



POSITION PAPER

RECOGNITION AND RETENTION OF TWENTIETH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

BACKGROUND

Since the early 1980s The National Trust has recognised important examples of Twentieth Century architecture by listing individual buildings and Urban Conservation Areas on the National Trust Register.

Trust Register Listings now cover a range of architectural periods and styles from Federation Period (Edwardian Period) Classical, Anglo-Dutch, Romanesque, Gothic, Warehouse, Queen Anne, Free-style and Arts & Craft to Inter-War Period Georgian Revival, Beaux-Arts, Commercial Palazzo, Mediterranean, Spanish Mission, Chicago-style, Functionalist, Art Deco, Skyscraper Gothic, Old English and Californian Bungalow to Post-War Period International style and Late Twentieth Century Organic, Brutalist, Structuralist, Late Modern and Post Modern styles.

Massive development pressures, particularly in the Sydney Central Business District have seen the loss of many award-winning buildings including Ken Woolley's 1964 State Office Block in Chifley Square, the Philip Cox 1988 Sydney Exhibition Centre and the John Andrews 1988 Sydney Convention Centre and demolition threats to Brutalist style buildings including the 1978 Theodore Gofers Sirius Building in The Rocks and the Brian Griffin (Stafford, Moor & Farrington) 1970 School of Molecular Bioscience at Sydney University. Other key buildings such as Stephenson and Turner's former IBM Centre in Kent Street, Sydney and John Andrews' former King George Tower in King Street, Sydney have both been so altered as to be unrecognisable.

When considering the School of Molecular Bioscience at Sydney University for National Trust Register Listing a comparative study of Brutalist style NSW University Buildings found twelve buildings which had been demolished or were proposed for demolition.

There is a worldwide threat, particularly to Brutalist style buildings. The British experience as outlined in the internet independent news and commentary website *The Conversation* argued on an economic basis for the retention of Brutalist style council estates such as Aylesbury Estate -

"It is evidently cheaper to refurbish the generously proportioned flats and maisonettes of council estates than to demolish them and to cart off millions of tonnes of concrete to landfill. It is also more sustainable, due to the massive loss of embodied energy and material resources that results from demolishing existing structures. Refurbished, apartments in council estates might well depress the sale price for new developments nearby, which would be a good thing for young people struggling to afford property.

There is a massive shortage of appropriate housing in the UK, especially in the South-East. And it's not going to be solved by expensive, developer-led flats, which sell primarily as investments and buy-to-lets. Refurbishing council estates offers an economically efficient way to ease this problem and preserve an integral part of our post-war history while we're at it."

NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- The Trust will continue to identify, assess and list on its Register Twentieth Century buildings of heritage significance, particularly buildings of the late Twentieth Century including Brutalist-style buildings.
- The Trust will lobby for the conservation of these buildings, arguing that their refurbishment would be less costly than demolition, more sustainable and may have a positive impact in ameliorating the shortage of reasonably priced accommodation.

ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST'S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on this issue in the media, with local Councils and the NSW government.