The Modern Movement in New South Wales
A Thematic Study and Survey of Places

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Production

In the post-war era industry consolidated in inner city localities with a large amount of pre-war industrial development or on large disused sites. It also spread onto greenfield sites on the metropolitan edge that were close to road transport and consolidated in regional centres. Many new factories were built to house new production methods and make an expanding range of consumer goods. The basic pre-war format of an “architectural” front for administrative staff and a big shed behind it didn’t change. On restricted sites administration blocks could be two storeys with recessed areas or void space at ground floor level. This had a Modern Movement pedigree where buildings were lifted off the ground on columns.

Many industrial buildings were designed by prominent Modern Movement architects, including Stephenson & Turner, Baldwinson & Booth, Harry Seidler, Oser Fombertaux & Associates and Hugo Stossel. Some were good enough to win Sulmans – the Wormald Factory at Waterloo in 1947 and Boots Pure Drug Company at Roseville in 1954, both by Stafford Moor & Farrington (both demolished).

Architects took care with these most functional buildings. For example, a delighted Sydney Morning Herald noted that Davey & Brindley’s factory for fashion accessory manufacturer G Herring Gibbes in Willoughby was “one of the most attractive post-war designs for a Sydney industrial building … treated with a delicate lightness of touch not often seen in factory buildings.”

Two more examples of well-designed industrial buildings: Ken Woolley’s 1959 Descon factory at Brookvale (demolished, left), and part of Brown Brewer & Gregory’s Smith Kline & French facility at the intersection of Warringah and Allambie Roads, French’s Forest, built in stages between 1962 and 1967 (SLV, Peter Wille photographs: Descon, Accession No: H91.244/5188, Image No: a36256; Smith Kline & French, Accession No: H91.244/815, Image No: a19499).
Some inventive thinking went into factory design. For instance, the concrete roof of Eric Nicholls’ 1954 Whitehall Pharmaceuticals plant at Parramatta held 772,820 litres of water for insulation while the office section of Dr H Epstein’s 1957 extensions to a sporting goods factory at Mascot was kept cool by means of sprinklers watering the roof. Ralph Symonds’ impressive plywood factory alongside Hill Road at Homebush Bay was the largest single industrial building in the Southern Hemisphere and the largest timber building in Australia on completion. The factory consisted of three rows of laminated timber arches forming long vaulted spaces top lit by glazing placed between the upper frame of the arch and a lower suspended beam. Here above-standard plywood sheets could be produced. Although sections of this monument to laminated timber have been demolished, enough remains to grasp its highly significant structural and aesthetic qualities. 12 years later Harry Seidler’s Government Stores in Bourke Road, Alexandria achieved huge clear floor areas with a large span space frame roof.

Ralph Symond’s extraordinary and innovative plant at Homebush, 1959. Although parts of the Ralph Symonds plant have been demolished, the powerful and distinctive forms generated by its laminated timber structure are still very apparent (SLNSW, Australian Photographic Agency – 16667, Jack Hickson photograph; Roy Lumby photograph).

Industrialisation came to the farm with the completion of the Rotolactor at Camden Park Estate, “a sort of bucolic Guggenheim Museum”, (Cross-section, Issue 19, May 1 1954; left) in 1953. The structure, which mechanised the milking of cows, was designed by architect Thomas Maloney. The technology of milk seemed to be of absorbing interest. Five years later a proposed milk processing plant at Parramatta was almost entirely transparent, its minimal Modern Movement form displaying plant to passers-by and visitors alike. The building was designed by architect Laslo Ernst (NAA – J Fitzpatrick photograph, Image No A1200 L16267).

Massive wheat silos imparted something of the Modern Movement to city and country because of their functional form and scales. These silos are at Glebe in Sydney and Carrington in Newcastle. Massive American wheat silos inspired European Modern Movement architects in the early 20th century (SLNSW – Government Printing Office – 1 40100 and Sam Hood photograph, Home and Away – 29084).

Recreation

All sorts of leisure facilities appeared after the war. Sydney’s first suburban squash courts opened in Crows Nest in the middle of 1955. Indoor bowling alleys also proliferated. But the major leisure-time focus seemed to be a club of some sort.

Changes to licensing laws in 1946 resulted in numerous club licenses being issued. Numbers rose from 85 to 253 in twelve months, mostly for returned servicemen, sporting bodies and community groups. Poker machines were legalised in 1956 and by 1962 there were 1,285 clubs in NSW. They substantially changed recreation. Self-contained realms for relaxing and socialising, their amenities and comfort threatened many pubs. Many were architect-designed and reflected Modern Movement influence. The most lavish in the country was St George’s Leagues Club at Carlton. Its attractions included a ballroom for 1,500, three bowling greens, two tennis courts and two squash courts.
After visiting the club Robin Boyd reflected: “People in States like Victoria from which poker machines are banned are cheated of the full realisation of Australian civilisation ... The leagues clubs of Sydney are not American. They are to Australian civilisation what the Parthenon was to Greece, what the cathedrals were to the middle ages.” Clubs appeared in several guises such as golf clubs, RSL clubs, workers’ clubs and bowling clubs, which seemed to be just about everywhere. The last-mentioned had a sameness about them – simple glassy pavilions with shallow-pitched or flat roofs oriented towards bowling greens.

Two bowling clubs – South Coogee at the time of its opening in 1957 (left) and St Leonard’s Park at North Sydney (South Coogee – SLNSW, Ken Redshaw photograph, Australian Photographic Agency - 02875; St Leonards Park – Roy Lumby photograph).

The RSL proved a good patron, commissioning architects such as Harold Smith (Burwood, 1959), Kevin Curtin (Belmore, 1959) and Sydney G Hirst & Kennedy (Corrimal, 1960). The results could be unexpected. Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Partners’ designed several. Textured screens across the façade of Kingsgrove RSL were a decorative version of their Townson & Mercer building. Kingsgrove was followed by their Dee Why RSL, a little to the north of the firm’s Warringah Civic Centre. The first stage of the building contained bars, a library and billiard room. It was a monumental and sculptural building - powerful massing, strong verticals and horizontals, and plain surfaces punctuated by dark narrow openings hinted at Brutalism.

Two RSL Clubs by Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs: Kingsgrove (left) and Dee Why, 1962 (Kingsgrove – photograph reproduced courtesy of Rockdale City Library; Dee Why – SLV – Peter Wille photograph, image no. a20544, accession no. H91, 244/1863 ).
McConnel Smith & Johnson’s Soldier’s Memorial Club in Arthur Street, Wellington (architect David Jackson, engineers Woolacott, Hale, Bond & Corlett) would have been the most adventurous building in the town. Its simple bi-nuclear plan incorporated a spectacular hall at one end, bar and billiards area at the other and services and entry separating them. The folded roof over the hall was in two sections and ventilated to provide natural cooling. Frank Fox & Associates’ 1966 Granville RSL (1966) was almost as exciting, a bold design based on interlocking circular form.

The five storey Wollongong Workers Club was an ambitious early exercise in Modern Movement form by Sydney architects Ashton, Tyler & Edwards but was only partially realised. It’s first two floors contained offices, bar, billiards room and a ballroom-cum-lounge but was designed for additions as membership grew to include a gym and meeting hall, lounge and office space. All of this would have been expressed clearly on the outside. Harry Divola’s Goulburn Worker’s Club in McKell Place, Goulburn, seems to have been less ambitious but neatly characterises mainstream Modern Movement aesthetics at this time.

Dream and reality: the Wollongong Workers Club as envisaged in 1954 (left) and Harry Divola’s 1959 Goulburn Worker’s Club summarises the more popular expressions of Modern Movement architecture at the end of the 1950s - bricks, decorative screens and grilles, randomly coursed stone and bright colour, in this case mauve terracotta tile cladding to columns (Cross-section, Issue 25, 1 November 1954; Roy Lumby photograph)
For many years the local pub was the only place to get a drink easily, but only until 6 in the evening. After controls over clubs were eased publicans received a further blow. A 1947 referendum maintained 6 o’clock closing and it didn’t change until another referendum in November 1954. From February 1955 pubs remained open until 10.00 p.m., with an hour off between 6.30 and 7.30 p.m. For those who liked a drink it was just cause for celebration.

Predictably there was a pub building boom. By the end of 1956 100 country pubs had been or were being altered and 17 new ones were underway and at decade’s end more had been done in NSW than anywhere else in Australia. Many of these buildings have since been extensively altered or demolished.

Some distinguished Modern Movement architects had designed pubs in the 1930’s – Sydney Ancher worked with noted pub architect Reg Prevost (and worked on pubs after World War II). Samuel Lipson designed perhaps the finest 1930s pub, the Dudok-esque Seabreeze at Blakehurst. In the 1950s Lipson & Kaad designed the Padstow Hotel and the Miranda-Rex at Miranda. The best pubs were excellent commercial design influenced by the Modern Movement and sometimes enhanced by art. Harold Smith’s 1953 Brighton Hotel, Brighton-Le-Sands, was influenced by a trip to Europe and America. He claimed it was one of the most modern in the world. The structure was certainly advanced - a modular system using a steel frame with precast concrete floors. Smith’s 1955 Enfield Hotel had floor-to-ceiling glass walls and cantilevered balconies along with a wide roof overhang provided best-practice sun shading. The lounge bar was embellished with a lively mural by Bernard Hessing. Hans Peter Oser’s Hotel Brookvale (since destroyed) was more tasteful than most, with lots of timber and warm face brickwork. The interior was distinguished by inventive colour and a mural by Douglas Annand in the lounge. Planning was similar to the best contemporary residential design - bars were segregated from the residential section by an expansive indoor/outdoor beer garden for 600. A dynamic Googie sign invited passersby inside.
Samuel Lipson’s stylistically advanced Seabreeze Hotel at Blakehurst, near Tom Ugly’s Bridge. The building has since been demolished (exterior - *Architecture*, Volume 29 Number 3, 1 March 1940; interior - *Decoration and Glass*, Volume 5 Number 3, 1 August 1939, p.13).


Some pubs were unexpected. Kevin Curtin’s Highway Hotel at Wentworthville managed to incorporate 12 motel units behind the structurally adventurous pub, a shallow vaulted structure of steel arches containing all the bar functions and lit by blue fibreglass domes. It was a stylish wartime Nissen hut, a squat version of Curtin’s St Bernard’s at Botany. The RAIA acknowledged high standards achieved when Arthur Baldwinson, Booth & Peters’ Hotel Belmont on the Pacific Highway at Belmont near Newcastle won the 1956 Sulman medal. It was a typical pub responding to all the legal requirements, but translated into a Modern Movement gem by cantilevering the solid first floor out over the glassy ground floor, not unlike the Rose Seidler House but much bigger. Artworks by Paul Beadle completed the picture.

Baldwinson, Booth & Peter’s restrained Hotel Belmont, photographed in 1957 (left) and the more overtly mass market Modern Movement Argenton Hotel on Lake Road at Argenton, near Newcastle, circa 1960 (Hotel Belmont – NAA image no. J2669, 378; Argenton Hotel – Roy Lumby photograph).

Hotels also needed to respond to a newly affluent mobile population demanding a bit more than just a beer. For instance, Newcastle architects Mayo & Wark’s Florida Hotel additions at Terrigal is a Modern Movement grid of rooms with balconies recessed back into the façade. The architecture formed the setting and image for sophisticated relaxation, with three lounges for dancing, entertainment “by internationally known artists”, poolside dancing “during the season”, indoor bowls, night tennis, heated swimming pool and television and card rooms.89

Florida Hotel, Terrigal: the romance of dancing by the pool was offset by the cheerful popular Modern Movement expression of the exterior. (SLNSW Government Printing Office 2 - 25950).
Coastal resorts weren’t the only places enjoying recreational booms. In the 1950s and 1960s the Snowy Mountains became an ever-more popular destination. This was precipitated by the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme, the largest engineering project undertaken in Australia, which was constructed between 1949 and 1974. This has been seen as one of the key events in Australia’s history. It employed about 100,000 people who came from over 30 different countries – 70% were migrants, so the project has come to symbolise Australia’s changing cultural identity. Several temporary towns were built for construction workers and the Vandyke Brothers Sectionit system was used for barracks to house the men. Towns such as Cabramurra and Khancoban became permanent, while flooded towns such as Jindabyne were rebuilt.

The construction of the Snowy Mountains Scheme led to the development of Thredbo Village, established in 1955 when several skiers formed Kosciusko Thredbo Limited. Directors included James Hardie & Co director Andrew Thyne Reid and architect Eric Nicholls. A lease was obtained from the NSW government and a hotel and a chairlift were completed in 1957. In the end the enterprise was taken over in 1961 by Lend Lease, which had been involved with the Snowy Mountains Scheme for some time. Thredbo became a year-round resort. It was home to some outstanding Modern Movement buildings. They included two lodges by Peter Muller. Wombiana Ski Lodge was built for Victa Lawnmowers’ Richardson family. It was dug into a slope and tied to the ground by sweeping roof planes and stone walls. The roof and balcony recall the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. Muller’s 1961 McGrath/O’Neill ski lodge was a square pavilion with a pyramid roof on a massive battered base while Bill Lucas’ 1961 Moonbah Ski Lodge for Marion Hall Best was an elegant A-frame building perched lightly above the ground. Harry Seidler’s ski lodge for Dick Dusseldorp was a timber structure that got wider as it went up to take advantage of views, supported by bold angled trusses.
Exterior and interior views of Harry Seidler's 1963 ski lodge for Dick Dusseldorp. It was awarded the 1965 Wilkinson Award by the RAIA (SLNSW, Max Dupain photographs, PXB 237/12-17).

There were more than just ski lodges showing Modern Movement influence. The Man from Snowy River Hotel was built at Perisher Valley around 1960 (NLA - nla.pic-vn3648439-s393-v)

**A Mobile Society**

The launch of the FX Holden at Fishermen’s Bend in Melbourne in November 1948 was a momentous event. The official gathering was headed by Prime Minister Ben Chifley, reflecting its importance. Australia’s automotive industry boomed after World War II, but not necessarily in NSW. The majority of major factories were in Victoria and South Australia. NSW was represented by Nuffield Australia’s large plant at Zetland, which built Morris cars, officially opened by Premier McGirr in March 1950. The polite conservative buildings at the facility were designed by architect/engineer Francis Feledy, who progressively added to the site until 1964. Motor vehicle production was good for the country, providing work and affordable consumer goods. National registrations rose from 1.6 million in 1952 to 2.6 million in 1959. The Federal government gave local manufacturing a boost in 1956 when it imposed import restrictions; the following year the industry employed around 40,000 people and turned out around 210,000 vehicles.
Prime Minister Ben Chifley and the first Holden in November 1948, (left). By 1965, late Menzies-era Australia and its cars were more sophisticated and Modern Movement architecture was a fitting backdrop to the latest Holden Premier (National Museum Australia, Fred Daly Collection object number 1997.0050.0417.108; NAA - Australian News and Information Bureau A1200 L50416).

The first place to go for a new car was a dealer’s showroom, which could embrace the minimalist transparency of the Modern Movement. Amongst the very best was Neville Gruzman’s Purnell Motors at Arncliffe, which he immodestly but perhaps correctly considered the country’s finest showroom. It was a pristine glass box with a long mezzanine, embellished with mosaic tiles, abstracted timber and coloured glass screens, and terrazzo floors by artist Eric Smith. The sloping site allowed workshops below the showroom. Vast areas of glass allowed passersby to see new cars inside, enhanced by long ribbons of neon lighting. Arthur Baldwinson’s Arrow Motors at Double Bay particularly excited its architect. The all-glass showroom addressed a busy intersection with a curved corner and a spectacular, rakishly angled roof. A new Holden dynamically revolved on a turntable right at the corner. The rest of the site was taken up with an open forecourt and a two storey box for workshops, offices and a television sales room, although television was some years away. The second storey slid over part of the showroom, skewered to it by a shapely television antenna.92
Once out of the showroom it was time to move. Wartime petrol rationing was abolished in 1950, allowing unrestricted car use. By the 1920s service stations were well and truly established – simple buildings housing workshops and sales, and petrol bowsers in front sheltered by an extension of the roof. A Modern Movement influence via America crept in during the 1930s. Bennet’s Corner Garage at Lane Cove (1938) could almost have come from the 1950s - a simple structure with a well-defined sales area and “lubritorium”, and a canopy shading the glassy shopfront and customers filling up the car. It was the first building in Australia sheathed in gleaming porcelain enamelled steel sheeting, the newest of building materials and commonly used on American service stations. Service stations remained essentially the same for the next forty or so years. The neighbourhood service station was the key to happy motoring and changed from independent setups selling several petrol brands to American style one-brand outlets, inaugurated by Shell in 1951. The Australian Motorists Petrol Co, which changed its name to Ampol Petroleum in 1949, introduced standardised service stations and brought a corporate identity to the roadside. The first, a rectangular utilitarian box, opened in Mosman in 1952.
A handful were designed by architects and reported in the architectural press. Newcastle architects Rodd & Hay designed a skillion roofed structure with integrated canopy around 1953, efficiently organised to expedite vehicular movement. Architect James England designed a two storey service station for Golden Fleece on a steeply sloping site at Drummoyne a year or so later. The upper level sold petrol, the lower contained workshops and the sales office was a glassy pavilion with a sleek flat roof sailing over an open deck that covered the workshops. Hely & Bell’s Total Service Station at Bondi Junction, done with engineers Taylor, Thompson & Whitting, had a fan-shaped plan and a canopy roof supported off a central steel column with radiating timber joists. The structure was covered by waterproof plywood sprayed with a plastic membrane. It celebrated the Modern Movement’s delight in structure and inventive use of materials.
Post-war service stations are now an endangered species. This fine and representative example of a mid-1960s service station for Shell Petrol on the outskirts of Crookwell is no longer in use and up for sale (Roy Lumby photograph).

Once on the road there were more and more vehicles to contend with, as numbers swelled from 188,412 in 1945 to 1,110,652 in 1970. They placed pressures on cities and towns, highlighting inadequate roads and infrastructure. Convenient, sometimes impressive expressways were constructed and aging roadworks swept away or supplemented. In 1958 the Cahill Expressway hastened traffic flows between Woolloomooloo and the Harbour Bridge while drastically altering Circular Quay's character. The F3 freeway linking Sydney and Newcastle was far more exhilarating. Four stages were completed between 1965 and 1973, an engineering tour-de-force transforming the landscape.

The extraordinary aesthetic impact of the major traffic interchange comprising Gladesville, Tarban Creek and Figtree Bridges owes much to the input of consulting architects Fowell Mansfield & Maclurcan in association with the consulting engineers G Maunsell & Partners. This elegant and refined network of bridges, with a slender pedestrian bridge spiralling up and over the interchange approaches is an all too brief experience, distracted by anticipating other motorists' manoeuvres. Fowell Mansfield Jarvis & Maclurcan were also involved with the Captain Cook Bridge at Taren Point and the Roseville Bridge. The latter was notable for its graceful form and scale, complemented by an elegant curve sweeping across Middle Harbour.

It was inevitable that there would be resistance to freeway construction. There was outrage over the loss of an avenue of historic trees and the severing of the Botanic Gardens and The Domain by the Cahill Expressway and there was concerted community effort to block the widening of Jersey Road, Paddington, in 1965, signalling disaffection with the Modern Movement's faith in progress and the concurrent destruction of loved urban fabric.
Fowell Mansfield Jarvis & Maclurcan were involved with several bridges, including the 1964 Gladesville Bridge (top left) and Tarban Creek Bridge (right). (Roy Lumby photographs).

The Gladesville Bridge complex also included a sweeping pedestrian bridge (NAA, J Fitzgerald photograph, image no A1200:L50323).

All the conveniences of life appeared on the open road during the 1950s - somewhere to eat, be entertained and stop over for the night. You could even go to the bank - in 1954 a drive-in bank was opened in suburban Melbourne. The ES&A Bank opened one at Burwood, designed by Peter Swan, in 1957, followed by one at Ashfield and Bankstown two years later. There was also one in downtown Newcastle.

Milk bars and American style cafés had been part of the dining scene for some decades but drive-in food took a bit longer to catch on. Entrepreneur and rock-and-roll promoter Lee Gordon tried in 1960 with his Big Boy at Taverner’s Hill, claimed to be Australia’s first real Drive-In Restaurant – direct from America. It looked surprisingly like McDonald’s generic American chain but even this was not enough and it sank without trace. Gordon’s timing was out – Australia’s first Pizza Hut opened at Belfield in 1970, followed by the first McDonald’s at Yagoona in 1971.

Occasionally respected architects designed drive-in food outlets. Bruce Rickard’s landmark Cobb & Co on the Princes Highway at Tempe was a long pavilion with a zig-zagging folded roof. It was a “distinguished piece of commercial architecture, eye-catching but not crude.” The same could also have been said for Ancher Mortlock Murray & Woolley’s 1968 drive-in food bar at Bass Hill. This was a small circular structure with the roof suspended by cables from a tall central pole. The circular plan allowed cars to drive right up to it.
Rudimentary motels appeared in Australia during the 1930s. The first American style motel opened in 1954 in Bathurst. Visitors were impressed by “this ultra-modern American pattern of hotels for travellers.” Accommodation Australia Pty Ltd, the country’s first motel chain, was formed in 1955 and opened its first motel in 1956 in Canberra. It was extremely well fitted out for the time, shaming many hotels, and introduced the courtyard-type plan. By October 1958 there were 25 motels across NSW – the highest number in the country. A year later there were 72 across 50 regional centres. They resulted in the closure of many pubs to in major regional centres.

The circa 1960 Three Sisters Motel in Katoomba is remarkably intact and exemplifies the popular interpretation of Modern Movement architecture that informs many buildings constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. The raked piers supporting the porte cochere and the exuberant sign overhanging the footpath show a pronounced Googie influence (Roy Lumby photographs).
The circa 1960 Capri Motel at Bathurst (left) and the Central Motor Lodge in Goulburn demonstrate the two storey form of the typology along with an interpretation of Modern Movement design. The Central City has some importance as one of two motels at key intersections located right in the commercial heart of the city. (NAA, Australian News & Information Bureau photographer James [Jim] Fitzpatrick, Image no. : A1200, L34831, Roy Lumby photograph).

Some were designed by architects with Modern Movement credentials, such as Kevin Curtin, Edwards Madigan & Torzillo and Sydney Smith, who designed spare elegant flat roofed pavilions at Goulburn and Albury. Their clean lines made a virtue out of low budgets. Melbourne architect Robin Boyd designed the finest of all. The Black Dolphin Motel at Merimbula, with landscaping by prominent Victorian landscape architect Gordon Ford, was oriented to take advantage of western views. Private gardens with creeper-laden pergolas protected rooms from the sun. Buildings were fitted between existing trees supplemented by native planting. The architecture was relaxed and natural, with walls of locally made red brick, and tree trunks supporting verandahs and covered walkways. It was a sophisticated exercise in regional Modern Movement architecture.  

External and internal views of the Black Dolphin Motel (SLV: Peter Wille photograph, image no. a22929, accession no. H91.244/4235; Mark Strizik photograph, image H2001.55/2051).
While motorists were enjoying the fruits of car ownership, public transport in NSW’s major cities was struggling. The decision to scrap extensive tramway systems in Sydney and Newcastle’s was made in 1953; they had all gone eight years later, replaced by buses. Railways, at least around Sydney, expanded as Lithgow and the Central Coast became part of the metropolitan network by the beginning of the 1960s. In 1967 steps to complete the stop-start Eastern Suburbs Railway commenced, and it opened in June 1979, admittedly at a smaller scale than had been originally planned. It boasted cool state of the art railway stations by Fowell, Mansfield Jarvis & Maclurcan.

Concourse of Martin Place Station shortly after completion (SLNSW, Government Printing Office 4 – 08314).

Even small-scaled civic items were not immune to Modern Movement influence and show how it infiltrated many aspects of daily life. These concrete bus shelters demonstrate approaches taken in the 1960s and 1970s. The skillion-roofed structure dates from the 1960s and is located in Wentworth Falls, the more homogeneous curved structure dates to the 1970s and is located in Goulburn (Roy Lumby photographs).

Local and international air travel grew after World War II. Qantas, Ansett and Australian National Airways (ANA) were joined by Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) in 1946 and then Ansett and ANA merged in 1957. International travel growth was accompanied by Qantas’ purchase of a jet fleet of Boeing 707s and construction of Qantas House in Sydney. Designed by Rudder, Littlemore & Rudder (project architect Felix Taverner), it was officially opened by Prime Minister Menzies in October 1957. Qantas House is an iconic 1950s building, exploiting the latest curtain wall technology across a distinctive double-curved facade.
Its strong identity symbolised forward-looking Qantas taking Australians to the world and it was judged the finest new building in the British Commonwealth by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Several years later Qantas built the Wentworth Hotel right next door. Designed by major mainstream Modern Movement American architects Skidmore Owings & Merrill and built in association with Laurie & Heath, this international-standard hotel was strikingly different to Qantas House – a massive brick building with a concave light court above a podium containing public spaces, ballrooms and the like. There were of course other international-standard hotels, such as Donald Crone & Associates 1960 Chevron at Kings Cross (demolished) and Peddle Thorp & Walker’s Menzies at Wynyard, which has a distinctive west-facing facade of precast concrete reflecting an enclosed approach to bedroom design. Windows are deeply slotted into the façade for shade and load reduction on air conditioning.

Qantas entered the jet age with its fleet of sleek Boeing 707s at the same time as Rudder Littlemore & Rudder’s iconic Qantas House was built. No less a personage than Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies officiated at the building’s official opening on 18 October 1957, depicted in the image at right (Boeing 707 – NLA, nla.pic-an24754933-v; exterior of Qantas House – Roy Lumby photograph; official opening – SLNSW, Ken Redshaw photograph, Australian Photographic Agency - 04228).

Two international-standard hotels in the centre of Sydney: Peddle Thorp & Walker’s 1963 Menzies Hotel at Wynyard (left) and Skidmore Owings & Merrill’s 1966 Wentworth Hotel with its distinctive ribbed copper canopy (Menzies – NAA, image no A1200:44188; Wentworth – Roy Lumby photograph).
Of course, travellers needed a point of departure and arrival. Kingsford Smith Airport was upgraded to serve international jet travel, coinciding with Qantas' purchase of Boeing 707s. These could land in Sydney but not Melbourne, thus bringing tourists and eventually migrants to NSW. The Commonwealth Department of Works designed a massive new international terminal (1970) with landscaping by Bruce Mackenzie and art by Douglas Annand. A host of functional hangers, maintenance and staff buildings by Stafford Moor & Farrington and Collard Clarke & Jackson were built during the 1960s.