niemeyer," *Werk, Bauen & Wohnen*, 12 (December 1994): 64–67.
 76. Harry Seidler, "Museum of Modern Art, Niteroi, Brazil by Niemeyer," *Monument*, 13: 64–67.
 77. Oscar Niemeyer, preamble to Seidler, "Seidler über Niemeyer," *Werk, Bauen & Wohnen*, 12 (December 1994): 65.
 78. Seidler, "Seidler über Niemeyer," 66.

79. Ibid.
80. “News: Flying down to Rio for Gold Medal award to Niemeyer,” *Architects Journal* (3 December 1998). <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/archive/news-flying-down-to-rio-for-gold-medal-award-to-niemeyer>.
81. “He’ll Change,” *Woman’s Day with WOMAN* (18 July 1960): n.p. Volume 2: Harry Seidler Scrapbook 1957–1962, State Library of New South Wales.

Acknowledgments

In the preparation of this paper, the author would like to acknowledge the invaluable advice and assistance of Penelope Seidler, Polly Seidler, Eric Sierins, James Weirick, Elizabeth Musgrave and Daniel Ryan, and the two anonymous reviewers who made constructive and invaluable suggestions about structure and content.