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ARCHITECTURE AUSTRALIA

At ground level, spaces are organized out of the play between the constructed diagonal of the site that situates the greater urban connector and the orthogonal edge to Turbot Street that engages the CBD grid. Above ground the triangular site plan produces a building of equivalent shape formed from two "walls" of court and interview rooms angled apart from one another with a public foyer in between. The foyers on each level have glazed ends between the walls, producing a space that is longitudinally transparent. Conventionally the court building type is associated with closed forms, deep within which we might imagine that justice is dispensed in airless, friendless interiors. Here that conventionally imagined plan form is inverted with courts on the periphery and the interior space made public and hollowed out. The visual openness achieved by this unconventional plan form is striking, particularly so for the fact that we live in such "security conscious" times, in which openness seems difficult to argue for and achieve. That light and view can be made present in all spaces (whether they be courts or foyers) does something psychologically important to lessen the potentially alienating distinction between an "inner sanctum" of justice and an outer public/everyday world. That said, the threshold between inner and outer retains a rightful significance and is duly acknowledged, at an unusually subtle, sensual and tactile level. For example, on entering the courtrooms, it is indeed surprising to reach for the patterned and perforated stainless steel door handle, a commissioned work by the artist Barbara Heath, and to feel the way it prickles against the skin just enough to draw you into the present moment while indicating the heightened place of crossing from the everyday world into the judicial. This work, entitled *Breezeway Lattice*, refers to the fanlight screens above the doors of a traditional Queensland, and in so doing implicates another resonant (and perhaps more familiar) site of passage and transition. Here the conceptual range of the artist and an inclination towards subtle commentary and observation assists in articulating a potent architectural moment.

In the process of realizing the building, collaboration seemed to take on a collegial aspect, as artist, builder and architect worked together in various supportive ways to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes. The shared ambition for the revelation of process was developed architecturally as a layering of elements, particularly of the facade, and also in the tactility of finishes and tectonic expression. Layering and tactility are mirrored in Bruce Reynolds' work *Cast and Elevation* in the ground-floor foyer, a curious admixture of materials – old lino, carpets and laminex – pressed into or revealed upon a concrete surface. Like a remnant of some prior construction on the site, this was a work that the builders openly delighted in fabricating alongside the artist.

IN LOVE WITH THE OPERA HOUSE

ALEX POPOV APARTMENTS ADDISON HOUSES  
BRISBANE MAGISTRATES COURT PHILLIPS/PILKINGTON SIX DEGREES

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