I am the author of the thesis entitled: **Self-reflective practice in sustainable design**

submitted for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**

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Signed ..........................................................
Date...........20.12.2010
Self-reflective practice in sustainable design

Appendices: (CD)

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Appendices: (CD)

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Appendix B1: Interviews journal

Stephen Webb 1st interview

01.12.05

This is my very first interview. It was scheduled for the end of the day. I have sent through the Motherhood Statements.

I am nervous but stoic - knowing that I must keep focused, attentive, respectful - which I think I did well enough.

SW let me know that he has read the Motherhood Statements and commented favourably on their orientation.

However I stumbled over my explanations and often sounded long-winded and unclear.

SW was engaged, accommodating but guarded and careful in his explanations - especially when it came to more personal details. He was mindful that he was speaking on behalf of the firm as one of its directors.

He was a mine of information - an invaluable first interview. From him I was able to judge Claude Bertoni's level of thinking about ESD and I realised that CB was not as philosophically well-prepared as Stephen.

Stephen showed enormous intellectual capacity. He was well-versed in ESD logic and recognised the critical need to integrate it into office culture and practice philosophy as a business proposition.
The DesignInc office is at the very top of one of the Melbourne landmark towers in Elizabeth Street. The views over dockland are sensational. The lobby is under sloping glass and I felt it was too uncomfortable. While the internal temperature was good, the glare was too much and I felt that the glass still radiated off too much heat.

It is a large office and while we were sitting near the kitchen bar I did not get a good sense of being in a design studio. It felt a bit remote - too corporate maybe. In fact I found Stephen similar - a bit remote and maybe too corporate. I certainly felt unequal to him - very much an inferior intellect - a silly, old female. I really did feel this undercurrent of mild distain.

**Mick Pearce 1st interview**

18.01.06

I came up by train from Woodford to interview Mick and as I was reaching the front of his building he came up to me outside and escorted me up. I don't know if he was waiting (as I had lost my way on a previous interview with Francis Broekman of Brophy) or whether it was purely coincidental. Anyhow we conducted the interview in a space where the design team had developed all their experimental ideas for CH2. It was very makeshift office with bits of raised flooring to demonstrate the underfloor circulation system and other bits and pieces.

He was so very nice - so very engaged and accommodating. I must admit I like Mick Pearce. He gave me nearly two hours of his time - which I must be very grateful for. I felt he was determined to tell me his story. In this respect he was very different to Stephen Webb and the other earlier interviewees. They were prepared to be guided by my Motherhood Statements. Mick wanted to emphasise what was important to him. He had a message to tell and he was determined to
tell it. So I had trouble in presenting my Motherhood Statements and getting him to answer directly to them. I think this is why the interview went for so long. This is also what came out in the interview analysis. He shows enormous dedication and strength of purpose in promoting energy awareness in particular.

In spite of his determination to take control of the interview he did so in a way that was flattering and full of polite attention to me. Overall I felt relaxed and appreciated for my interest in him and his cause. While he has enormous intellectual capacity, he also has a generous spirit and I feel this was why he was able to treat me as a colleague without making me feel inferior.

**Greg Burgess 1st interview**

15.02.06

I organised two interviews in two days. This afternoon - late - I interviewed GB. I drove to his office on time but had to wait for half an hour before he had time to see me. I spent time looking closely at his overall style. It is full of curves, with a preference for natural materials and muted colour schemes. Elegant, not loud or self-promoting.

When I first walked into the room I noted that GB looked tired, but was gracious in giving me his precious time at the end of the day. I was conscious that I had been in his office a few months earlier with Sarah on a school project. I felt that we were looking for tight organisation of his office system which was just not there. So I was prepared when the discussion focused on ESD. I like his organic approach to hierarchy and expertise. I gather that those who have a particular interest in something are encouraged to speak up and take the initiative when appropriate, but that’s as organised as it gets.

It was a nice interview - I felt confident enough to relax and enjoy our good-humoured antics as the sun became very difficult - I was trying to avoid its direct
beams and Greg was bending further and further sideways to block it for me. It was sweet and I felt a bit cheeky in exhibiting so much of my persona.

Greg commented on the Motherhood Statements favourably. I did not push him into a discussion of meditation per se. I now wish I had been more explicit - but I wanted him to bring up the subject matter - only obliquely did he do so. He made it clear that he engaged in spiritual practice as an important part of his life and professional practice.

As we talked about ESD he admitted that he was not personally engaged with those particulars that required computer analysis and statistics. His engagement was more intuitive and socially attuned. He also admitted that the firm's engagement in ESD relied on client initiative. For him ESD (as it is currently promoted within the architecture literature) is only part of a much larger need for sustainability that has both social and personal attributes.

Greg's approach to ESD is definitely the most steeped in non-scientifically guided thinking. He is definitely a humanist. His bias is in gaining insights from the arts and the humanities. He is certainly aware of the sciences but makes no bones about the fact that it is not his natural orientation.

He seems to have learned much from his dealings with Aboriginal peoples over his career - especially their psychic power. He also references other indigenous peoples for their wisdom traditions.

He asked me if I knew the children's writer from Warrnambool as he was engaged to design his new house. I said that I knew the couple only by association. I gathered that Greg found the writer's antics disturbing and perplexing. Sally has told me that the writer is having an affair and that his wife is much maligned.

**Stephen Webb 2nd interview**
With my second interview I had postponed it. This did not please Stephen and he sent me an email reminding me that his time was valuable. I responded by telling him I had postponed it due to a break-in at my flat. This was only partly true. Because of the break-in I had not been able to conclude my review questions - I was running late in other words.

At the very beginning of our meeting, Stephen noted that there were a few discrepancies in the transcription but did not elaborate - I had deleted a lot of ummms and ahhhs - but did not delete or distort in any other way.

During the interview, he was very good at remembering our previous conversation and clarifying context for his earlier remarks. He ensured I did not take his comments out of context. This is a very important consideration that I must respect in my analysis.

This interview was conducted very much with one eye on the clock. I felt that Stephen did not wish to give it too much importance. So I reversed my questioning and asked the deep ones as early as possible. He still gave me over an hour of his time.

Natasha Palich 1st interview

I was over an hour late getting to Natasha's house. There was a delay at Flinders Street Station - no trains were running out of there and I had to get a bus to Clifton Hill and then take the train to her station. Natasha came and picked me up and also drove me to the nearest tram stop afterwards. She is such a delightful young woman. A real inspiration. I do admire her. She is living proof of community-mindedness in action. She is an experienced volunteer and easily
dedicates her life to worthy causes - whether they are through her volunteerism or through her business strategies or through her holiday arrangements. For example, Natasha was concerned to offset her carbon loading with tree planting while planning for her European holiday. She also invests in ethical superannuation schemes and supports community projects through her business. I have much to learn from her example. We all have much to learn.

Natasha is a very emotional person, so her comments and reactions to the state of the world were dramatic and often nihilistic in the sense that while putting up the good fight was essential no matter the odds, she felt we were all doomed. Therefore, in her black humour, she found it entertaining to be engaged. It struck me as a certain type of detachment without losing the passion. This is very different to Stephen Webb's techniques to remain engaged but not too attached. Without him going into it, I gather that Stephen was conscious that his own natural remoteness should not be overemphasised.

Allan Rodger 1st interview

09.10.06

10.14am

I walked over to Carlton and arrived hot and sweaty - to my embarrassment. When Allan greeted me at his door he gave me the full look-over. His residence is in a beautiful set of attached dwellings built into a renovated factory allotment. The factory facade still stands and provides a delightful entry onto a central promenade off which the individual dwellings are connected. The promenade is like a communal garden off which run private front gardens. I thought it was very attractive.

Without asking him I discerned that Allan had not read my Motherhood Statements. He asked me what my reason for interviewing him was and I told
him that it was because of his pioneering work on setting up the UIA Environment Policy and that I wished to ask him about what kept him committed to ESD for so long. With this he proceeded to take over the interview. I tried very hard to keep him to my agenda - but in his own way he was like Mick - very determined to present his own story with little concern for my own parameters.

He was definitely a wonderful person - very articulate and perceptive. He knew Warrnambool and had been engaged in setting up the Green Triangle. When I asked more personal questions of him I felt he revealed a certain resignation that we (as a culture) had wasted so much time procrastinating and had lost our most precious resource - that being time itself to make change before it was too late.

**David Oppenheim 1st interview**

09.10.06

I interviewed David at the end of the same day I interviewed Allan. I did not look forward to interviewing David. I was nervous and unenthusiastic, so had to try hard to spark up.

The office is recently renovated and they have recently moved in. It is full of recycled materials and furnishings. I was particularly impressed with the desk lamps - they were retrieved from skips, as was the kitchen setting. The office was one big open square. It felt good, friendly.

David is a bustling sort of person. I have felt that on previous occasions he has judged me unfavourably - I remember our camping trip in second year when I was very cagey about my past - David was not impressed. However, I was not prepared to reveal I was a recent widow nor that I had a previous life.
Appendix B1

Anyhow, I felt that David was only reluctantly giving me his time. Throughout the interview he was also quick to dismiss any idea of ESD as some sort of healing exercise that could be pursued like in medicine.

I had sent him my Motherhood Statements, but I gather he did not take time to read them.

In spite of this however, he was still engaging and friendly. He was definitely very happy with the way his business was now operating. He had been in private partnership for many years in Kew and I gathered it was well time for a change - in both service orientation, location and business structure. David was particularly protective of the rise to prominence of ESD through its scientific credentials, and would not countenance that this was detrimental to its humanist agenda. He was also very dismissive of any attempt to debate ESD as a psychic phenomenon.

His recipe for success was to be pragmatic, practical and scientific.

**Jane Toner 1st interview**

13.10.06

As I walked up to the office I was filled with dread. There was no particular reason, but I felt very loathe to conduct the interview on the day. It turned out I had not emailed Jane my Motherhood Statements, so she was not at all prepared. However, I still went ahead with the interview. It was another very long interview - nearly two hours. We actually had a good time together, but I felt I did not allow her enough space to air her views completely. I was very unhappy with my interview style and have told my supervisors so. However, Jane is one of my RAIA interviewees and therefore I feel compelled to use the data from her interview.
I was very concerned to discover if she thought outside current ESD scientific thinking when contemplating her approach to ESD. She does not. Yet she appreciates Ti Chi and other non-western approaches to interconnectedness. The ability to link her exercises to ecological sustainability through experiencing interconnectedness at a phenomenological level has not yet been made. Her sense of interconnectedness is much more on the sociological plane - where she volunteers her time and energy to contribute to organisational change and adaptation. She is committed to engendering social networks of commitment and interconnection.

**Natasha Palich 2nd interview**

18.10.06

When I met Natasha for our second interview she was very excited. Her trip to Europe was only a few days away at the end of the week. So she was in high spirits when we met at a lunch cafe near the town hall in South Melbourne. It was noisy. I felt comfortable. I spent a lot of time introducing Natasha to new ideas from the mind sciences and from physics and cosmology, but she didn't seem to need to know for her level of commitment to be effective. I told her I admired her commitment and found her an inspiration. We talked about the RAIA and this time Natasha was prepared to be critical of its conservatism. She does not criticise the people who run the organisation, but she is critical that its focus is so firmly on commercial opportunism. There is a good deal of compromise of other agendas such as environmental sustainability in favour of maintaining a commercial agenda.

**Louise Honman 1st interview**

20.10.06
Bob Fuller recommended Louise to me as a possible interviewee. He had heard good reports about her from her boss Mark (whose last name I should not have forgotten). I have rung Louise to see if she was prepared to be interviewed. She was but advised that she did not practice self-reflective practice when I asked if she was aware of such a term.

So I was dubious about what I would learn from her. We met at her very middle-class home, right in the middle of Geelong. It was an old two-storey double-brick Edwardian maisonette. We sat in her lounge-room which was filled with her books and a piano. Louise is indeed a cultured woman. She reads extensively and reads out of genuine interest in the human condition. She is very capable of reflective practice, yet she did not mention that she felt the need to be self-reflective.

I have come away thinking Louise is one of my better interviews. I think I conducted it well because she naturally knew what I was talking about.

**Seona Gunn 1st interview**

29.06.07

It took a long time to get Seona to talk to me. I think Seona was actually nervous. She does not seem to want to be interviewed. She has refused to answer my emails. I wonder why? Throughout the interview I felt Seona purposely avoided talking too much about her real self. In fact she said as little as possible. When she did speak there was much talk about generalities, and admonitions about others, but nothing about her own tactics and their success or otherwise.

I did not think I got much out of Seona. She seemed too vague and general. Not enough expression of direct experiences. Maybe she is privately struggling with what might be a split between her private practice and her professional practice. I must microanalyse her interview for I think I'll find hidden reasons.
General observations

None of interviewees divulged their daily practices. I never asked either which doesn't help.

None of the offices had meditation / relaxation regimes in place as part of their practices, yet a number of my interviewees showed an inclination to practice meditation / relaxation. Greg and Jane mentioned they practiced mediation and/or holistic exercises. I can only presume Seona practices meditation - though she did not explicitly say that she did. David is a practising Christian I gather. But neither Natasha, Mick, Stephen, Louise nor Allan admitted to religious or spiritual practices.

The first four interviews were done in a block of a few months over the Christmas/New Year 2005/6.

Then there was a gap of several months till mid-year 2006 before I interviewed Natasha for the first time.

Five further interviews were then done in a block in October.

Seona is the last interview and I did not interview her until mid 2007 - a long time after the others.
## Appendix B2: Observations of interviewee character

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Appendix C1: AR_1st interview_09.10.06

09.10.06

INTERVIEW No 1 Professor Allan Rodger

Recorded at 113 Station Street, Carlton

Recording 10.14am – (1:17:48) – 11.31am

Transcription 3.38pm – 4.00pm 22mins

10.15am – 12.10pm 1hr 55mins

1.35pm – 5.30pm 4hrs

6.20pm – 7.20pm 1hr

total hours 7hrs 30 mins

AR… and he and Evan Illich were involved together um and … in a workshop seminar out of which came the book *Freedom to Build* by John Turner …

SM-L yes, right

AR and Donald Schon was, curiously, a Professor of Education and Planning … so straight down your line

SM-L right

AR… that you on the one hand have planning action but education as an integral part of practice. Hence the reflective practitioner … much later – many
many years later he wrote *The Reflective Practitioner*. Because that’s probably in the 80’s

18: SM-L yes that right or late 70’s I think

19: AR yes but certainly he was involved in these interactive learning processes and the whole business of community learning. And of course Illich on the other hand … was all to do with providing the critique on the expropriation of knowledge into private professional hands and by implication was an advocate for the re-appropriation of knowledge and expertise back into …

20: SM-L into professional

21: AR into community hands

22: SM-L oh okay

23: AR he wrote a book called *The Disabling Professions*

24: SM-L right and that’s Illich who wrote that

25: AR Illich yes. I’ve actually seen the two of them together. , and met Illich a number of times and met Schon once but for a whole week at a, at a workshop in York. And where you can’t have sort of casual conversations with Illich. He was an austere remote character with whom one had interactions but you didn’t have casual rambling coffee conversations with Evan Illich (chuckle) he was not that sort of guy. But Donald Schon was and you could, you could explore issues in a very relaxed way. He was very reflective,

26: SM-L okay

27: AR … interactive practitioner.

28: SM-L well, I’m interested in looking at taking that reflective practice into self-reflective practice.

29: AR humum
Um in order to bring all of that right back to a very very personal context before we take it back out into our … our .. task as a designer … so … um

Are you looking at the … division of labour in the procurement of buildings in the built environment? That is, architects are … in a sense bit players. A) they only deal with a little bit of what might be called architecture,

humhum

buildings, as Australian conventional usage of the term … um, so they only deal with a little bit of that bit, but the dynamics of it, and the effectiveness of the architecture is very dependent on architecture at a bigger scale of how the cities go together. And then at a bigger scale again: how the cities relate to the supporting hinterlands.

yes

And these are, you know … Not many architects conceptualise their architecture as the organisation of space in support of human activities. That statement doesn’t include anything about scale. Aah … you could be architecting the organisation of space to support our conversation here. Or to support our family activity within the house or to support a community activity within Carlton. Aah or to support the dynamics of Melbourne. And gradually you become more and more dependant on all sorts of technologies. And then how do you feed and water Melbourne right and how do the materials and energies flow into and flow out of it. Where does it come from and where does it all go. Now all of these are special issues – organisation of space

yes

in support of human purpose. But architects tend to be, tend to like to define it …

very narrowly

AR very narrowly.
and I suppose that’s why I’m interested in finding out just, you know, the context that they tend to work in in their thinking about the design of ecological – designing for ecological sustainability. And therefore how expansive is their understanding and how do they try and bring that understanding into their daily activity and be able to make some impact at a conceptual level or um … while they’re in a position to be able to influence other players …

well I think that’s a very important issue. That interaction because … perfectly environmentally sustainable buildings … if every building were such … err … our built environment could still be wrecking the system.

humhum okay

because (chuckle) because say a house that harvested its own water, purified its own wastes, um … generated its own warmth, coolness, even produced surpluses for operating machines and all that sort of thing – the autonomous house if you like – the Robert Vale model – I’m sure the Geelong people will have made

know that (laughter)

quite sure you’re familiar with Robert and Brenda

that’s true

because of course they’ve been regular visitors

they have

the autonomous house concept. But a city of autonomous buildings would still be disastrously ahh destructive because it could be so dependent on say food from outside … unless you say we’ll make it totally autonomous. Well we’re a long way from doing that. That’s not even vaguely on the agenda.

humhum yes.
and totally dependant on high levels of mechanised transport for people and goods. You see we could have as it were environmentally perfect architecture.

SM-L mmm

AR still part of a totally destructive system so the interactions seem to me to be the actual crux

AR profoundly important

SM-L so really um, … yes … I’ve actually just read this morning your submission to the Sustainable Cities Enquiry …

AR that sounds a long time ago (chuckle)

SM-L back in 2003

AR when was that?

SM-L 2003

AR 2003 ah right

SM-L and um … you know you talk about issues of scale and the nonlinear complexity of the whole problem (laughter)

AR (chuckle)

SM-L and I totally agree with you there and I keep on thinking ‘well in the end the problem ultimately resides within our own … within our own meaning making and the way we comprehend the situation ourselves and the way that we actually make adjustments in our own lifestyles …

AR you’re not talking about architects. Its not we architects, its we community

SM-L we community, but we are part of community ..

AR oh sure, sure

SM-L and we take our meaning making out into our professional role
Appendix C1

¶69: AR that you make it reflective and you engage the community in a continuing education process and of course Greg Burgess would say (almost) the role of the designer is (a quality architect) is to … engage the community in an educational way

¶70: SM-L yes

¶71: AR um …

¶72: SM-L then that level of participation or empowerment …

¶73: AR absolutely

¶74: SM-L and interestingly I was – just happened yesterday to go along to a rehousing conference that RMIT put on as part of the State of Design Festival and just listening to a range of speakers um … people who were Government Architects, people who were practising architects um … people who were talking about the low engagement by the community in architectural services for mass housing.

¶75: AR yes

¶76: SM-L we’ve got a situation were you know, 99 or 93% of domestic housing is not within the architecture field … and um … you know, it was an interesting conference in that there was a lot of discussion about the mass market developers and builders but there weren’t any people from the mass market, from the developer community or from the builders or the large builder companies there in order to engage in a true dialogue in order to actually, for it to be, an educative or participatory conference. And I was with a colleague who had actually been to a HIA conference earlier

¶77: AR humhum

¶78: SM-L who were looking at precisely the same issues and she was the only architect there so we have a situation, we observed a situation where two parallel universes are busy talking about one another and not really talking to one another.
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¶79: SM-L yes
¶80: AR you’re actually using up the one resource that you can’t make any more of
¶81: SM-L oh
¶82: AR you’re using up time the lead time.
¶83: AR and you see I’m meeting later this week with DSE and incidentally, err tomorrow with the Government Architects, the Government Architect
¶84: SM-L right, yes
¶85: AR John Downish and Shelley Penn. Um … Governments and big beurocracy are … are very poor capacity to engage with community or so it seems to me
¶86: SM-L hhhmmm
¶87: AR um … they put out documents and ministers think that they’ve done their thing. But the practical reality is that the ordinary person in the street out there is not engaged in some of the major issues of the time. They may be driven to minor adjustments of how they water their garden by virtue of a lot of advertising and a certain amount of threatening … but ah … if you talk to them about sustainable futures
¶88: SM-L hmmm
¶89: AR no idea and even the people who are talking about sustainable futures, there’s very few people prepared to say well what would it be like. Ah, and how could you plot a track over 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, 40 years to assist a sustainable future, one or multiple futures … or a cluster of lifestyles that were collectively sustainable. Um … and Governments are pretty well scared witless to engage in that sort of scenario building. So, so basically without that eh, I have a fairly dismal view at the moment. Because, because of the lead times.
¶90:
¶91: SM-L yes I recognise that
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92. AR and the lead time is the critical resource and indeed over in Vancouver a few months ago um … Bill Rees was (you know Rees of the footprint?)

93. SM-L yes yes

94. AR Bill Rees gave a, we had a small session and we were talking about this whole issue of the resources and the non-renewable resources and history of the discussion about non-renewable resources from the late sixties onwards … and ah … at that time discussion at that time about how we would run out of tin, run out of oil, how long the coal reserves would last and all that kind of focus on resources, physical resources. But on reflection, the critical resource (chuckle) is time

95. SM-L humhum

96. AR is time. Because you can’t make any more

97. SM-L mmmm!!

98. AR and it just – its immutable and you only get it once every little bit of it. And ahh … there are huge lead times

99. SM-L yes

100. AR There’s lead times on environmental impact. You release carbon today, the total effect of that is spread over 60 or 70 years and there’s nothing you can do about it, you can’t catch it again. And it builds up and its going to do all the things it does for 60 or 70 years. Um, and if you take action now to look after the future, it takes a long time to transform the capital stock, even if you have a total commitment to doing it, which you don’t.

101:

102:

103. (so much emphasis on material world. Wouldn’t it be more useful to transform attitudes so that people would be more capable of coping with future scenarios – taking responsibility for their culpability)
So these are flows of time … the inexorable progression of the system and the huge inertia of responses
don’t … auger well
it’s not a good scene, not a good scene. But … the most worrying thing I think is the almost complete failure to grasp how serious the situation is
at a community level. Not at a technical or expert level.
no
it really doesn’t matter if you or I understand that perfectly … its whether you can generate the political will so that … without generating panic (laughter)
you don’t want brave politicians you want politicians who listen and you want politicians who will be … selfishly responding to a community drive and they’ll do the right thing because they know that that’s what they represent in their electorates and they’ll get re-elected if they … stay within there pushing the main thrust. So if you don’t have that main thrust I really can’t see the sustainability agenda … driving ahead
I totally, I absolutely agree with you and I suppose I’m simply, my focus is to come to the individual and I am within the architecture profession as well as being a community member and therefore my day-to-day activity has to be mindful of that …
well … public advocacy becomes a part of that mission
yes it does
and Natasha
¶119: SM-L    yes

¶120: AR     ahh has, … is presiding over a number of initiatives in the Institute at the moment as you well know. One is a public advocacy and … ahh … clear commitment that the Institute ought to take a proactive role either directly with the community but also as an advocate to Government and to Business and much more proactive … than they have been in the past.

¶121: SM-L     and it really comes from her individual drive and determination

¶122: AR     oh yes

¶123: SM-L     and so I keep on coming back to the fact that it’s the individual and the way that they make meaning out of their purpose in life that generates that energy and …

¶124: AR     yes

¶125: SM-L     I’m very interested in um … reading Thomas Berry of late. I think he’s a very interesting environmentalist whose also a theologian … he was born in 1917 I think so he’s been around … seen the 20th century and the effect of the 20th century mind and the momentum towards the scenario we have set up for ourselves. And he talks about an urgent need for what he calls a “post critical naiveté” so he’s basically looking at our very deep issues about um … our image of ourselves, the story that we have made for ourselves. We have a wonderful story through science – we now know an amazing amount about our universe and the way its works

¶126: AR     yes

¶127: SM-L     and he’s suggesting that we now generate a new story about – based on those facts that move us into what he calls an “ecozoic age” …

¶128: AR     but that is scenario building as distinct from accumulating provable facts. This is an integral part of my discussion with DSE …

¶129: SM-L     humhum
ahh… two connections in there. They are awash with data

absolutely

and they are full of um … people are much too academic

yes (laughter)

much too academic. Because they want to be able to say to the next person up, and all the way up, only those things that are … absolutely clear from an academic point of view, they are unambiguous, there’s no uncertainty. They’ve done their research and they’ve presented their little thesis …

umum

and its all … the footnotes are there and the “I’s” are dotted and the “T’s” are crossed … and by choosing to do that (chuckle) they actually are not building scenarios. I tell you what I say to them as I keep nudging them. The purpose of the data is to test the hypoth / theories. And without the generation of hypotheses/scenarios … um … you’ve just got so much data useless data. Its self-serving, because all your doing is proving that some of its correct and some of its not correct. And there’s more of it and we need to do more studies, more studies and more studies. But the studies are all sort of quantifying … I’ll give you a good example of this sort of thing. I’ve been working with a community out in south-west Victoria for

oh yes?

many years – for ten years

which community

the South-West Victoria partnership for Sustainable Development – its called South-West partnership

and, and is that generated through Warrnambool?

yes Warrnambool that’s right. Lindsay Merrit whose the Chief Executive Officer …
SM-L: I’m a Warrnambool person actually

AR: Oh are you? I used to go to Warrnambool every few weeks

SM-L: is that right?

AR: at Deakin … I had three years of a consultancy with Deakin University ‘97 –2000 … ‘97, ‘98, ‘99 up to 2000. and um … ahhh you’ve been around in Warrnambool over these years then from time to time

SM-L: I have yes

AR: you would know Tom Lindsay

SM-L: I do know of Tom Lindsay

AR: yes you’re bound to know of Tom Lindsay and ehh … who’s the lawyer man, who’s sort of the grand old man …

SM-L: Tait? Jamie Tait you’re talking about?

AR: Jamie Tait – he was on the council at the University. David Jones …

SM-L: ahh yes I know of David Jones (chuckle) from Fletcher Jones

AR: he lives at Fletcher Jones. He was your execu … he was Kennett’s ahhh … commissioner wasn’t he?

SM-L: that’s right

AR: and the woman who ran the … motel on the main road running through Warrnambool. A very dynamic woman …

SM-L: yes I’m sorry I can’t remember her name.

AR: I’ve forgotten her name, she was the other commissioner. Yes I was there and through well … after, I think the … yes Kennett’s … the commissioners had gone by the time I came … but we put together a partnership of um … the five municipalities plus all the education institutions that aside, there’s about 14 or 15 players down there in the partnership for sustainable
development of the whole region from Camperdown to the border and from Hamilton to the coast.

¶159: SM-L yes

¶160: AR includes the coastal borders. Lynn Merril

¶161: SM-L Lynne Merril?

¶162: AR ahhh … from Portland a leading environmentalist, advocate. He’s coastal …

¶163: SM-L okay

¶164: AR now my point was, we had discussions about sustainable communities down there and they keep inviting me down. I went down to … oh I’ve forgotten the name of the little place … not too far from Mortlake … and … all the DSE people were saying “yep, yep, we’re going to do another study on … we’re going to get more information about the stream flows and … the microbiota in the errh … this stream flow and errh soil chemistry somewhere else and all this …” and I’m thinking “yep, all good stuff” all good stuff but you also have to have some kind of vision for what it is you’re trying to do. There’s something architects could be more …

¶165: SM-L provide

¶166: AR sometimes they do … for example. Sorry (chuckle) for holding the conversation like this

¶167: SM-L you’re right. Yes, thankyou.

¶168: AR but ehh DesignInc were part of a a group with some engineers and some financiers .. to … that advocated or put forward the proposition … I think they were not at the advocating stage, they were putting forward a scenario (which is precisely what I think they should do) …um … that if you dredged the bay you should make an island.

¶169: SM-L ummhum!
now that’s a real architecture/planning thing. And there’s lots of commercial issues involved. You could have some very upmarket real estate …

that’s quite an exciting idea

creating real estate in a *very* shallow bay when you’ve got a lot of stuff to get rid of

mmm

taking it out, taking it in. Create an island. Now, good, bad or indifferent, that seems to me that’s a part of what we should be doing. We should be exploring some scenarios. I said to John MacDonald the last time I spoke to him only last week um … knowing of his interest in that, the recent greenhouse um … information which is being exposed by Al Gore and in particular the *new* role that seems to have emerged for melting ice

mmm

ahhh which used to be thought to be … one thousand to ten thousand years scenario. The experts used to tell us don’t worry about that, that’s way out there. Don’t worry, um … they’re now saying “oops oops, its on our doorstep”

15 to 25 years is what I was reading …

there could be major changes within our lifetime. That being the case, do you dredge the channel or close it? (chuckle). Aaahh! As they have had to do in London; they’ve had to build a barrage … to stop London …

because the sea level’s rising? And is that what you’re looking at?

all of south-east England is going down. That’s not so much a greenhouse issue, but … 10 or 15 years ago they had to build, they built a in effect a dam across the Thames …

is that right?
¶182: AR yes … east of the city, a huge thing. And it opens and closes, … its an opening and closing thing yep, and ships can go through, boats can go through …um, but they can stop … a big tide rushing up the river, right …

¶183: SM-L uuummm

¶184: AR now, why don’t you close the heads? Now, I’m not at the stage of being an advocate for that, but it seems to me that’s part of the community education, reflective practitioner kind of …

¶185: SM-L yes, definitely

¶186: AR we’ve go to, you’ve got to stimulate thinking and this becomes community education through the injection of practice ideas. There are lots of other things go with the closing of the heads of course, because you put a road across the top and suddenly the whole dynamic of Melbourne changes completely. Instead of being central city it becomes a reinschstadt on the German model.

¶187: SM-L mmmm alright

¶188: AR you see I’m not advocating I’m just saying we should be thinking …

¶189: SM-L building the scenarios, yes that should be …

¶190: AR building scenarios …

¶191: SM-L and they should be public um … property as you say …

¶192: AR these should be live issues because we’re going to have to make some decisions …

¶193: SML yes, unless we’re, unless there is plenty of discussion about it and we can get past the hysterics and we can actually be courageous enough to accept there are going to be fear-mongers and ..

¶194: AR huge, huge changes …
¶195: SM-L yes. But we can only make change if we’re in … um we have the
information and then as you say – I agree with you entirely – that we need the
scenarios that give people a … sense of enthusiasm and energy in order to pursue
that.

¶196: AR I think that’s something that architects could do very much more
of.

¶197: SM-L mm

¶198: AR Then private practice doesn’t err, encourage that. In fact to some
extent it discourages it because architects in private practice are to some extent all
in competition with each other and err, they’re certainly not being funded to do
that sort of thing

¶199: .

¶200: SM-L no. and when you’ve got a … competitive tendering environment
as well it makes it very difficult to know where to absorb your extra research ahh
… costs …

¶201: AR oh. Competitive tendering is … virtually um … virtually ruled
that sort of thing out. You go back to Bates, Smart and McCutchion. They
proposed, they proposed (a double-edged sword), they proposed a very high
building in Docklands a very long time ago …

¶202: SM-L hmmm

¶203: AR well, sort of in Docklands area and they spent a lot of money on it,
on a proposal … um … but basically they put it forward as a celebration of 100
years of Bates, Smart McCutchion, a gift back to the community. It was also
good marketing.

¶204: SM-L mmmmm absolutely

¶205: AR they funded it in those terms … err … because they obviously
spent … a lot of real money on this proposition. And in those days spectacular
graphics and all kinds of public marketing
Appendix C1

206: SM-L okay
207: AR maybe 15 – 20 years ago …
208: SM-L right
209: AR but then, that was you know, you can’t keep doing that all the time.
210: SM-L that’s right. There needs to be a return. (laughter)
211: AR yes
212: SM-L I mean and that’s what I’ve found very interesting in the interviews that I’ve done with practising architects is the fact that in the end it has to be a business scenario …
213: AR it does in deed
214: SM-L and … um … therefore it has to be written into contracts and the the effort has to be all up front so that the client comes in to the business arrangement, knowing … that that’s the sort of um … service that they’re going to expect and um … for the architects to provide that service it has to be part of a business arrangement. It needs to be funded.
215: AR well you see I saw, this is just tangential, to your point, to your interest but you may have seen Norman Day’s critique of Council House 2 in the Age, a half page.
216: SM-L I haven’t actually
217: AR not today but … 3 or 4 weeks ago. And he wrote point after point after point a paragraph about this thing and about the next thing and the cooling and the heating and the water and the venting and the natural lighting and all that stuff. And then he concluded that um … err … this might all be very good but …err … the purpose of architecture was to raise the soul or something like that he said. It was certainly a sort of … emotional response …
218: SM-L ohh?
ahh … and essentially it did all these good things but it actually didn’t do what architects are supposed to do. Now, (chuckle) in my view, that Council House 2, that should be the starting point for everything else and if it doesn’t do all these things it shouldn’t even get built! And sometimes you get buildings that are really inspiring and uplifting and have got a bit of magic 

they’re very rare

not all. It never has been all. You just get a little bit of magic emerges. From time to time. And if you’re getting that the community’s doing quite well. Aah … but to sort of denigrate it because it doesn’t do that seems to me to miss the point that this is the base condition and that really aught to be …

yes, seen for that …

built in … and that’s where we start. Now, how do we make magic, from there, not instead of there.

I’m very interested in this qualitative experience that architects try to engender through form making or through spatial arrangements … umm ..but I …

did you see yesterday … yesterday’s … oh … name’s gone … ahh a great architect in Sydney, what’s his name … oh dear me …

Wooley, Siedler

he just does a small number of …LaPlasriere is one and he is ..

Murcett, not Murcett?

Murcett. Glen Murcett I beg your pardon. Um … he’s done an extremely expensive um … property down on the Ocean Road but he talks about the … article if I’m not mistaken … no I’m sorry, I’m confusing two things. He’s done a very expensive motel, hotel, more than $1,000/pp per night sort of thing on the Great Ocean Road. But no there were three houses in Saturday’s Age I think, just houses, ordinary kind of …
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 ¶230: SM-L  properties

 ¶231: AR  kind of things that normal (chuckle) people could … sort of normal people …

 ¶232: And one of the architects, I’ve forgotten his name, was talking about very appropriately about how … integrating … the building with the environment actually produced very fine and attractive environment … um … places that it was good to be … filled with light at the right time and you were cooled and you enjoyed the cool and you enjoyed the warmth and you enjoyed the view and you weren’t beaten around by glare and it was fresh and naturally ventilated … all that stuff and how in fact all of this could and indeed should be … integral to the architectural experience. This is just a great way to be.

 ¶233: SM-L  and a great way to be again is also my point that we often … have an idea about what we ought to do … but we need to understand how it is to be, what is it good to be … and that really comes all the way back to our own … um … understanding of what is important to us … and how we reflect upon our needs and therefore are able to move as an embodied example of how good it is to be.

 ¶234: AR  think of an office block. You may very well find that um … the thermal and air movement conditions are set by some bureaucracy and some risk management people and aah … some institution of heating and ventilating air-conditioning engineers target and everybody becomes answerable to that. And the idea that you might open a window wrecks that system and therefore you know the story …

 ¶235: SM-L  yes I do. Its an act of disempowerment. And um … I’ve just …

 ¶236: AR  oh yes, back to Illich

 ¶237: SM-L  yes right? … I’ve flicked through a little book by um … Carl Jung called *The Undiscovered Self* and he was just talking about the rise of the common man and the secular world that we now … inhabit, and he was talking
about that in reference to the unconscious side of ourselves, our instinctual and ancient side of self that … (chuckle) really drives our … we have a reasoning mind that sits on top of that …

AR yes, yes

SM-L (laughter) but we have a deeper, much more powerful instinctual aspect of our …

AR a bit of ID as Freud would have called it

SM-L yes, that’s right. And um … he was really talking about, he was writing the book at the time of the nuclear cold war

AR yep

SM-L that very serious phase that … there was that potential confrontation and he was just talking about how … nobody is … is totally in control of their instinctual um … dimension and therefore you know, there are enough deranged leaders around to prove that reason is not really what powers society …

AR (laughter) yes exactly

SM-L and therefore a lot of our discussion you know is very abstract its very generalized we tend to like to discuss it in that arena because, it’s the way Western society has … evolved its own rationality its own reasoning and um … therefore it always removes us … we always manage to remove ourselves, we find ourselves living conceptually. We tend to conceptualise ourselves conceptualise our environment and very rarely come back to real phenomenological embodied, time-dependant, as you say, nowness, exper…

AR experiential

SM-L experiential ahh language. We don’t even have that in our language. And therefore we often … tend to disengage. We find we live disengaged lives … because we’re constantly thinking in abstract terms …
248: AR well, I think anybody, if you could observe the human condition from outside then you would see a very poor fit between what people are actually doing and what these same people’s theory says is confronting them … it doesn’t fit at all. And how are you helping to bring it together?

249: SM-L well, … because there are people who are conscious of the significance of this problem that we are the problem, and the problem that we have built for ourselves, and are also working through the way to overcome those problems, and therefore I’m looking at the way that those people embody their own … solutions … and if we can all embody our own solutions then we can all … ahhh instead of externalising the problem we internal the problem and therefore we take greater responsibility for our next move. And therefore we bring the solving of the problem within our own reach, something that we can actually um experience (laughter). And so that’s the reason why I’m interested in self-reflective practice because that brings the problem right back and allows, you know, that level of participation into a much more intimate level of participation. And so you know the questions and motherhood statements I have …

250: AR you’re really suggesting here and I’m just learning from what you are telling me ahh … you’re really suggesting that self-reflecting practice as a modus operandi for society as a whole within which you would have architects engaging in that self-reflecting practice process either within their own bit or interacting with other self-reflecting users …

251: SM-L that’s the idea (laughter)

252: AR that’s an interesting … sort of … suffusing of the self-reflection idea across the whole system. But you really can’t have one without … some level of the other …

253: SM-L very true

254: AR because simply the smart learning professional who learns from their mistakes if you like, but stays isolated from say client or community or whatever isn’t going to get anywhere …
yes that is very true

because communities’ ego (coming back to the psychiatrist’s model), their self image of who they are is rattling along undisturbed by …

(laughter) the self-reflective practices of the architect

the evolving ego of the architect

look, I do … appreciate that there has to be networking, you need to be surrounded by people who are reinforcing those same practices … and therefore … and as you talk about … its the fact that its also a participatory and educational process, its an advocatory role that you take on. You can only … you know, you have to appreciate that you are only rippling so far. Your ripples might only go this far and you might be somebody whose ripples can affect a wider environment. And therefore I’m looking at you as somebody who has been able to make a much larger ripple in the pond than say somebody that’s …

it’s a large ripple but its very small (laughter)

so you know, I’m interested in speaking to you in order to understand you know, your … own strength of character

ohh … yes well, you do what you can

you do what you can

where you can

mmm

etirely opportunistic … um … I suppose my effort has been to create a context in which … sustainability becomes a kind of respectable, reputable arena for discussion and therefore subsequently for adoption. Um … you could go out and try and persuade an architect here and an architect there … or you can try to persuade an institute to act as the information disseminator of a bigger idea, or an international institute to establish in a major congress the credibility of a major proposition. So … and of course, none of these actually
does the job because if you fiddle with just a few practitioners you just get a little bit done. If you work with the International Union of Architects then … you actually only have a very limited amount of influence … you create the context within other blocks may find it easier to move. So the Australian Institute of Architects actually took … three or four years I think to

\[267: \text{SM-L} \quad \text{adopt} \]

\[268: \text{AR} \quad \text{to adopt the Chicago Declaration … but the very fact that the Chicago Declaration was there made it} \]

\[269: \text{SM-L} \quad \text{mmm} \]

\[270: \text{AR} \quad \text{made it much easier for them to move.} \]

\[271: \text{SM-L} \quad \text{absolutely} \]

\[272: \text{AR} \quad \text{that the point. … um … I really don’t know whether the American Institute who were the hosts … formally adopted it or not. Although you would have to say they’re Environment Group was … pretty advanced in 1992. they were in Rio with Al Gore.} \]

\[273: \text{SM-L} \quad \text{is that right?} \]

\[274: \text{AR} \quad \text{yes. Because I was with them because I was co-opted onto the American Institute programme committee for the Chicago Congress. And so they were people I had never met – they were just people on the other end of the fax and telephone … we used to have networked telephone conversations with people all over the US and me here and Peter Ellyard in … in Richmond. So we had a funny sort of geography of a committee. Someone up a mountain in Montana and someone in Washington DC and … Peter and I sitting together (laughter))} \]

\[275: \text{SM-L} \quad \text{in Melbourne} \]

\[276: \text{AR} \quad \text{we were probably closer together than (laughter) than any other pair. Anyway Peter did one aspect of it and I did another. Anyway we drove that and aahhh … then … we met up physically in Rio and that was the first time I had met most of these people … but they were … one of them was close to Al} \]
Gore and they wheeled us all in to meet Al Gore .. in some hotel foyer somewhere in Rio De Janeiro (chuckle). But he was, he was very, very articulate public advocate for sustainability and green house issues … way back then and he had been for some time. He’s very knowledgeable fellow.

277: SM-L yes and um …  
278: AR and of course that all raises the profile because these guys, because they were associated with Al Gore who was … was he …I think he was endorsed as the vice-presidential candidate at that stage but he was certainly running for presidential type office. That of course raises the profile of all these people that are talking to him … referring to him … he’s referring to them. They become a mutually self-reinforcing community education group.

279: SM-L yes that’s right  
281: SM-L mmmm  
282: AR and Bill was the link into … Gore  
283: SM-L oh is that right. Oh yes  
284: AR Bill McDonough knows everybody (chuckle)  
285: SM-L well he has been the president of the AIA hasn’t he … no sorry he was the president of the committee advising the president  
286: AR oh yes oh yes. He’s always advise…, he ‘s always on the committee advising the president (chuckle)  
287: SM-L is that right (chuckle)  
288: AR presidents come and go but McDonough is…  
289: SM-L there (laughter)  
290: AR (laughter) McDonough … it think that’s the way it is.
well its good to have that level of stability
he got the, he got the first President’s Gold Medal for sustainability from Clinton.
right … yes and I very much admire his logic and his idea entirely. It makes so much sense …
the idea and his ahhh …
his partnership with Micheal Braungart.
Yes that’s terrific its such an innovative approach
ooh yes and it makes … you know it’s such a sensible approach (laughter)
ooh yes and it really opens up that whole … relevance of architecture to …
ooh yes … the physical structure of our built environment
hmhmhm
um … yes so, what we’re having a discussion about at the moment is these levels of rippling you know,
yep
the level of influence, you know, you can try and work at many different levels in order to influence all those very many different levels that need to be influenced. As you say, its not just um … grass roots levels that you need to be influencing, you need to be influencing all the way up the chain of
leadership and try and … sort of raise that profile as you say. Why is it, I’m very interested why is it that sustainability (well, I understand why) why the fact that its such a difficult proposition and its so um … there’s such a violent opposition, well such a determined opposition anyway to taking it on.

AR well, I think it was at Bill Rees’ session I was exploring some of these ideas and … sustainability is a euphemism for survival. But sustainability is much easier, it hasn’t got the same threat as survival. You have to be careful in America, suvivalism is a term used by a small group of extreme right wing anti-government people … the McVeigh attack on Oklahoma – that’s was a … that’s categorised in American English as survivalist. Because this is a group that thinks Government is all wicked and they hole up with a lot of ammunition and … to protect themselves from wicked Government. So … you know, you’ve got to be awfully careful with these words.

SM-L right

AR and sustainability is a new word and the last time I got a bit of software, sustainability was still not in the dictionary, the electronic dictionary. And the late (laughter),

SM-L ooh

AR … in the late eighties, in the late eighties I can remember discussing, since we were using the word professionally, did we really have the right word because it it was kind of ugly in the way its not perfectly organised grammatically somehow …and … we just concluded you know, what else can you say

SM-L hmmhmm

AR but … really, this is a survival issue ahh a human enterprise survival issue. So things like … excuse me a little wandering from the topic … the war on terror for example is a wonderful alternative to confronting the really serious issues. Ahh it’s not a question of fighting with somebody it’s a question
of all realizing that we’re in this space ship earth together. And its hurtling through a very hostile vacuum um there’s nowhere else to go and you either make a success of this enterprise on this spinning ball Earth

¶317: SM-L make it a co-operative venture yes

¶318: AR or you don’t. (chuckle) its very simple. Um … and an internal fight is a great way of not making any decisions about the major strategic issue.

¶319: SM-L that’s very true. And we do seem to run for those options readily …

¶320: AR it’s very unpopular to say so but architects have been well, unpopular is kind of – architects have been complicit in supporting … highly destructive practices for a long time. Like the building of our present cities, I’m not saying that they did it but they were complicit in it and they produced a lot of the imagery …

¶321: SM-L mmmm

¶322: AR and the tower blocks and mass transit for example, you would have to go back to Le Corbusier his drawings, he produced imagery and developers and Governments came along and did it. Architects have been complicit in this whole current morphology of the urban system

¶323: SM-L yes yes

¶324: AR the agro-urban system. All of that. They will do far more damage – that system will kill far more people and do far more damage to humans in the whole …

¶325: SM-L yes

¶326: AR than you know a Hitler, Stalin or a Mao …

¶327: SM-L right, a very interesting point (laughter)

¶328: AR I mean really our cities are huge tender traps we like them now and they seem comfortable … but, but they are tender traps. When you look
around the world and you look at the living conditions of an increasing number of, huge numbers of people …

329: SM-L mmmm. I mean I, back in 2003, I was fortunate enough to spend 12 months in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and so I moved from Australia to Malaysia so it’s the first time I’ve lived overseas and so I was able to recognise … the problems that we have … exported and the aspirational lifestyles that have been taken on board by emerging developing economies who have used our model and are in love with our model, totally blinded by our model and don’t wish to

330: AR and the destruction of their own model … Their own life support systems are being destroyed to support this non-supportable one

331: SM yes, yes

332: AR and (chuckle) I would say Kuala Lumpur has some of the best slums in the world. They are much better than other places (chuckle)

333: SM-L (chuckle) well that’s a good point yes

334: AR it is because there’s slums in Malaysia because of the legislation generally, or at least there used to be, I haven’t been in touch with this for a decade. They had substantial level of security of tenure. Not absolute, but they … a very substantial level

335: SM-L yes

336: AR when being compared with some other places where there’s no security and no internal investment, Malaysian slums are …

337: SM-L no, you are quite right, because they are usually the sites of old villages or their traditional way of …

338: AR and there’s a fair bit of infrastructure that gets invested into them

339: SM-L yes

340: AR and they can’t easily be just moved aside
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341: SM-L moved aside, no

342: AR talking to an Indian chap who used to be head of Habitat and ahh … talking about the evictions that go on around the world … um … and they’re evicted which is the key issue, because if there’s a risk of eviction you don’t invest. You get every sort of … it just goes from bad to worse … there’s a low risk of eviction in Malaysia compared with India for example …

343: SM-L yes …. Yes ….um

344: AR now, I’ve been nattering on, you probably have specific questions that you’ve …

345: SM-L I don’t want to take up too much of your time but I suppose I’m just looking at what it is I’m really trying investigate and to tease out and as I’ve been talking to you I’ve been looking at how people personalise this so in a way that’s what I’ve been trying to discuss with you is your own personal um … values that allow you to make, you know, have a meaningful life in the context of engaging in … activities that will generate a sustainable lifestyle for yourself

346: AR hhmmhhmm

347: SM-L so um … and and so really I’ve, a lot of my questions are to do with how you maintain your level of commitment to your practises.

348: AR … sometimes with difficulty. Because I think … you catch … me at a time when I … I think things have taken a turn for the worse in recent times, psychologically, in that … the problems seem to be … that are all being described by the scientists they’re beginning to firm up on the… on what’s thought now to be the most probable was previously thought to be the extreme fringe … so that the … gravity of the situation has progressed. We’ve used up more time and we’re engaged in a lot of … we’re really not in my view aah … much further on in confronting … as a society wide, global society wide. Because it’s got to be … its not even … you know … it would be good if it was Melbourne. Because
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Melbourne could be substantially self-reliant if it wanted to be um … but it … the global systems require … global approaches.

¶349: SM-L are connected.

¶350: AR I don’t see for example the political will to develop a global approach, particularly … when … we are dealing with Sustainability Victoria and we’re trying to develop a network around Asia on sustainable cities … and the Commonwealth Government’s basic policy is, they’re not interested in multilateral arrangements.

¶351: SM-L that’s the government’s position?

¶352: AR yes which is basically an anti-UN stance … well its not a pro-global or encompassing stance. They say we should work on bi-lateral arrangement with specific context with the subtext, often written, which support commercial trade. So we’ll work with the Philippines on sustainable cities, but then we’ll service that with the sale of services and products. As for stimulating a discourse and sharing information and ideas around Asia to improve … on self-improvement … they’re really not interested. Your bi-lateral arrangement is the basis on which to then supply goods and services on a trading arrangement.

¶353: SM-L so the philosophy is very much the competitive, commercial, narrow, very narrow economic …

¶354: AR the fact that the Philippines could sink us, the Philippines representing the rest of the world, could sink us … is not on the agenda at all. They simply don’t see the interdependent … the Chicago Declaration for Interdependence. I didn’t use that,

¶355: SM-L why is this

¶356: AR I didn’t produce that, I didn’t produce that…

¶357: SM-L well it’s a terrific phrase

¶358: AR I wrote most of the text
is that so

its um … Gilmore … what’s his first name … Oh dear … from Seattle. He was not an architect, he was a professional editor, counsellor who was brought in by the Institute to help fashion the whole thing … a nuclear scien … ahhh … an astro-physicist by profession. Robert Gilmore, Robert Gilmore, and ahh … it was Roger who produced the title. There’s the key issue, total interdependence. Any one player can yep … can actually wreck the system. Um … including … topical today … North Korea.

yes

North Korea. They can be quite a small player … can wreck the system. If they really lost the plot and … either released their nuclear arms into terrorist hands or … ahhh … had an all-out blast they would do untold damage. And that’s not the only way.

that’s just one instance as you say

but equally equally, China just legitimately going about its normal development business in a perfectly … reasonable way in terms of what we have done

mmmm

in previous times … if they simply followed us they’d wreck the system.

can I just ask because you know, you seem to have an understanding of the way our institutions are thinking or not taking on the task, could you just talk about that a little bit more as to why you think we’ve arrived at this level of denial.

… you’re question turns on who “we” are. There’s a lot of people around the world just struggling for day to day survival. Um …

say the “we” who have got more power to take on
right right. There’s a lot of self-interest to … um … it’s necessarily in your self-interest to be an advocate for sustainability. Um … it’s everybody’s a tiny player. You hear it politically, Australia says why should we bother. We’re only point something %. Let the others do it, we can make profits in the meantime. Interdependence and inter-responsibility … um … its … its hard to confront. I’ve found it quite liberating a statement by Kenneth Boulding who’s spaceship Earth economist

humhum

and he explained in a lecture here 20 years ago … you know, that mother nature’s a bitch.

(chuckle)

nearly all her progeny are extinct. (chuckle)

(laughter) oh wow

well you see if you want to know what mother nature, she lays them down there in their fossil records …

that’s really interesting way to look

well you see can either think of this as terribly depressing or liberating. The normal expectation is that we’ll go extinct. The question is if life does (I say to my students and to anyone who would listen). If life is good do you want to make life good for your children and grandchildren and succeeding generations if its good the question is not whether it will spin out for ever … the question is can you spin it out a bit longer. And how much longer how much can you contribute to spinning it out. That’s the challenge. Now once you’ve bitten the bullet as it were, that extinction is the normal … and of course it is inevitable, it will be … it will be a huge volcanic eruption or we’ll get hit by an asteroid or there’ll … err … there’ll be a major climatic catastrophe or there will be a pandemic, or a collection of all sorts of things coming together. So, that’s why 99% are extinct. These kind of things. If so, if life’s enjoyable. If life as distinct
from our life err, then the question how to spin it out … it actually becomes a
erather exciting and challenging task once you, once you’ve bitten the bullet that
you’re not going to spin it out forever.

¶379. SM-L right

¶380. AR if you think she’ll be okay … if you think mother nature is a
beneficent mother who looks after her progeny, then, she’ll be right, you know.
Don’t worry about it too much. That’s for some people much more comfortable I
think it’s unrealistic …

¶381. SM-L well obviously you know, as you say, it comes down to sense of
self, and as you say whether or not you’re concerned about the forever and ever
context eternalism. I mean we do have a drive to be eternal …

¶382. AR well look at religions are full of …

¶383. SM-L promise (laughter)

¶384. AR endless, endless promise.

¶385. SM-L endless promise

¶386. AR Well … you know … if you take the actual experiential side of
you know … actual living is good … something after that’s a bonus, but the
living bit … we actually have some control over. If that’s good then aah … and
the day’s … I can go back to my Edinburgh days I can remember the great
geneticist Waddington

¶387. SM-L oh yes. I know the name

¶388. AR talking about the School of the Manmade Future

¶389. SM-L yes I’ve heard about him yes

¶390. AR the School of the Manmade Future still operates aahh … it was the
centre for human ecology which was quite radical in those days and the two were
eventually amalgamated as I recall. The school of the manmade future, and
Waddington was the founder, a great geneticist, and … he pointed out there was
nowhere, by the late fifties where human activity hadn’t intruded. He was pointing to the strontium 90 that was being found in the ice in the Antarctic. So even in the most remote places on Earth, the … fingerprint of humans were there. And the corollary of that was that having grown into the environment as it were, filled it, there were no new places to go, no empty spaces um … aahh … a whole array of responsibilities become completely different. You really have to take responsibility. You may or may not like it but that’s the way it is. Growing empires can grow as long as there is space round about them. But the human enterprise, Bill Rees, he says that if we all did it like the European and the Americans, we’d need 4 Earths and we’re living at more than one Earth at the moment by running down the stock

that’s right. And we’ve got the Chinese and the Indians who are still a growing population

with an incredibly active economic … phenomenon happening right now and pursuing our model not having an alternate model

well, by far the best thing we could do for our own survival - forget about sustainability - survival - of the Australian values, of the Australian way of life (chuckle) all that all that. (We could bend these words just enough to make them politically plausible.) No but a congenial lifestyle in Australia. The most valuable thing we could do would be to develop and to give away our market visions for sustainable futures.

mmm?

including giving away making available at rates that could be absorbed, prices that could be absorbed the technologies

wouldn’t that be a a wonderful gesture

it would be self interest. Its not a gesture in the sense that you’re being charitable. Its absolutely in our self-interests that China does develop some sustainable model
Aahhh … and what a mission for a technologically developed world and make it globally available.

and why isn’t this vision … it’s such a sensible vision … so why isn’t it being taken up?

because individual players are …

are not being encouraged to take that option.

very commercially involved in not proceeding, for example

because you … produce a drug. Now what you do is you market it at the price you can get for it from the richest people in the world at least to begin with at least until you’ve made a lot of money and then you only make more. You could decide to make it available on a huge scale. Straight off … you could

you could

…. The business models show that you make money going the other way. And the short-term lots of short-term money, dividends, bonuses for the chief executive when he retires …

(laughter)

no seriously. Output of dividends, stock goes up, he sells his options … so there are a lot of systems that operate against it.

yes

um … would governments in the developed world increase taxes to pay … for all of that? … You talk to a politician about raising taxes and they just say “no you’re in the wrong era, we don’t do that”. We’ve been having long discussions we happened for a while to see Brian Howe quite a bit. But Brian, this needs to be done … but you have to raise taxes. This is a democrat is there ever was one from the left of the Labour Party and a democrat and a Methodist minister. And you say, but look Brian, that’s the right thing to do, but oh you
can’t raise taxes. Its not politically viable to raise taxes now (chuckle) I find that really quite depressing

¶411: SM-L I mean … I’m sure that if the right publicity machine … I mean John Howard has managed to convince us of a whole range of issues (laughter)

¶412: AR (laughter) well … maybe

¶413: SM-L so you know, it really takes political will in the end

¶414: AR exactly

¶415: SM-L and to to …

¶416: AR there is a scenario in which Al Gore is is … using his political position to establish himself as a global leader. Not an American leader.

¶417: SM-L m mm

¶418: AR I don’t know whether that will happen … it’s just a straw in the wind.

¶419: SM-L that’s a very interesting thought

¶420: AR and he can use the US election and not committing to raise his profile globally because he becomes a, he is already a world figure, and he can he may in fact become … see Gorbechov did this for a while … he’s kind of retired

¶421: SM-L mmm he did

¶422: AR but but Gorbechov was a global figure for a while

¶423: SM-L absolutely

¶424: AR um … and he and Morris Strong who was a major UN figure Canadian in there. Well Gorbechov was the more visible one …

¶425: SM-L and what about Havel, Vaclav Havel?

¶426: AR yes to some extent, to some extent, but he hasn’t been such an active global figure but he’s fed ideas out into the system. Where Gorbechov has been more global in his reach. He’s been there been around
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¶427: SM-L and made enormous change
¶428: AR but he hasn’t solved the problems
¶429: SM-L no it hasn’t. well look I think I’d better finish up here I think I’ve already taken up enough of your time
¶430: AR well if you’d like to talk again ring me up if there
¶431: SM-L issues I’d like to talk further with you, that would be good
¶432: AR yes
¶433: SM-L thankyou very much for that
¶434:
¶435:
¶436:
¶437:
¶438:
¶439:

Annotations

1 the space AR is talking about is an active space of interactions and feedback loops with characteristics of increasing scale and complexity. While architects will argue that they organise their spaces in support of human activity, the counter argument AR subscribes to is that these spaces are not conceptualised as integral parts of larger spatial arrangements. The problem he alludes to is that in narrowing their focus on individual form-making, architects have reduced their capacity to engage with the scale and complexity of the web of spatial dynamics that constitute the real situation their individual forms interact with. Their interest in space is very limited because it becomes subsumed into individual form-making. This problem is both conceptual and structural in that architects have removed themselves as a profession from the challenge of designing for wider feedback loops. My research is focused on levels of interconnection between mind / cognition and environment. The problem AR describes is one

2 AR sees architecture as nodes within a system. While the nodes may exhibit autonomy at certain levels like energy and water use, levels of unsustainability exist in the larger system of transport and food production that are not addressed at the level of the individual household. And as Lui et al report, household
Appendix C1

numbers have an accumulative effect on resource consumption and loss of biodiversity just by the very fact of their being built and with the widening of the support systems that occur to cater for their non-autonomous needs.

3 Improving the effectiveness of architecture comes through widening the scope of architecture which comes through scenario building. Improving the effectiveness of government also comes with scenario building. The lesson here is that scenario building enables engagement through focused action that treats time as of the utmost importance. AR considers time our most valuable resource and the one non-renewable resource that we have been most profligate with.

4 Generating the political will is the crux of the dilemma. Politics is the art of negotiating / finding ways to implement scenarios / enable visions about the art of dwelling. Politics is one of the arts of dwelling. As as consequence of widening the architected scope of engagement, the architect needs to engage in political activism.
Appendix C2: DO_1st interview_09.10.06

1. 09.10.06

2.

3. INTERVIEW No 1

4. Between DAVID OPPENHEIM (DO) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)

5.

6. Recorded at SBE Offices, 10/485 Little Collins Street, Melbourne City

7.

8. Recording 5.00pm (45 minutes)

9.

10. Transcription (Sahr Willis) 5.0 hours

11.

12.

13. DO: There is one phone call that I’m waiting for, and comes through, I’m going to have to interrupt I do apologise, and then take it and come back

14.

15. SML: Ok, alright

16.

17. DO: But, apart from that, I’m all yours

18.
SML: Well, look, that’s just something official, and I keep forgetting…

DO: Oh, is this ethics

SML: Yes, It’s just me saying um, that you’re aware that you’re being interviewed (laughs)

DO: Oh, no no, I understand that

SML: And that you don’t mind. Yes, and it says there yes, whatever you feel…Thanks for that.

Now, the reason I’m wanting to interview you, David, is because you’ve obviously been in the game as far as ecologically sustainability for a long time, and have seen the whole…

D: (Laughs)

SML: And have seen the whole game progress, which I think, gives you an incredible insight into the whole situation where we’ve reached, and how far we’ve travelled. If in fact we’ve travelled very far at all. And, so I’m I’m really interviewing you also for how you actually maintain your level of commitment to the whole idea, so I’m interested to know whether you’re…at what sort of level of reflective practice you engage in to sort of keep on reminding yourself of what is meaningful for you, and whether or not…I’m really interested in pursuing self-
reflective practice. I’ve been looking at um, its development within the health disciplines and also within the teaching disciplines, but I’m more interested in medical arena where some professional development programs have evolved, that take into account mindfulness meditation as a part of package…

33:

34: PA: Sorry to interrupt, John Howard has called for you

35:

36: D: Hill?

37:

38: PA: Howard

39:

40: D: If it’s Hill, I’ll take it, if it’s Howard, I won’t. John Howard? Unless it’s the Prime Minister….

41:

42: SML: Or the comedian…

43:

44: D: Or the comedian!

45:

46: PA: It is Hill, sorry.

47: SML: Is that your call?

48:

49: D: It is, would you excuse me? It is, yeah.
That’s alright, I’ll delay this.

Um, so, what I was wanting to talk to you a little bit about was….

Reflection

Yeah, your experiences, and really to really gauge whether the profession could take more of this on board as part of, you know, practicing for ecological sustainability, if it can be seen as you know, another strategy that can be engaged in by designers who are looking to make the.. you know, make that level of commitment to ecological sustainability…if it’s worth going down that path. I mean…as I said to you before, there are um, professional development programmes inside other disciplines that are looking at a more sophisticated approach to self reflective practice, so I’m just wondering about your own experiences.

Um, there’s a whole range of bits on that, aren’t there? Um, the first thing is to…in terms of ESD as practice, it is numeracy

Mmm hmm

That you can implement strategies and do a whole range of things, but at the end of the day, there has to be numeracy.
Alright

To measure if you’ve had any change.

Ok, you’re talking about a quantitative approach, aren’t you?

Correct. So that … the same way as that whenever you look at a budget, you could say I’m going to design a cheap building. Unless you actually measure how much the building costs, you don’t know. And you might have some strategies that are good, and some are bad, but you don’t know. So the theory is that whenever you measure budgetary money, you should measure environmental impact.

Mmm hmm

And, then get feedback from that system. Most architects are very good at intuition and bringing together a whole range of issues, and dealing with a whole range of issues, um…but are not good at necessarily being numerate.

Ok

And, I suppose over the last… when did it start…when the project managers got involved…probably in the middle 70s
When a lot of cost control of projects started to move out of architects’ hands

MMm hmmm

To project managers who would then deliver a product on a price, rather than on a design

Mmm hmmm

Um, and I think that that’s one of the biggest problems that architects need to face is how do they…how do they quantify what they’re doing. Um, the advantage…and only since we’ve had the inception of Greenstar we really haven’t had a standard against which to measure things.

Since then?

Mmm…before then.

Sorry, before then.
Before then, we have now. Now we do have it, and whether the standard’s right or wrong or needs tweaking or anything, that’s another issue, or another discussion, but we do have a set of standards that say, well, a group of people, and an enlarging group of people, would suggest that some of these things do lead to better outcomes.

And, not only do they have to be seen in the design phase, they also have to be monitored and verified and measured in after the built object, and to see if they’re maintained.

So there’s this complete strategy of, again, not only measuring the design outcome, but measuring…and constructed outcome, but measuring the performance outcome to make sure it’s there.

So, um, architects may find that process…it isn’t an airy fairy, um, uh, methodology.
Appendix C2

¶113: SML  No

¶114:

¶115: DO  One can have um…one can’t begin the process without having some methodology, and some approach and some feeling towards the subject, and some understanding of the subject, and that um, one of the roles, and particularly Chris Barnett in our office is trying to really introduce…he’s trying to change the psyche of architects, so that they uh…

¶116:

¶117: SML  OK

¶118:

¶119: DO  …see this as an issue that needs to be addressed.

¶120:

¶121: SML  OK. Now that’s that’s…I’m very interested in this, because my feeling from a lot of the…say the environmental ethics that I’ve been reading, is that we are heavily um, rationalised in our thinking. As a society, we generally pursue that part of our psyche to the detriment of our more intuitive side. And so there seems to be a push to try and rebalance that. Especially inside these particular programs that I’ve been looking at within the medical profession, which seem to think, that the…a lot of the problems are to do with the imbalance that there is. And we tend to…forever…you know rational thinking

¶122:

¶123: DO  I think it’s a different issue, totally different issue

¶124:

¶125: SML  Alright

¶126:
But I think… I don’t know about the medical profession… only as a patient not as a provider, but, I would suggest that there would be… that, if one takes the view that one wants to treat the whole person, rather than just the the overt … symptoms.

Illness. Um, well the symptoms, not the illness. If one needs to treat the symptoms, that one’s only getting half the message if one doesn’t listen to the patient and understand their, their social… where they work and their stress levels and their relationships and all the other things that could lead to then stress…and … I don’t know….

Whereas, an architect, if he’s designing a new building, or renovating an existing building, which is hopefully the preferred option.

Needs to have a position that one adopts and that position is um… does one believe the planet’s in trouble. Or the species… the planet will never be in trouble. Is the species in trouble?
Um, if one comes to a position where one says there’s a broader question, and this might be where you’re heading, but I think it’s a very different case to the other one. If one takes that position, then one approaches one’s design in a totally different manner.

Totally different manner. And that the criteria by which one assesses a project being successful or not successful…where one wants to head, takes on different flavours.

If one…if one thinks that the species is in trouble. One would have as an absolute guaranteed outcome the certain performance level of energy, water and waste. I mean, one would.

The same way as if one thinks that uh one has a limited budget, one makes sure that the building comes in costs less than the budget. Same sort of way.
So that...as opposed to having...and maybe I'm prejudice...prejudicial, but if one thinks one’s going to do the right sort of thing, and one’s going to cover the building in photovoltaic’s and one’s going to cover the building in um...greenleaf...and make sure it’s all made out of timber, and has water running through it and there’s soft sounds and all those sorts of things, because that feels right, some of those things might be really good, and some of those might be really not good...

And I would like to see the end result of the measurement that says, well

That it is indeed effective

Tell me about it. Numerically.

Yeah. In a way you’re talking about gathering evidence from the experience of that situation

Mmm. Hard evidence. Yep yep
And, so really, we’re looking at something that’s ah…you’ve got modelling to start with, which is sort of your virtual…um…preparation.

And then you’ve got your experiential…your end product, where you’re you’re measuring how people actually experience that space, or experience the running of that building. You know, as you say, is it performing…Are they performing, as well, inside that context. So um, there’s these…so really it’s it’s being able to know that your level of experience…that you can judge um, that it’s not…that you’re not just looking at num…num…numeracy

You’re also embodying the…

The only way one could judge that would have been based on reviewing similar circumstances and similar numerical outcomes
SML: Mmm hmm

DO: You couldn’t walk in without that knowledge and say this is evidence and say this is a low impact building.

SML: Yeah

DO: You'd have to have had experience with numeracy or evaluation to do that. You could then walk in, once you’d done that half a dozen times, you could then walk in to a building and again, critically analyse all the elements and go, this appears to be a good building.

SML: Mmm hmm

DO: You couldn’t walk in without that knowledge and say this is

SML: Sure

DO: Very different. Very very different.
Mmm that’s fair enough. I mean um, I suppose I’m I’m also concerned about how we use our own bodies as gauges I mean we, we know that we become ill when we’re inside buildings that don’t perform well for us, so, in a way I’m…I’m

Alright, well I’d have a counter view to that…I’d steer…which is the productivity argument. If one, if one uses the…again, I don’t think it’s been proven, the analogy that says if one is well, one works better, and if one is not well, one works less better…

Alright, you don’t think that’s been proved. Yeah.

You would have to take…no I don’t. Intuitively it feels right. Intuitively.

Right

But one would have to take two very large cohorts and they would have to not know that they were ill, and…it’s the only way we can do a blind test…

Yes
And then their productivity would have to be measured doing the same tasks.

Ah, because who knows what goes on in here?

Mmm – that’s very true

So, the evidence and productivity, if one works between wellness and productivity, the evidence at the moment is that it can range as stated by Adrian Leeman from the UK, productivity increases in that “green” building can be anywhere from −5 to +20. Now that’s not…that’s not a set of numbers on which you’d want to base anything. One huge error, and on both sides positive and negative.

So, and there’s so much grey noise in that report of that evidence in terms of managers and mothers dying, and…
Appendix C2

DO …children being sick and…

SML Yes, that’s right

DO Stream out all of that, stream out all of that and God knows what you’re left with.

SML Yes. I suppose I’ve…I’ve just looked at that simply because it’s one of the arguments that are being used to promote, um…

DO I…I’m not convinced with that argument.

SML Mmm, ok

DO There’s a lot of evidence around, but I…intuit…well, int…yes

SML Ok, right. Well…

DO (laughs)

SML No, no, I’m very happy about that because, I mean, I’m actually much more interested in designing for ecological sustainability
I’m…there are a whole range of arguments as to um, you know, what outcomes can be achieved, and so, and but I’m more interested to know what changes you’ve had to make yourself, personally, in order to pursue designing for ecological sustainability.

Um, what changes I’ve had to make. Um. I go back to what you said…I mean, what drives me to do it? You said, we talked about self-reflection, um, I was brought up an Anglican, I was an altar boy and I was always fascinated by um, the physical and the metaphysical and to try to find some morality that guided one’s actions. And when I started to do architecture, I found it very odd that there didn’t appear to be an ethical approach to design.

Yeah, OK

It was seen as being either good or bad. You know, visually pleasing or not visually pleasing. But the ethics…there was no ethical

Evaluation of why one does it. And um, does this bring one closer to God, or further from God, or…all of that was missing. And then when the first oil crisis came, well the first one that I experienced – there’s been lots before…in
73, all of a sudden I said “Oh, OK, this is an ethical issue” and, where do we sit on all of this. So I suppose that was my guiding thing, but what drove me was this this sense that we need to be moral and ethical in what we do.

¶273: SML Mmm

¶274: DO And, how does one take the path that one’s chosen and not be a priest or …but to take…and do that in an ethical way. And to do it obviously in that sort of way. And I suppose the simple way is every…is if every one does what I do, what’s the end result?

¶275: SML Mmm

¶276: DO And, that’s an interesting approach to take in one’s…how one deals with one’s professional life, and how one runs a practice, I suppose. Um

¶277: SML Mmm. I mean, I’m I’m interested in the difference between what is considered right to do, and what is considered good to be in our professional…in our daily professional tasks,. They’re, they’re two…

¶278: DO They should be indivisible, shouldn’t they?

¶279: SML Mmm, they should be.
They should be. I suppose they’re driven… I was talking to someone this morning about, uh, the morality… we were discussing a question here to do with whether we work for a nuclear um organisation. And the two…the the… quite often the muddying factor is the financial viability of the entity that you’re in.

SML Mmm hmm

DO SO that you do have a responsibility, or have a responsibility to try and make sure that this company keeps going, it’s financially viable…

SML That’s right

DO If the company doesn’t keep going, all of the opportunities that we had are gone. So you need to always have that. But, when you come to moral questions you have to abandon that consideration, and make sure that uh, if the moral stance you take blows the company out of the water, well, it blows the company out of the water. Which is a really hard thing to um, contemplate

SML Mmm

DO Um
Appendix C2

301: SML Ok, so um, you’re obviously an overt, just in the way your business is presented, it’s overtly taking a particular approach to design

302:

303: DO Mmm. It’s also the staff that have come here have been one of the…they…we quite often have to not take staff because they’re not members of environmental organisations and they haven’t shown that commitment to the environment.

304:

305: SML Yes

306:

307: DO So that they…I mean, the staff here are quite…some of them were eco-terrorists, and some of them you know…there were a lot of protests and things, I mean they come here they’ve got to have…be committed to the environment, be part of an environmental organisation and bring a skill that makes money.

308:

309: SML Ok

310:

311: DO And fit in with where we sit. So there’s all of those…that broad spectrum of attitudes that they need to do, and it’s…it isn’t a money making machine, the company.

312:

313: SML Well, I, I really like the way that you’re marrying action to ideology, you know, so that, your individual staff members actually embody the principles that you hold, that the company holds. So, you know again, that’s that
sort of being able to be very consistent in idea and practice, and in a way self-reflective practice is an attempt to always keep that in mind. You know, so that you’re always constantly contemplating whether your actions are, you know commensurate with your philosophy. Um, and, so, so in a way, as far as some sort of a professional development opportunity, program um, is that something that can be formalised? Where, you know, you talk about a lack of, you know, moral standards…not immoral but amoral

¶314:

¶315: DO    Uh…yeah, amoral. I’d agree with that. Look, I don’t think you can, I don’t think you can um…we’re getting an increasing number of people who want to come and work for us…apply to work here…or or not apply to work here but who express interest in working here because that we appear to be doing you know the current “in” thing.

¶316:

¶317: SML    Oh, OK.

¶318:

¶319: DO    And so that they see ESD as a um, a, uh, a skill that they need to acquire to work in the market place. And, which is terrific, you know from the long…from if one stands back, our role is to um, save the planet, and save the species, um, but…

¶320:

¶321: SML    Are you concerned about…

¶322:

¶323: DO    …from our point of view, we can’t employ those people because I suppose, a lot of our staff have to suffer the slings and arrows of um, dispute and um, ‘cause we try and take as radical expression of it. We try and take a firm
view of what we believe in, and in the advice that we give to our clients, we say that one needs to be committed to that approach.

SML Yes and, and really it’s maintaining that commitment. I mean is that something that you really work on inside the office? As far as how do you provide the support…

DO Yeah, uh yeah, and it comes from all of the staff, it’s definitely not top-down or bottom-up it’s just um, um…it’s embedded in the way the firm operates. So everyone feels free to um contribute and comment about where all those things happen.

SML And, and do you…is that sort of inside your quality assurance program or something like that?

DO No, no we’ve never formalised the selection process of staff

SML What about retrieving information from your projects, is that a formal part of keeping people committed?

DO Yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, to keep people committed to the morality of the firm?

SML Mmm
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338:

339: DO No, no. No, it’s much more disorganised than that. Or no, it’s organised as a meaning…

340:

341: SML Informal

342:

343: DO It’s much more a-organised…one could use that word

344:

345: SML (laughs) A-organised, alright,

346:

347: DO Yeah, it’s neither it um…staff are…the actions of staff to support…say if there was an anti-nuclear protest there would be um, there would be known within the firm by everyone, that that activity would be supported in terms of going off and protesting. And you wouldn’t have to apply for leave to go off and protest. Just part of what we do

348:

349: SML The culture

350:

351: DO Yeah, and also that if people feel committed to go and protest about that particular issue that’s part of where the firm sits, that’s fine. If they wanted to go and protest against um, um, say, anti-animal. That would not be seen as part of our core business. (Wishes staff members goodnight). That would not be seen as being…if they wanted to go and do it, well they’d take time off on their own and get permission if they were to do it.
24.06  26.10.2006  1 hour

But if it’s to do with the built environment and how that…how the energy’s supplied to the built environment or all of those sort of things, yes it’s seen as something that would be supported.

SML  Alright, Ok

Because I suppose that in the sense from a management point of view, that all of the knowledge that they gain, and the experience and the street cred and all that sort of stuff is important to lay on the table.

SML  Yes, so really, you know, it’s not only having a knowledge about the issues, it’s actually being engrossed in those issues.

Doing them, yep.

And actually coming to an understanding. ‘Cause understanding involves feelings and emotions…

Look, the fit-out of the office is important, we found the space and um, the staff actually designed the fit-out, and then um, there was a commitment by everyone to have nothing new in here, and to only buy or find or do stuff, and
to have the right attitude, so all of the plants are part of the Green Star scoring system that you need so many plants per person so that was supported financially. Um, the lamps were found in a skip by someone down the road.

SML  Yes, I’m really interested in your lamps

DO  Yeah?

SML  No I just noticed they look very…it’s a great idea. And they’ve obviously been um…

DO  And you can’t sort of direct staff to do that, I mean there’s an attitude of staff “Oh ok I’ll do that” and that that’s part of the ethos of the firm.. Someone was throwing out this kitchen so, um,

SML  Terrific

DO  …that was salvaged for…thrown out and rebuilt here. Uh, all the furniture was brought across from where we were, recycling all of the things that weren’t appropriate any more, um, so it’s a real attitude of…that’s supported so when you talk about this internal reflection I suppose it’s uh, it’s a view that we’ve all taken and we all support as a group – this is the way things are done.
¶382: SML I mean and that’s critical when you’re taking a position that you actually surround yourself with a body of like-minded people so that you can draw strength from that and have that sort of reiterative feedback, um which is so critical. And in a way, I mean, so you’ve been I don’t know how you’ve been developing that over 20 or 30 years or you wouldn’t have…I don’t know how much support you’ve…you’ve had

¶384:

¶385: DO Well, SV is only five years old and this is the first…most of the rest of the time I’ve actually been in private practice, so in terms of the environmental issues I worked with Michael Taylor for a long time, he’s still a very close friend and colleague um but we were doing school together and but not…and privately I was pursuing environmental issues

¶386:

¶387: SML Right

¶388:

¶389: DO Um, so this is the first time that we’ve actually gathered a group together and I think that’s been able to be supported financially because of the change of regulations and the introduction of greenstar. I mean, there’s some sort of regulation behind all of this

¶390:

¶391: SML OK

¶392:

¶393: DO There was never a section J, and never any regulations to do anything. We were the lone greenies out there
OK…Working in an environment that wasn’t conducive to any…

To create a business.

Yeah, that’s interesting

Yeah, because in the end it needs to be a business proposition

Absolutely, all those people get paid every fortnight…the money’s got to come from somewhere

Yes that’s right…the client. So how do you actually develop your clients? You’ve got this overt stance, you’ve got a committed sort of group of people who are prepared to offer these services, these high quality environmental services. So, what level…what sort of education are you giving your clients, do you find that you’re being an advocate while you’re dealing with them? You know, it’s an important opportunity. Do you see it as an important opportunity to change their mind?

Mmm – I think there’s a full spectrum of people who are totally supportive of what we do at one end, and push us, and to the other end where
people are almost overtly antagonistic to what we do, but they have to do it because the regulation says that they’ve got to do it, and they’ve got to get through this system

410:

411: SML  Ah, that’s interesting

412:

413: DO  And there’s the full spectrum of attitudes. And our client base comes from um, councils, other developers or developments, architects ah local government, federal government, um, overseas contacts, interstate contacts, so it’s um a very broad spectrum of what we do. And do we nurture? We advertise a lot just saying that we’re ESD consultants and we don’t advertise that we’re different, I suppose, to other ESD consults. We speak a lot so we’re known in the market place as being fairly strident with our views. Um, which I think sets us apart from the more traditional engineering base.

414:

415: SML  Yes, right. And have you ever found that that’s actually I mean, have you …you might have a full range of options that you give your client about what they can do, um, do you then find yourself having to pull it all back? Um or

416:

417: DO  Oh yeah, yeah, depending on the client, yeah, yeah. Uh, we acknowledge that we are…we are paid by our clients to provide a service and in the first instance we try and offer them the the zero resource impact option, and they then work out what they want to take, and they’ll pay us accordingly. They’ll pay us for providing a service, but, um…it that a compromise? Ohhh, no I don’t think so.
OK, so you’ve never said to a client “Look, we can’t deal with you because we really feel uncomfortable about the um,

The outcome?

…the outcome?

We would if, um, we would if we did feel uncomfortable about the outcome

OK

But any, any move towards to improving anything is a good move.

Yep

And any move that brings money into the firm that keeps the firm alive is a good thing

In order to…promote that, yeah, opportunity.

Mmm
Um, now I’ve also been looking at the fact that there is a lot of discussion about energy and there’s different levels we can discuss that at. It can be, you know, a more spiritual approach to energy, it can be a psychological approach to energy, it can be a simple, you know, engineering approach to energy. You know. So, do you find that you, um, look at all those different subtle layers? So, we’re really talking about the physical to the metaphysical here.

Mmm. Uh, yes and no. That we, um, you can measure or you can predict and later measure um, consumption of resources, that create energy, so we look at that, uh, in terms of the other ones, we try and promote what we call it (yawns) excuse me…

Oh, sorry, David

People who…the good neighbour um…it’s like the Christian good Samaritan attitude you know, it’s very hard to define. It’s very hard to define the social aspect of TBL?

TBL?

Triple bottom line reporting

Oh, ok
So we’ve come to the view that, um, because every circumstance is different but we, we put to our clients “How would you like to operate as a good neighbour, in as a local, in the community and in Australia” and it varies from you know, some people might say well, you know 5% of our profits we give to the spastic kids, so…so we make no value judgement we just put it down and say part of ESD is this social thing, and part of that is being…we see that as being a good neighbour.

SML  Mmm\ hmmm

So when you talk about spiritual and psychological energy that we would, I would dump those in that camp, I suppose, but we don’t, we don’t go near the area that I think you’re talking about

Well, I’m. I’m only looking at that because that is uh…it’s a very difficult area to actually discuss in the public arena, and yet, at every opportunity, people are needing to um…

We would…Look, I suppose there’s this one story I tell which…and I tell it knowing that it’s a very powerful story of my son, stepson, who is a ranger in Cambodia, in the forests.
Appendix C2

465: DO And he was in Cambodia, in Phnom...just outside Phnom Pen in the Cambodian mountains...not Cambodian...Cardomom Mountains, and he’s got a range...a group of guys who work with him, the rangers, Ben leads them, and they go out and they camp in the forest and try and keep the illegal loggers out of the forest...

466: 

467: SML Wow, mmm

468: 

469: DO ...because of the...it’s awful social conflict that um...this is an easy way to make money but it stuffs the environment and it’s uh...ruins the life of the people that live there and, so in general we don’t support that whole issue of clearing rainforest. So, Ben was in Phnom Phen one night, and the rangers out in the forest and the illegal loggers went to the local police station, borrowed a gun, came in, shot three of the rangers and didn’t kill the other two, because the gun jammed, or they would’ve killed Ben. So for me there’s a direct connection between a piece of Merbu on site and someone trying to kill my son. SO if you talk about psychological energy, that’s what it’s about.

470: 

471: (answers phone)

472: 

473: DO Psychological energy, that’s where it would sit. It’s a pretty powerful story

474: 

475: SML Yes, and and again, that takes me to a really...what I think’s crucial is that fact that we all, at some level, need to have very powerful motives in order to, you know, maintain our level of commitment and we live in a very
comfortable and very affluent environment, and we don’t have you know, that
type of a um, um, crisis. We’re not dealing at that level, really, it’s it’s very
removed so, you know when we need to, when there’s such a um, we…rationally,
we know that there is an urgent…we need to be urgent, uh, but our own sort of
level of participation…we’re quite removed. We’re very comfortable you know,
we’re enjoying the fruits of the situation, and we’re not feeling any of the direct
impact, at all. So, in a way, that’s why I’m trying to find out how people
maintain their strength of commitment.

DO Well, look, the simple answer for me is that…the philosophy in
the firm of gathering people together, like minded people who are all like that,
we all feed off each other. I mean that’s the very simple thing that um, you kno
we all go through ups and downs in our personal lives and professional and all
that sort of stuff, but there’s bound to be someone who’s on the case. Very
simple. And I think there’s also, I’m a very firm believer that um,

SML Mmm hmm. Oh that’s interesting.

DO Like Enron, the person at the top must have been corrupt because
that allows the feeling of corruption to
To exist. If the culture at the top of an organisation is that the species is in trouble, we’re advocates of the environment, and let me say it again, again and again, within the firm, all of those things are allowed to be said, and stated and

That’s right

…developed and supported. SO by creating that culture, it then it becomes as supportive strengthening thing

Yep, and that’s right, you’re actually allowing it to be part of the culture

There’s a word for it…I don’t know what the word is but it allows you to be part of the accepted language that’s used in the gestalt…something

Gestalt works shaum or or zweitgeist or whatever it is

Yep yep
Alright, well look, you know I think that I really like you’ve been really direct with me and I really appreciate that, and I suppose the only other… I’ve been looking at a lot of environmental ethics and it seems to be a very highly charged area, and and, full of scenario building which tends to be um, you know a lot of people are knocking that because it seems to not have enough, sort of, grounding, so you know, I mean, we’re here talking about the fact that there’s a culture that allows these sorts of decisions and discussions to be had, and therefore obviously you’ve got scenarios of your own of the world, of how you would like the world to be or how you would like business to be or you know relationships to be, you know, professional relationships and um, and so your involvement outside of your business you know, with the RAIA, or various other activities. So, I’m wanting to ask about how that sort of strengthens, or disperses that information, or that culture that you might have the culture nice and strong here and how much of that are you trying to export…

One of my, I’ve had a few sort of heroes through my life I suppose, and um, as we all have, and one of them is Robert and Brenda Vale. One of them, two of them! And I first met them when I was in England in 1977, and I was always amazed at their ability to be quite plain and direct and simple about what they believed and how they carried out their life, it was very uncomplicated um, and I’ve been fluffing around the edges of where they’re…and I’m nowhere where they’re at, and I never will be, but they’ve been the sort of inspiration of – well it’s, it’s really simple, you know, we want to save the species and we’ve got to stop using energy and now how do we stop using it? I mean it’s very…

Right
Appendix C2

Vous savoir, vous pouvez le présenter de différentes façons, mais c'est really simple, donc, je suppose que ce que je veux faire maintenant, c'est parler plus, ah... en utilisant des termes provocateurs, mais plus directement et en disant... racontons les histoires de Ben, et racontons les histoires des glaciers, et essayons de raconter les histoires de l'utilisation de l'énergie, et de l'exploitation et du doublement entre moi et mon père, et le quadruplement entre les gens que je rencontre et leur grand-père, donc, s'il vous plaît de réduire tout par 75%, vous devez le faire, c'est really simple, vous devez le faire en vivant comme votre grand-père. Vous êtes très intelligents, vous pouvez travailler comment le faire et ne pas souffrir d'un déclin de style de vie, parce que je ne me sens pas que je souffre de moins que mon papa, qui a eu une grande vie, nous avons bu du vin, nous avons mangé du fromage, nous sommes allés au footy, nous avons fait tous ces trucs, mais nous avions une voiture, et nous avons marché au take away, et nous avons emmené notre propre poêle, et papa a carpoolé avec quatre autres personnes, alors... est-ce que c'est mauvais? C'est really simple, si nous le voulons, mais nous devons tous être engagés, personne par personne.

SML Mmm

DO C'est pas matière à une prédiction, il faut être engagé personne par personne

SML Oui, c'est cela. Bien, allons-y, nous pouvons arrêter là, parce que je pense que vous avez été fantastiques, j'ai beaucoup appris de cela, et vraiment, l'une de mes autres questions ou mes autres déclarations était vraiment concernant les niveaux de satisfaction, car nous tous avons besoin de nous sentir que c'est satisfaisant, personnellement satisfaisant
Mmm mmm. Which, I mean, like, look I’ve taken again the same thing about the Vales, when they built their first autonomous house they were sitting around and they said wouldn’t it be interesting if could build a house that used no resources…mmm, we’ll do that. And the economic evaluation and all of those things weren’t part of the criteria. It gave them happiness to achieve this. It was, I mean we all earn money to spend on things to make us happy or survive but…what’s the…what’s the seven…is it three or seven levels of psychological…my son’s doing psyche…the Van Bruchen or something triangle. Inverted pyramid of things or inverse, or something like that, you know, you’ve gotta survive and zzzzzz,

Oh right

Do I make sense?

Yeah, I do I sort of vaguely remember that

So I mean that’s the, that’s the

Mmm

So your talking about happiness, look I couldn’t be happier I’m a pig in mud it’s just fantastic, just working with or from my perspective, it’s just fantastic to be surrounded by really young active intelligent people, and it’s just fantastic, and
Appendix C2

530:

531: SML Oh, sure, right. Well thankyou very much

532:

533: DO Oh, pleasure, pleasure.

534:

535: 45 mins. 28 Oct. 06

536:

537: 5 hours.

538:

Annotations

1 one can justify any action. the courage is to make a stand and justify that particular stance in terms beyond self-interest. nuclear power - one can make a stand either for or against its use. the precautionary principle allows us to err on the side of caution. but the potential for non-CO2 emitting power production is a consideration in an energy-hungry world. do we feed the world this form of energy knowing the very long-term dangers. statistics tell us the risk of nuclear accidents are not huge / cancer-forming side-effects can be minimised / the earth can regenerate even in environments with high radiation levels. i need to read up on the argument for and against before i can come to an informed stance.
Appendix C2
Appendix C3: GB_1st interview_15.02.06

GB: 15.02.06

INTERVIEW No 1

Between GREGORY BURGESS (GB) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SM-L)

Recorded at: Gregory Burgess Pty Ltd Architects,

10 York Street Richmond

Recording 5.46pm (1.39:41) 6.30pm

GB: What was, what was the love of where you started – just taking you back to your first um …

SM-L: …Oh yes, well um er … I started because I was trying to nut through the problem when I heard you speak um, at the gold medal presentation
and I realised that what I was hearing was something that is not often – well I hadn’t heard it before, and so I thought from what I was hearing that you were sort of really working with your intuitive side with that sort of more the poetic – I found it very poetic and I just felt that you were deliberately tapping another sort of level which you were prepared to, um, be quite conscious about and be quite deliberate about and often the actual art of design is considered so mysterious that it is difficult to talk about, often architects tend to back themselves into a bit of a corner when it comes to justifying the time and effort and skill and sort of that intuitive layers that need to be worked and honed and, so in a way, I was inspired by the fact that you were able to articulate it so well, and speak about architecture at a level that moved it away from that pragmatic. So I was … and it got me into thinking about the fact that maybe it’s the language that we use can limit our, the way we imagine ourselves into a sustainable future. So – so I feel you’re a…you could offer enormous lessons for other practitioners to help past some of the difficulties that beset any architect or any designer. Maybe it’s the language that we’re using which is difficult to grapple with or…

19:

20: GB: …Well it’s probably maybe [language to some extent](1), but I think it’s um, probably also [dimensions of self](2) and [dimensions of imagination](3) and [dimensions of connectedness](4). Even [suffering](5) I think…*[that limit the way we imagine ourselves into a sustainable future]*[CONCEPT - inner human sustainability]*

21:

22: SM-L: Yes yes you’ve spoken a lot about that…

23:

24: GB: oh – have I?

25:
Yes – you have, and I think that it’s a really, it’s very important and something that we tend to avoid these days we don’t want to discuss it…

…I was reminded of it in just going back to your um…

Oh yes, my motherhood statements.

oh yeah yes, they’re good. I was reminded of it (suffering) just in terms of um, the public and private and the task orientated and self orientated and transformation. So yeah, transformation is really at the core of all this, [sustainability requires self-transformation as a core condition] and because we live in a pretty comfortable society, [lack of suffering] with a (laughter) a government whose encouraging that kind of unreal sense that everything is all right, when it’s not, [lack of connectedness to the suffering of others] I think, in a way that’s saying we don’t need to suffer or we don’t need to acknowledge that other people are suffering [avoidance / denial] or um… ‘cause I think the only real transformation comes about through suffering, in a way… [real / affective / longevid self-transformation requires suffering] [sustainability is at core self-transformation which at core requires self-suffering] CONCEPT - core and non-core definitions of sustainability]

…yes I think that’s an interesting point…

…so if you live in a comfortable country it’s more difficult to transform, more difficult to change when you don’t feel the need to… [comfort is inverse to transformation] [comfort v suffering]
37.

38. SM-L: hmmm…

39.

40. GB: …so there’s need to…

41.

42. SM-L: Yes. And that comes down to a discussion about needs too, you know, maybe our Christian, our Christian sort of um… there’s a whole tradition of using guilt as a way to take on somebody else’s suffering um that seems to be a technique.

43.

44. GB: um well yeah, that’s true. Um, well if, um er…

45.

46. SM-L: … yes or charity – or how you come about it, charity

47.

48. GB: Well – I suppose what’s interesting about it, it’s all about relationship and um, a sense of self and a sense of the other and what the space between is and… [relationship as spatial phenomenon - betweenness is important rather than unification] [otherness is to be part of relationship] [CONCEPT sustainability through diversity]

49.

50. SM-L: yes…

51.

52. GB: … um, how you affect not just another person um, but that’s I suppose a starting point, how sensitive we are to our affect on others especially
people who we are in close contact with, you know who we are married to or in family with or work situation or friends – um, that kind of sensitivity is one level, but then there’s, you know, as you put here, the public and um what – what the bigger picture is when you raise your eyes above your own little world, and the people that you love or care for – there’s a lot of other people out there…[sustainability at multi-levels of relationship]

SM-L: That’s right – yeah – How do you relate

GB: …go to another country. I went to China at the end of last year and gave a talk in Shanghai. One of the big things there for me was, apart from as it is in India and other places you sort of – people are in your face much more, the density and the contact is far more pressing, and then the air, and the quality of the air and the quality of the water and all these things which in Australia you come back and take for granted, there you think this is not going to last much longer, you’re not going to be able to breathe here in 5 years – you’re having trouble now. [confrontation with suffering - breathing / pressing crowds / drinking]

GB: So – there’s something there about the other other country, the other people, the other rest of the world, another level of seriousness between some of the challenges that we have to face umm, everywhere, but some places are more exaggerated therefore the next level of suffering whether it’s bronchial or brain or – you know, that all becomes much more real and you think, well this is accelerating here. In Australia, even though you fly over it and you see the country’s been cleared and, you know, the salt and the water, it’s um, still a pretty good life…[CONCEPT otherness - as a means to make comparison / to taste the difference between comfort and discomfort] [CONCEPT - sustainability through diversity because diversity allows for otherness]
¶58:

¶59: SM-L: yes.

¶60:

¶61: GB: … when you squint (laughter) – or you don’t look out the window when you are flying across the country. [CONCEPT - degrees of separation] We’re probably getting off the track a bit here…

¶62:

¶63: SM-L: No, no, you’re quite right, because we’re talking about degrees of separation from the problem.

¶64:

¶65: GB: Yeah, and how do we get it in the face. Because if you get a slap in the face [shock tactics?] it’s a wake up isn’t it?

¶66:

¶67: SM-L: That’s right.

¶68:

¶69: GB: You’re eyes see something which your memory can’t…

¶70:

¶71: SM-L: …Deny…

¶72:

¶73: GB: … deny or you can’t get it out of your head. You see somebody dying or the consequences or you know, that school in Russia, and there’s no substitute for being there yourself and feeling affected [CONCEPT direct experience], you’re thinking “I can’t cope with this”…
So you’re really talking about an experiential level, in other words, you have to experience it as a bodily affair rather than just an intellectual sort of…

Well, bodily and psychologically and emotionally and even then you have to experience it probably many times. [CONCEPT reinforcement] I mean you get vice versus where extremist becomes an interesting source of learning and transformation. [CONCEPT relationship]

Hm hmn

You have the extreme situation where, I think China was extreme, India’s extreme and there are aspects of Australia that I think are pretty extreme too, like in Aboriginal communities, but also John Howard is a very extreme character of a….somebody in denial…[thinking about extreme examples brings out the similarities between exotic extremism and home-grown extremism]

yes, yes

…and I think your point about reflection, I’m not sure that’s what – when you say reflective practices, as a reflection, that reflection is very crucial in all of these things. To reflect what went wrong, to reflect on what is being denied, or are things really as good as… or why aren’t we thinking more about this. Because I think that’s the problem, that comfort thing is a real problem in
Australia. We think all of us have it pretty good, why bother to try too hard about these sort of things… [CONCEPT reflection upon extremes exposes hidden dangers close to home] [CONCEPT the dangers of complacency] [CONCEPT reflection upon extremes counters complacency] [CONCEPT - this is another reason for embracing diversity?]

86:

87: SM-L: Especially when there isn’t a… Well what I’m really asking you is do we need as social beings, we do need examples. Often we look towards those in positions of authority to provide examples of how we are meant to behave as a society and, you know, there’s a lot of writing that suggests that it’s because of those power structures that there is a reluctance to make changes, because of the fact that the more powerful you are, the more buffering you put between you and those extreme situations.

88:

89: GB: That’s right – the more privileged you are… I don’t know if you saw that program the other night about the scientists…the CSIRO scientists that are being gagged. The government was gagging the scientists not to say too much about global warming or…

90:

91: SM-L: no, I didn’t see it…

92:

93: GB: …or war, you know the effect of, you know, big industry on government policy and the sort of lobbyists who – what really happens hand in hand with government and people who run businesses that are very polluting - like the coal industry or the… They’re all other things I suppose, but they’re part of the picture in which architects work and it’s part of denial, part of that thing
about denial and lack of reflection as is the whole issue of Australia’s past

[CONCEPT - denial as status quo]

¶94:

¶95: SM-L : Very true, very true

¶96:

¶97: GB : And it’s in the present now we’re denying a lot of things and even getting scientists shut up in case they say too much so it’s too plausible and people get worried, and people – it reflects badly on the government… so that’s head in the sand kind of stuff. But I suppose our models for these things really are Indigenous people, American Indians … 12:41

¶98:

¶99: SM-L : Uh huh…

¶100:

¶101: GB : …this was sent to me by a ???? at Christmas but um, they're all sort of, all sort of good touch stones [INVIVO concept] for behaviour [CONCEPT transgressing separation]. But I suppose what we’re talking about really is the ethics of, of behaviour [INVIVO concept].

¶102:

¶103: SM-L : Yes… that’s really what we get down to – in the end

¶104:

¶105: GB : Well - you talk about need for an environmental ethic but I think it’s really a need for an across the board ethic isn’t it?– where you – you are um, a guardian of much more than just your own little life and self and all that. And when you’re an architect… so it’s an environmental dimension I suppose it’s also the cultural, social um sustainability issues as well. I suppose one tries to move
all that together… the many dimensions of what an architect does effectively and how that can support and nurture change, and challenge too, I suppose. All those things to keep things moving, and keep people awake and conscious.

¶106:

¶107: SM-L: Yes…. Obviously there’s a … I start asking about this level of expertise – that’s a fairly dry word – but really as you say, it’s a way of keeping you alert to the impact that you’re having. Often you know we can be unaware if we’re not keeping up with the latest evidence that’s coming forward.

¶108:

¶109: GB: It’s that – It’s not easy I think to just read and do something just because you read something either. It’s like things happen when a client is particularly sensitive to toxicity or something and so that becomes an extremist situation because somebody…[GB pushing thoughts upon extremism -how it is incorporated into design thinking]

¶110:

¶111: SM-L: …pushes you…

¶112:

¶113: GB: …is in some sort of danger what you and I might - cope with in terms of breathing stuff in - they break out in…

¶114:

¶115: SM-L: …they’re totally allergic to it…

¶116:

¶117: GB: or go into paroxysms of coughing.
SM-L: So are you saying that you use those sorts of opportunities?

GB: Well, they make you more conscious and make you think it’s a very real underlying [raising awareness]… of how serious say that particular thing is, toxicity of materials – what’s in them that you can’t necessarily – you can’t see them you might smell them for a while or some people … some materials give off fumes for many years. So to be able to open a window or, the whole business of the range of choices in materials whether it’s paints or timbers or… and therefore a million subtleties and impossibilities in getting things right. I suppose that’s the other thing, one feels constantly ignorant about exactly how to make choices in these things [confusion / challenge of competing claims / lack of simplicity / no simple answers]. It’s not a science in the usual sense at all because there are so many things to weigh up and you get differing opinions about where it sits, where something sits [science avoids complexity by controlling variables in experimental settings. Sustainability is therefore a science of lived-world complexity; not an experimental science.]

SM-L: There seems to be a problem where the many different materials that you can, that you bring into a project all have different ways of being assessed. It might be a very high level of energy to produce the material, but they could have benefits that outweigh that. So there’s all these arguments that need to be weighed up…so (laughs)

GB: Yes… yes

SM-L: So the thing is, how do you structure that into your choice making?
Well I suppose um, this is where it gets down to the relationships involved in a particular project, say with the client who may be particularly conscious. As an architect you need to bring what you know across a whole range of things to the process [*expertise in synthesising*]. I see in my experience that things work a lot better when the client is committed [*client driven*]. And we’re doing a number of projects where the client really wants to demonstrate things - like to make a point about choices – these choices.

But then you see that that choice (laughs) has got other things, things that make it – undermine it too. And maybe an obvious thing like recycled materials or recycled timber or plastics or using car tyres in the foundations for a slab or…

like a coffering – which we’re doing at Ceres...
build more cheaply and build more sustainably – with some ingenuity and imagination.

\[142:\]

\[143:\] SM-L: So you’re really then there as a supporting – giving the support for the, for it’s feasibility …

\[144:\]

\[145:\] GB: Yeah, that’s right – with the checking of - I suppose there’s …

\[146:\]

\[147:\] Mobile phone rings

\[148:\]

\[149:\] SM-L: Oh my, I should have turned that off – I’m terribly sorry about that. I should have checked when you had your phone, that mine might be on too.

\[150:\] Umm, O.K. so I suppose when you’re talking about the way you allow clients to bring new ways of looking at a problem, looking at an opportunity to you, do you find that you do a lot of, um… How closely do you look at your own limits when that’s happening?

\[151:\]

\[152:\] GB: Limits in understanding, knowledge or…

\[153:\]

\[154:\] SM-L: Or your own aspirations as far as the level of mindfulness as to what it is that you want to get out of the project yourself, because that’s also a driver.
Appendix C3

¶156: GB: At that level of understanding you mean? or about the total project? ‘Cause I suppose there’s a total project which is much bigger and more complex than that and I suppose one always looks for ways in the total picture in how the building might be a more sustainable building and that’s um, inherent in the design and the way it orientates – all that sort of passive, basic design. And then there’s a myriad of detailed choices about materials, how much - what goes into the concrete, whether there’s all sorts of…

¶157:

¶158: SM-L: Recycling options…

¶159:

¶160: GB: Yes – that’s right – steel and ash and…

¶161:

¶162: SM-L: And that sort of information, I mean are you finding that that information is something that you, inside your office that that is something that you are trying to structure into your sort of library. Do you set it up in a way that everyone in the office has got, its sort of categorised on the….

¶163:

¶164: GB: Well, we’re I suppose probably better than a lot and not as good as some (laughs).

¶165:

¶166: SM-L: Right…

¶167:

¶168: GB: I don’t know where we’d sit in the whole spectrum of commitment and details at that level. And I’ve chosen people here who do have a real interest. There’s a fair number of people with an active interest and commitment. I think
that’s important, because you can’t, you have to as you indicated here, you have to carry things yourself as being worthy of attention and worthy of following through. But I must say there’s... it can be quite confusing as a path or um… it can be quite confusing in this weighing process of what one would like to do, and there’s the aesthetics to it as well, and there’s a point to be made and there’s even a marketability which a number of projects we’ve worked on have had that green agenda as a major part of, along with us as the architects – I’ll get, um 23:55 (GB looking for something) …Just some units in Fitzroy which was a much larger project….

¶169:

¶170: SM-L: Right, O.K.

¶171:

¶172: GB: And this is like a presentation that was done before they were built.

¶173:

¶174: SM-L: Right

¶175:

¶176: GB: So it was all sold off the plan in a month…with the marketing - but detailing...

¶177:

¶178: SM-L: What it’s goals are...

¶179:

¶180: GB: What that vision, that green vision was and why… and that can be quite a powerful … that’s going back some years now but…the way this was seen
as an educational offering as well…to the wider… it was written up in the Financial Review, and the papers and…

¶181:

¶182: SM-L: O.K.

¶183:

¶184: GB: Um…there were tours where taken through. I took the whole of the Yarra council mob through. They were very keen to have a special…

¶185:

¶186: SM-L: …viewing…

¶187:

¶188: GB: …sort of look through.

¶189:

¶190: SM-L: Right, and so with that process…

¶191:

¶192: GB: …Government Ministers and a lot of others – yeah.

¶193:

¶194: SM-L: So they were involved early in that idea? Did they lend their support early in that process?

¶195:

¶196: GB: local residents – even though it was enthusiastically supported by the council. So the larger benefits – this is 11The Council?
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¶198: SM-L: Yes.

¶199:

¶200: GB: Um... well the council were – they felt, um – they were very supportive in a lot of ways, and in other ways they could have been more supportive. The largest thing that was going to make the whole thing financially viable was rolled by apartments – the whole thing is probably like 50 on another adjacent site, I suppose that’s another issue of scale. The scale of the project and while small scale can make a difference because of the principles it’s standing on – not on a design base or marketability. The real benefits accumulate much more effectively when you get a bigger project; so it was very sad both financially and environmentally, that the whole thing didn’t get up.

¶201:

¶202: SM-L: So in a way, you’re really talking about there was a problem in the process in that the local residents didn’t see the big picture, or weren’t part of that vision...

¶203:

¶204: GB: No. I think their concern was a very conservative concern about really not wanting to see anything that wasn’t a reproduction of the local history streetscape. So um, they came down on it being um, an overdevelopment and too dense – and all those things that it probably should be in that area and it was – and I think what was built is in fact a very neighbourly but lively re-interpretation of that sort of streetscape. It gets pretty wild out the back (laughs) – but the fronts quite...

¶205:

¶206: SM-L: Discreet in the way...

¶207:
Appendix C3

208. GB: Well – um, yeah it’s quite discreet – it sort of feels at home there – but it’s sort of lively in a different way. So there’s that issue of the breaks are on sometimes from conservative councils and conservative residents who have real power to stop something which maybe of a wider benefit.

209.

210. SM-L: So in a way, again, it’s making something – an idea – supportable. It’s being able to put an argument that is supportable, and obviously that’s a challenge when as you say you’ve got different pressures…

211.

212. GB: Yeah, well as I said before, there’s a lot, a lot of projects are very complex and this was particularly complex - and apart from having a green agenda it had these severe heritage issues and parameters and a very tight site – very difficult site for sun. (chuckle) It wasn’t an ideal run by any means – so that makes it interesting too in terms of sorting through what you can do. I suppose what basically underlines what it is for architects is you do the best you can with what you’ve got at the time. (laughs)

213.

214. SM-L: Which is a very understandable justification…

215.

216. GB: And that can include starting off with huge aspirations like quite a few projects and for financial reasons we’ll normally trim things down to a fraction of what you started with. 29:28

217.

218. SM-L: And I suppose there is always that criticism that’s levelled at, you know, at the architecture profession about how we justify the levels of sustainability that we’ve reached within each – within our project; and often
that’s a criticism – that buildings that are winning awards might not be 100% - not that we can actually judge…

GB: But they might be really silly in that area – but they're architecturally interesting or exciting or... Yeah I think, um …

SM-L: … being authentic, it’s a matter of knowing or being able to be confident about the level of authenticity in the final outcome. How much has it held onto that authentic spirit, or how much can it be authenticated really.

GB: So authentic in which way are you talking?

SM-L: Well I suppose you, you, I mean, environmental design and or ecologically sustainable design, there isn’t really – it’s still an evolving field as to where those standards are and how do you judge, and it really comes down to the argument that you can mount as to how well it’s perceived in achieving it’s…

GB: And you might have to go through various layers of argument [CHALLENGING the parameters of ESD BEST PRACTICE] to get to putting it on a plate [clarify the parameters of ESD BEST PRACTICE that may be other than expected] for those that are assessing it too [those charged with establishing STANDARDS (as agreed parameters)]. Or other people might come forward and put it through the microscope or fine tooth comb [VARIABLE STANDARDS / FURTHER CHALLENGES to own standards as well as that of the STATUS QUO]…
SM-L: …and set their own

GB: …Set their own…

SM-L: Expectations.

GB: …Expectations and say well this is absolute crap you know this doesn’t… And I think this is where there’s a lot of arguments to be had for what is best practice? What is a building – that is – a high percentage got it right? So…

SM-L: So what’s the technique that you would use in your own, in authenticating the standard that you have achieved?

GB: Well I suppose some of it is just workability – whether ventilation works well or…

SM-L: ...fairly obvious…

GB: Well I think a lot of the obvious things are gotten wrong too (laughs) – very often. So they’re important. Things like the arithmetic, if you like, of the energy that goes into making some products. There’s rules of thumb [non-arithmetical/non-scientific/ observationally based expertise validated through experience] for these things (laughs) – like timber on the whole might
be more sustainable – especially plantation timber – than steel and aluminium and glass and whatever. We don’t, I suppose, go into very detailed audits ourselves [lack of expertise], but we have worked with and employed people to do that [delegation of expertise / outsourcing].

245:

246. SM-L: Right

247:

248. GB: Who will…

249:

250. SM-L: Who will do an audit, energy audit …

251:

252. GB: In the process of choosing and when the final building is there - to analyse – that’s what’s going on with this project too – RMIT is doing an ongoing study of …

253:

254. SM-L: Right – post-occupancy…

255:

256. GB: Post-occupancy and performance.

257:

258. SM-L: Fantastic.

259:

260. GB: But that doesn’t happen with all projects. So, um…
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262: SM-L: I mean, I suppose what I’m trying to get you to talk about, also, I would say, that alright, you’ve got that sort of layer which you’re bringing in – you could be doing – getting a QS to come in and analyse maybe a lifecycle analysis, I don’t know if your looking at that – so that’s um, that’s one layer of validation. And then I’m wanting you to talk about maybe the sort of, the way that you’ve built your reputation because that’s – you would be using that as another layer of authentication or validation…

263:

264: GB: That reputation you mean?

265:

266: SM-L: mmm

267:

268: GB: Yes, I suppose that’s there to an extent I suppose because we’ve had a number of environmental awards or sustainability awards. Well a particular building, the Bendigo campus of La Trobe we did the Ironbark Centre up there… I think it got both the energy efficiency and sustainability award through the institute … a fairly detailed look at…

269:

270:

271: SM-L: So did you – in that particular project – did you make a conscious decision that you were going to work on it…

272:

273: GB: Well yeah it was conscious, and again a client / architect commitment to do that and have the building as an educational vehicle for these difficult questions.
GB: So, I suppose… and I had people there who had a long term commitment to monitoring thing…

SM-L: Right. So there was actually a network, a sort of supportive framework…

GB: So I suppose what I’m saying is that, on the whole, I think architects do much better when the client has a commitment because, in quite a few cases, we’ve started with very high aspirations (chuckle) and commitment, and there’s a huge – there can be a lot of wasted time, wasted, quite expensive, sometimes at our expense too – where things will be cut out or the most expedient alternative is - because it’s cheaper it’s just gone bang. There’s a cost shock of some kind. 37:00 It makes a difference to come in on budget or…so…

SM-L: So just looking at that budgeting thing there’s a lot of discussion now about bringing the builder in and using the builder as part of the design team in a way – bringing in expertise at that practical level. Do you… have you deliberately… you know – What’s your policy? How do you work with builders in order to maintain that integrity that you’ve designed into the building?

GB: Well I suppose some of our buildings we have the same builder…

SM-L: right, so a level of sensitivity… and expectation…
Yeah. That’s sort of a very helpful feature.

Because you know, I’m interested in these new approaches where you ask the builder to actually – you do a costing, but before you do you’re finished working drawings, you ask the builder to come in and do their own costing as well and see where they can contribute to the design detail, in a way.

Yeah, I think we do that and also the specs, even the nature of the specification and other things as well. There is a bit of a problem with having builders cost, relying on the builders costs in the process, because the crunch time is when they sign the contract. We’ve had some fairly horrendous experiences where we have builders involved and it hasn’t kind of, we’ll know what it costs because a builders involved from the start. It doesn’t (chuckle) always work like that.

So often we’re keen to make sure that they’ve got a foot in the door and keeping looking and then the last price will be put down and then its like what have we been doing for the last four or six months. So I suppose what we’ve done subsequently is to make sure we have a QS as well as a builder…

So yes, there’s a comparative…
there’s a touchstone – a reasonable parity between the two.

In a way what I’m trying, what I’m talking about here is really this process of how do you process a project that maintains it’s original intent, what sort of auditing process are you doing, as you go through, the sort of team that you’re building, you’re talking about supportive clients who can allow you to take the project further than… as far as you would like.

Well I think there’s like sourcing too. We’ve spent – and this is all extra time – but sourcing local – what’s available locally – I mean you have to be sensible about what you can use, you have to explore and exploit that.

So when you’re talking about locally, I mean again that’s another catch phrase in the discussion about maintaining a sustainable environment, is being as local and connected as possible.

Yeah… I suppose some of these things make sense on different levels and sometimes you can – it makes sense on three or four levels and they don’t make sense financially, or something.

Yes. ‘Cause there always has to be a business case, in the end it does have to be viable.
And some clients are willing to wear the cost because they’re committed to the principle and they want to see it there… and feel that they’ve done the right thing. I mean it’s partly a matter of conscience for some people… and it is for us. The whole thing can be conscience driven, so that you have to be trying – at least trying – without always knowing (chuckle) what the best thing is to do [CONCEPT-linking between the personal and the professional / CONCEPT- transgressing separation by being consistent].

So when it comes down to … a lot of people will also criticise architects because architects work, most of their residential work is at the upper end of the residential market and there’s a lot of criticism about affluent consumption levels. I mean, would you like to talk about that because I know that that’s is a question that has come up and I’d like to hear your answer to that.

Well I think that that’s, er, I did work for Bruno Grollo back in the 70’s and I actually pulled out of working with him because I just felt he was profoundly wasteful and very much about display – which didn’t do me much good for possible future work [consequence of taking a principled stance]. (laughter) But um, … and I suppose we do what you would call luxury houses in a matter of at least one or two a year probably … and

They might not be many, but they set a standard or they show an intent. How do you use that?

Well one of the projects I was talking about to start off with was a huge aspiration because of the budget was there to do it. That was one of the projects that was cut (chuckle) – even on so called expensive houses there’s a
limit when you get a pragmatic client as to what they’re going to wear on behalf of longer term sustainability. It becomes more of a capital cost. So I think there’s an um, the capital cost issue seems to be when you can buy a bit of air-conditioning – you can get it for this much and it can do this sort of job for you. It’s again partly a comfort issue I think, where people may not just want to make sure there’s a bit of air movement and they’re not going to put up with the small number of red hot days a year. Your question is a very good one again it’s a matter of… with an expensive house do you run with the luxury of certain materials rather than honing things down to the… for most people who have lots of money (chuckle) don’t want to feel like the house is honed down to a … So there’s an issue there of appearances and often because… [Of primary importance is CONTROL OVER COMFORT AND APPEARANCES. This can be seen as a PROPERTY OF THE STATUS QUO.]

\[323:\]

\[324:\] SM-L: So there’s value systems there in that you’re really coming into conflict with peoples value systems. They might at one level support the idea of acting responsibly towards the environment…

\[325:\]

\[326:\] GB: hmm… but when it comes down to the crunch, very quickly they might just jettison what would have been much longer term sustainable ways of doing something, ways of doing, ways of designing, ways of working with the ground…so

\[327:\]

\[328:\] SM-L: So how do … do you find yourself working hard to present an argument to keep the project on track…

\[329:\]
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330. GB: Well, I suppose, usually you’re working hand in hand with engineers or with … [admission that ESD is left to others - GB sees ESD as province of engineers?] you know we had on this project we had an ESD person who was very stringent and had very much the hard line… and we were involved in those discussions and the client, I suppose, was listening to what everybody had to say so that they could including the finances. So there’s that weighing process there active through the design process as well as the building process.

331.

332. SM-L: So do you find that with your, when it comes to arguing the case… can you talk about how you go about that? Because that obviously seems to be a pretty important part of an architects job is to push as hard as possible without having a problem with the client – I mean you don’t want to create a situation. Do you surround yourself with other supporting evidence that will support your argument?

333.

334. GB: Well, er we do at times [not always] yeah, I think there’s sometimes there are bigger consequences in terms of costs and benefits and what the client wants to hear [openness to hearing]. It’s like if I’m going to pay extra for this system what benefits am I going to get that I can’t get with others that cost half that or quarter that. [ESD suffers disadvantage of being uneconomic within current economic thinking]. I think it’s a matter of stirring that bigger picture in people – I think that’s a part – I think you’ve eluded to that and you have to carry that yourself [taking responsibility] and I suppose sometimes these processes get very exhausting and you can get very worn out with… not only just worn out but there’s a factor of time and financial issues in running a practice - which some of us don’t run very profitable practices – for all sorts of reasons. [GB does not profit from his approach to practising architecture]
O.K., So I suppose one of my sub questions here is sort of looking at the rules of engagement. You know, how do you re-structure the rules of engagement to push your own agenda. ‘Cause often, I presume, when it comes to that relationship that you have with the clients and with the other expert members of the design team, you have to establish a level of authority in order to set the agenda.

Yeah and that’s um, because there are not many engineers actually who come as part of a mainstream engineering practice who are either interested in leading – helping to lead – and really a lot of these things are quite technical so not something that an architect carries… [CONCEPT-expertise / CONCEPT-ESD as engineering problem not design problem]

…has the expertise for…

…you’re really looking at the need to be in tandem [CONCEPT-collaboration] and usually that persons going to be a – tend to be a – more of a specialist than a mainstream engineer which effectively means that it’s an extra consultant … and we have them on quite a few jobs where we convince people to make sure they’re on board [CONCEPT-client relations CONCEPT-ESD added layer of expertise/complexity to project]. Because we went through a process some 7 or 8 years ago where we interviewed a lot of engineering firms to try and test their commitment ‘cause we wanted to make sure we were being led so that we could lead [CONCEPT-ESD requiring engineering expertise / architects require advice from experts to provide leadership for clients].
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¶344: SM-L: Mmn… sure…

¶345:

¶346: GB: We were being led in a technical sense and we were confident we had that… it wasn’t a very impressive… And the person we ended up with couldn’t really perform… they were quite good in a personally committed way, but had a limited science practice so they really couldn’t… and they were busy and couldn’t really perform on time – so there was a whole other complicated agenda that came in there. I think in the meantime there’s been a huge positive shift in the capacity of particular firms to deal with these things. There’s a lot of pretty serious, in depth work being done out there…

¶347:

¶348: SM-L: That you can access and you feel that your confident that you can…

¶349:

¶350: GB: I suppose we’re not really doing huge projects where some of these things become much more benefit to scale… which I hope we will be able to do. I can’t point to a very large project where can say what this… Quite a few of the systems that make a difference are dependant on economy of scale.

¶351:

¶352: SM-L: Yes… that’s very true.

¶353:

¶354: GB: And we do mainly fairly small to middling work, although the commitment's there, the benefits are not always self evident. So you’re doing your smaller gestures, still with commitment – but as I said – you do what you can – where you can. …Not giving you a lot of hard edge stuff here….
No no, that’s all right. Some of these, a lot of my questions – I sort of start out by trying to see how you – how structured this is in the way you organise your business because it is a – when I say a business I mean a practice – and how you set up your staff and your own internal…

We have – as I was saying to you before – I have a number of people who are quite knowledgeable about such things and we talk … during the whole process.

Do you conduct, you know, regular reviews at different stages and bring those experts in, or those people in even if they’re not directly engaged in the project…

… yeah they’ll have an overview and initial discussion and reviews…

So they act as a sort of objective layer that can come in and critique the intent.

Yes.

O.K. I’m really interested in reflective practice as well – I think it’s…
When you say reflective practice, what do you…

What do I mean? Well I suppose when I’m talking about reflective practice, I’m trying to see how if there is a separation between a reflective practice that focuses on the design itself and the – what’s required – all the input that’s required there, but there’s also this other layer of reflective practice that seems to be being promoted inside other disciplines – inside the medical profession there’s a form of reflective practice that looks at your daily working, and then looks at what sort of mind you had at that stage. You know, what was actually your personal state of mind. It could be agitated, it could be calm, it could be… so in a way that field of reflective practice, or that technique, is trying to draw on some of these more deeply embedded…

… more subjective or subconscious…

… yes. And to bring them up to the surface to make a more – to be a little bit more truthful about what actually went into that design process. So I just want you… if you could just talk about your approach to the way you…

So is this across the board is it?

It’s sort of the way you would monitor yourself. Do you monitor yourself? Or do you – or if you do – is it something that you encourage in the wider office? or is there a particular office culture here?…
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¶382: GB: In relation to the process, the design process. Umm, well it’s probably moved around a bit over the years but um… I’m just trying to think of different um, different examples…

¶383:

¶384: SM-L: I mean do you put yourself in a certain frame of mind, or do you find a particular time of day…

¶385:

¶386: GB: I think you have to be able to do… I can look back over 35 years or whatever it is and see quite different things depending on – like some competitions and special projects I’ve worked on and gone almost without much sleep for a couple of weeks, so you get into a very lifted energy where you potentially reach quite unusual inspiration or access to certain integrating energies or whatever.

¶387:

¶388: SM-L: And you feel that that’s a – you feel that that’s quite a – that that’s a deliberate – or not deliberate… that that state. … O.K. so that’s an interesting observation that you can draw on some other levels of energy that might … need that…59:10  4:30pm

¶389:

¶390: GB: 10:45am Well yes I think there are different levels of intensity and certainly you're not always on that level but if you're working continually on the one thing, and you're under a creative psychological psychic pressure to work through something - and like your state of mind and your attitude - and preparation – sort of meditating or – making yourself open to grace. I mean there’s a whole lot of religion situations. I don’t know if that's something you want to talk about or something else all together.
Well, no, in a way I do because we talk a lot about our energetic side and it’s difficult to actually bring that into a conversation with engineers – with people like that – but often that is actually part of the creative process and I’m convinced that most artists try to make themselves available to act as some… you know as a conduit for being able to work …

Well yeah I think that’s also a part of when you talk about the difference between self and - but I think there’s something about that process which is much bigger than your self. It’s lifting your eyes to the horizon. And you’re not just doing it for your own little self, you’re doing something for the world and it’s something that is graced by something bigger than yourself – so that hopefully it speaks to a wide variety of people – rather than some little self expression, neurotically put together. So there’s something there about service, like an attitude of service, an attitude of um, I suppose love, or some sort of yeah the greater good. I suppose even just holding the question - What is needed here? What’s really needed here on many many levels? It’s not just simple we need a roof, we need a nice view or. There’s always that complex lattice of people and place and culture and history you don’t even know you’re absorbing - by osmosis or by just being open. So you’ve got to be open and gathered Those two things together and I sort of take that preparation seriously to um, with aboriginal groups or all these times we’ve worked on competition or some of these particular projects that I could show you sometime. Yeah so that preparation time then sets the mood or attitude or state of being for the day and you hope ...

KNOCK on DOOR
This level of sensitivity is also um, ... I’m wanting to find out how you extend that towards non human needs. When we talk about sustainability or environmental responsibility we tend to... the argument tends to be round how do we move away from our human centeredness – those needs – and how do we enlarge...

See that little green...

This lovely Indian...

I think it’s Persian...

oh...Persian...

...that’s one of my favourites. The birds and the whole world is enchanted [glorifying the web of life] [CONCEPT - the significance of ceremony in the art of dwelling] ... and it’s all about moving into a state of being connected so that when you’re – you have the right thought at the right time, the right gesture or the right, right idea. There’s something when you’re connected – things come together in the right way – that openness it’s almost like an innocence in spite of our worldliness – we have to trust I think.

It’s very important that idea of trust and feeling that something has arrived that you can have trust in ...
GB: Yeah. Well that’s true too. I think you have to trust – which is difficult sometimes because there’s all sorts of other things that come in – sometimes there’s fear or there’s anxiety or a whole lot of things – like you’re in a new situation or you’re under a lot of pressure to perform, you have to pull something out of a hat – and can you do it again. I think this is one of the things for architects I certainly feel every time taking on something new, starting to get the job.

SM-L: …even after 30 years…

GB: …and you get the job and you think ohhh…

SM-L: …It’s only the first stage and that ‘s the easy bit…

GB: And that’s the easy bit. I regularly have that feeling, and you feel almost drained – sometimes it’s only a momentary thing – but you have to gather yourself for something you haven’t done before and you have to lift yourself – if you’re not going to do anything that’s pedestrian or predictable – you’ve got to crank your energy up somehow and get connected with yourself but out of yourself as well. It’s that sort of being able to be enchanted or to wonder - to wonder about a person or a place or about what you can’t see or what you can feel. It’s the use of your whole being as a means of understanding, drawing information from the environment. It’s also the space behind – I’ve noticed that’s incredibly active when you’re not just listening to what’s being said or - particularly with Aboriginal people when I was in looking at Wimmera – and the language issue – you have to always. The back space becomes very important part of – very live -which is quite mysterious. I put that together with a um,
something a young Maori said to me in New Zealand when I was over there about they walk backwards into the future. And I thought that was a very fascinating, profoundly interesting thought or reality, because what it means is of course you trust. By walking backwards you trust your own space, you're probably facing your ancestors and there’s something amazing about that. Anyway I put this together with this particular consciousness I had in my backspace – as um, you're trying to walk backwards or balance on something going backwards – that sort of process it’s very interesting. I noticed the Chinese actually doing it in the parks – lot of the old people just walking backwards, as sort of a, a part of a sort of training to not be seeing but to be sensing out.

421:

422: SM;L- Hmmnn, that’s very interesting…

423:

424: GB: So that’s part of, I think, what an architect – part of an architect tool kit or whatever you call it. The undefined aspects of consciousness or memory or imagination or. It's like occupying a very different space not just a literal one we all tend to be trained in. I think that’s what’s good about some of the things you’re doing here; it’s bringing up deeper questions that are the questions behind the more obvious one’s that are asked about. It gets back to quite more universal questions about living and some of these sorts of things.

425:

426: SM-L: That’s it. I mean just what you’ve been talking about, there’s a lot of criticism about our reliance on only one way of thinking which is the rational, reasoning aspect of our consciousness and that is valued. So we have this value system which places high value on certain ways of thinking and dismisses the sort of thinking that you’ve just been describing. It’s not well appreciated, it doesn’t get the same… it is dismissed more often than it’s left within this sort of artistic
… it’s left to the artists and it’s not valued because it’s left to the artists and there’s a much higher value given to logic and reason and rational…

¶427:

¶428: GB: I think logic and reason analysis, they’re all important, but I suppose it sits all under the umbrella of intuition…

¶429:

¶430: SM-L: Yes it does.

¶431:

¶432: GB: Like intelligence… all that stuff needs to be under the guardianship of intuition…

¶433:

¶434: SM-L: That’s a really good way to put it. But it’s often… that umbrella is so transparent nobody really sees it.

¶435:

¶436: GB: But it’s very real and I think that very real processes, very real creative process in that … I suppose the issue is how you might characterise it or, describe it or, learn about it or, use it. They’re all sort of slightly elusive questions but I think there are principals there too… and the trouble, or the difficulty might be with some people letting go enough to trust enough, or to put aside … getting to the right state of mind or …’cause you need to have a working trusting relationship with your intuition for that to fly I suppose. And sometimes you have serious blocks, sometimes I have blocks and it’s frightening ‘cause it’s ones lifeblood – one’s life to be able to work in this way and if it’s not working and you for what ever reason freeze up or become autistic in a creative sense it’s very disturbing for us; everybody has that experience at different times.
¶438: SM-L: And in a way – again when it comes down to then turning that into a project and then taking it through all those other stages again it comes back to making that supportable. Having it to a point where you can argue for it, you can then bring your client into the picture.

¶439: 

¶440: GB: Yeah well I think part of the use of it [intuition/creativity] is communication I think. It’s not just a hermetic thing that happens here although that’s the smiling evolution stuff that’s something that’s very wonderful. It’s as much about communicating, about verbally before you’ve got anything formed up, it’s about part of making the space in which people can – a group of people – can co-habitate and creatively contribute to and begin to build energy in. I think that’s quite critical, especially group clients, group dynamics – that’s all… So the way your state of mind affects the capacity to express yourself is extremely important for working the way towards what it is it’s got to become. So, um, because it’s already involving people in the process, which makes it different if just one person doing it, so there’s a communication, an exchange in energy, or a mutually building an energy which is not just me or you or the other people, it’s a shared energy which is freed from you and shared which sort of lifts – which makes a lifting – it’s that thing of the other, or the group, or the community or the world. All those things take it into another realm where you’re still connected [to the thing it has to become] but there’s sort of a whole lot of connections working with it so… It's in movement and lifting and it’s integrating energy which doesn’t mean to say it’s um, always just harmonious ‘cause I think you’ve talked about it here I think, maybe, but the importance of conflict and the importance of nurturing difference and the importance of froottage rubbing against difference and how that generates sparks or energy or … it’s not comfortable necessarily. I think this thing about harmony has got to be put in the context of conflict is important and different energies are important and the rough edges are important. So it’s not just sacre and sleep. There’s something there about being prepared to be – for things to be
a bit raw. So we do some very refined things, but there’s something important about **not being afraid of rawness and reaching towards something and not quite getting there** or you fall on your face or you’re getting up or **there’s something you can’t see clearly and you’re going for it** – and that’s pretty wonderful to go with that rather than feel you've got to work it til it’s. SO there’s something there **in architecture a kind of poise** – quite sort of fibulant poise, or dynamic poise where or balance… I think you've – I mean there’s another word – something like balance – yeah – **Dynamic compromise**.

¶441:

¶442: SM-L: Yeah I think that’s kind of a scientific way of saying Dynamic Compromise…

¶443:

¶444: GB: No no, It’s not bad. You used an equivalent to balance…

¶445:

¶446: SM-L: Yes that’s right – I was looking at that fact that this state of equilibrium isn’t as you say – it’s not a state of harmony it is a compromise…

¶447:

¶448: GB: A Flux **a constant state of flux** to it… and I suppose the extremes, like I was saying before, there’s something important about the extremes rather than just **the middle bit** – the middle is what we try – **the middle way has real wisdom to it**

¶449:

¶450: SM-L: Very much. Again it’s another balancing act in that you’re appreciating those extremes.
So I’ll just go through some of these other statements that I’ve made. Of course I’m interested in this idea of commitment and it’s obviously something that has to be forged at an individual level but it also requires again that feedback mechanism, you know you need to have that level of commitment coming back to you in order to move, to strengthen that a little bit further. So I look around your office here as I walk in and I see a certain strength of commitment.

GB: Mess… It’s a terrible mess out the front…well yeah commitment, well I suppose there is yeah when you’ve been doing something for a long as I have been doing this and I must say that I occasionally and even very recently wonder is this what I want to do. So it’s very hard sometimes and I think as you get older and at my age you… I’m not sure …I’ve got 20 or 30 years work in me … but um, that word reflection I feel I would like far more time for reflecting on life and slowing a lot more, and probably deepening my understating and absorbing things more slowly and more deeply and not being under so much pressure so much of the time – which you are when you take on work and you’ve got a small practice.

SM-L: …that’s it - other reasons for being tied here to the practice. You’ve just talked about something that made me think about a situation, a tradition amongst certain parts of Indian culture that I’m aware of and there’s a tradition there where you can become a wandering mendicant once you’ve achieved – you’ve reached a certain stage in your life, you’ve played a role…

GB: Yes that’s right, and you go…

SM-L: … and you can renounce that….
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¶460: 
¶461: GB: …you can bale out and hit the road…

¶462: 
¶463: SM-L: that’s it! And there’s a lot of sense in that because it does allow that space…

¶464: 
¶465: GB: Well yeah that’s true. I suppose that’s the impulse that comes to one naturally at the age I’m at. So you have to listen to that too, so I’m wondering about and I’m feeling at the moment like I need to …

¶466: 
¶467: SM-L: …take stock…

¶468: 
¶469: GB: …yeah to take stock, to review the whole thing of lifestyle and even the nature of just doing what I’m doing and how I’m doing it rather than doing it round another way. More shared responsibility or just doing it in a more shared way perhaps rather than taking so much on myself.

¶470: 
¶471: SM-L: I was listening to the head of the, the director of the International Arts Centre here at the NGV – sorry I’ll get it right in a minute – the National Gallery of Victoria, the director of the international exhibitions… Anyway he was talking about Sir Norman Foster and basically congratulated him for being…for setting up a system where it wouldn’t have mattered if Norman Foster was there contributing directly to the design process or not because he’d set up a system where…

¶472:
473: GB: ...hmmn, that’s interesting...

474:

475: SM-L: ...everything seemed to have his imprint on it even though he wasn’t actually doing it...

476:

477: GB: well that's systems isn’t it

478:

479: SM-L: That is a system which the director laughed because he realised he’d probably made a phopar when he said it... but

480:

481: GB: Yeah that is a very double edged - it’s sort of what do you make of that?

482:

483: SM-L: ...where did you go in that structure...So, anyway, I’m interested in the fact that when you look at the RAIA and I am using the RAIA as sort of a base line and in their environment policy they basically say, O.K. We’ve got five principles that you need to adhere to and the number one is Commitment. You know, you must commit and then you must educate and then you must formalise and then you must do all these other things. And they’re very explicit about giving examples and illustrations on how you do all the other points except for commitment – that’s sort of very bare – there’s not a lot that they’re prepared to put forward. So, it’s obviously a tricky area because you’re really talking about a much deeper layer of yourself which you have to deal with, which you actually engage at a level which is deeper than just a professional level. Do you want to talk about that?

484:
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485: GB: Well I think that’s true about architecture. When you sort of start looking around you say you see the commitment – I’m not sure what you’re looking at to say that - what are you…?

486: 

487: SM-L: All right – well when I walk in you know I see a, I see a commitment to a particular mode of expression, there’s a, what I would call, a flow – a soft edge to everything that I look at here, there’s a definite form of expression which comes through in these very – I find them – there’s a gentleness and a softness and a flow; and those are the words I would pick and the colours are in that sort of earth range, that sort of fairly earthy range what I’m seeing……2:00pm 2:44. I’m not saying that I’ve looked…when I look at the um, the additions that you’ve done to the Catholic monastery – it’s not a monastery is it it’s um…

488: 

489: GB: The Catholic Theological College…

490: 

491: SM-L: Theological college. I mean, of course there’s some beautiful very strong colours there, so to my mind you have a particular view of um, form which it’s not, it doesn’t sort of rely on lots of strong angles – it doesn’t seem hard and there a …. I don’t want to use the word organic – but there is a flow there

492: 

493: GB: responsive I think's a good word …. 

494: 

495: SM-L: So what I want to know is, with what I’m seeing those forms, what is the commitment – what are you committed to?
GB: Well I think it may be connect.. that… Commitment to me is not just about a commitment to architecture, like it’s not why I’m doing what I’m doing – it’s more a commitment to probably architecture as an exploration of life. I mean architecture is a vehicle for exploring and understanding life or connecting up in as many different ways, as many different levels one can be conscious of. So, some of these projects I’ve talked about are projects where I was consciously exploring a very particular ideas or paths or geometries or um, where the architecture in some ways was incidental, not incidental. What did I say? Well it’s like the trace of the dance. I think I said in the Hook Address - it's not about freezing something in a Platonic fixed form – it’s about that poise issue where, the poise idea, or the poise reality where something’s- a hearts beating there or something. So it’s about life and that’s what I’m - that’s what interests me. And processes and working with people and doing something in the world that makes a difference and all those sort of things but its not - there are other ways we could be but architecture for me is a way but there are other priorities over it which are people and place and - Does that make sense?

SM-L: Is there an ideology that you would, that you could articulate?

GB: I suppose it’s humanist and it’s um, it’s certainly got a spiritual dimension and.

SM-L: So who would you say are your mentors? Who do you refer to, or who would be inspirational? Or what has been…

GB: You mean in any way what so ever?
¶506: Well yes. Because you’re talking about using architecture as a means to engage in that bigger discussion that you’re having, and… So I’m interested to know what it is that you’re actually discussing. O.K…. so in a way I’m interested in your philosophies.

¶508:

¶509: Well, I think um, they couldn’t be nailed down to any particular religion – there’d be universals across all religions or spiritual realities. So they’re explorations of the sacredness of life and the underlying, maybe underlying form, flux – you know – form and flux. There’s chaos and form and there’s chaos.

¶511: ... and how does form emerge out of that chaos…

¶512:

¶513: Yeah. And I think working with Aboriginal people that’s sensitive chaos. That’s what that is - and it sort of spirals in big gatherings and it’s space and all that sort of movement – there’s no centre as such. I’m interested in centre and periphery and I’ve been profoundly interested in Vesica Pisces sacred geometry for a long long time and that I suppose universal ordering principal um. Movement – well I suppose that’s a part of flux – yeah I’m interested in the pulse – yeah – just pulse between polarities and pulse between life and death and re-birth those sort of. It’s quite simple really. I find it very moving and very wonderful. That’s what keeps me going.

¶514:

¶515: O.K. – right.
Appendix C3

517: GB: So I guess that’s a commitment of a kind. It’s a different kind of it's not a fundamentalist kind of ... It’s something so mysterious so profound so wonderful about grasping – trying to grasp whatever that is because it never stays still for its not something you even grasp, its something you're in, so anyway … sorry …I have to go…

518:

519: SM-L: That’s really interesting what you have to say there – it’s fantastic. And really what you’re, in that discussion that you’ve had, you’re really presenting to me what your needs are and what drives you.

520:

521: GB: So I suppose it’s in relation to your questions – In some ways it’s to one side and in other ways it’s behind it all. But I certainly don’t put myself as a shining example of what I know that you’re looking for but like a bit of a bungle like everybody else. But with a strong sense of a starting point which has as part of its trajectory a wisdom about these things which - somewhere along the track – and I suppose some people start it down here with a more fundamentalist commitment to ESD but it’s not going to be much good because there are so many things missing there that you need to sort of come back here to reconnect or to gather and take the thing to, because architecture is many things and ESD is part of that picture and it’s an important part of the future that’s for sure and I’m committed to getting better – I know it’s probably slower than I would like and well yeah – all that.

522:

523: SM-L: Well, we’re all…

524:

525: GB: …human…
...human – Yes. Don’t think we’re doing it fast enough or getting there quickly enough. O.K. so it really is… you’re also touching on those other things I’m very interested in – the level of happiness that you do draw from … I’m going to be horizontal soon ...

SM-L:

SO You’ve given me a lot to go with for the time being and I really should just sit down and digest what you’ve said so far...

GB:

Well you could come and have a second round some time. I don’t… there’s a lot of the hard core stuff which I should know better that tends to be something that one's interacting with people who know more and it’s not the kind of stuff I carry in my memory I don't ...

GB:

Yeah but obviously everyone has there own different way (laughter) so we might end here before your arm gets tired (laughter)

GB:

(laughter) we're all different, we're all bloody different
Appendix C3

¶541:

¶542. SM-L:

¶543: that's right thank you Greg …3:45pm.

Annotations

1 20/08/2007 5:47 PM  Greg is bringing the problem much closer to its originating source - self-awareness. Language is a device; an extension of self, and discussion of language implies a distance between self and self-awareness - and with this the opportunity for obscuration of self as the originating source of the problem. Therefore, Greg warns not to see language as the full extent of the problem. However, poetry points to a different mode of being than logical reasoning and with the difference comes a divergence of focus of attention from self and extension of self through architecture to architecture detached from sense of self.

2 20/08/2007 5:48 PM  what does this mean? - dimension of self / selflessness / nonself / other than self. dimension means extent / measurement / quantification - extent of self / nonself / selflessness / other - new ways to measure - current ways to measure / define self / other

3 20/08/2007 5:48 PM  dimension / measure / define / quantify / make aware - (the extent of our) imagination / lack-of-imagination / ignorance / creativity / open-mindedness

4 20/08/2007 5:48 PM  dimension = extent / measure / quantification / dimensionless / without measure / without limits / infinite / multiple levels / multiple dimensions / multiple measuring opportunities - connectedness = interconnectedness / disconnectedness / linked / delinked / family connection / community connection / gender connection / species connection / ecosystem connection / cultural connection / national connection / regional connection / global connection

5 20/08/2007 5:48 PM  dimension of suffering = ways / levels of intensity - psychic / physical / emotional suffering - little / medium / intense suffering - avoid = maintain distance / embrace = cultivate care. Greg is defining the many ways we limit imagining ourselves into a sustainable future / limit our ways of sustaining ourselves / that sustainability operates at the level of meaning-making as well as physical sustenance. Our meaning-making must be extensive enough to cover many dimensions of being / many concepts of being through which we live both consciously and subconsciously. We must conceptualise ourselves as interconnected individuals whose richness of interconnectedness is limited only by our imagination.
Sustainability is therefore a dynamic of meaningful relationships. Language articulates which relationships we focus upon. Language exposes our conceptual parameters when thinking about sustainability.

6 20/08/2007 7:30 PM transformation = across formations = change from one form (that is unsustainable) brought about by certain attitudes to another form that is more sustainable because it is brought about by a change in attitudes. therefore attitudes are what needs first to be changed before forms can be changed accordingly.

7 core = centre / base / basis. therefore self-transformation is the basic requirement for sustainability. GB, in saying this, is implying that our sense of self is basically / fundamentally unsustainable when it is not touched by suffering. he is also saying that this is current and the current condition is because we have not be touched by suffering. Howard once talked about core and non-core to define what was necessary and what was not. GB understands that self-transformation is necessary and sustainability will not come about without it becoming a core consideration.

See Also Links

1 Documents/Interviews/GB 1st interview_15.02.06

part of that thing about denial and lack of reflection as is the whole issue of Australia’s past
Appendix C4: JT_1st interview_13.10.06

13.10.06

1. 1st INTERVIEW BETWEEN JANE TONER (JT) AND SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)

2. lunch café, Little Collins Street, Melbourne City

3. interview 1.36pm (1:56:29)

4. transcription 8 hours

5. JT … its three CD’s long um … and it’s a concerto for

6. SML for busy people (laugh)

7. JT … no, four pianos playing together at once, but they just play the same refrain repeating um. It really sort of varies but oh my god its just the most incredible piece of music that you can work along to, but every now and then it crescendos when all four pianos are getting into something and you… know that time is passing. Otherwise it’s the most incredibly easy music just to … have on. If you can remember Simeon Senhold (?)

8. SML Simeon Senhold (?) okay I’ll do that. Now this is for you. I just need you to sign that but we can hold off till the end of the interview. That’s just to say that you consent and that you know that you’re going to be on tape and I’m going to use you for my research and that you’re prepared to risk what ever (chuckle) …
Appendix C4

16. JT  okay!!

17. SML  your life …

18. JT  I’m doing it!!

19. SML  now. Did I send you all those Motherhood statements?

20. JT  no

21. SML  didn’t I send them to you?

22. JT  I don’t know … was I supposed to have read them? Does it help if I read them now?

23. SML  no look no … it doesn’t really matter … but um … so I’m looking at design as a transformative process, so it’s not just the actual design elements about the building as such or the project itself, it’s really about what it’s doing to you. That’s what I’m into because in the end, it’s how we are transformed by the process, so that we become an embodiment of … that new … understanding …

24. JT  okay

25. SML  unless we are living it ourselves we haven’t really changed – nothing has changed. So one of the real challenges is to … move people, so that people embrace this idea …

26. JT  absolutely. And even in my discussion of our ethics to try and get people to turn lights off in our toilets there, um … you know its just a small thing um … I had this discussion with … we had two girls coming in to complain and um they were much younger than me um … and I had just seen An Inconvenient Truth the night before so it was very fresh in my mind, but never the less An Inconvenient Truth only reinforced …

27. SML  what you know

28. JT  exactly. So these girls they were saying you know … “What about future generations?” they just looked at me blankly ahhh …

29. SML  you mad woman
Appendix C4

30: JT … that’s an example for me … umm …

31: SML the difference in thinking …

32: JT as I was saying to you earlier, I had my own practice and in that I put as much passive solar design as I could into a project. I mainly did residential architecture and that’s always a battle, especially alterations and additions which was what I was doing. I would have a number of … ahh … I would have some quite heated discussions about heating and cooling systems for example with people and … umm … but that would be the extent of it. You know I would choose plantation timber … but generally you didn’t … you couldn’t influence peoples choices in their renovations so much. There were too many constraints, and the whole process of doing renovation work is also an education for people as well. Um … maybe there’s only so much you can educate them in.

33: SML now this is what I find is very interesting. I’m interested in reflective practice so that ability to be able to … you know … um influence through design,

34: JT yes

35: SML influence your immediate environment,

36: JT mmm

37: SML but also being able to engage in self-reflective practice which means to look more closely at your own conditions – your own conditioning actually and why it is that you are part of this broader … um … environment and it is a very much a philosophical environment that we live … we live in a philosophical … ahh we have a philosophical approach to our self worth. And the environment that we build is merely a reflection of that.

38: JT sure

39: SML and therefore … in my mind anyway and I’d like you to tell me how do you find ecologically sustainable design. What is it in terms of looking at
yourself, how have you used ecologically sustainable design to extend your sense of self

JT um …

SML or investigate yourself. Have you seen it as an opportunity to extend yourself

JT yes. um for me I was heavily brought up with these concepts from that ‘70’s

SML yes!

JT that 70’s oil crisis

SML yes. It seemed to be a pretty inspired stage for architecture

JT indeed, architecture in the 70’s - all these amazing vocal things were going on at the time

SML yes very positive

JT and and this informed me … um very deeply … um both my parents were very active in these areas um … I once had the local priest talking about you know, “your parents they’re so ahead of their time ”. they wanted to plant trees and you know and this was in the ‘70’s and we didn’t really think about geosequestration at all

SML no not at all

JT and that wasn’t where they were coming from. It was just we need this natural environment … then I guess as I studied architecture you still take these things on. Somehow, somehow they get … cut away from you or at my point of education. um … where the emphasis is on how do you present your project, how do you make it look good, how do you make it look like a magazine, how do you pin it up on the board so its … you know looks like you’re a graphic artist or something. And I never fully bought into those things. So I like to always try
and quietly subvert that. How can I just get away with this … doing it you know … cheap money … and that sort of thing

51: SML right

52: JT but I always had misgivings about that because you know it wasn’t the way you did things … it wasn’t the way that um …

53: SML it (concern for the environment) wasn’t the status quo

54: JT it wasn’t being encouraged! You know everyone else it seemed was aspiring to these incredible colour presentations where …

55: SML so your virtuosity was in your artistry and your aesthetics and in your form making and you know … but not so much in your depth of philosophical commitment

56: JT no. when you first go into architecture um … when you first start studying what are the things that people start talking about. Why did you start studying architecture? And ah “ohhh because I like drawing houses” and this sort of thing. And you know it doesn’t take very long in your education and you also have a concept of what buildings you like when you first go into the course. Through the course of your education um … you receive enough understanding to know that ohh this is a classical building actually it isn’t really ugly. Its part of our history so even though you wouldn’t design that you have an appreciation for those things … um … so those things seem to be more in ahh what you were … educated with than with concepts of sustainability.

57: SML okay so really you’re saying that there’s a whole different list of priorities which tend to … sort of ahh downplay … I mean sustainability then just becomes a smaller a small part of a subsection of a much wider

58: JT absolutely well when I studied there wasn’t even sustainability as a concept. No

59: SML So when did you study? It must have been in the ‘80’s (laughter)

60: JT it was that long ago! yeah it was in the ‘80’s
when all the fire in the debate had died out after the ‘70’s

yeah yeah. I finished in ’89. I came out just on the recession.

right … and everything was quite cautious and very post modern

its just that our education has changed so much since then. I’ve um done tutoring up at RMIT and specifically about ahhh its Building Tech 3. and that was environmentally sustainable design ummm. And this was just this one little unit that was put in there as building tech which is as you know is one of the most dry subjects and as a student its like ohhh do we really have to know this. I just want to do the glass box things in magazines and computer stuff. So people aren’t paying attention and its …

fundamental

well you do have to … its exciting to try and … excite people …

but its interesting don’t you … I mean I’m interested in the idea that as you’ve just talked about, that environmentally sustainable design has a very very strong scientific sense to it. Its presented very scientifically.

well in the I mean in actual fact we didn’t introduce such a hard … it wasn’t taught at this stage as such a hard edged technical thing. For me it was just that it was bracketed into that and separated off from design. I guess that sidelined it a bit. Um … within the subject we actually looked at … um we were trying to get the student to look at modernist buildings um … that had taken on – Australian modernist buildings – so that they had already taken on some notion of Australianism modern construction whatever. But at that time they weren’t really concerned … um …

it wasn’t an overriding issue
no because it was the heroism, the modernist hero thing. So how do we get these modernists to consider sustainability. So it was a somewhat … ahh it was a different approach to teaching it, by getting the students to look at I guess the masters or examples of you know well known and loved buildings. For example, the Farnsworth House. How do you get the Farnsworth House to 5 stars … um …

without destroying its architectural … mystery or mystique or …

mm, but still as you say there’s still that notion that this is Building Technology 3 and even though they’re trying to present it to us in you know designy fashion its still that … um … but maybe this is just the nature of students these days.

… well I’m following up on the idea that … that whole idea environmental sustainability has been very closely tied, tied to being able to be measured. And because it needs to be measured it’s become an engineering project.

and because the engineers have taken it on as an engineering project they have … basically hijacked the wider meaning-making attributes that

mmm and this this is the difficulty for architects because … you know some aspects of sustainability like energy, water, waste they are all things that can be measured. The things that can’t be measured that architecture embraces you know the social things

yes

ummm …

well-being, just human sensitivity to nature, animals, plants, cycles

mm! Just to take that a step further where that does interest people – those qualitative things is in terms of um productivity (laughter) you know productivity gain which you know once again brings it back to numbers um …
and so this is the problem, the hijacking of the debate by engineers um … I feel architects really need to have a full understanding like we were taught I guess structures at university. So you’ve got that basic understanding of bending moments, etc, … which somehow we need to know this stuff even more and this is what I see is a huge problem for architects at the moment and why a lot of them are getting pissed off with um … some of the measures that are being applied to their buildings by engineers and (laughter) … umm … we had a very, here’s a little example. Um … a very famous architect ahh just received a prize for his residential building the other day …

right …

ummm …

not mentioning names

not mentioning names, a big glass box surrounded in mesh …

right, okay

um you might have an idea

Sean Godsell

might be, could be so anyway he got a prize for that.

right

I got a call from an energy rate-er whose not an architect um … incredibly pissed off

right (laughter)

that how could the architecture institute do this. How could they give an award to this building.

this is a very fundamental issue that you’ve just touched actually.

mm
Appendix C4

97: SML in that … why is there this … gap between what is considered architecture, outstanding architecture, innovate, you know exciting …

98: JT mm

99: SML and yet it doesn’t comply with these other needs that we have too. They are important qualitative needs as well and they’re all about quality of life issues

100: JT so it just became a very interesting point with that house in particular um where … so that particular house was done before energy regulations came in so it didn’t actually have to meet anything um …

101: SML in a legalistic sense

102: JT you know it had to meet BCA requirements that’s all

103: SML but that’s not in the spirit of architecture

104: JT oh no no. in fact I’ve got a whole lot of examples of meeting that basic requirement and its still not quite good enough um … anyway so … we’ve actually worked with … Sean … to um … with the basic modelling of his house to energy rate it and get it to 5 star standards

105: SML is he part of you know does he want that, how does he find … what’s his reaction to that

106: JT well I have to be careful

107: SML yes okay I won’t mention names all right

108: JT no slander

109: SML look in fact if you can make a positive assessment, meaning that if its something that we can use to learn from. I mean quality lessons learned. What’s a quality lesson learned from this

110: JT yeah well so he’s realised I guess that he has to bring his property, his houses up to this standard.
SML so does he see it as a conflict

JT no! he just wants to know how to do it. And he wants to still be producing … you know his designs are lauded that they are beautiful. The detailing is just gorgeous, they are beautiful buildings. And so you know I’m almost loath to touch them if we have to energy rate them. Oh no but you know, um … you can still detail his building to be 5 star or better. You just have to be prepared to …

SML engage philosophically

JT to do that. And also be prepared to tell your client that um … actually these windows are going to cost you three times more so the project budget is up, but you’re getting this house that isn’t just architect designed it actually really incredibly comfortable.

SML quality, a very high quality

JT It hasn’t just got that quality but it’s also got that comfort.

SML yes, yes, but that’s what I mean by quality we have to actually change our whole idea of what is quality. What is quality.

JT mm and so this house as a case in point is also interesting because maybe that particular house didn’t win the award as I say we’ve developed um strategies for that house in future so that it can achieve the regulatory performance. But there is other aspects of that particular house that will not be assessed by First Rate energy rating systems which was the thing that the quality of light. Um … the quality of ventilation um … what it’s like in the morning to get up and come out of your bedroom and see you know the vista from this box you know or whatever it is you know

SML the sense of transparency or …

JT where is that

SML those qualities
JT yeah and there is no way of judging or assessing that in a quantitative way

SML now I’m very interested in that. I want to know how does the RAIA balance this qualitative assessment against these quantitative imperatives. Now obviously if we don’t hold on to a notion that a qualitative assessment is valid and it needs to be filled. That it is valid and we can learn …

JT here’s another slight example when first the 5 Star energy thing first came in um … we did a presentation to a whole group of architects that um … chased sort of a … display room type thing but they also have architecture and functions for people can come in and really pick out their products. Anyway we did a presentation on 5 Star and it was just following the weekend of the Robyn Boyd, the tour of Robyn Boyd houses which you know a lot of RAIA members went to. I went to as well. I was totally blown away. Beautiful beautiful houses.

SML I should have gone

JT Um … but we had one architect get up at the end of this really furious well this 5 Star thing is going to destroy what we can do. Its going to you know “I went on this tour of Robyn Boyd buildings and none of his houses would get 5 Star and it means that we can never design these type of houses. Um … and my response was you know Robyn Boyd was a master architect and if he were alive today in these times he would be designing 10 Star buildings I can assure you. I believe he would you know ahh …

SML I agree with that argument I really do. I think what you are trying to say is that ahh ESD those requirements are not a deterrent to good design

JT indeed, indeed they’re not

SML and a good architect

JT should embrace them, understand them and make them his own

SML should love the whole idea

JT and I mean her (laughter)
our own (laughter) yes so to my mind there’s … a misunderstanding … because of the quantitative approach as a standard that has to be achieved. And that misunderstanding is also a vulnerability to a qualitative approach and that makes people pissed off and angry. Sorry about swearing on your tape. And so you know just to go back to that lights in the toilet example, those girls are angry because we’re pointing out to them something that they should just be doing. Um that they shouldn’t have to have an argument with you about um … “ohhh its not safe when we go in there!” and so what happens when you go home do you leave the lights on in your toilet every night … ahhh just to feel safe

so really what you’re talking about architects get upset too when its pointed out to them that they’ve made a very fundamental mistake probably

it’s a fundamental issue and that’s the problem. That to take responsibility is to actually … put the mirror up to yourself and say well look that fundamental thing that I should have been aware of, I should actually know, you know if I’m a moral person, if I’m a sensitive person I should already have that um … as part of my being

but that’s being shoved in my face and I feel inadequate and I’m made to feel inadequate.

yeah and it pisses me off and so I’m going to rail against it.

I don’t want to be part of it because it will alter my perception of myself, it will force me to/

so we do get a lot of anger … um … but that’s not, that’s not … the … majority of the approach, particularly from architects. Its more the thing that I
see, the problem is lack of resources and as I mentioned earlier the nature of architecture offices … they’re too small.

\[145:\] SML to take on the amount of research and development that they actually require in order to … really be .. capable

\[146:\] JT yes to produce a totally holistic solution um … in terms of empirical um …

\[147:\] SML yes and sensitivity to site and access to recyclable materials or
\[148:\] JT even other things like on a commercial scale where um … and this is probably something that architects still don’t fully engage with like in terms of mechanical plans and that sort of thing. If I’m designing my building fabric which I don’t really see as an impost to design. If I’ve got the right amount of insulation my wall has to be that much fatter I can still design a wonderful building. Um … as long as I know that that’s the case in the first place. And by doing that I can reduce the mechanical plant

\[149:\] SML and justify the wall thickness

\[150:\] JT mmm and in part because of the … I think the shift the separation of architect and the engineer anyway, those two things aren’t necessarily understood. Um what an impact building fabric has on servicing requirements and how we should just be I mean that what we can be right on top of. Um …

\[151:\] SML so there’s a specialisation which really we need to be much more … our capacity needs to be broader in order to understand engineering requirements, imperatives. But that we could balance our design agenda knowing that we could have a very informed we could take an informed stand. Because in the end we make the decision first and then we tend to use consultants to to um verify the decision is a sound decision because you can’t make a sound decision unless you have sound knowledge of … construction or… as you say.

\[152:\] JT mm
so you’re getting, you’re really touching on architecture and the education of architects. The fact that we have a highly specialised / we tend to specialise. We tend to specialisation. Some of my reading on ecologically sustainable/ecological sustainability is looking at hierarchies of management, moving away from these very narrow silo, siloed information, ahh vertical, narrow focus where you place your engineer in this narrow silo and place your architect in this narrow silo. All these people have their areas of narrowly defined expertise. This is supposed to bring about efficiencies which is the sort of the industrial model of efficiency. But for something that’s truly ecologically sustainable that model’s not seen as a useful model and/

no, no and indeed you need, it needs that/to be a successful architect in that situation you need to know and if something - we’ve always needed to know this:- how do they clean this space up. How do they use this space ahh ahh we’ve always needed to know those things. The imperative has been ramped up.

yes, yes, there’s an extra layer of complexity there

We have to take that on.

mmm yes

ahh so I guess you’ve read the Greenstar Integrated Approach. I can’t think of the name the Greenstar integration … it’s a paper on how integrated design teams should work together. As an integrated whole. I’ll send it to you.

I can’t say at this moment that I have definitely read that particular paper.

it’s sort of providing the information that an architect needs to … I guess work in a team that draws on everybody’s knowledge.

yes, yes. So its participatory design. So you’re saying there’s now a Greenstar/

and that’s another thing that I think … participatory design. We’re still moving away … its that heroic architect thing. We have to get away from that.
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¶163: SML now, now that interesting we’re living/ if you look at all our popular magazines. You look at our popular culture, you know look on television – Australian Idol. You look on ahh … you know a whole range of ahhh … the momentum is increasingly towards

¶164: JT celebrities

¶165: SML celebrities, lifestyle you know and people are much more concerned about image/

¶166: JT well I was just mentioning to ahh David Oppenheim who was driving me home the other night. We were going past the old Victoria Brewery on Victoria Street that Philip Stark did. Um … he was involved in the design of that and that was how it got put through you know in that “oohh Philip Stark” you know you’ve all probably seen and lusted after his teapots well now he’s doing this wonderful development. And it is the most appalling umm … it really is. It’s like it’s real ticky tacky box stuff behind the façade.

¶167: SML the original façade yes

¶168: JT Its an absolute shocker um and that is purely there by virtue of his celebrity (laughter)

¶169: SML yes so I mean and so this gets me back to this whole problem that we are living in a in a structure, we’re living inside an environment which we call our modern world, our contemporary world which is pushing in one direction … and we are trying to implement something that goes against a lot of these trends. We’re trying to actually pull in another direction and ahhh

¶170: JT mm

¶171: SML that’s a that’s a … you know when you haven’t got the momentum behind you and you’re the one that’s/ and yet you’re being asked to take that responsibility on you know the RAIA has made that a/made a point and Government you know the Greenhouse Office has made a point about that. That
architects and designers are seen as leaders to introduce people to sustainable design in the built environment

JT mm

so there are these calls to take on these issues but you haven’t got an environment that’s conducive to following you with any real ..

JT well there’s no defined path yeah. No! Look I um I … one of my specialities is in Aquatic Centres and I do I work on a lot of aquatic centre projects. So I ahh I’m there on the project team with all the traditional people – the mech and the elec, the hydraulic, the architect, landscape. The people that I find are the least liked on this project team are the DDA consultant the disabled disability access

SML yeah?!

JT yeah, consultant and myself. Umm we’re always on the last of the agenda um and very often you know I’ve had meetings where we’ve gone through all the other issues and getting up to ESD and the mech says “alright I have to go, I’ve got another meeting” …

(SML laughter)

JT all these things um … but it can be very disheartening trying to … you’re really just saying to people “this is what you should be doing anyway. I’m just here like this nagging person um … telling you all about good practice” … umm (which you should be doing anyway).

SML mm

JY so that can be quite disheartening

SML yes okay

JT and I guess me having that separate role from just and architect. Yes the architect does try and take those things on. Some architects are sympathetic to what we’re trying to do and some just don’t … They’ve only got you there
because they have to have you there … umm … and the way that you get support for that because it can be very disheartening is only by having … like-minded people that you can go back to and know that you’re doing the right thing.

183: SML alright, okay
184: JT moral support
185: SML yes that moral support. So … um … I …
186: JT we can just crap on about anything … it seems. I don’t know whether it’s useful or not
187: SML no. I’m collecting my thoughts
188: JT no worries
189: SML because again as I say I’m looking for for … no. I am looking at um … self-reflective practices that have been developed inside other professions especially the medical profession which does take on a deliberate approach to self-reflective practice and it’s based on mindfulness mediation which is a particular approach to just being in the moment which is very difficult for Western people to be in because we live in a much more conceptual mindscape.
190: JT mm
191: SML Um … so this is quite a foreign … approach but it’s being used / it’s found its way into the medical profession because of its therapeutic benefits
192: JT mm
193: SML and, for professionals who offer the therapeutic programmes… they’re also realising the benefits to their own professional practice.
194: JT indeed
195: SML So there’s been this sort of symbiotic… relationship
196: JT beautiful
between the programme and the professional/the practitioner. So I’ve been thinking about ESD as being that type of therapeutic ahhh approach to the built environment. It’s the same sort of… ah healing response

and therefore if we’re architects we need to see ourselves as healers as well. We have that same symbiotic / we might need that same symbiotic/

JT mmm. It is. We are creators, we’re certainly not God (laughter) but we’re creating you know we’re creating this built environment

absolutely

which we all … we are ahh … you know and so we are shaping that social psychology of the people that are working in those spaces. And its an incredible responsibility. Um … it really is.

so it’s this level of responsibility. Understanding just how fundamental our designs are. We might only be a very small part of this architectural you know built environment. But we play our role we play our part.

its like the green bag thing. I use that as an example for how the community wants to take these issues on. Its such a simple gesture. Look at the proliferation of green bags around town just shows.

yes people are ready

the number of people that are enquiring about grey water and rain water systems at the moment shows how much people want to … um and an architect getting to shape that environment for people. We can help to encourage that um … shift, that ability/

that quantum shift
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208: JT yeah absolutely. So we went … ahh Chris Barnet from our office. I think David told you to have a chat to him as well. He organised the RAIA to see An Inconvenient Truth. He organised a showing of that.

209: SML I wasn’t able to go on Tuesday but I did want to. I still haven’t gone to see that yet.

210: JT It’s … of course you will see it. I know that but it is powerpoint presentation I guess essentially but because he’s given it so many times it's just a lovely … ahhh

211: SML articulate

212: JT discussion and some lovely visual examples

213: SML right

214: JT um … much the same as I thought Tim Flannery’s book The Weather Makers

215: SML oh yes

216: JT might sort of encourage a shift. After all I read I was just furious!! Umm … I’m really thinking of this as a more popular thing not everyone reads books ahhh … ahhh

217: SML yes you’re right. I mean its interesting that/

218: JT we take it for granted that we take it for granted that they do, but they don’t

219: SML but they don’t that’s quite true and … um … but also you’ve got a situation where, we’re really needing to move I think, from the industrial world view which we still carry around with us into an ecological world view

220: JT I agree

221: SML so how do you think that, you know as say within your work with the RAIA, and you’ve been looking at the environment policy … so I get back to this idea of commitment, now how do we commit to something if we’re still
inside an industrial mindset. How do we move to an ecological mindset … and commit to that and are able then to expand upon … that so that you know the RAIA has to also … define what is an ecological worldview

JT mm and indeed I mean … the Victorian Government Architect Deputy State Architect um got up

SML did he

JT she

SML she Shelly Penn

JT yep she hadn’t really prepared a speech so it was just a response to the movie and she made three statements – I’m not going to get them exactly right. But it was umm … we need to reassess design, good design must be sustainable, umm sustainability must be included in a design for it to be good design, another thing about sustainability and good design. So it was just a reiteration that these three things/

SML cannot be separated

JT indeed … and that’s I think that’s the commitment we need to make. But in order to make that commitment we need to have an understanding of exactly what sustainability is

SML yes, what is ecology. I want to know how we place ourselves in that ecology. My feeling is that we have in our contemporary world view, part of our contemporary world view is the way we think about ourselves. The way we think about ourselves creates our contemporary environment. Now I’m interested in

JT sort of someone who’s bulimic, anorexic. You think you’re fat and you’re not fat. I think that was totally an aside.

SML no I think that is right to the point. That is right to the point, we have a very distorted view of ourselves. We actually think we’re one thing and
in the meantime we’re busy ignoring the very life support systems that will keep us going. We think we’re/

JT we think we need to live in a um … in a suburb surrounded by houses that are all the same .. um … and don’t differentiate us from other people. We think we need to live in houses that celebrities live in have all that

SML the tree bathrooms

JT that the celebrities have around. This is something that is very hard for architects to influence. But architects themselves can be aware of the impact that these lifestyles have on the planet. We need to have solutions for um …

SML well maybe we need to be packaging. I mean architects have some, there are a lot of people who would argue that architects have a lot of influence. So if something is advertised as an architecturally designed home, that’s got prestige. So architects are seen in the wider community as remote, exclusive, the top end of town …

JT creative

SML creative. So there’s

JT always on a sitcom

SML (laughter)

JT no! you think – this is just another aside. The number of architects who appear in sitcoms and in movies just shows like how you know that we’re sort of held in some “what are these weird people on about” you know. Um … so Hey Dad, umm The Brady Bunch he was an architect

SML is that so ohh I didn’t realise

JT umm … Three Men and a Baby one of them was an architect.

SML right (laughter)

JT there’s so many there really is. In fact I think I’ll do my PhD on that. (laughter) so architects are very influential.
they are very influential. So in a way we have to embody that. In a way we’ve got to be in two worlds.

we also have that oath. This is something that I took very seriously and once again I think its being brought up as the child of an architect, who was really into … umm it wasn’t sustainable design it was just environmental design. It was mudbrick houses and this sort of thing. So for me it was like why … I got to be an adult and why is it that everybody’s doing the same thing … and education belies this other knowledge and you know not having respect perhaps for your parents at that stage of your life you go “oh maybe there’s something different”

but you still have that basic fundamental orientation

yeah and that’s where I was much earlier. My background has come back out and its been endorsed by the movement of the moment.

okay so when I’m when I’m thinking of you I’m really coming to understand that it’s your … whole self development coming from your home life

as the example of your own parents that have given you a much deeper grounding from which to actually maintain a sense of propriety as you go through all that education you know architectural training and you’ve come to appreciate that the world is/ people are seeing the world very differently to you, which ahh you have to test then, whether your earlier assumptions can stand up to the new vision of the world and yet you’ve been able to also for me to re-embrace so … um … you know the things that I was brought up with.

principles

yes
which you sort of absorbed without probably intellectualising which you are now able to intellectualise

Um if you’re attaching a morality to it you don’t want to set yourself above people at all. that’s not sustainability. For me its about sharing the information and having extra knowledge in this area um …

and being able to offer it and for it to be taken in the spirit that its offered

which is a project to heal you know we’ve got to do a lot more healing, transformative action um … okay so that’s another interesting area too is this concern about taking a moral stand. Now we tend to/ our language tends to go towards “you ought to”. We tend to externalise. Really we have to think about … what am I saying … there’s a difference between “ought” ahhh what you should be doing to how we/how good it is to be. There’s two ways of looking at morality. How good is it to be what is goodness. … that you can … that you can sort of … know is good. Is good for all the good reasons. And you’re not out there vilifying the environment around you you’re prepared to actually

or putting people down for not doing the right thing. Maybe encouraging them into the right direction.

so again architects are in that position where in order to be taken seriously they have to embody all of those things they talk about. And so again when I’m looking at design as a transformative process its not just the buildings that we’re trying to transform. And it’s not just the users it comes right back to the designer.

if you’re talking about the designer working in an integrated group of people the whole group of you that are learning and through
that hopefully you can learn a bit more because there will be one person in that
group that knows one extra thing and that when they bring that in all of a sudden
everyone knows that. Um …

\[265\: SML \text{ so do you … I mean so again you’re looking, you need that}
support, so when you’re working as an architectural group are you finding that
you can only work with certain groups of people. Do you find

\[266\: JT no, no, oh no. We work with all people. And that’s when I say that there
are people that will come to us that are really deep green because they are
thoroughly committed to this sort of approach and then the other side of it is the
people that come only because they have to. And they really just want a
greenwash thing. You can maybe sort of trick people into doing some things. I
don’t mean in a bad, immoral way

\[267\: SML \text{ no what you’re talking about is you’ve got a bit of an opportunity.}
It’s a little bit more of a challenge but you might be able to … it’s a way you can … lift them out of that particular mindset to your mindset.

\[268\: JT here’s another ahhh but also another difficulty is an emphasis on economy
over society over ecology over humanity. Um … many architects have to deal
with this. Many architects might be committed to incorporating the best
principles of ecological design into their work but they’re just floored by the
quantity surveyor … this is just one of those disheartening things.

\[269\: SML \text{ and again we’re getting around to that problem when you’ve got}
specialised silos of information that are busily not you know connecting to one
another not seeing the full picture, only seeing their ..

\[270\: JT indeed. And so it might be that ahh … here I am working in my own
practice and I’ve heard about some bit of equipment and I’m trying to source that
and no you can’t get it in Australia. You just give up you never try and do that
again. Someone in the next silo might know that ohh actually that’s been
developed and there will be another one here in that time frame. Everyone has to
start/the way we all work at the moment we all have to start from scratch um …
and each individual um … enterprise because of that competitive, commercial environment that we work in its difficult to know how much you can share without being abused. You want to know that you can work in an cooperative

intellectual property. And it all ties back/ultimately when it all comes down to it I’m not a capitalist (laughter) so I have to be careful not to just rant on …but I’m aware that I live in a capitalist society and I am one by default. But the philosophy I see is being the antithesis of what it is we are trying to achieve. So why is there intellectual property, so you can make money out of it and that’s what we need to do apparently.

and yet you know, in the sciences certainly the cognitive sciences there’s a real understanding that actually we have evolved through cooperative forces not through competitive forces. We might have been able to take advantage of those qualities … our ability to reproduce certain qualities

well you know you talk about the competition thing and so what’s the that evil um … devise of the current government – the competition, what is it – the competition thing. Weren’t they trying to make it so that anyone can call themselves an architect. You know this is not competitive. And that doesn’t help much architects within industry trying to have some moral ground, authority, or I guess any bastard (laughter) …

that’s right without any training at all. So its another deskilling process when architecture is quite a complex study

incredibly. Highly skilled

and an enormously broad endeavour. You’ve not only got to have technical proficiencies, you need to understand psychological, sociological … you know you need to understand moral …

culture

eyh culture, aesthetics,
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[280: JT] meteorology …

[281: SML] yes (laughter) that’s right, climatology

[282: JT] all that stuff

[283: SML] we have to be able to be competent in all those areas

[284: JT] mmm and take joy in that

[285: SML] yes!

[286: JT] knowledge of …

[287: SML] and in fact you’d want … everybody to be that broadly … focused.

[288: JT] and I think it is that broad focus that does um … make us good agents for sustainability in actual fact. It does make us, that education does allow us to um … work centrally in a group of people

[289: SML] and provide some leadership

[290: JT] indeed

[291: SML] because leadership needs that breadth of knowledge as well as other qualities. … okay. I mean these questions, I’ve set them up as motherhood statements which I’m sure I sent them to you. But maybe I haven’t. It would have been the end of last week. But anyway it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t matter. What I’ve been doing …

[292: JT] but if I find them there I’m happy to respond to them in written form.

[293: SML] ahh look. no, all I’ve done is that I’ve just put statements down – just something to think about. So I mean, we’ve been talking about my first bit is about design intervention strategies as opposed to designer transformation strategies. I believe that we should be able to separate the two out. Tease them out a bit. And focus a little bit more closely on designer transformation strategies, so I’m wondering if the RAIA has been looking at ways to tease out designer transformation strategies when thinking about ecological sustainability …
JT okay, so then well in that context you’ll have to redefine transformative practices.

SML okay. Well because we’ve been talking about moving from an industrial world view to an ecological world view that’s a hugely deep transformation, because we are of … this current world view. But we have the … we’ve got the imagination to move into another world view. So that requires a level of visioning of us. We have to envisage what that means for us. We make meaning out of that. It’s got to be meaningful to us … um.

JT mmm yeah I / for me the RAIA for whatever powerful a body it is, I don’t necessarily think that it has that much ability to transform its standard

SML its membership base

JT I don’t. I don’t see the membership base as being um perhaps totally comprehensive. I know a lot of just small practitioners out there. They can’t afford to do it.

SML what

JT oh to be a member

SML an RAIA member. Yes I see what you mean

JT um they can’t afford to find the time to go to the education … um … I don’t know how you get around those issues um …

SML yes right. They’re quite important issues as you say. … the RAIA talks about how it has 80% of the architectural professionals who are registered RAIA members. I mean that’s a huge percentage of the profession

JT it is, so at the same time as I’m saying this I guess I’m also thinking that it is, it is the body representing architects and I guess even if you are not a member of the RAIA you might look to that for some sort of …

SML mmm. I’m sure … at some level you will

JT you’d certainly look to that for some sort of leadership um
you would. So in a way I’m asking about that leadership. What is that leadership … and I’m asking the difficult question about transformation

I almost had a point … about … um … At the end of this film the other night Shelly got up and did her talk and Philip Goad got up and did his talk.

Yes

what I thought was the opportunity that was missed … was really placing it back into the context of what architects can do … um Chris Barnett from our office produced a handout that was attempting what architects can do. So that was incredibly useful. I just thought a statement needed to be made to say …

we take this on. This is us

here’s us you know. We’ve seen this film. Here’s us. Here’s what we can do. It was … done in the paper but um … this is, this is, I fully believe at this point in time the RAIA must provide incredibly inspirational leadership. It must really … restate what it is that architects can do. Why it is that we’re good at it. Um … and how it is that we can engage further … um … I really think that that … for me is … that’s the key role that the Institute should be …

yes … looking to take on

yes

now you’re … you’ve had a look at the Environment Policy. Can you do that in your role that you see yourself in or the group that you’re engaged in …

well, we’re currently looking at / yeah we’re currently trying to work out how / you know and this is the thing about working in these groups … um there’s all these / there are all these Motherhood Statements that you make. “We must do this” and “We need to achieve this” … um … what my group is trying to do is actually work out a process, a strat/ … you know the action plan which is part of the sustainability approach as well um … so how is it that we achieve
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sustainability across this range of … issues um … do I get more specific than that?

**¶317:** SML no that’s all right. Because again I’m also thinking is there any professional practices / I mean I did want to speak to the um Professional Development Officer of the RAIA and um … Clare Newton is it …

**¶318:** JT oh yes

**¶319:** SML and um …

**¶320:** JT have you tried Marina Nervegna?

**¶321:** SML well actually I’ve emailed and written letters to both actually in a very formal context. I think I’ll just have to ring. That might be better. And. Because. You know as I said to you before … there are other disciplines that are looking at a more holistic approach to … service delivery. In this way that the individual is made to become more self-critical, more attuned to the …

**¶322:** JT oh okay

**¶323:** SML so I’m thinking is the RAIA … looking at those professional practices … self development as professional practice … meaning again the focus is back on the individual, not on .. what you’re doing to the job but the actual way you define yourself so that your own sense of self is also part of that redesign process, that transformative process. So that we start from a different base-line.

**¶324:** JT mm and so is it that … is it that re-education is needed and it needs to be a re-education that you can take up yourself

**¶325:** SML mm at a professional as part of continuing education as part of professional development. I mean, yes it needs to be in other forums you know, the undergraduate courses or further down. Who knows but we have to start with ourselves right now. The practising architect. Right now needs to take some action. And those actions are also outward oriented, task oriented, yes, because there’s a hell of a lot we need to know/
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¶326: JT yes so materials as a case in point.
¶327: SML all of that/
¶328: JT um … there’s a number of resources that you can / one of them is the VicUrban one, one is the Ecospecifier, but, … how is it that architects know about these things. You know, we need to …
¶329: SML … yes there’s a lot of information and those channels of information. How do you make them as accessible as possible.
¶330: JT and how do you understand the implications of those materials. How do we get ahhh … I focus on you know, my old bosses of mine. Two guys engaged in private practice um … in Hawthorn … both have families um … both already work too many hours in a day um they could never make it to any of the events um …
¶331: SML mmm just because of the difficulties in the …
¶332: JT in their life. How is it that we can um …
¶333: SML help these people
¶334: JT help these people. And so it is / there needs to be like a resource bank
¶335: SML hub, yes a bank
¶336: JT yes where people can just go
¶337: SML log in
¶338: JT and there it is there’s that information. Maybe as a member of the RAIA that you can access that, it encourages more people to join
¶339: SML the RAIA. I mean that would be an invaluable service. If you didn’t you know if you only needed your RAIA membership and you know your code and if as you say a bank … the RAIA is being supported by … Ecospecifier and by VicUrban and by all these other people who are channelling this information in
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JT mm and so this is sort of being discussed and talked about. People want these sort of resources put into place. … it is really at that truck (?) how um is it that we can do that.

SML how can we do that

JT we haven’t really got there yet.

SML okay … again here I’m looking at / this is about ahh expertise okay. It comes down to attitude. Improving capability relies on continual improvement that challenges your beliefs and knowledge base. So … again I’m looking at the fact that … we … have this rational layer that sits over our more emotive substrate ahhh you know our, our whole evolution as human beings … the reasoning rational side is something that is reasonably new (laughter) in terms of evolution we do still tend to be powered by our instinct, our basic emotions, but I’m also interested in the fact that a lot of this mindfulness practice allows us to … um … access much more directly those basic instincts which we tend to be unaware of that tends to be motivating us and subtly influencing our logical process. Now I think its really important that … design, well design draws on intuition and it draws on reason and logic and fact. I I I’m really interested in … again … valuing that intuitive ability that we’ve tended to devalue because its stuff that’s not easily measurable. Its not easily quantified.

JT and indeed. I mean um … that’s such an interesting um area because … somehow by that intuitiveness, somehow that translates to many people and that’s why they think they can be an architect. Um … I know how a house goes together, I know how … oh I’ve looked at the magazines … I’ve got an intuition about it. But that’s quite a different intuition to if I put a window here and a window there um … for those days when its actually forty degrees I’m still going to get a breeze through the house and its going to be gorgeous. Um …

SML but at a different level of skill. I mean you’re talking about skilling up on your intuitive ability. I mean we are all naturally architects
because we all live in built spaces. You know that’s fundamental to everybody in the same way that we fundamentally chefs or we’re all fundamentally builders.

JT: sure, good point

SML: so as a / so the real point I’m trying to make is that we tend to devalue our intuitive self we don’t know how to really engage with it. We just um … put it down to serendipity or … some people are born with it and some people aren’t. and to an extent that’s true, some people are much more talented than others um … but you can keep on you know … um … it’s really um understanding that it’s building on your experiences its being mindful that everything that you experience is feeding into your design your next understanding.

JT: well that’s right, when you get that feedback from the client gee this house is incredibly hot in summer

SML: it doesn’t work or it does work

JT: you’ll never do those things again

SML: again of course you are intuitively looking for that feedback. In fact we are all about feedback

JT: mm for sure especially if we get feedback from glossy magazines

SML: (laughter) yes well that’s another level of feedback …

JT: well we’re getting away from our point

SML: well (laughter) um so I suppose what I was asking is how do you work with both those aspects in your design how do you work on your intuition

JT: Um … I don’t know I could come up with quite a weird answer here which is … You know working in / its incredibly hard. We know that there’s all the qualitative things that we’ll never be able to assess but some of the logical … more logical intuitions about ventilation about energy performance, well we can test them. Maybe that’s how you learn … um as well if we feedback / if we
feedback all these engineering tools into the work that we do and we have an understanding of how that impacts

§357. SML through an experience of actually going into those spaces and saying will okay here’s the data and yes this is how I feel about this space …

§358. JT mm I do a lot of work / I do energy ratings and um … very often you just telling people ohh you’ll have to add in double glazing or whatever. The things you really want to say to people, look you’ve got windows on the north, why don’t you just put a bloody eave over that window um and I don’t know where that intuition – or is that logic? – its really logical to put a bloody eave on there to stop the sun – its one of the most basic passive solar design things. Where have we lost that?

§359. SML yes

§360. JT Um …

§361. SML yes, well, we have lost it yes you’re quite right and again we have to relearn that, so we have to relearn it before it becomes intuitive.

§362. JT mm um … and so that’s what I feel a lot of a lot with these um these … numerical systems that are being imposed on design um … its like the Robin Boyd argument. I think it will just take a little bit of time before architects get their heads round that and know okay well I just can’t have that massive window on the west or if I do it has to triple-glazed, and that … I embrace that ‘cause I understand what the west is all about. Um …

§363. SML … so really the intuition side of it is really understanding the climatic and environmental aspects … its putting yourself outside yourself as a human/

§364. JT its understanding the greater implications of what you do …

§365. SML … that’s right and moving beyond having to ah … be ahh … having to refer back to data in order to verify that experience/

§366. JT and to intellectually justify it
Yes, the data is there as a reiteration of what you have come to understand – that your data is your knowledge on one side and your intuition is your understanding and that there is a difference between the two. You can have knowledge and no understanding and you can have understanding and no knowledge they are quite independent … of one another. You know, its getting them to come together in you, the person as one 

You as one so that your whole way of designing is unselfconscious. So that’s a sort of a …

Do you think we need to go for coffee?

We will have to I think. Why don’t we stop and go and get a coffee and then start again if you don’t mind are you um … I hope I’m not taking up too much of your time …

Okay we’ll go back to the house I was speaking of earlier. The Farnsworth House. So you know I as an architect Sean Godsell can be incredibly, seen by the rest of the community as incredibly arrogant, he’s got a very fixed um … way of doing things and he won’t be swayed by … just you know negative sayers so … but at the same time he really has taken this on, he wants to design beautiful objects um … and … but he knows that they have to be energy efficient. I mean he intuitively had taken that on anyway um … but that … that intuitive thing about how wonderful my design is ‘cause its all passively considered doesn’t always stack up … according to these programmes …

… measurements …

Yeah so he’s, I believe, that by going through that process with his houses he now real/ he now bloody knows if I want to have this much glass I’ve got to
have this much insulation I have to have my glass especially detailed um … all those things he know knows and that will be part of his beautiful work

377: SML yes his intuitive ability … take them on board … and that for any architect to take that on board, absorb that, genuinely absorb it so that it actually becomes part of/ you don’t even have to consciously think about … um … its become fundamental information … and that level of … so when it comes to ecological sustainability there’s also biodiversity issues okay. Our cities are entombing vast tracks of land

378: JT earth

379: SML … how do we think about that you know there’s an industrial mindset that says well/

380: JT pave it all

381: SML yes for efficiency sake and put stormwater drains in for efficiency sake and then there’s an ecological world view which is we can live … we should be able to um … feel comfortable in a less um …

382: JT managed

383: SML managed, less controlled environment that allows other life forms their space as well. It also allows

384: JT um you know even talking about stormwater things, permeable landscape we need it for our water table ahhh we need this

385: SML yes, ummm

386: JT it’s a very important thing

387: SML yes yes …

388: JT um …

389: SML so again we’ve got all this knowledge you know we do have this knowledge there’s still the difficulty of getting it out – disseminating it and that an important issue that the RAIA has really raised. That’s another one of the
principles – the level of dissemination you know that you … um … woops now
I’ve lost my train of thought um … its … I have forgotten my train of thought
where was I …

¶390: JT … we have this information that/

¶391: SML yep that is thank you. We have this information …

¶392: JT and

¶393: SML and we’ve got to learn to actually not be so … we’re so caught up
in this level of information, we’re so proud of this um … of our industrial might,
our technology, our sophistication in the way you know, we’ve got so much
power over nature we can do whatever we like we think! In our small mind set
um … you know we can … ignore it/

¶394: JT well for me this industrial thing I’m always fascinated by that … um and
how that transformed society, cities,

¶395: SML mmm yes mm

¶396: JT … us. Um … and for me that whole thing where you end up as the/ with
the modernist architect as hero …um …

¶397: SML yes, … its actually part of that industrial mindset

¶398: JT it is

¶399: SML the hero worship that that

¶400: JT and that is really what we have to get away from um … and even that
notion/ I see Corbusier I guess as you know as one of those classic examples. In
Melbourne I see um … some of those examples in some of the professors I had in
the eighties, but I guess they were from the seventies and so they still had that
slightly um … you know blokey sexist overtone you know about how they see
the number of women in the profession

¶401: SML mmm yes mmm in spite of the undergraduate numbers/

¶402: JT indeed. By the time you get up
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403: SML to the upper echelons there’s 1% of women left running businesses

404: JT yes if you’re lucky um … so I really see that as one of the greatest flaws, that is one of the things that we need to break down and get away from … as a group

405: SML … yes … so in a way we’re talking about patriarchal systems here

406: JT indeed

407: SML and when you think of patriarchy you are thinking of a whole different emphasis – the emphasis is on control, its on um … domination there’s a whole range of motives – psychology involved/

408: JT and I mean that’s actually quite interesting too. I think David ahhh noted that ah ESD there seems to be a lot of women working in this. Women engineers as well umm … and I find that … interesting/

409: SML indicative

410: JT that context/

411: SML well its worth, its worth um … noting … if …

412: JT and I don’t like it for that you know women as nurturers sort of thing

413: SML well you don’t want to turn it into a gender issue

414: JT no I do not

415: SML but there’s probably a lot to be said for that. The fact that women have a different/

416: JT well a disillusion with that patriarchal system and what its producing so rather than women perhaps being more motivated to save the planet than men um … maybe its more/

417: SML they know what its like being in a patriarchal system

418: JT yeah and its how they want to work um … they want to work in teams, sharing information

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419: SML yes

420: JT not playing power games um …

421: SML yes I’m sure that I mean do you have those discussions inside your environmental group at all

422: JT that patriarchal thing? um … well we do a bit I guess more just as an observation. I guess as a reflection um … we have a weird setup we’ve still got a weird setup we’ve got all the boys along one wall and all the girls down there and then we have days when none of them are there and we’re all just there doing the work. Yes we do have them quite a bit

423: SML (laughter) so it’s a bit like the old dance hall. You’re waiting for someone to come up (laughter)

424: JT yeah

425: SML for a dancing partner. Right um … so when I’ve looked at just the Environment Policy I’ve noticed that the examples given on how to place sustainability at the core of an architect’s practice and professional responsibility the examples given involve the practitioner in quote, this is the quote ‘actively encouraging clients to embrace sustainability as an integral part of their project and maintaining commitment to the delivery of an outcome’. Now … so I’m looking at this and I’m saying well that’s sort of the step after you the architect has made the commitment yourself so you need to make that commitment in order to then influence your clients to start building/

426: JT mm for me it goes back to education once again and education um … as we discussed before part of an iterative thing where you’re designing something, its energy rated, you know what that’s worth, how much that costs um … this is the problem for architects. It takes so long and costs so much money. Um … if we can shortcut that process by providing extra knowledge um … that’s a good thing um … otherwise it is yes, a long process um … part of this issue you’ve brought up is you know … explaining to your client, making sure that its in there
you need to have a knowledge of what it costs and stuff so you know we’re already behind the … um … the 8-ball very often when it comes to … ohhh well here ohhh you want a $100,000 house well, here it is, here’s everything you’ve asked for anyway um … oh! $250,000 - sorry about that what can we cut out um … but when you have to suddenly say ohh and you have to have all your windows triple glazed um … that’s embarrassing. This is what I think as a profession we need, … its very important for us to quickly boost our knowledge, um … of all the implications, energy efficiency on building fabric on costs so that we can be knowledgeable so that we can be …

¶427: SML put forward a scenario, build those visions as you say, carry through those visions. Alright. Now my other statement is that there is a lot of discussion about spirituality and its importance to living harmoniously with the world and how architects are drawn to designing habitats that reflect this need. Buildings are discussed in terms of energy transfer, … ah potential, you know we use words like harmonising, and energising and vitalising and refreshing and regenerating, respecting … space and form are seen as an opportunity to enhance environmental energies as well as psychic energies. So we’ve we’ve got this/

¶428: JT Feng Sui

¶429: SML we have a very broad understanding of what energies are um … and so … in a way when we’re acting as environmental/ when we’re thinking about environmental energies … you know how do you bring in this other qualities of energy these other energies, these more … psychic energies that affect us more psychically/ or is it the environmental energies that affect us psychically. Do you ever give that any thought?

¶430: JT where do these energies come from?

¶431: SML no

¶432: JT what am I responding to?
what are you responding to. I'm wanting you just to simply respond to the idea that architecture is playing with energy in a qualitative sense. It's not just you know, fresh air and …

and daylight to improve your energy efficiency. And this is the thing that, I mean its one of those things that architects have that we can’t measure, the joy of the spaces that you create. When you wake up in the morning and … you you know open up your curtains and there’s some view framed or there’s some light that just angles in that right way … those are the joys … I don’t know how we match them with the …

how we quantify them at all

so in a way we have to argue for these qualities we have to make them part of our language our selling point that they’re important. So as environmentally responsible or sensitive architects how are you putting this into your/

in some ways there’s there is a point where we … should perhaps be challenging some of the computer programmes that we’re using to judge our buildings. They’re engineering systems. They’re systems developed by engineers, to assess our buildings … maybe there’s … there needs to be an argument made by somebody about well actually um … this house of mine doesn’t meet energy requirements but the quality of light the joy (laughter) it gives people, they’re only there this time of year … maybe we have to have those other arguments um … and not just blindly accept um … engineering systems foisted on us in this technical sense. um … we do have to challenge them as well. How we do that in a technical sense I don’t know. …

… other I guess … again … its probably being able to dialogue with engineers and speak to them about their personal experience. Have you personally experienced this space … you know … take them to these spaces that are high quality experiences that are palpable … again that’s a/
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JT I always see that as you know, the role of an architect. It is to …

SML sensitise people

JT yeah, give them an awareness of what those things are and how you can have them in your space and how they can improve your life. And you don’t just have to live in that space that has a rumpus room tacked on the end/

SML or you know the thermometer is set at 21 degrees and that’s going to be wonderful/

JT and will your family ever use that … bloody … secret room that’s tucked up at the front of the house.

SML … um … yes … now the Bruntland report is all about how a sustainable society meets the needs of present without compromising the future needs. So this is a very large statement. So how do you personalise that? How do you make that … your own …

JT … um … it’s a really daggy response. But it just came into my head. And its ‘do unto others as you would have done to yourself” …um I’m just trying to think of …

SML lovely, good well its immediate and … and you know … its moral

JT yeah. I don’t really mean it as an overall Christian thing …

SML no, no, of course not. It shouldn’t need to be like that

JT no

SML if that’s your immediate response that’s the most important thing, what your immediate response is how you live that out … okay … so alright … I think we’ve discussed this fairly well you know what sort of society do you believe yourself to be part of (laughter)

JT … a misguided capitalist one

SML okay (laughter) and what role do you believe you provide
JT … um … I’m one of those annoying people (laughter). No that’s not necessarily true. Um … I have to be careful not to be one of those/ no that whole morality question you know, because you have the knowledge in this area not to um … lord that over other people or you know, put them down that’s its more to help educate people and disperse that knowledge …

SML … yes and that’s a real skill to be able to not sound so important as if you’re on a soapbox you know, telling everybody else how to behave

JT mm when I was in um … it was my approach when I had my own practice and would go onto the building site you know you don’t have much experience when you’re starting out … um … I would always say to my builders um … look you know I have knowledge um … I have education I have some experience but if you’ve got any better way of doing this um … please just discuss it with me and hopefully we can all learn from that. That’s the sort of approach that I like to take to everything and that needs to be the basis to an ESD type of approach … we’ve all got this knowledge … if someone holds back maybe you don’t end up with the best …

SML outcome

JT outcome … um and if everyone participates and makes it their own, what a good thing it is.

SML yes

JT what a good thing it is. But I do also see myself as um … providing enthusiasm for it. This is really important too. Not that this is something that we have to overlay … to convince people that this is a really important thing you need to have an enthusiasm for it and you need to be able to … um … put that across. That’s really important. Because its too easy its so easy to be just discouraged from doing it to just go down the same path to do the way – to do things the way you’ve always done them. But we’ve passed those times we need to go somewhere else …
yes we need to make a more …

… okay so in general - my next statement was about actual happiness and the fact that we’re all, you know our whole sense of self … comes through our sense of meaning-making which is about what is valuable to us. And what is valuable to us gives us a great sense of self-satisfaction and happiness and so when you’re talking about enthusiasm that sort of energy that comes out of that whole … psychology of happiness.

If you haven’t got self-satisfaction you’re not going to generate that enthusiasm. So um …

and that for me Michael Motts in his book um … Sustainable House

oh yes, yes

in the forward of that he talks about how he was such an angry man he was really pissed off at things that were happening in the environment and felt helpless in society to produce a sustainable house. But through doing that just for his own self what that has done for him personally is that he is feeling that he is making a contribution he’s educating people um …

he’s generated all that anger and all that energy so in a way he’s transformed an energy force from something that’s an angry thing to something that’s a really positive thing

incredibly positive and and spreading

rippling

around to so many people um …
... and you know very self fulfilling and it would make you feel wonderful

and this is the other side of *An Inconvenient Truth*. At one point there’s despair and if you don’t stop you know … there’s the knowledge and there’s the despair if you don’t … you can just very swiftly go off into despair and not do anything but the real trick is to stay … away from the despair knowing that it is potentially there but if you can be engaged in work away from that despair for one your making the outcome less severe perhaps, hopefully um … for another action and doing it makes you feel better about yourself that it is transforming …

… yes, so in a way in order to not become immobilised through despair it has to become a meaningful activity. You have to in spite of the scenarios have your own … scenario, your own vision about/

well here’s what I doing. It’s all like that but here’s what I’m doing/

and its making me feel … good

because its also the other people …

so again we’re talking about that level of understanding of self that it is not, you know, how do you expand that sense of self so that you include more and more people into that and more living beings it is not just humans we need to be concerning ourselves with biodiversity

yes, yes

... so have you got any particular ways of broadening that sense of yourself. do you work on that at all specifically? …

... I don’t quite know what you mean.

I’m just thinking um … for example … like … do you engage in a whole range of other activities that …

sustainability type things?
or just that that expand your own sense of self

Oh I do Tai Chi that is self expanding

okay

and also to me that’s incredibly … it’s a holistic sort of a thing. it actually fits in with sustainability to my way of thinking. Everything’s interconnected … every movement … creates another movement … um that sort of my I guess that’s my core. Um … in a community sense I’m engaged in the Sustainable Living Foundation um … I love going out they have the festival there. I work on the stands giving out advice. I love doing that. Um … I’m going to Nepal in ahhh December to put in a self-composting toilet system.

yes? That’s fantastic

you know I had to go and do something … else

yes something practical

yes yes

concrete

Alright … um … now this is all about you know the new sciences that are telling us that we are totally interconnected you know interdependent and ahh … you know there isn’t a … we’re nothing other than the moment you know our history. We’re nothing other than our history. There isn’t a isn’t a an essential self somewhere its just who we are in this particular moment …

oh I’d like to think that there are some parallel universes and that in one of them Al Gore actually is the president

(laughter)

I think we’ve got a I think we’ve really ended up with a dud parallel universe with this one … but I’m happy to talk to you in this one. In a positive sense
SML: (laughter) yes um … does systems thinking have any bearing on your design strategy?

JT: okay now tell me … systems thinking being

SML: systems thinking being that that’s that whole understanding of … or where does your level of understanding of interconnectedness emerge

JT: … in my designs?

SML: well it will eventually come through into your designs but where does it actually start. Where is your understanding of interdependence, interrelatedness, inter, inter … um

JT: interconnection

SML: how interconnected do you see yourself at what level …

JT: ohh that’s a really deep question isn’t it. It really is a deep question I then just have to go back to Tai Chi. And for me I dunno. Its not even something I can explain but which is a meditation as I see it so … is that fair to say? Is that some ingrained thing is that not systems thinking?

SML: no no I mean what I’m trying to gauge here is that we come from a very Western way of thinking … that’s our tradition. Now you’ve just been talking about an Eastern approach that might have opened up your understanding.

JT: my mother studied comparative religion so I’ve always been …

SML: open

JT: had a you know, an open understanding … you know … a variety of philosophies shaping the world um … and so for me I … I find it very hard to … I don’t think there’s one system for everybody. I think everybody needs an individual … we all need to personalise that somewhere … I’m not quite making sense…. All that I can think about when you ask me that question is being at some point in the middle of a Tai Chi exercise … and having that sense
okay and understanding your sense of oneness with the universe. Okay now what I’m interested in is that you can … you have a sense of it … you know that its/ you’ve come into contact with it within your Tai Chi. Now I want to know how you also see that in a scientific way. Is there a scientific view that supports that?

JT Fritjof Capra

SML okay

JT the Tao of Physics.

SML so you’ve come to an understanding of interconnectedness as a scientific point of view

JT as a philosophical for me/

SML experiential

JT absolutely

SML so again its this whole point of trying to work now we have that knowledge, its all there Capra has written about it, the sciences are telling us about it – quantum physics, chaos theory, whatever you know its all there. But it’s the Eastern meditation that gives us the experience that allow us to enter into … the oneness of interconnectedness …

JT mm

SML … so …

JT yeah okay so the scientific one it is more a technical thing whereas through Eastern philosophy … well there’s also an intellectual component to that too so if you’re engaging in practice I guess … you do have that … more intuitive sense of …

SML yeah … so … do you find that you’re drawing on your um … does that sort of way of experiencing oneness is that helping you to deepen your
understanding. Is it something you’ve been aware of in enhancing … knowledge …

JT: hmm. I think it does but its such a deep umm … at such a deep level that … how you access that/

SML: you’re not consciously drawing on it

JT: no. I think it’s just part of what I do.

SML: okay. I mean again I’m really just trying to

JT: no, no its very good you never get to think about these things (laughter)

SML: well again its all part of the post/ you know being able to raise something up into our consciousness that we might not be ahh aware of but which is influencing us otherwise

JT: mm

SML: … so … you know our … obviously our unsustainable lifestyles are to do with the fact that there are a lot of issues that are unconscious that we’re not dealing with in a conscious manner and questioning and maybe one of those things is this understanding of interconnectedness. Um … its only when we bring it up consciously maybe through Tai Chi or yoga or you know whatever … and I can’t think of any Western traditions that allow us to bring it up. I’m trying to think of some I’m trying to look for maybe St. Francis of Assissi or something. There must be some tradition that has explored not only intellectually but experientially these deeper levels of interconnectedness that Capra talks about and that Buddhists talk about in their own language, … that will help us in our post-industrial momentum … towards experiencing and living interconnected lives. At the moment we’re still divor/ managed to you know we’re not we’re not there yet …

JT: mm Certainly the change in leadership, media …

SML: (laughter)
JT media ownership laws won’t help

(laughter) we’ve been living in a society that’s going in one direction (laughter) …

yeah that’s the despair bit you know. Go away don’t go there …

that’s right

JT let’s just work in the positive

yes it is better to work in the positive. I’ve just been … reading a terrific book on environmental ethics by Val Plumwood who

I’ve not heard of her

she’s an Australian philosopher actually, and environmental feminist, environmentalist and sort of an incredible … brain on her. She talks about the crisis of reason. She talks about how all our reasoning, the way we rationalise away … really logical things. We’ve got a very distorted reasoning mind and our ability to reason about things is highly unreasonable, its illogical. We place so much value on our sense of reasoning but …

especially if you’re reasoning is based on a set of premises that is not reasonable

like economics …

like warfare

yes

like the current debate about ahhh nuclear energy …

yes. Its all terribly reasonable but totally illogical

you know we haven’t done anything about it for all this time um …

it must be right it must be time… so that’s the logic and its not logical at all … and so … the um … again the … the argument is that if we could … be more self-critical about our reasoning abilities, of our need to balance our
intuitive needs and to actually be much more … prepared to be experiencing … rather than conceptualising …

JT maybe a way that we can do it is you know … is it that you need to go out into … spaces that are … inspirational … to be able to get in touch with … ecology to discover that. Do you need to go to spaces that are ecologically ruined … to feel … is that the way that we in the West can get a connection?

SML that’s one of the strategies

JT its not a very negative view, maybe it is

SML yes there’s a negative and a positive sense. Lessons to be learned from both approaches and maybe that’s something that architects courses, you know professional development could be looking at … doing a very experiential approach rather than an intellectual approach rather than a logical, reasoned approach. It can be an experiential, it could be … um, you know … intuitive you know … going into spaces …

JT well here’s you know the very easy thing to look at here. We’ve got all these building sites all around us around town you walk down the street and have a look at the skips. Um … you look at how much material is wasted in those skips … um

SML mm just doing something like that … would be … but again that takes time, again you’re talking/ I mean who would / how do you make that real for people make them want to come along to do those sorts of experiential courses (laughter) who are busy living very very busy lives.

JT I don’t know

SML anyway I’m right off the subject here really because …

JT me too its very easy to get me off the subject

SML so my last question is you know how do you think ecologically sustainable development fits into … this idea of interrelatedness … and experiencing oneness …
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562. JT um … development being the operative word

563. SML yeah the operative word. What is development you know. Can we seriously entertain the current/ well lets talk about our current understanding of development.

564. JT … mm …

565. SML how can we transform that

566. SJT so my current understanding of development is … an example is just out there with the skip full of stuff. Its about um … it actually comes back to our early roots in Australia of um … squatting um … speculative land development. That really what development is about.

567. SML that we understand as development

568. JT for me an ecologically sustainable development is about um … creating spaces that … do not …that actually could positively contribute to the other spaces around them … and to the space as a whole … the greater space um … where I don’t know if David was mentioning it the other day. Probably we have the lighthouse of sustainable design which is um buildings that use no energy, that use no water they create no waste in their construction um … or operation um … they don’t affect ecological diversity um … in fact they might … contribute and feed something back into the system. Ahh this is how/ this … definition expands to ecologically sustainable development … um … and we call this … the lighthouse model for us because at this point in time its quite ahhh impossible um … and a lot of that’s to do with industry, um notions, we have to make money, capital costs not operating costs, we’re not benefiting from that …

569. SML … narrow economic parameters

570. JT indeed

571. SML okay thanks for that Jane we’ll finish now

572. JT pleasure
Annotations

1 we are outward bound in our thinking - it comes as a surprise to JT to find herself thinking about her own level of interconnectedness.
SML: SO how I’m trying to interview people, I’m looking at different…three different sort of groups of people and I’m asking them all the same questions and um, so I’m talking to people who are you know, overtly engaged in Ecologically Sustainable Design – that’s part of their um you know it’s recognised that that’s their interest and their capacity, and then I’m looking at other architects who are inside…who are contributing to the RAIA and maintaining that sort of momentum from within the profession…the representative body

LH: Yep

SML: LH: Yep
And the third group that I’m looking at are people that are coming at it maybe from a different angle, who may be…and so I’m looking at people who are doing structured self-reflective practice who are also practicing architects.

SO I’m looking at the three different groups, and as I say, I’m just asking them the same questions, and how I’m…how I’ve…and I’m very sorry, but I can’t remember if I’ve sent you these statements

Did I say I was going to? I hope I…anyway, I do apologise if um…but these

I’ve had lots of other things from you, but I don’t think I’ve got this one

Right. All that it is, is that I’ve set up some seven motherhood statements that basically are drawn from my literature review as to where, you know, some important ideas are coming from, and so I start with the first motherhood statement which is that design, the act of design is processed through two different strategies, which satisfy two basic orientations. One orientation is towards the task itself, that’s the sort of task oriented side of the design process and the other side of the design process is the self oriented side of the process. So that you actually go through a transformative process yourself in the act of the
design process. SO, you know, what I’m trying to talk about is that self transformative side of it. I’ll get you to think about that, and so, I’m just wondering how do you look at the actual design process itself, do you reflect on those two aspects of it? Or two orientations?

LH I think for me a lot of design is actually going right back to things I knew as a child and growing up and experiences I’ve had, perhaps overseas or in different places that have really made an impression and been important, and I think I go back to a lot of those things and maybe I transform those a little bit into something else, but they’re always there. And sometimes they’re there even though I think they’re not there. Other people will see things in my designs, and say “Ah, you’ve picked up that from this particular place, or that particular place”. I’ll say, “Well, look, I didn’t. I really didn’t…

SML Knowingly or consciously

LH If it looks like that it was subconscious”. But, so, I keep, I suppose I’ve always looked at the visual arts and design as something extremely important, and I think you get images in your mind, or you get a way of living in your mind that you want to do for other people, I suppose. Not that you want to try and tell other people how they should live, but you want to give them some other broader ways of thinking about how to live. Because, predominantly I’ve done houses, so I’m talking about living environments rather than perhaps their working environments, which are equally important, but um, houses are what I’ve been involved in for a while.

SML Yeah, so the actual service that you’re offering comes through, not just the actual concrete design stage…

LH No
...it’s the information of the experiences that you can draw from your own library – internal library.

LH Yeah, I mean sometimes that gets diluted a bit at work where there’s other people involved as well and you have to negotiate through certain things, so, um, it’s um… but if I was doing it for myself, and I used to work for myself, there was only me to please, I mean, and the client but I can do the process how I like to do the process. It’s a bit harder when you’re working with other people in a business.

Sure, it engages a different sort of negotiating skills or, negotiation.

Yeah

Um, ok, so do I asked you this over the telephone, do you actually have professional development techniques that you use?

Probably the one I try and use most is that I allow myself a bit more time, in that I don’t quite work full time. I allow myself some time to sit and to think or to read what I want to read, and I know that’s sort of not very structured but it’s very important for me that I have time alone to think about things, and to go and look at things and perhaps to go and photograph things just to absorb things. Maybe it’s an exhibition, or maybe it’s just reading a book that I like, or rereading a book that I’ve liked before. It’s that time where you’re not pressured
in to actually producing something but it allows your brain to, to really sort through things, and throw out things you don’t like or are unimportant, but to hone in on the things that are important. So um, yeah, that’s probably what I try and do.

To my mind, I would call that…in the way you’ve structured that in to your practice, so to my mind I would call that a fairly structured approach.

Right.

You know, you have made a deliberate decision, and you’ve consciously thought about that and put that in to practice, so that’s good to hear how you’ve…What I’m looking for is how people cope with…you know, what’s their coping strategy, and that’s a good indication of a coping strategy to...

Well, I know I don’t cope well if I’m five days a week under continual pressure to work. I find I can work so much better if I have a day a week where I can just think and…It works for me (laughs)

Sure. It’s terrific that you’ve come to that decision. So, when it comes to the next question that I was looking at is the fact that expertise comes down to attitude, really, when you’re trying to build a body of expertise in an area it comes down to what you’re going to challenge. So in a way I want you to talk about what it is that challenges you to develop expertise.

For quite a few years now I’ve been interested in sustainability and the green movement, and that probably goes back a lot longer as well. I can remember even at school choosing to study those sort of issues when there was a choice about what you would read or present to the class. So, but, increasingly I
think that’s becoming more and more a way of life for me, and hopefully for the rest of my family, although they sometimes take a little convincing. But, they, I think now, I’m very…I hate seeing waste, I hate seeing poor design, I like to think that everything…that everything you do makes things better, that you repair what is bad, and that you try and make it better. Even if you’re working with something that’s really awful, your challenge is to improve it. I’ve worked quite a lot with old buildings, particularly ones which have heritage listing, and they are always a challenge because sometimes they work, sometimes they don’t work. I’m very interested in heritage as well, and I think the two of them…I haven’t worked out a way that this really comes together yet, but I think it might. That you can combine sustainability and interest in heritage to give people a really…quite a well rounded approach to thinking about buildings. Not sure that that answers your question. (laughs)

\[65:\]

\[66:\] SML Well, you know, I mean you’re…you’re really indicating to me you know what you’re drawing on. You know, the fact that there’s been a um, an original orientation that has guided you in your developmental…as you’ve developed. And, as you say, it’s a choice making exercise that you’ve been engaged in for a long period of time. And so, you know, I’m really wanting you to now think about what are the beliefs that you’ve actually had to challenge in order to maintain that, you know, that sense of direction.

\[67:\]

\[68:\] LH I think I’m, I’m constantly trying to um, when I see how the building industry operates and how the housing industry operates, you want to really try and change their point of view. And I’ve no idea how to go about it, but, um, the belief that I have is that everyone should be able to design…or to contribute themselves to a really nice living environment, it’s not the realm of experts, professional people, to do that. Everyone has, within them, the ability to do it and these…a lot of people do not have the confidence, and I see trying to give people that confidence as an important thing, but also the confidence to reject what’s out
there that they’re told they should buy, or build, or…and, so what you’re trying to do is really change people’s attitude, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t and you don’t normally end up working for those sorts of people where you can’t see eye to eye at all, so I really think that um, for me it’s important to keep challenging the belief that, …sustainability is important and increasingly becoming more and more urgent and people will turn around for different reasons but you need to be able to give them the power and the confidence to do so, I think.

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SML Yes, yes, so, you’ve actually talked about your belief that you have that belief that people have, you know, as part of them, but you’ve also indicated to me what you feel to be your major contribution and your ability which is to draw that out of people so that they actually participate more fully in the process and are more confident in the decisions that are made, so in a way, it seems to me, that’s…it seems to me that you’re talking about your ability as an architect therefore…

LH Yeah, and to…to make people a bit more discerning and to reject marketing and hype about certain things that they feel they must have. To really…to get them to think “What do I need?” not “What do I want?”, um, and when it comes down to it, you don’t need a great deal, really

Mmm hmm

LH So, that’s important to me, but obviously at work sometimes you end up working for people where you just think “What are they doing, this is madness” and you go a certain way, but you don’t always…you don’t always win
That’s right. And so, the knowledge base that you draw on, you know to come up with those beliefs and to come up with that ability, so where are you drawing your knowledge from in order to…

Um, I’m quite fortunate to work with good people who each have a specialty in a way, but we’re…the office tries very hard to work as a team, and to draw on other people’s knowledge. For instance, one of our directors is very good on water issues, another one is really good on thermal issues in buildings, someone else is particularly good on the whole systems for bigger buildings. So, each of us are encouraged to develop our own speciality so working with other people is very important. I worked for myself for a long time and after about 10 years…you’ve just got nothing to draw on, you’ve given it all out and it’s not there anymore. You need to…so, I made a conscious choice to go and work with this particular firm of architects who were starting out because their beliefs coincided with mine, only they were a little bit further down the track than I was, and so we’ve been able to spin off one another and to get encouragement and support and knowledge from one another. So for me, it’s working with those people who…that has been really good. Um, not all offices will work like that I don’t think, but there’s a very conscious effort to try and…to do that, and also to allow us time for professional development, paid for by the company. Because that’s considered to be extremely important, given that a lot of technological things move very quickly and unless you’re up with it, you just miss out.

Yes, Ok. That’s answered that very well. Um, so, in a way, we’re really talking about two aspects of awareness, you know there’s that sort of the logical approach to the solution, finding the solutions, and then there’s drawing on those deeper, more intuitive more deeply embedded understandings. So, you’ve actually talked a fair bit about those two aspects, can we just talk a little bit more about how conscious you are of the fact that you’re…that there’s the
intuitive aspect of your creativity that you’re drawing on, and there’s also that logical, you know, analytical approach that is also part of the design process.

LH Yeah, I think I’m very conscious of it because I know probably most of the time is spent doing the more logical “this works, this doesn’t, you know, gotta have this area here and that there and this part of the site’s best” and all of those things take up probably 90% of the time, 95% of the time, because you have to get them right. But I know that unless the other is there, it’s a sort of hollow solution, it’s not, all there. So, and for that to happen, I need to almost get out of the office, come home and sit and thing about it, and really think who these people are, what drives them, what’s important about this site, what can I build into this of um, that makes meaning for them and also for myself, and…so I’m quite conscious of it, but it takes up such a small amount of time compared with the rest. Which is frustrating in a way, um, but that’s the way things are structured at present. That there are so many things that you have to take in to account with planning and geotechnical and landscape issues and um, so many things…there’s a mass of information that needs to be ordered and sorted and the important bits pulled out and these are the things I’m going to use to design. But that’s all very well, you get a design, and I can see it with a lot of things, you get a design that’s functional, but you don’t get another level of meaning in a building, and you don’t get that unless you’ve had time to reflect on it, so, unless you…and it’s often when you just come up with a client…you come across a client that, that wants that too, and can see that it’s important, and are prepared to give you the time to do that that it all works. So…

SML Yes, and I think that it’s really important, really what you’re talking about is that really crucial level of embodiment. You know, you’re basically putting yourself in the client’s space and you’re becoming the client, so it’s very much experiential, sort of almost an all of body sort of approach, you know, it’s not just the mind that you’re working through, it’s all those other
deeper feelings and sort of more intangible emotive things that you’re drawing on at an emotional level. Um, so, when we’re drawing on those things those aspects of ourselves, we’re also…there’s a lot of us in that as well, so we might be you know, putting ourselves in our client’s state of…and but we’re also thinking through ourselves through our own cultural background, through our own perspectives and perceptions and things like that, so um, in a way we have to be conscious of our own landscape, our own mindscape, that we…our parameters that we think through, and so that sort of coming back to questioning some broader issues about the culture we live in, you know, the sort of the, um the world view that we’ve absorbed, and I would just like you to talk about how sustainable design tackles that aspect of process…of making the change, one world view to another

90: LH I mean when you think about it, it probably doesn’t make much difference because there’s so much out there that’s not working…your little well thought through something doesn’t really make any difference at all. But, um, it might if the movement if the movement becomes big enough, so everyone needs to do their own little piece, and if you say “well, it doesn’t matter anyway” you just give up, and what’s the point of that? You have to do it for yourself first, really, and in the long run, various factors will probably make it happen anyway, but it’s um, yes, it’s a movement that’s always been there, but it’s it’s now probably in the forefront of people’s minds, rather than just saying “Oh, it just belongs to the Green fringe or the hippies from the 60s or something” it’s much more than that now.

91:

92: SML SO we’re really…we’re putting much greater value on it, and we’re starting to value these ideas, objectives, and therefore, when I’m talking about a world view, a world view is really where our value systems…you know what are our value systems, you know core values. And so, when we’re caught up inside how…I mean we are a phenomenon of our society so therefore
we’ve…we’ve sort of got to have these split um consciousness that we are of this particular world-view. What is this world view, you know, we know that it’s damaging, we can see that, um, how come we’ve got to this place. And then we’ve got to sort of work against that in a way we’re our own whistle-blowers or something. So, can you talk about that, you know, do you think about that as you’re…

93: LH Um, I, I think it’s all tied up with power. It’s all…there’s so much power that’s abused, and in the global perspective…

94: SML Can you talk about why? Why do you think that that is…you know, what is it that causes…

95: LH I think it’s just a fundamental human need to control things and control other people, that people have, not everyone, but some people. And when you look at most of the problems, it’s all to do with power, and take…it gets back to those sort of philosophical ideas from Greece and Rome, in a way, that people are what they are and flawed and…but they want to control things for themselves.

96: SML Ok, so you’re talking about a fairly small minded approach to self interest

97: LH Yeah, I think so, and I think that when you look at many of the bigger issues, they can often come down to that. The conflicts in the world and all of that. I think many of the cartoonists, you know, you read Leunig every week and you think “Oh, he’s done it again, he’s got it on the head. How did he do it again this week in half a dozen words and a picture”. I mean it’s just…he just cuts through…

98:
Absolutely, to and you see it. And so, I think people like him and there are others of course that can really just get rid of all that bullshit and, just say “look, this is real” and they can see, somehow. So, I identify with that sort of approach to things, that all this huff and puff from governments and everything. You just think if they really sat down and searched their own consciences, would they come up with this nonsense? And you think, no they wouldn’t, but they’ve gotta do that searching…so

Yes, ok, um, so, as far as who do you draw on, you know, you’ve talked about Leunig and you’ve talked about that level of sort of insight. What other resources do you draw on to…

Um, I’m a great reader, I read a lot of novels and short stories. Fiction, I like fiction. Um, and the sort of contemporary Melbourne writers like Arnold Zable I just think are truly wonderful people, that they write the most extraordinary things both on current affairs and on more reflective philosophical issues, family issues, where they’ve come from, how…what’s made them how they are. And I really like that sort of writing. I read anything that Arnold Zable’s written in the paper, and I love his books, all of them. And, he’s one of a number of probably they’re all probably fairly left-wing intellectual people, but they have a common humanity and I really appreciate how they write about people, and things, and if they were allowed to be listened to more I think the world would be a better place

So why do you think they’re not listened to more? What’s your reflection on that?
Um, I think they’re seen as going counter to a lot of policy that’s around at present. I think they’re seen as a bit soft, a bit um, oh a bit “wet”, whatever that political term means, but…and whereas I don’t think they are at all, I think they are highly…I regard them very highly in terms of the way they’ve thought about these issues. I’m not sure why they’re…I think certainly, if you’re that way inclined you read it and you think “yes, this is wonderful writing, it’s saying all sorts of important things”, but, there’s a whole other side of of some people that is really hard and really quite selfish in a way.

OK, so really, I think, just from listening to you that we’re really talking about something that you mentioned earlier which is this idea that certainty…power and certainty, and absolutes and boundaries and…the more we sort of…the closer we draw that in to ourselves and keep on turning that in to a smaller and smaller space, the less sensitive we are, the less capable we are of serving what you call wet or soft, you know, that ability to accept that there’s more than one certainty, and that there’s you know, more sensitivity is required in order to address you know, the situation, and um, and therefore there’s these two aspects of ourselves in constant negotiation. The need for certainty, and also the aspiration to be more sensitive to the wider human need or ecological situation, so, you know it’s sort of that constant balancing act, of keeping that in focus, and so, um, you know, I mean I can assess what…how you think from what you’ve just been saying, but I’d like you to say in your own words what sort of an understanding as opposed to a knowledge, an understanding, have you come to about sustainability?

Mmm, that’s a difficult question. Let me think. Um, I’m trying to think of an insight. (laughs)

It can be, you know, very everyday…
Um, I think it’s how vulnerable we are, and how intertwined we are with nature, that we’ve really tried to get away from that. We’re terribly urban, we are not um, we are connected in so many ways to nature, to animals, to plants and what’s showing up so rapidly, is that those connections are being broken, and the effects can be catastrophic. And the effects are unknown, because we’ve never been in this situation before, so I think that you must try and make…understand some of those connections, even if you’re not terribly scientific, or well read about scientific issues, you must take on board what people say who know about these things, and say “What is my action going to have on this particular piece of land” or whatever, and sometimes things will be conflicting and you can’t resolve all of them in to a nice neat package, but you must be aware of those connections, otherwise, I don’t think it’s worth building anything. I mean, I get back to building because that’s all I know really.

Of course, that’s…your contribution is being able to build responsibly, taking on board all these understandings that you have, so um,

So, there’s a lot to learn, and there’s um…but you must take people seriously who have got the science to tell you that this will have that effect and think, alright, ok, that’s not a good thing to do then. So, I think it’s probably the dependence on nature that we’ve tended to shun in your tilt-slab, concrete environment. Um, I’d like to try and get back to everyone having an appreciation of that so that things are thought through a bit more carefully.

Ok, so is there any sort of deliberate devices that you might…when you’re thinking when you come down to the project level…back down at that project level
LH Mmm hmm, well, certainly if it’s a bigger piece of land it’s looking at really where you site buildings in terms of the drainage, water, wind, um, most people just think of view, but I don’t think of that, I think about the micro-climate on a site and how you can do a building to modify the micro-climate for human comfort. So, I think that’s one thing, and also it’s working…very much working around existing vegetation and not saying that this has got to go and that has got to go because we’ve got to re-plant it in this style and it’s all going to be…whatever. It’s working with what you’ve got, and trying to make a minimal impact on a site, and certainly not trying to make um, some sort of statement about things. I think the most successful things that I have done are ones that are really non-statements on the outside but you go inside and they feel…something feels right about them. I’m not saying it happens all the time, it’s hard work (laughs) to make it happen, but occasionally it does, yeah.

SML Yes, um, this is a little aside, but that’s something that Bob Fuller and I have been talking about a bit is about this quality. You know, the actual something that’s a bit hard to measure and quantify

LH It’s ex…you can’t measure it. Or you can sort of say, Ok, some of these patterns come together well. Oh, that’s the other thing I didn’t mention, it’s probably going back two or three questions, but another book that I go back to again and again is Christopher Alexander’s “Pattern Language”, and um, some of his other books “Timeless way of building”. I read them in the 70s and I come back to them and I think they’re more and more interesting and a lot of the things he talks about are fundamental truths about how people operate in spaces, and how you…and so I really like the way he writes and I find a lot of architectural theory completely incomprehensible. (laughs)
An interesting observation. So, I mean, I’ve…I find Christopher Alexander is…I like his acknowledgement of the intuitive…our intuitive way of knowing

Mmm, that’s what I like about it, so. Sometimes I’ll just go back and read a few things about that and think “Ah, yes, if you do that, it does work”. Yeah. So.

Fantastic. That’s really good. Um, and really I’m just…there was one of my other motherhood statements was this discussion about energy and how we can see that at many levels; it can be from electrical to wind to metaphysical, to spiritual. There’s all these different…you know, psychological, there’s a whole range of ways we discuss this energy, and as architects we’re sort of working with all those different interpretations of it, so, when it comes to valuing those different levels of energy, how do you sort of embrace or integrate and think about it in terms of…

Um, at the basic level it’s sort of the energy use of a building, the embodied energy in a building, and those things are part of our daily work, to a very large degree, in that we rate everything that we do with a software program that’s not perfect and can provide strange results at times, so, but…at least it makes you think through what you’re doing. So, that’s almost a…something that’s become a basic thing, just a repetitive task, um, but I think if building are to really work, they’ve got to provide people with the sort of peace and psychological energy if you want to call it, that makes them feel comfortable. That makes them feel relaxed at home. Um, that does things for them. So, that’s the harder thing to get to, but that’s what I would like to think that we do search for a little bit. Um, we also look at alternative systems of energy where they’re appropriate and where the client can pay for them because, obviously, they’re sometimes more expensive so, we do incorporate those wherever we can, um
because obviously then we’re making a smaller footprint on the ground, but um, yeah, integrating them is something I think we’d like to do better. Yeah, it’s a challenge to get it right, but if a building is really comfortable, and uses less energy, to my way of thinking it feels better anyway…it feels comfortable, therefore you feel better in yourself, therefore you have more, um, ability to be creative in that environment, because that’s really what everyone wants to be. I think if everyone is allowed to be creative they’re happy in their own way, you know, whatever it is, so…

Yes, yes, and in fact, one of my later motherhood statements is to do with this idea of happiness, in fact, that it’s considered our ultimate goal and when asked, people overwhelmingly support this as a self-evident fact, and requiring no further justification. That’s it. You know, what’s the thing you want most in life? In the end, you go through a whole range of different things and ultimately you come to this idea of happiness. And there’s different ways to describe it, but in the end that seems to be the basic drive. And um, and yet, our personal happiness actually…it’s a lot of the therapeutic models look at happiness being on this continuum, being from extreme misery to extreme joy, and we’re somewhere along that continuum and you know, we can be floating backwards and forwards, usually around the 75% mark, that seems to be the state, and um, and, you know the people who are further down this end are the ones who have become…you know, their thinking is more neurotic as far as their parameters have become narrower and narrower and that tends to lead towards the misery end of the spectrum, so in a way, the wisdom is that the more selfless you are, then the more your actual sense of self is satisfied. And that need for self-satisfaction is actually enhanced through, you know acts of…of not being self centred…”

Yeah, I would agree
So, when we’re…but actually when we’re designing, we’re referring back to ourselves for our own experiences, in order to um draw something out that allows us to work on the project that’s in front of us. So in a way, it’s a very interesting dynamic between selflessness and intuitive…those intuitive things about ourselves that we’re actually drawing on. So understanding your own quality of self, um, gives you a more critical view of what it is you’re actually drawing on in order to then forget about yourself. Uh, so, I suppose, what I’m looking at again, is these are core values that we’re starting to talk about here, these core values and often they’re so integral that we don’t even know what they are, you might not even be able to reflect upon them…and so I really want you to talk about this idea of self, you know, what is…who are you as far as an understanding of self goes, or of selflessness goes.

Mmm, well, I mean you’re a product both of your time and the place where you grew up, and the family situation you grew up in and the family situation you find yourself in now, and all of that, so you’re tied up with other people so much

So you’re…it’s the interconnectedness, isn’t it?

Yeah, um, but you also um, I think…what, what you do, what you become is also um, part of…it…I mean I find when I go and look for books or listen to music or whatever, you’re drawn to certain things, and you don’t know why you’re drawn to them, you don’t have either the vocabulary or the knowledge of those art forms or whatever to say why you like them, you can’t be particularly critical, but you’re drawn to them. What is it that draws you to them? Having then been drawn to them, you then find out more about them and then you find that yes I really do like the way this is composed, or the way this is written, or whatever, and it becomes…it puts you in touch with a whole movement, a whole array of thinking, a whole way that other people have
thought, so again, you’re putting yourself out there to discover what other people have previously discovered, but you find you identify with it.

¶155:

¶156: SML Intuitively

¶157:

¶158: LH Yeah, intuitively. So you have to trust your intuition a lot and it’s very easy when you’re working with other people to question it, because they will question it, because they have a different way of operation, but I think there’s a lot in intuition that we don’t use and don’t value highly enough, because I think there’s something that just attracts you to certain things, and that’s what you are, and you almost want to identify yourself with that group of people who can do those things, and you wish you could do it as well as they could.

¶159:

¶160: SML Yes, yes, so, that’s…so your sense of self is actually…you construct it through

¶161:

¶162: LH You construct it through identifying with other groups

¶163:

¶164: SML Yes, and really, you’re also building on that past knowledge, that past embodiment, and so that’s sort of a history, you sort of keep on building on your past history, you keep on adding to that picture.

¶165:

¶166: LH Yes, yes, you do, and it’s fascinating to see that happening with children as well, I have a 15 year old daughter and a 16 year old daughter, and the 15 year old particularly is quite…is doing that for herself, and it’s an age where you do that, but you can see it happening in her, and you just sort of stand back and listen and think yeah, she’s doing it at that fairly young age. So…
Yes, terrific. I’m just thinking back on what you’ve been saying there. To my mind it’s very insightful, quite, you know very reflective about that whole process, of how you build your own sense of self, um, do you…This is looking at philosophies, what sort of philosophies do you subscribe to when you’re thinking about your sense of self, you know building on your…

Mmm, I’m not particularly well read in philosophy, but you know I read, I really enjoy Alain De Botton because he explains it so well for me (laughs). I love the way he writes about it. But there’s um, I think the people who inspire me are like, there’s one particular French philosopher called Montaigne who…

Right, I don’t know him

Yeah, he, um, he seems rather interesting to me, in that he could be terrible objective about thing and write things just the way they were and they might be really unappealing and you read them and you might think “Oh my goodness”, but it’s very very true, so he could really cut to the core of things, um, and there’s another one is Spinoza, who seems to have a very lovely humanitarian view of the world which I like. But I’m not particularly well…

That’s alright, it’s more what you’re drawn to, rather than what your knowledge is about

Yeah, it’s usually people who are very open to the ideas of other people, but also very able to be direct on the page, um, rather than talk about theories of this or that, it’s sort of “Ok, what are people really like”
You you’re, I mean, you’ve just raised something which I think is interesting, that there is a fair criticism of our western approach which tends to be generalised, you know which tends to be abstracted. You know, we tend to like to talk in that realm, or work in that realm or perceive the world in sort of fairly abstracted, fairly generalised terms, but the real world doesn’t actually work like that, it works more concretely, it’s much more situated, you know, it’s now, and it’s happening right now and we have to cope right now, you know, we haven’t got the luxury to keep on generalising about the situation

Yeah, those sort of things annoy me a bit when they just keep on doing that and not, yeah…

Get down to the sort of…that level of concrete know-how, and so this comes up to the idea of ethical know-how, as opposed to ethical know-why. You know we can often, you know…we tend to like to think that ethics is some sort of deliberate logical process, but in real terms, we’re constantly actually making ethical decisions you know, every moment. And so, is it a coping process rather than a rational thinking process? So, again we come back to that idea that we’re having to draw on these embedded core values that um…and so, you know, I’m going to ask you what you think is an ethical, you know, sort of world. What is your ethical you know, world, what is your ethical environment, or situation or sense of coping.

I’ve…it’s very important, and I think every time you do something you should consider the ethics, the morals of it
That reflective…

Yes, um, and I, I mean I would like to think that, um, it was much more uh, accepting of people, I would like to think that we don’t turn away refugees at the…you know, in the middle of the ocean, I would like to think that we had enough to share that people who don’t could come here and share it. I would like to think that, um, well, it would be nice if there was…if the world conflicts could disappear, and people like George Bush could all go…to hell. (Laughs). But, um, I think a lot of people want that! It’s fairly obvious, but I mean, there certainly are um, I…yeah, you must, you must maintain a global perspective of those things, I think, but also bring it down to how you deal with people on a day to day basis. Even with boring things like contract administration of building, and buildings getting built, you’ve just gotta be sort of so straight with people, and not to favour one part over another to think, OK there’s a right way through this, um, muddle here, what is it? And if you feel…I know that sometimes you’re sort of pressured in to making decisions this way of the other, but if you feel uncomfortable about it then I know it’s a wrong decision, for me, so it’s really, it’s just a feeling that you think no this is not right. And I guess I’m fortunate that I was brought up with very good core values from my family, and I’m really lucky that that happened. Other people have not been so fortunate and can sometimes…um, it’s easier to be swayed and you know, you’re put under all sorts of pressure when you’re dealing in a business and clients and builders and all that sort of stuff, but you’ve gotta really think…take one step back from that decision and say OK what’s the right things to do here,

And that right thing is really to do with what makes you feel good

Yeah, it’s what makes you feel good and I’ve worked in Queenscliff for a number of years where I was working with the council, but you were um…had to work with the public as well, and things, you know, people
would get upset about what you said and, um, but I know that if you let yourself be swayed in their direction, I just feel so uncomfortable about it. I needed to say what I felt was right to people, even if they didn’t take it on board, if they didn’t use that information in the way that I had intended it, it was still out there, and then I could feel comfortable that, you know, at least I’ve said it, at least I’ve written it, I’ve told everybody that that’s what should happen and that’s all that I could do.

SML

Yes, sure, so really that’s your…that’s your advocacy.

LH

Yeah, it is, and you sort of learnt that over a number of years. When you first start out it’s easy to sort of move one way or the other, but then when you think about it, you think no I shouldn’t have done that. It’s wrong.

SML

Sure, that’s…again, that’s that reflective process, being able to look at the decisions that you’ve made and learn from your mistakes of course, or, you know just evolve as a human being anyway. Um, ok, so those core values that you were saying that you were blessed and fortunate enough to have, um, can you talk about those a little bit more, where they’ve come from, who…how far back the go or what sort of...

LH

Yeah, it’s probably from my father really that he was a very fair, honest, um, hardworking person, but also a person who um, would think fairly deeply about things and we would have discussions about things on the television, or books, or whatever, and he would…but he would listen, he would never lecture he would listen and he would put in a point of view, but he would let you make up your own mind…so he was easy to talk to…easy to talk to about things, but he also had a very fair attitude to people and to um, to work situations to um….he…so I think it probably all goes back to the way he was, and the way
he let us grow up to be whatever we wanted to be, to discuss whatever we wanted to discuss. So it was very open, and very free, um, and he would learn from us and my generation, and friends and everyone, as much as we would learn from him. So, I think that worked really well

\textit{SML} It sounds to me like it wasn’t a prescriptive approach

\textit{LH} No, it wasn’t a prescriptive approach at all, it was…there was never any prescription, it was sort of “well find things out for yourself” and then, um, and he would never take a particularly firm point of view, he would just say “oh, yeah, I can see that is an interesting way of thinking about things”, so, I think by the lack of those prescriptive boundaries, you come to your own idea of who you are and how you’re going to operate. Whereas I think that if a lot of things are imposed on you in a family situation, you either accept them for a while or then you try to break out of them if you’re that way inclined, and both of those things can be a bit disastrous for a time, you know. I mean, obviously you grow through it but…

\textit{SML} But really you’re again, you’re touching on the fact that it’s…when there’s a prescriptive approach, it tends to be fairly hollow in that core…in the core aspect of being self evaluative, you know being able to evaluate the situation and, and it’s the actual…that support for an open ended um…analysis or interpretation that sort of allows you to develop a stronger sense of those core values.

\textit{LH} Yeah, I think so, you know particularly when, you know, my father was in the war and he was, um, up in the islands during the Japanese occupation and all of that sort of thing, but he never ever uh, you know he…a lot of people would have a lot of resentment towards the Japanese, because of what
they did and what they saw, but he went out and learnt Japanese as an older person, you know, just as a hobby and he would never, um, he always accepted that the Japanese...you know things were not right at the time, but there was no reason to hold it against the Japanese people as a whole

215:

216: SML   Wow

217:

218: LH   So, um, whereas I think that a lot of returned service people perhaps in their own hearts sort of could never forgive what happened.

219:

220: SML   Oh right, yeah that’s a very um, you know, that’s a wonderful story about your father, very instructive. Um, and I’m caught up in that

221:

222: LH   I’m actually going to

223:

224: SML   Have you got somewhere to go?

225:

226: LH   I have to…I’ve got an appointment at about 1.30, it takes me only 5 or 10 minutes to get there

227:

228: SML   How’s our time?

229:

230: LH   It’s about quarter past,

231:

232: SML   Well, look, you’ve really um, been a terrific interviewee, you’ve answered a lot of the questions that I was hoping to draw out of you, and I really appreciate that, and really, the only other questions that I was really going to ask about were things like, you know, the Bruntland definition of sustainability and
you know, how it’s quite global, and just the way you bring your own sense of meaning to this idea of needs that don’t impinge upon future generations, you know how do you sort of make sure that we’re…what I’m really asking is that we’re obviously living with too much, we’ve…and we have to draw back from that position, now, the hardest thing is that, you know the thing that we seem to be in most denial over…

233:  
234: LH  How do we do that?  
235:  
236: SML  …is drawing back  
237:  
238: LH  Yeah, I’ve always felt very strongly about the transport issue and driving and I’ve tried to live close to things so that I can walk or ride my bike most of the time, and use the car a lot less than most people would use a car. Um, so, and I take public transport whenever I can, I think through how I can take public transport and then think if it’s really impossible, I’ll take the car, so I really try and do the transport thing quite seriously, and I’ve tried to instil that in the…my two daughters and they’re quite good at that too, in that they’re very much public transport oriented, and they will walk every…because of where we live they can walk to most things that they want, and be independent, so, and I think in the future when I…when we sort of…I’d like to build a house in the future, but where it is will be very much influenced by how I can get around on public transport and how I can have a car just for those things that really can’t be done um that way.

239:  
240: SML  SO have you been involved in any, I mean and this is just quickly getting you to say um…projects that are fringe, urban fringe developments, have you ever had to deal with that?

241:
Not so much, no but I have…we do increasingly get a number of clients who buy land out in beautiful agricultural areas and they have their 40 hectares or whatever the minimum size is and they want a big house, a really big house, and they’re out there and I say “yes, we can build you a house that works well, but you’re going to need two cars for your family to operate, and you’re going to be driving in to Geelong or wherever all of the time, you know, three trips a day in and out. Is that sustainable?” And that’s the really hard question, because people don’t want to hear that.

They don’t. SO is the firm very up-front when clients come in, how assertive…

Not really in that, I don’t think they address those things quite as well as we should because a client comes in with a piece of land they’ve bought, and we will do a house for them. But, I’ve questioned it with a couple of…with the directors a bit, saying why are we doing this big house, who needs this. And they say, oh yes, nobody needs that, ha ha, you know we don’t need…and, I’m saying, look there’s this great double garage and one of them will be a four-wheel drive, and the other one will be a big station wagon and, um, they’ll be in it all the time. You know, they’ve got three kids at school doing all this stuff, it doesn’t make any sense.

And so you get back to that idea that we can sort of hive off the ESD bit, and feel quite good about that as long as we ignore…

But, we haven’t addressed the issues. And I think where the real issues are going to be is in making urban environments…dense urban environments good places for people to live
But there are plenty of examples

Oh, there’s lots of them, I mean masses of the inner suburbs of Melbourne are fabulous, great places, and there’s numerous examples in European cities, and probably some American cities that I’m not aware of that um, are doing that and transforming brown-fields…what are they called? Brown-sites of something where, I don’t know, it sounds awful

Leftovers

Into really lovely housing places. There’s…we went to one in Adelaide right in the city, the square of Adelaide that

What’s that called again?

Yeah, it’s (laughs)

Yeah, I’m sure I’ve read about that particular…

What’s his name…Peter somebody lives there…anyway, it was great, it was very very packed in but everyone had lovely views to a little piece of garden, little piece of courtyard, they had, um, a sort of a small car parking area with a few little cars and they were trying to arrange it so that people could pool the cars and you didn’t actually have to own one, that there would be a few cars there, that you could take one, book it but otherwise you could ride your bike everywhere around the city area and those things work in a city, they really work. Um, you can live so well with using less from a transport point of view if you choose where you live.
Yes, so there’s a lot of other factors that come to enh…to make that possible.

Yeah, and if you’ve also got, on a slightly bigger scale the fact that green spaces can be designed in, and all of that to make life bearable for children and

Yes, for all communities

Yeah, and then I think you’ve got the best situation and people can’t have really big spaces to live in, therefore automatically they’re using less energy to run a house, um they need to have all of their water collected and um, and the no-waste bits, you know, let’s not let any of this water run away, let’s just collect it all

So, that whole approach, to actually live more densely solves a whole range of issues.

Yeah, and it makes businesses work too, if there’s a lot of people living in a small place then you get businesses that flourish, so I think

Yes

I think it makes a lot of sense and buying things out of town is a waste of resources, a waste of agricultural land, a waste of people’s time and fuel,
And really if there’s that pressure, you know if towns develop or communities grow, that they really should be micro-communities.

Yeah

…maybe, rather than just sleeper suburbs

And self contained, and work places mixed in with where people are living, ‘cause so many people now are really office based occupations, they can be anywhere. They don’t have to be in the central city, they can work in any location where people are um

As long as there’s networks that support and stimulate…

Mmm, that’s right

Alright, well, we’ll end up there because I really thank you for your time, that was terrific, really good

Oh, that’s alright, you never quite know how these things are going to go, do you.
Appendix C6: MP_1st interview_18.01.06

18.01.06

INTERVIEW No 1

Between MICK PEARCE (MP) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)

Recorded at MCC Offices, Bourke Street, Melbourne City

Recording 10.00 am (2.20 hours)

Transcription (Sahr Willis) 14.0 hours

SML So first of all, thanks very much, Mick, for having this interview with me…allowing me to have this interview with you

MP(over) No problems

SML and, I’ll just say that the reason why I’m conducting this interview stems from my literature review on ecological sustainability, and uh, I’m interested that within the architectural discourse on ecologically sustainable
design, there is a bias towards design intervention, as opposed to designer transformation in the discussion. So, while I appreciate the necessity for this, I argue that it’s not sufficient, and therefore I’m looking at how we can bring designer transformation into the base of our design intervention. And, um, so, I start out by saying that we operate at two levels of need, both of which are open to change. One is our public professional needs, which tend to be task oriented, and our other needs which are our private and personal needs, which are primarily self-oriented. And, I argue that design intervention aims at task oriented needs, while designer transformation aims at self-oriented needs.

So, I’m looking at the blending process, you know, how do you sort of um bring both of those needs along in alignment with one another

Um, so um, I start with Paul Keating’s famous truism which is, you know, “when in doubt, back self-interest, because it’s the one…”
SML: “...horse that you know that’s always trying”.

MP: Mmm hmm, Mmm hmm

SML: I think that it’s a really powerful force and that we should acknowledge its power over our motivation over, our sense of purpose and commitment and and work with it more consciously, and arrive at the um at an understanding of our purpose as architects towards making change towards a more sustainable future. Uh, so what I want to discuss with you ah, is you know what is the ways you maintain your level of commitment. What sort of structures you put in to place, what sort of, um, props that you use, so I’m sort of going to try and tease that out if I can

MP: OK, OK

SML: OK, so, um, I suppose, I’d like you just to talk about why you’ve become involved as an architect and then why you’ve moved your architecture in the way that you’ve moved it. I think that’s a fairly broad statement to start with...

MP: Yep, OK, look, I’ve always worked from theory I like theory, and I like.. but I also need to test the theory all the time with real um, design projects...

SML: Mmm hmm

MP: And that’s why I’m not in a university, I I I actually have to be...
48. SML …working…

49. MP…right up at the coal face

50. SML fantastic

51. MP And then I, the other thing is I tend to self educate, I taught myself most of it. Um, now it’s based on on ecological ideas, um, and uh…

52. SML So you’ve come to your architecture through ecology rather than through…

53. MP Well, yes, I’ve moved from being trained in one of the leading schools in Britain The Architectural Association, which was the leader of um the sort of end of the industrial age or the machine age celebrating the machine

54. SML Right, OK

55. MPI mean, we were taught at school, at the AA, the dictum by Corbusier that buildings we’re a machine for living in…I’ve moved away from that, because I think that we’re no different from other species

56. SML Mmm hmm

57. MP
Um, if you look at other species, or other animals especially, they make nests and burrows and buildings, and other ways of modifying the environment, and I subscribe to the idea that, that burrow, or that nest is actually an extension of the organism.

In other words, if you like, hink and so on. And, and But the act of speaking, language, is a very consoling act,

I mean, there are dozens of examples of people who’ve moved to different places and failed because they’ve not changed their cultural…

Mean, there are dozens of examples of people who’ve moved to different places and failed because they’ve not changed their cultural…

Yes…bridges…or those sort of communication

They’ve taken their culture with them…

Right

And tried to…and simply practiced their culture in a different environment
You’re kind of, you’re sort of not relating to the real to the reality you’re relating to a concept of of what you think. The um, your personal boundaries, and not sort of realising that you’re more than that, than the skin on your body, that there is more to your boundary than…

Exactly, so it’s like making new boundaries. Now boundaries have all sorts of ah, problems about them. They have one side, which is what I call language, or um or culture, or

Mmm hmm

Um, and that’s to do with the past. Uh, we particularly have a fascination with language, I mean our species…

Mmm hmm

put two humans together in a room from totally different cultures, they’ll end up talking, in some way, so we we have to speak

Yes

in order to think and so on. And, and But the act of speaking, language, is a very consoling act,
I mean, there are dozens of examples of people who’ve moved to different places and failed because they’ve not changed their cultural…

Yes…bridges…or those sort of communication

They’ve taken their culture with them…

Right

And tried to…and simply practiced their culture in a different environment

Right

In fact, a very good example is the Norse people, who went to Greenland, taking with them, farming methods from Norway, and they failed.

Right, ok

The whole community, beautifully described by Jared Diamond (??) um in his latest book but, there are many examples like that

Yes,
So that one factor is the language you take with you, your past, your heritage. Another factor is the environment itself. And in my book, if you’re a designer, you have to absolutely understand the local climate, and the micro climate…

…of where the building is. Um, you have to understand it in the same way that ah, and react, and respond to it in the same way that a termite does, or a any…or a beaver changes a river system

it can modify it, but can only modify within the bounds of the…or the the constraints of the climate

Mmm. I mean, we have a problem in that we are very technologically advanced, and therefore our technological prowess gives us a level of power and control over our senses in engagement with the environment, that doesn’t allow for a lot of humility or a lot of um acceptance that it’s a space for other organisms, other uh, living entities as well, that might not have the same power as we. So we tend to, um, we tend to…I think that it, it’s changed our way we look…
our vision of the world around us has been dramatically changed because of the technology that we’re capable of using, developing, and therefore our vision is affected by our technological prowess.

That’s exactly right. (Pause) …And it’s to do with um, energy

Yep

We’re all, all the species on the planet, um, transform energy from the sun. And, uh, we’ve found enormous deposits of energy stored from previous periods and we’ve mined it. Now, um, it goes right back to the invention of fire.

Mmm hmmm

Not the invention of fire but the…

The use of it…

The use of it…

or control of it…
You know, you, if you’re able to use fire in forests, and you’re competing with other animals, you have a huge advantage.

Particularly if you can boil up your fruit and vegetables. And therefore, produce pathogens. And therefore you can eat all sorts of other things that you couldn’t eat if you didn’t have fire.

So your whole…immediately you’re…

In control of a much larger…

…much larger…

array…
array of stuff

Yeah

Um, and also you can…uh by heating it, you’re actually saving your own energy in digesting it.

Mmm hmm

So you get all these huge advantages

Mmm

Just from transforming energy. Well, um, that’s where it starts and it goes on and on because we now, without realising it are, are changing the climate of the planet

Through our energy …use of energy

Yes

And this whole idea of being a, uh, you know, a body of energy that is you know, bringing, absorbing energy and releasing energy. And this whole idea of being a, an energised mode of life rather than being a static, self contained, you know, um, object in the space
I think that there is a lot of rethinking that needs to be um, sort of, absorbed about our sense of person, our sense of personhood, and sense of object.

So that we can understand this relationship with energy transfer that we actually are

And that might help in reengaging with the, you know, the idea of what energy really is. And, that it’s more than a resource, it’s actually us

We, we need to, yeah, we need to really reassess. We need to change our whole relationship with um, with nature. I mean, that’s why that story about the…Eve, wandering around in the forest that I keep on telling you about. Being about a hundred watt…
...consumer.

Mmm hmm. Mmmmm.

And then, Eve plus tools. A ladder and fire, you step it up to three hundred watts. And then, Eve plus fire, plus tools, plus all the modern cons

The motorcar, the 4x4 and all the other bits, she shoots up to 11000 watts, and then you translate that back, and she’s a 40 tonne mammal.

Mmm. That’s a really good analogy, it makes things very explainable. It’s very visual way of describing our impact.

Yeah

And this sort of information, you’re gathering this information through…
Just your reading, and you’re actively looking for those examples to try and tell the story as, um, as easily as possible. As supportably as possible.

Tell a story that people can support because they can see the argument.

They can understand the implication…

Mmm. I mean there are other people that who’ve, that that, who’ve…that are worth reading. Every designer must read the Gaia

Sorry, who?

Gaia, Lovelock

Yes, Gaia
They must be familiar with that, every one in Australia has to read um, Tim Flannery’s latest book…

Yes

Otherwise, they’re…they’re…

I’ve got it on a (unclear)... (laughs)

No you must read it – it’s very well done

Yeah, yeah I haven’t flipped the pages yet

It’s, it’s got, it’s pulled together everything that’s happened over the last two decades.

Mmm

It’s very concisely and well and well written

Yeah

I’ve just finished it. It’s excellent.
Yeah, yeah. So that’s the way that you’re…

That gives you an enormous basis

Yes

Of theoretical thinking, for, for… a springboard for…

Pursuing an argument…

A point of departure for design

Yes, yep, that’s right…

I mean, I want to, to write the next book, after Tim’s book which is the, how you move from there to applying, um, ways. You see, he’s talking about a broad picture.

Yeah

Um and of the urgency of, of the need to change, and so on,
But on a very broad scale. And the, the thing is that you the first thing to do is to reduce consumption of energy.

That *must* be the first. And you do that by, uh, using technological approaches to design. Which reduce energy. It just saves energy. I mean, we waste vast amounts of energy in the way we behave…

Yes. I mean, just taking that point say with, um, Michael Browngart and um, Mcdonagh, William McDonagh’s Cradle to Cradle (sic) philosophy where they’re talking about becoming net *producers* of energy rather than users of energy. Do you um, you know do you have a way that you, um, try and pursue that particular plan?

Mmm. Oh yeah.

I mean, I know that…

But I think the, uh…we, we, we have to be right because you need to understand the theory of entropy. I’m not sure whether McDonald (sic) does…

Mmm hmm
‘Cause the entropy law really states that in any transformation of energy from one form to another, some entropy results.

Yes, that’s right.

You cannot break even.

Yep, sure.

So, um.

There will always be a, uh, a sort of reduction, well, through the heat isn’t it?

That’s right. I like to then, when you’re talking about energy, think about the next triangle, which is scale. That is the rate at which the energy is consumed.

Right, OK.

And distribution…This comes from Dally, Dally’s economics. Distribution: Who gets the energy?
SML: Mmm, that’s right. Very problematic.

MP: That’s about human justice

SML: It is, that’s a moral issue

MP: See, scale is about rate. Rate of consumption. And, and going back to scale, the rate at which the ecology can absorb the resultant entropy

SML: Mmm, yeah

MP: Um, distribution is, is about justice, and finally allocation for efficiency.

SML: Right, the actual way that the… the rules…

MP: I mean, it, it…when you say that you start producing energy you become producers, well, um, it’s more, actually to do with allocation, of efficiency of use, in fact. No one…I mean a plant is very efficient at converting solar energy into biomass

SML: Mmm hmm
And then we eat (or heat?) the biomass, and so on and so on. But, um, and we, we *can* collect solar energy, and, and redistribute it, and then we become positive…

Mmm, yes

…producers.

But in our, in our habitat, we use technology in order to harvest that, all that free energy there. Whether it’s wind, or solar and various other things. And heat producing energy. Or energy that produces heat, or the, um you know, waste um gasses or all those other ideas that are out there.

Mmm hmm

Um,

Now this is the basis of my design, so I start uh, when I get a project, I look at the climate,

Mmm hmm

I look at the culture…

Mmm
And the technologies—the local sources, human and natural. And I look at the...you know, how much money there is...

Yes, which is...the economic

The economic...

Yeah, bottom line

Yeah

Which is crucial to...how much you can develop the idea, and how much of the, how many ideas you can bring in to play

Mmm. But it’s, uh, it’s a difficult one, the money one, because most of the um, the building work we do, is based on bank debt and that introduces another layer...

Another layer of complexity...

...you know, short-term, long-term structure.

Yeah
Um, and uh, it, it. No economic argument factors in natural resources.

No, not at the moment, no.

Doesn’t belong. The... Our economies in the West are all based on growth.

Yes, which don’t take in to account the effect upon the, or the, you know, the effect on the resources on the natural and... and also consider things like air is free, fresh air is free, and don’t, sort of, cost that.

They don’t put a cost on that. They don’t recognise that the limits...

...to nature’s ability to maintain that free air um...cycle

That’s right

OK, so really what you’ve been talking about is, you know, the way that you improve the... it’s your self-education process.

Mmm
It’s the way that you keep on um, reviewing your own level of understanding and your…

Yeah

And then demonstrating your understanding through practical um…some sort of practice. Um, um, so obviously, my question here was really it’s to do about…it’s to do with expertise and how you handle this in your workplace as an architect.

Yeah

So, really, you’ve described how you do that, in the fact that you’re…you know, you’re constantly looking at the, the theory behind energy transfer, energy consumption…

Mmm, mmm

And you’re always looking at how that becomes a built form, how you absorb that that in to the workings of the, of the building…

Yes

How the building works as an energy, um, it’s working to transfer energy to its occupants and out of the building envelope and through the building spaces. So, um…
One nice story is that architecture is as much about energy as about light.

As about light?

You know, people talk about architecture’s expression of light, really. I mean it’s space and…

That’s right, about the play of light on form.

On form. But it’s also as much about energy.

Mmm, yeah. Is that a new observation, do you think?

No, no. Vitruvius, lived quite a long time ago.

He did…(laughs)

And, uh, he was Julius Caesar’s architect. Uh, and it was Julius… Vitruvius, I’m told said that what started, or what created human society was the fire.

Right
Because the fire. There’s a lovely picture drawn by Vitruvius of humans dancing around a fire, and in another corner they’re actually building houses and things, uh, for each other. But, uh, the fire provides light and space at night, and also produces warmth, and uh…

You, you then follow that analogy, and think of a child drawing a house, with a chimney, which doesn’t become alive until she draws the smoke…

And somehow, what’s um, to pursue this line of thinking. I can’t remember the name of the author, I read this from. He was a Spaniard. It’s a nice idea because if, it seems that in the machine age…
…fire has disappeared from our consciousness. Whereas previously it was always there.

Mmm hmmm

It was there on the fields where people farmed, because you burnt the stuff off

That’s right, yes

And you, you cleansed the field with fire, um and you fertilised the field with ash.

That’s right.

Now we use fertiliser, and we use um, we use machines

Heavy machinery to …

Which are all driven by fire…

Destroy the…

…in the form of fossil fuel
Appendix C6

483: Yeah, combustion inside the engine

484: SML

485: Yes, but it’s gone. It’s disappeared from consciousness

486: MP

487: That’s right

488: SML

489: And fire has become something we fear, particularly in Australia

490: MP

491: That’s right, it’s changed the value…

492: SML

493: Instead of something we all dealt with every day. In Africa it’s not so. In Africa, people are totally conscious of fire. So when they see a bushfire they don’t get frightened.

494: MP

495: Mmm. They understand how to deal with it.

496: SML

497: To deal with it…

498: MP

499: Because of that, that familiarity, and that’s what’s missing.

500: SML

501: They also are conscious of the carbon cycle

502: MP

503:
So when you say the...people get upset, in the West, they don’t realise that actually, the smoke goes up um, and the CO2 goes in to the air, which is then removed from the air and, and turned in to biomass by the plants. It’s all part of the cycle.

OK, yes.

The problem for me is, we’ve lost that consciousness, um and therefore, and we don’t understand that we’re adding vast amounts of fires that never happened...

Oh, right?

Because, well um, the reason why we have fossil fuel is that um, 200 million years ago, the planet was covered with

Green matter

...huge, huge amounts of plants in a reduced atmosphere.

Mmm hmm, right, ok

There were no bushfires.
The plants died, and laid down in vast quantities, um, so we, and that’s how the solar energy has been stored up, if you like, uh, and now we’re releasing it without even realising it. And we’re totally changing the balance.

One way of looking at it: that consciousness of energy, I think, needs to be kind of, something that architects need to express.

If you talked to an engineer, an environmental engineer of the “old” type, he would say what we need to do is shut out the natural environment.

Control it.
Fear it. I say no, no that’s wrong. What we need to do is to relearn how to live with the natural environment.

Yeah, in our most sophisticated urban spaces

Yeah, and and

As closely as possible, mmm.

As closely as possible. Retain that, that relationship.

Mmm so, you know, in this particular illustration that you’ve shown me here, the fact that you’re trying to bring as much light and air to as close…even if it’s right over the, you know, the computer monitor, or underneath their feet, as deep in to the, in to these urban spaces that are normally a long way from being in contact with the outside environment. And are you finding that, um, that we have the technology to do that? Are you finding that it’s a um, it, you know it’s, not um… I mean we have, is the problem more our desire for control rather than our technological…

We have masses of technology. There’s no shortage of that. And our ability to use them. There’s no shortage of that.

Yeah

The biggest problem we have is our own culture.
Mmm, yes. We have to transform our culture.

There’s a beautiful description of the Inuit peoples that we called Eskimos, that are now called Inuit, who have adapted to the polar regions, the arctic, in a magnificent way. They, they have their boats which are like battleships, they go in to the Arctic and they, they have found ways of adapting, eating seal, hunting seal and whales, um, and killing just enough to keep them going through the winter. They’ve completely adapted to their environment, and they’re totally in touch with it. And then, the Norse people went to Greenland, uh, and what killed them was their religion, funnily enough, because they imported a bishop who made them build a cathedral in that very cold environment. They used not only all the men to build it, but they used most of their resources

(over) Mmm, mmm hmm. Mmm hmm.

Instead of focusing on…

reality

…putting down as much hay as they could, they also brought with them cattle.
Which was a terrible mistake

Right, inappropriate

Yes, I mean, so everything they did, and they also regarded the Innuits around them as a sort of lower class people

It’s such a common story though isn’t it?

I mean it’s a story that you’ve heard again and again. You know, the reason why Australians grow wool is not because Australia is a good place to grow wool, it’s actually because they came, a lot of them, from England and Scotland.

That’s right, a wool producing nation, really.

They brought a sheep from Spain, well, a merino, um, and they felt it was their tradition to make wool, and so on.

Mmm, yeah

But it didn’t necessarily relate to the environment

to the Australian continent
So all these factors come in, and I think that, half the time, it’s our culture that gets in the way. That’s very true.

And, for one thing, we can certainly live with less energy. We do not need air conditioning, most of the time.

No, we don’t. But, I mean, just talking about air conditioning, for example, I was in Malaysia for a short time and um, the status symbol in Malaysia is an air conditioning unit attached to your window, because it’s, it’s a way of belonging to the powerful, the affluent, to the Westernised, um way of living. And therefore, there’s another battle that needs to be enjoined as well, which is to allow people to respect their own indigenous culture, their own indigenous um, ways of solving, or engaging with their own habitat and valuing it, and giving it dignity.
Appendix C6

610: MP  Yes that’s right

611:

612: SML  And, when the West is so powerful, when technology is seen as such a wealth producing um strategy, that there’s this problem of valuing, you know, what is really valuable and what is of no value at all.

613:

614: MP  Mmm

615:

616: SML  But we have a…our value systems are skewed

617:

618: MP  Yeah, absolutely, yeah

619:

620: SML  And, and, and it’s the western approach to uh, living, which is also a need, you know, it’s neurotic, there’s all sorts of problems in the way um, you know, we see the world as you say, it’s a cultural barrier that distorts how we think about our relationship, um with, with life, really

621:

622: MP  Mmm

623:

624: SML  It’s a very fundamental problem we’re actually talking about

625:

626: MP  Mmm. Huge.

627:

628: SML  and, in a way, uh, that has to be addressed, when as architects you’re taking on the problem of making a change. You have to address these
very fundamental, and very deep seated and unconscious level of disengagement.

629:

630: MP Mmm

631:

632: SML And, so, um, I’m interested in the fact that you’re using certain strategies to bring to raise the um pertinent points…

633:

634: MP Consciousness of it, yeah

635:

636: SML Yeah. So um

637:

638: MP So I do a lot of talking, a lot of um, preaching, if you like, or parables

639:

640: SML Parables, yes yeah, you were mentioning that in the email

641:

642: MP Parables, rather than dot points um, really to get people thinking again. I, I think it’s not it’s not the uh the sort of 80% of the world’s population who are very poor…

643:

644: SML No, it’s not

645:

646: MP …that seem to be destroying the environment, it’s the top end.
It’s the aspirational drive for technological prowess

That’s right, that is the real problem

Mmm. OK. So, you know we’re talking about the values of the current mental paradigm here, that’s what we’re talking about (clears throat) and that’s the controlling mindset basically that’s the root of the problem, um and so, it’s looking at leadership and governments, and how you make change in your position, how you make change. So, in your position, can you just describe that? I know that you, you have been, but can you describe that again in your position where you are now, how you bring about this change, and the way you govern the momentum to engage with change.

Well, I, I’ve become someone who goes around really talking

and presenting these ideas. Um, uh, now it’s just because I feel very strongly about them, and I find that it does work to do that. And you can do it with clients.

Mmm hmm
The problem is that most clients uh have the enormous power of being the one with the chequebook.

Um, architects feel very restrained; they don’t want to upset the client. In fact, I look out for people who want to develop building who actually have this insight already

If I can’t get that, I do make an attempt to persuade them

Um, and I’m finding that more easy, now

Why?
Because, uh people are becoming more aware. It’s changing very fast.

Right, so there is a…so you’re sensing it amongst your clients who are coming to you, that they’re already prepared. There’s a preparedness to listen to…

to listen to what you have to say? Even if they might not have the same level of awareness, uh, you’re saying they’re certainly more open to making

Yes, they always, they always talk about the bottom line, but and, the bottom line is a very short-term bottom line, usually…

Mmm

But, if you can, um, talk to them about the you know…The main problem is that it’s clear that energy costs are going up, that oil is running out that, you know

So you push that line, in order to…

And the climate is definitely changing.
Mmm, yes

And, and a lot of them are sceptical. You avoid them, the sceptics. If people are sceptical, leave them. That’s fine. They can…uh

You can’t...

They’ll lose out, they’ll lose out. They’ll lose out on the fun, and the enjoyment of this approach

Yes, that’s right

And they can stay in their glass box with the air conditioner on.

Until they’re driven out at a later stage

But buildings, now, must last 50 years to justify the expense

Right

And, certainly, within 50 years if the business is usual,

Yes, it’ll be dramatic
…apparently it’s going to be three degrees warmer, sea may have risen 1 ½ - 2 metres all that…this is all regarded as scaremongering at the moment.

Well, it’s not. And I agree with you that the statistics are there, the, there’s plenty of agreement amongst

There’s no excuse

Amongst those who know, and amongst those who are following the measuring and collecting the data, there is agreement on exactly what you’re saying. It’s the political will which is, it always needs to be brought up to speed and the political will needs to also show leadership. At the moment there seems to be this level of conservatism that is sort of tied to um, sort of a very, very unenlightened political sort of thinking.

Yeah

What is it to do with? Um, you know, brute force or there sort of seems to be a movement away from open mindedness, from, um, liberal thinking, from social redistribution um,
That’s not quite true, there’s plenty of examples there of people who are still, ah, you know, well, what was being discussed on the news today was about the avian bird flu and the fact that there are a whole lot of donor nations getting together to look at mechanisms to spread the cost of insulating against those, that sort of pandemic. And yet at the other extreme, you see, you know, the AIDS pandemic that is not being addressed in a um sort of logical or or in an enlightened manner at all. Um, so, you know, so there's… you can only work within your own sphere of influence and, as an architect, you’re working um, at a level that’s to do with economics, it’s to do with standards, um building standards. Do you find that you’re engaging in those pragmatics, you know the pragmatics of building delivery. Are you, in your position, are you talking to people in government about…

Yes. I mean luckily, working for a local authority…

Right,

is…

you mean the City of Melbourne?

Yes. Suits me better in some ways, because it is a political organisation, and these decisions are largely political and there’s a lot more freedom in that sense for me, working for a local authority, provided the local authority regard what I do as part of the service that they should be providing.
¶750:

¶751:F Mmm hmm

¶752:

¶753:FM Because it’s, yes. That, too, has been a great success from that point of view because its... it may not fit the corporate accountant’s bottom line figure, but it pushes the boundaries of thinking and of design, as far as you can, really.

¶754:

¶755:F Yes

¶756:

¶757:FM Um, and that’s very important, because you’ve got to lead the way and, and, the local authority is the best vehicle for that at the moment.

¶758:

¶759:F Yes, so and when you say the local authority, you’re saying that in contrast to the state or to federal.

¶760:

¶761:FM States are not…I mean, usually states, which are very important, are pushed by local authority, and the politics of local authority, and that’s probably where, cause the local authority is at the interface between people and politics.

¶762:

¶763:F Much closer to community than…

¶764:

¶765:FM The, the, ah, central governments seem to be you know far to big for small decisions

¶766:
Mmm hmm. Yes

Um, and they’ll focus much more on the external factors, but also on the… and both local authority and the central government um, are looking at the next elections, and they’re usually working about ten years behind, uh the reality

Yeah

But, uh, local authorities um…

You’re finding the best opportunities

And, also that the city itself has become a more important entity

Mmm

In particular Europe, and in certain cities in America, so I think the city is beginning to compete with other cities

Mmm? Yes? You’re noticing…

Yeah, and the green agenda
Appendix C6

¶786:

¶787: SML agenda is being used as a…

¶788:

¶789: MP is being used as a huge political banner, not so much by central governments, but by local authorities. There are lots of examples of that…

¶790:

¶791: SML Yes, you’re quite right

¶792:

¶793: MP Munich, uh, Hamburg in Germany, in England…

¶794:

¶795: SML I’ve read about Chicago

¶796:

¶797: MP …Portland in the States and so on. And Melbourne. Vancouver. I mean they’re all looking in that direction and uh,

¶798:

¶799: SML I suppose it’s knowing how deep that commitment is going

¶800:

¶801: MP Curitiba, fantastic example and its done at enormous…Curitiba particularly is now in a position where they choose the industry that wants to come and settle. They’ve got a waiting list.

¶802:

¶803: SML OK

¶804:
So they say, well actually, we’ll have that one, and not that one, bad luck.

Fantastic, geez. I did hear Jamie Learner speak and he was talking about how quickly he had to do these things. He talked about speed, more than anything else, but he’s concerned that you should jump in and not worry about the consequences you can fix the mistakes as you go along, but you just have to jump in there and work as quickly as possible while the opportunity is there. He talked about how small those windows of opportunity were. You know, he built a park in 28 days, because that was the only time that he had, and he had to...or else the park would have been privatised.

Or somebody would have noticed and done something else

Mmm

Yeah, exactly. Or it would have been...

taken out of the public realm. So, and you know, so it’s I mean, so there’s an example of, you know, of somebody that’s gone in to politics, he’s gone in to local government um, and as an architect, he also has that training as well.

Mmm So I’m finding that that’s a good position to be in, platform to be in, with the local authority
819: SML  Mmm yeah

820:

821: MP  But, ah, you move in to private practice, I think, you get back to the old problem of being ah, very subservient to the corporate, or subservient to the banking system and that whole… problem…

822:

823: SML  Mmm that whole… and that takes us back to another issue which is to do with the public, the government architect which the RAIA started to talk about a need for. And so you’re taking, again you’re trying push architecture to be more responsive to the public realm…

824:

825: MP  Mmm, mmm

826:

827: SML  Whereas, as you say, in a private practice sphere you’re that one step removed from the freedom of, of addressing directly, um, public issues. You kind of have to move through your client in order to address a public issue. I would presume.

828:

829: 50 Minutes - 44.53

830:

831: MP:  Yeah, in private practice, you more or less have to wait for a client that’s willing to go along with you…

832:

833: SML  Who’s engaged with that

834:

835: MP  Yeah
SML Who shows real um. An open-mindedness to that. That’s true. So in a way you need to respect the fact that you wait for clients to come along, or you work only with those who are prepared to work with you

MP Yeah

SML Alright, so can we talk about…we’ve just talked about how you think there’s a growing awareness, and that you’re working with people with this growing awareness.

MP Yes

SML What further changes do you think are necessary to push that?

MP Well there…The other thing that I find is that architects mustn’t be afraid to step out of their cocooned existence that, it’s um…

SML To get out of their comfort zone…

MP Architects…it’s something that everyone should be engaged with

SML Yes
Appendix C6

855: MP  It’s a public thing...

856:

857: SML  Very true

858:

859: MP  People, uh, you know, must feel the…I mean, I quite like working with um, I do the odd house, I’ve just done a house for an artist, and I’ve tried to make the house an expression of his art.

860:

861: SML  Mmm hmm

862:

863: MP  You know, the house is meant to be like his paintings

864:

865: SML  Mmm…ok…

866:

867: MP  And he’s got totally involved with it and has added a lot of his ideas to it

868:

869: SML  Fantastic, yeah

870:

871: MP  And that’s been great fun. So I think it is an enabling process as you were saying. So that’s the fun in architecture…

872:

873: SML  Mmm yes

874:
if you try to build your own monument and become better and better at selling it to the corporate, uh, I think you’ve lost your way

I mean, you’re talking about a very fundamental difference. You’re talking about um, participate you’re engage…you’re asking the client to actually become

participate

become architects…co-architects

co-architects. Not necessarily the person who’s got the chequebook, but the people that are going to use it

Mmm

It goes back to that extension of the psyche we

That’s right

The whole idea that that’s what the building is. Um, by doing that, if you can get a building that people can really belong to in that very holistic way like an animal’s burrow, there’s no question about their productivity and bottom line…it goes along…it’s more healthy, it’s an environment which they enjoy working in
Mmm, the results can be better and actually, a point that was raised in another interview was about um, customisation and personalisation.

Yeah

And it was, the discussion was around well, the original way architects would come up with ideas, through the imagination, using hands, pens so it was a very human, it was a very tactile imaginative response.

Yeah, yeah

You now have a situation where you’ve got computers that do a lot of the drawing for us. There’s now these new computer software programs that actually generate ideas or options, so that you’re basically just putting in a set of parameters, you’re establishing the parameters and the computer is doing the imaginative work. And spitting out the finished options, you know.

Mmm

So there’s a… so we were talking about the fact we’re stepping away from this customised approach to delivering a drawing, we’ve also stepped away from a customised approach to delivering construction… Most of our construction is moving into factories, and in to prefabrication and, so there’s very little, there’s less and less hands on work going on, on site
That’s right

SO there’s all these layers where the personalisation, that customisation seems to have been moved out of the process

Mmm, absolutely

Yet, we are encouraging more participation at another level, encouraging that sort of design participation, so our clients are still able to feel the human scale because it’s their humanness that’s been catered for. And, maybe that’s also why there’s a lot of emphasis now on the actual individuals being able to interact with the spaces once they’re built. So that’s a level of hands-on and a level of customisation is now in the use of the building rather than in the making of the building, or drawing of the design…

Yeah, yeah

It might have been stripped back at those stages, and it might be, sort of, re-expressing itself in the use of the building. So there’s always that. We don’t lose that sense of, you know, customisation and personalisation.

Yes, to do that, to get that, you may need to do much more group work. I mean, you know, we’ve tried it with the workshops um, and that needs…that’s been going along all the time too… although we perhaps should have done more than that, but you’re, you’re always in a hurry to get
the damn thing up and to make it work. But the more participation you get from the wider wider…

920:

921: SML View…

922:

923: MP Users. From other experts, the better the product I think. If you can control it.

924:

925: SML Yes, yes if you have the luxury of the time and the

926:

927: MP Yes, it does…it gets expensive, workshops, very expensive but they’re good. They’re good things to do. And the more you can pull people in, the more people own the ideas.

928:

929: SML And so it comes down to how do you, you know, it’s the accounting system that you set up to say you know that this justifies you know, this longer term consequence, wider consequence. So, um, with CH2, when it comes to maintaining that ownership, because there might be a sense of ownership with the current group of users, of…how are you envisaging that sense of ownership is going to be an ongoing process over a 50-year life span of the building?

930:

931: MP It’s a bit out of my hands that one, because, uh, we’ve started something. Whether it will continue or not, I don’t know

932:

933: SML Right
I think the, um, inevitably, the pressures on the people that take the risk

Mmm hmm

That is, the people that write the cheque, you know, the local authority, are enormous

Yes. How do you lighten their burden for them?

And what happens is that, that always reduces the amount of participation, the more, the more pressure that’s put on the people that sign the cheque the more they have to reduce their participation. I mean I knew this from running a cooperative, which I did for five years in North East England

Ok

And everything was open book, the entire cooperative knew exactly what the profit and loss was

Yes

And they all shared equally in the profit
So labour, in that experiment, was uh, owned profit. And capital was entitled to a fixed interest. It was the reverse of a normal company um. That I ran. The problem with it was that as pressures grew on the…and the market got worse and worse, and we were forced to close down eventually, um in the last stages there was no way, I had to hide information, because if it got out that we were trading very close to the line…

The line, we would have been closed down

Stamped there. Yes, that’s right.

Immediately, information becomes important. That’s exactly what always happens, but you lose the advantage of the participation

That’s it

Participation has potential but how do you

How do you maintain that balance

Maintain that balance, yeah
SO, in fact, in this case I think, um, in CH2’s case, we can’t have everyone in the building not room.

Right

We’ve got to house other people in other buildings and bring them up to the same standard. It’s a long process. A lot of it is about keeping people informed. About keeping that line of…

Right, but once you move out of that project how is that going to be maintained?

I don’t know (over)

Is there something that’s been put in place?

but I know that it’s a lot easier to run a company if you don’t tell anyone anything about what’s going on…

Fair enough, so there’s always this fear, that you know, the easy option will be taken. Right. Yeah. Ok, so, what changes have you
actually found that you have had to make in your own life to accommodate this way that you practice architecture.

990:

991: MP  Well, we’ve…you cannot expect big profits if you become a pioneer. You won’t make big money.

992:

993: SML  That’s right

994:

995: MP  You have to accept that, because it’s not the right way to make money.

996:

997: SML  That’s right, not in the way money is made

998:

999: MP  You’re building things which are ahead of their time and uh,

1000:

1001: SML  The risky…

1002:

1003: MP  Very risky. And uh, I was very lucky to find a client that would work with me. It’s very rare.

1004:

1005: SML  Yeah, and that was really what generated your, your career…

1006:

1007: MP  I mean, another example is the Wright brothers would never have got the first aeroplane into the air without the guy that put up the money. The prize money. He was a newspaper man. Newspaper king. He had the
foresight to put up the money for those people to make an aeroplane. And without that money it never would have happened. We wouldn’t fly. It’s as simple as that

*SML*  
"Yeah"

**MP**  
So it the process needs people - risk takers with imagination. Those are the…and they should get as much glory as the designer.

*SML*  
"That’s right. Yes, the people"

**MP**  
As it is, everybody’s forgotten the newspaper king that put up the money. Everybody remembers the Wright brothers, but the king was just as important

*SML*  
"Absolutely, crucial to the process. And I think I saw a documentary about an Australian who contributed his ideas to the Wright brothers, and it was his pioneering work on the box-frame…"

**MP**  
"Really"

*SML*  
"That…he was a philosophically committed to the idea of open knowledge, so he allowed his knowledge to be open to all and sundry"

**MP**  
"Yeah"
And, in the end, he has...his ideas contributed significantly to what the Wright brothers perfected.

And he got nothing out of it.

But he has...his achievements...fascinating. Yeah. Um. So, ok so while, I’m really looking, these questions here are sort of taken from sustainable governments' strategy. So we’ve looked at how you change the dominant mindset, and now we’re looking at how you rearrange all the parts around you to accommodate that, to maintain a fresh, sort of, maintain the momentum. The sort of personnel that you draw around you so, who, who are the people that you make sure are part of your design team, that you want to uh, keep those different perspectives, push those different perspectives and bring in new skills and you know, reshape the project that you’re working on. SO can you talk about that?

Yes, Yes. It’s really the engineers um, who you work with. Um, I don’t have the skills, uh to uh, the mathematical skills and the theoretical skills to do all the engineering. I’ve got a good feeling for the engineering problem.

So you’re talking about the energy engineering?

Yes. And I find that this approach needs a new breed of engineers who are trained differently from the Chemical and mechanical engineers. They need to be called something else because environmental
engineering is uh, a holistic business, and uh, it needs, uh, you break down all these barriers, I mean, the engineering’s become more and more specialised

SML: Yes

And they find it very difficult now to leap in to other forms of engineering. Um, I’ve found this group in Sydney, run by Che Wall of ten or twelve young people, who can, to some extent, can change their roles within the same team. They’re wonderful to work with. I found another group in London, who work in Arup office, and they have a totally different approach there. Their whole approach is holistic. Holistic engineering. Where you bring in every factor, and deal with it, actually put figures against it, and measure it

SML: Right

Turns in to mathematics. Um, and then, I mean, it incorporates, you know, in this new approach the building um, form, is a vital part of the um, mechanical performance of the building.
It was divorced

I mean, you made a pretty building, you sent it down the road to the engineer who made it work. Built it up and provided all the ducts and stuff they would have added in afterwards. But now the ducts are a space. The, that’s why I’m going through all these crazy metaphors like the termi…to try and bring the thinking in to the team. And there’s another group in there’s a group in Stuttgart, who I’ve met a lot of them, never worked with them, but they have an amazing team of holistic engineers. And this is absolutely vital.

Right, Ok

It’s got to come from the Universities

Right

And I find that a lot of universities are way behind. Terrifying

Yes, it’s a real problem. Mmm. What about the environmental, you know…when you’re talking about ecosystems and the way buildings and people are part of the ecosystem. Do you find you need those people around you as well, people who are, you know environmentalists?
Appendix C6

¶1067: MP  Yeah, yeah

¶1068:  

¶1069: SML  Who come from marine biology or some sort of other

¶1070:  

¶1071: MP  Well, they would be very useful, I mean, they, they probably have’t got to the point where they’re placing humans in the ecology. I mean, some of them are. I mean, I know that the City of Baltimore uh, started a program which they got ecologists to study the ecology of or study Baltimore as…

¶1072:  

¶1073: SML  An ecology, right…

¶1074:  

¶1075: MP  And that was a program

¶1076:  

¶1077: SML  Right

¶1078:  

¶1079: MP  SO I’m looking for ecologists who bring in humans in to the story.

¶1080:  

¶1081: SML  What about the concept of bioregion. Uh, do you sort of have much to do with that? You know the fact that a region is seen as a cultural, and biological and geographical and um, economic whole

¶1082:  

¶1083: MP  Sounds good, sounds very good, yeah. I mean, are there people thinking like that?
Well, uh, there are some places that have been designated as bio-regions, so it’s sort of a new concept that is trying to be taken on and Point, uh, goodness…

There’s a famous one in Denmark

There’s one here just outside of Melbourne

Is there?

Mmm, I keep thinking it’s Point Lonsdale, but I think that could be wrong. I’d have to get the right area for it but it’s goes down…yeah, I don’t drive down that part of town, so I don’t know it very well. But, um, that has been designated a bioregion. But trying to get the idea to work is the difficulty.

Yeah, I mean, it really is important in engineering, because I remember trying to uh, I did a huge hospital in Zimbabwe and it was very hilly, and the civil engineers were building storm water or designing storm water ditches all over the place, and I said look, I don’t want to get rid of the water, I want the water, so I want you to design retention swales and so on. Um, “Oh, no, no, you can’t do that, no, no”. So I mean, the civil engineer is often my enemy, totally. So I have, you know, real problems with… you know if you talk to Bill Mollinson, he was, and that lovely campus in Newcastle, which is designed as a sort of model
A permaculture model, is it?

A permaculture model, yeah. The whole campus is designed as an ecological system

Is it? Ah.

And it’s all happening. And it’s a wonderful example. It’s in an ancient Eucalypt forest.

Right. I’ve not heard a word about it.

Yeah. And they’ve got swales and all sorts of things. They might get a fire one day which might be a bit of a problem, but…

Right

Because the old Eucalypts like fire

Mmm, need fire

But um, you know they’ve taken that plunge and it’s a wonderful environment. It’s very good. Very very good.
Appendix C6

[1117] SML Right, Ok

[1118]

[1119] MP And they can deal with storm water properly, but you talk to a civil engineer and all he thinks about is getting rid of the water to the next pipe. And they talk about the width of the ditch. I’m not… I’m interested in the area of the swale and making…retaining water, and getting it into the substrata and so on…

[1120]

[1121] SML That’s right. And reducing the flow…

[1122]

[1123] MP So, it’s really…You know, instead of this linear thinking, it’s all a part of engineering training. We’ve got to move right away from that. And it’s absolutely vital, and very urgent

[1124]

[1125] SML Yes, but linear thinking is the way we’ve been…our society has operated for generations

[1126]

[1127] MP So, how to get this in to Universities quickly is what worries me.

[1128]

[1129] SML Mmm ok

[1130]

[1131] MP ‘Cause I go there, and I find that it’s not being taught

[1132]

[1133] SML You’re right, it’s not
I mean, RMIT has no environmental um, architectural…

Subject or…

Subject.

Not …yeah or mentality

Yeah, I mean, and it’s very worrying

I mean, I’m, I’m from Deakin University as you know, and I’m not a lecturer or anything, I’m actually a student, and I’ve gone through as a mature age student, I’ve gone through their undergraduate program and seen how little it is…how little emphasis is placed on a holistic view of the built environment, and, and, where, environmental thinking, how it’s relegated, where it ends up. And, it’s not valued, it’s not seen as the first priority, the basis upon which you start to justify your design thinking

Yeah, and that is a pretty severe criticism of a university. If it isn’t leading edge, what is it meant to do? Where is it meant to be? Universities must be right on the edge, on the leading edge…

I think that they haven’t set their parameters properly, they haven’t…they haven’t set their goals
Well, it means that there’s something seriously wrong.

Well, that’s my interpretation.

It’s the same in London. My school, the AA never has moved nearly fast enough in this direction. So I’ve actually…I’m no longer a member of their Association…

Right, because of that conservatism and uh

Yes, well, they tend to rest on their laurels, instead of moving forward all the time. It’s very serious.

Yes it is. Um, Ok, ok, so, we’ll look at the goals, you know what are the goals you have set yourself. Can we talk about the goals that you’ve set yourself?

Um, yes, I’m having to work, um, away from home, really, that’s the problem. I had goals in my firm in Zimbabwe and I’m still part of that firm. I’m meant to be the senior partner, and I go back every year and it…it gets worse and worse…

The political climate, you’re talking about?

Yes. Um and more and more difficult to keep the thing going. It’s rather difficult to make plans…
¶1168: SML  Right

¶1169: MP  Goals sound like plans

¶1170: SML  Yes, they are

¶1171: MP  But I think, probably, what I’m going to try and move in to is a position where I’m, I don’t belong to any particular country.

¶1172: SML  OK

¶1173: MP  Where I’m…

¶1174: SML  International…

¶1175: MP  …like the wandering Jew…

¶1176: SML  …itinerant

¶1177: MP  You know, I simply go from one project to another, and stay there while it’s being built.
¶1189: SML Mmm hmm, yeah

¶1190:

¶1191: MP I like to be around it

¶1192:

¶1193: SML Yes, absorbed by…within the culture or within

¶1194:

¶1195: MP Yes, I don’t want to become an advisor to people who want to tackle a project. That’s what they all want me to do. They want me to come in and just tell them how to do it, and then I go away and they…

¶1196:

¶1197: SML go back…

¶1198:

¶1199: MP …finish it off

¶1200:

¶1201: SML …with their own ideas or something

¶1202:

¶1203: MP You know, it’s so important to try things out and follow them right through to the end

¶1204:

¶1205: SML Right

¶1206:

¶1207: MP And be involved in the re-assessment of them. It’s very important. Otherwise you go through your life kidding yourself that they worked.
¶1208: SML Yes

¶1209: MP And you have to be prepared to

¶1210: SML To revisit…

¶1211: MP …to revisit. So there are no end, fixed goals, actually

¶1212: SML Right

¶1213: MP Um, the goal of course is eventually to try to get as many people aware of the problem…to raise consciousness

¶1214: SML Yes, sure

¶1215: MP And to get.. and to keep involved at the front line. I regard myself as having to, education has to go on all the time, right through your life, like you. A mature student.

¶1216: SML That’s right. Alright, so, in your own…when it comes to your own personal space, personal life. Do you find that you make conscious…that you are making conscious changes to the way you live your life. I mean you’ve talked about, previously about the way you cycle to and from work.
mean, how deep do you take that commitment within your daily practice? Daily life?

| 1226: | MP | Oh, I think it’s very important, that. I find that, um, actually just cycling to work makes a huge difference to my health. I mean I don’t get sick. It’s just amazing. And just that little bit… It’s silly to do violent exercise I just do |
| 1228: | SML | Mmm hmmm that’s right |
| 1230: | MP | I don’t cycle hard, and I wear ordinary clothes when I cycle, and I don’t mind a bit of sweat, but this idea that you’ve got to break every record, every time you get on is absurd |
| 1234: | SML | Mmm, it is, isn’t it |
| 1236: | MP | Yeah, just do a little bit and you’ll feel fine. It’s all you need. |
| 1238: | SML | So do you apply that… |
| 1240: | MP | I apply that all the time, and I’m getting better at that. |
| 1242: | SML | In all… in various other aspects of your daily life, or your personal thinking, it’s sort of moderate |
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\[1243:\] MP Moderate, yeah

\[1244:\]

\[1245:\] SML …and little by little, step by step. So you don’t see yourself as making radical change. Do you think you’ve ever noticed a point in your life where you’ve made a radical change?

\[1246:\]

\[1247:\] MP Um, I don’t…uh, I’ve made. There’s never any particular point, but I sort of drifted away from my earlier political activity which was pretty violent to a much more passive position when I realised it didn’t work. In Africa, that is. So I’ve changed there.

\[1248:\]

\[1249:\] SML Mmm, yes

\[1250:\]

\[1251:\] MP Um, I’m beginning to think that, you know, we completely misinterpret other cultures…

\[1252:\]

\[1253:\] SML Mmm hmmm

\[1254:\]

\[1255:\] MP So there’s a change, I mean, I’ve changed from somebody who’s pretty arrogant, to somebody who’s less arrogant and more accommodating, so that’s a change there, as I get older…

\[1256:\]

\[1257:\] SML Yeah. Probably comes down to exposure and experience and reflective thinking and being…

\[1258:\]
Yes, you realise that…and I think that’s very important never to be sure that you’re right. And have the confidence to change. It’s very important.

Very true

And not to…this idea that you suddenly retire is absurd…

Yes it is, isn’t it

I’d much rather die!

Yes, that’s right, it is an absurd...way to think about your whole life

Yeah

Alright, now, the next thing that I want to talk about is restructuring the rules of engagement. How the power over how work gets done is real power. So, if there’s work to be done it’s about who has got the power that are the crucial...crucial to getting change to take hold. You know to getting a way of thinking about sustainable design, or sustainable building, to take hold, it’s the people that have got power. So, how much power do you think you have in being able to generate changes in the work situations that you find yourself in. You know, you're looking at this idea of being a roving architect, so you’re moving in and out of established power structures. How
can you affect change. How do you get hold of the power in the organisation to effect the change that you’re looking for

1274:

1275: 1.17.08 3 hours

1276:

1277: MP Well, a lot of it is credibility, you know, and you build up credibility as you, you know, you have a track record and that’s worth power. That’s worth power and persuasion

1278:

1279: SML Mmm, yeah

1280:

1281: MP Um, I don’t…I think that…and you also have to take risks, you see. You have to, uh, keep taking…

1282:

1283: SML Mmm hmm

1284:

1285: MP …keep taking risks with people as well. I mean, I’m not a corporate person at all, and I don’t obey those rules, and that doesn’t get me any power.

1286:

1287: SML Right, in, in that within that organisational structure

1288:

1289: MP Yeah, but I think that you just, you get into a powerful position by seizing an opportunity. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t, you’ve got to seize the opportunity. You’ve got to find the opening and always take it. I never actually don’t take up an offer. I always listen to an
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offer. Whether I take it or not is another matter, but I think it’s very important to always be open to change, to seize an opportunity. And forget about the guy that is the big corporate boss who is… who tells you to sit, that you haven’t got the cheque book, I have, so just…

1290:

1291: SML Mmm hmm… buzz off?

1292:

1293: MP Buzz off. That doesn’t matter, I just go…

1294:

1295: SML Go off…

1296:

1297: MP go off, yes

1298:

1299: SML Go off and find an environment that’s more conducive

1300:

1301: MP Somebody that’s… yes. You’ve got to look for opportunities that work and there are and there always are. Just keep looking.

1302:

1303: SML That’s right, and that’s the attitude isn’t it, to have?

1304:

1305: MP Yeah. I don’t think you will… you won’t change much of the big power… conglomerates. You won’t. Um, but you’ll do it by finding people who will change. And then they look a bit lost. And then they’ll change. But you won’t do it directly.

1306
Alright. Um, ok so, a lot of the information that you rely on, obviously it has to be information that’s focussed around developing sustainable ideas about living in harmony or living sustainably with one another and with our natural… our world. So, could you talk about some of that information that you put around you.

The information. There’s masses of information. You have to keep crosschecking. In other words, you know, I like reading the New Scientist all of the time.

Mmm hmm, yes.

It’s a good crosscheck, because you can see a great variety, and it’s current, it’s all current stuff. Um, I then I keep reading books and I keep… I’m a very slow reader but I really make a lot of time to read at night. I don’t sleep much, but, you know, it’s essential to keep up with, with reading.

Right, so you condense your sleeping in order to maximise the amount of time.

Well, I’m lucky. I don’t need too much sleep…

Right. You’re fortunate.

…because I’m a very slow reader.
Right, ok

But I, I think that is essential. You have to keep up with what’s going on and cross check.

So where do you look?

Well, you know the books, and you know, I use the web but I use…but I read books, I tend to read books rather than…

Yes, read screens or…

Read screens and be very wary of the web. The web is great

Mmm, it’s good to source information, but as you say, cross check, go to the printed word.

Printed word, yeah. Um if they take the time and the trouble to write a book it’s usually better. And then you follow the bibliography and find other books.

Mmm, that’s right
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¶1343: MP   You cross check with that. And that’s the way to go, really. And you know, I use Amazon a lot

¶1344:

¶1345: SML  Amazon?

¶1346:

¶1347: MP   Well, to get the book

¶1348:

¶1349: SML  Sorry, yes, yes, the web search

¶1350:

¶1351: MP   And it’s absolutely wonderful. You just search for a book and you get it.

¶1352:

¶1353: SML  Yes, sure

¶1354:

¶1355: MP   And I occasionally go to bookshops, but…the best way is through the web

¶1356:

¶1357: SML  Yes, it its

¶1358:

¶1359: MP   It’s wonderful.

¶1360:

¶1361: SML  Yeah, very convenient. So, um, and gives you a breadth and…

¶1362:

¶1363: MP   And I read reviews in New Scientist
What about outside the architectural magazines?

I never read them

You don’t read their reviews?

I’m afraid I don’t, I don’t subscribe to any architectural magazines. I can’t afford them.

Is that right? Ok

Well, maybe they’ve changed but they’re usually horrendously expensive

Well, they do seem to be very superficial – the writing.

Good pictures but…

Yes, its very…you can get bored with it

I gave up architecture magazines years ago. I read New Scientists and I get a magazine called ReFocus, which is a German produced
uh, solar magazine. There are quite a lot of environmental magazines, energy …alternative energy magazines. So I keep up with all of that.

SML Mmm hmm, are you involved in any other organisations, or you know, do you sort of beyond your architectural life? Do you have other lives?

MP Yes, I have a role. I go to Holland three times a year to participate as a judge in a thing called Price Clarke’s foundation.

SML Right, I’ve only vaguely heard of that

MP Well, Prince Clarke um, was the husband of the Queen of Holland. And he’s a wonderful man, he developed this idea of um, the prizes for outstanding performance in development and culture in the third world. In Asia, in Latin America, South America and Africa

SML Yeah, right?

MP And, uh, we for instance this last year, the four or five judges…seven judges, and we go and judge things. It’s rather like a sort of mini Nobel Prize thing. But it’s particularly in the area of culture

SML Right
All the culture—all the arts. And to get a prize a person must be very good at his particular art, but uh, must also have made a positive contribution to society, um, in a positive way.

Mmm hmm

And um, we’ve just done humour and satire, so it’s various people who are very good at cartoons and stuff.

Right

But it…and that’s a great sort of…you know we go to Amsterdam and we have the whole thing there. It’s great fun there. I’ve got another two years of that. And that’s really outside of…

Totally. It gives you a sort of completely fresh, you know, it takes your mind right away. It’s like going on a holiday, a mental holiday. It allows you that…

It’s hard work, you know

I’m sure it is…and when I say a holiday I mean…

It is a complete diversion
A complete diversion. Alright, um, so um, I’m looking at how… your feedback mechanisms or how you foster an idea or foster a group of people around you. Sort of mechanisms, feedback mechanisms do you sort of think work in, um, you know when you’ve got your design team. How do you…what is the feedback mechanisms that you rely on?

Yes, I mean during the design process, I um, I really think it’s important to listen before you speak, so, and I think anybody within the group that has something to say has got to be allowed to say it and listened to. So listening is very important. And I think that in the building, the buildings I’ve designed the east gate and Haruser house and various…well particularly east gate and Haruser house. Um, I’ve lived in the building. So we’ve set up the office in the building, and lived there for four or five years

Mmm, terrific

Um, and that’s enormously because you don’t normally get much feedback. And then I wanted to get the firm…the goal wanted when we were in Zimbabwe was to set up an architectural firm that did projects and facilities management so, we’ve actually…so we get…

Yes the ongoing running

Yes the aeroplane and the make it fly. You don’t just sell an aeroplane when you’ve finished making it. You’ve got to keep it in the air – like Boeing does.
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1429: SML Yes right

1430: 

1431: MP And that’s how buildings should be. And we’ve been at East Gate for six years so we know it backwards and we know how it behaves

1432: 

1433: SML Sure, and are you the facilities manager?

1434: 

1435: MP No, and it’s raging, infuriating. Because the client still insists on doing it, and they make a very bad job of it, and we keep on offering to take it over

1436: 

1437: SML Right. Why do you think there’s a resistance there?

1438: 

1439: MP Oh they just…it’s just that they’re, that’s why they’re there, they facility manage it and they give it away and…

1440: 

1441: SML …their job is…alright, ok

1442: 

1443: MP But, ideally, if we could design, develop, build and then manage

1444: 

1445: SML Have you…do you know of any examples like that?

1446: 

82
I don’t think architects tend to get involved. And then, so they don’t build up this body of feedback as they should do. It would be ideal if they did.

I mean I was just, again, it just reminded me of the illustration in Cradle to Cradle about the um carpet manufacturer that changed its…not only…

…it’s interface

Yeah, its interface. Yeah, changed not only its manufacturing process, but its ownership program, and it now owns the carpet for the entire life of the carpet, so in aNo, um, I don’t actually. No, way that’s really what you’re putting forward

Very much so. That’s exactly right. Incidentally, you’re sitting on Interface carpet

Is it owned or rented, or leased?

No, there’s no benefit tax-wise to the council

To, to rent, or to lease the carpet

Whereas most companies would get an advantage there
Oh, because it’s government

Yes, you don’t pay tax

Oh right, there is a sales tax. That’s right. Oh

It’s rather maddening. But, anyway, it will be recycled. And probably get bored with the colour.

Right. Can you just talk about who are your exemplars, who do you sort of follow, not follow but who…

Well, the person that changed my direction and gave me a lot of confidence was Bill Mollinson actually,

Right

Because he came to Zimbabwe…

yeah, yeah?
In 1986. And sat down there and lectured to a whole bunch of agricultural demonstrators, talked about permaculture. I just thought that coincided exactly with where I wanted to be, so Bill had lots of influence.

Right, Ok

That was very early on, you see

Yeah, sure, yeah

SO, I was trying to do the equivalent of um (coughs)

Do you need some water?

Yeah

Um, yes, so, who else would you sort of allude to who are current?

Um, well look, I mean, um, I suppose the people I read. I think that Tim makes a lot of sense. Tim Flannery. Just currently. Um Jared Diamond I like because I’m a geographer. The only thing I could do at school was geography. I wasn’t interested in anything else. I just, I struggled. I struggled with everything else. And geography was meant to be something that you did if you were useless at everything else so u
Well, great for the days of exploration

Yeah, but geography in fact is about the environment

It is, yeah, sort of mapping the world

Measuring it

Its contours and…

And so, I followed that, I um, you know there are a number of people that I read who are very much my mentor

Mmm hmm

Some of them I’ve never met. Scott Turner is a great physician who writes about the physiology of animals and he’s the one that produced this idea of the extended organism.

Ok, that evolved into the Gaia concept or sort of…

Yeah, and its wonderful hearing or reading a physiological explanation of living systems, it makes a lot of sense because it’s so holistic. And that provides a model for my design. See, I really take this bio-mimicry quite seriously, it’s, I think it does
That’s one of the crucial concepts, permaculture, bio-mimicry

Yeah, and bio-mimicry is really good. I think that architects should certainly do some biology, as well as some thermo dynamics. So there are a lot of areas in Science that are missing in their curriculum

Within in the architecture training…very true

Yeah. And if you banned all architectural magazines from the university it wouldn’t do any harm

Yes, you’re quite right, because there really is an over-emphasis on aesthetics and very little else

Well, there you see, there is a problem, because what is aesthetic? Philosophy of art, in a Greek sense. Well, where’s the philosophy in an architectural magazine? Zero

Very little, yeah, very true

So you talk about aesthetics, it's really more around…

Fashion rather than…
MP  Fashion, glamour. It’s got nothing to do with architecture

SML  No, it hasn’t. Alright, um, ok, so, this is sort of looking at rock-solid commitment and unmistakable clarity, and the ability to generate positive results

SML  That tends to…that seems to be the best way to develop…to have a … to have

momentum. If you can maintain those three

MP  Clarity of thinking?

SML  Clarity of your vision, rock solid commitment to it, and then also you have to back that up with positive results. So I want you to talk about your positive results. I mean, obviously East Gate is one of those, and with CH2, obviously you’re hoping for positive results there.

MP  Yes, look ,I mean, you have to fight for something you want. You’ll never get there without a struggle, so you must be prepared to really battle for it. Um, and in the battle that gives you the focus, and the sort of clarity. I mean clarity is, I think, very important. I’ve learnt to, I’m very bad at writing, and talking but I’ve learnt to make it more and more simple by using simple language, actually. Because you get it across much better. So communication is vital, so talking is just as important as listening but you
need to try and use very simple language, actually, to get across and that keeps your thinking clear

SML  Yes, I appreciate that

MP  And then you have a, and you must expect a battle

SML  Right, and so one of the strategies you use to do battle is simplify the language, to keep it as easy to appreciate it as possible, so you don’t lose people just through the language that you’re speaking

MP  Yes, very much so. And also you must, you know, I was thinking of the turbine problem here, with the big one, because we nearly lost the turbines on CH2

SML  You nearly lost the concept?

MP  Yeah, because the.. there wasn’t…

SML  …there wasn’t sympathy with the idea of a turbine?

MP  Yes, the engineers couldn’t see the advantage of them, or wouldn’t factor them in to the engineering equation.
So you mean…I know when you talk about the termite you talk…

No the turbines…sorry the turbines, the wind turbines

Oh, the turbines…my apologies. Oh right. Oh

And it’s really because of the way they…their strategy was slightly different than mine

Ok

But, um, we won in the end because we ended up by making a turbine here that does, uh, generate power during the day when there’s a lot of wind, when you get most wind

Right

And then at night it has another function, which is to extract air from the building, when there is some benefit because there is a lot of time when there isn’t enough buoyancy with the air to get it out of the…up the chimney

Right…So the wind turbine is being…
And also to…to

Is that wind driven or do you use a little bit of power to drive it?

No, no it’s wind driven. But what’s good about…you know you battle away at certain things and the battle is a very important part of the process because it really makes you more robust and more uh…hard-nosed about the argument…

Sure

…and it’s not a game. It’s a real fight. And the other thing is that you have to be prepared to accept failure

Mmm hmmm

With humility, and you know, accept that failures are strengthening occasionally…that sounds very…

No, it’s important

But it is, I mean, there’s strength in failure, and weakness in success
Right, I think, you know, that I can understand the strength in failure, probably not so sure about the weakness in strength, are you saying…

Well, you rest on your laurels

Right, so, when you’re talking about failure, in a way, are you talking about the fact that you have to make compromise. You might find that you come to a point where…

No, I was really thinking of things that don’t work

Oh, right….

Um, or they work differently from what you expect, and you see, we…

SO you’re talking about engineering…

Engineering things as well

Right, rather than say human relation failures…

Yeah, well, that’s another one that…but in the engineering field I was thinking, perhaps
Right, yeah. So I suppose, in a way, you use that engineering sort of strategy to bring...you know to sort of, maybe bring those relationships that need to be developed. Maybe use it to lead the argument, to develop the momentum through engineering

Yeah, yeah. I think it’s essential for architects to become engineering thinking, and for engineers to become architectural thinking. But, there’s a huge sort of communication barrier there. They don’t understand space

Right

And uh, we don’t understand energy, and as the thing has to express both it’s essential that we understand energy. Basic concepts of energy, and you know, I’m not a scientist, I haven’t got the faintest...I can’t do calculus, I can’t do much mathematics, but I have a good feeling for thermodynamics. The three laws of thermodynamics. Um, and that’s by self-teaching. I was never taught them in school at all, but they must be fundamental parts of architectural training. And again, you know, architecture is energy and light combined...not just one or the other

Yes, alright. Well I think we’ve talked a lot about commitment so I’ll just move on from there. Um, what I’m interested here this is about spirituality and spiritual energy and psychic energy so it’s another level of energy that I would really like us to discuss (laughs). Because I’d like you, I put the question to you what has spirituality got to do with Ecologically Sustainable Design and I mean there’s a lot of discussion about...
Um I have a slight problem with spirits but because my wife
does as well, but I’m an atheist you see, but uh on the other hand, I think that
we…what’s very important is to recognise where we’ve come from. And the,
the real deep connections we have with our origins. e how beautiful they are.
Um, and very much alive. The sort of relationship between human farming
which is all peasant farming…

Right, yeah

You know, that sort of stuff, for me, is indescribably powerful

I won’t leave it. It’s…I was there about two weeks ago and
driving through the country with these wonderful villages and the plains and
these immense great granite rocks rising up covered in diverse ecologies that
you don’t see anywhere in the world. That’s beautiful. It’s absolutely
incredible how beautiful they are. Um, and very much alive. The sort of
relationship between human farming which is all peasant farming…

Right, yeah

You know, that sort of stuff, for me, is indescribably powerful

Yeah, it is, yeah, that’s right
And you know, that’s important to me, that’s very important. And I think we’ve come from the Savannah that’s our origins, that’s the origins of the species and that is…it’s that part of Africa which has given birth to our aesthetic. That’s about spirituality, that’s the essence. You know the plain, the flat plain and the water and the trees and the edge of the forest.

*SML* mountains

*MP* All that sort of thing it’s where we are

*SML* Yes it’s the glory that glory of nature

*MP* Yes, and you see it here too, of course, you see it in this landscape too. And, I can’t tell you…the landscape in Zimbabwe is just fantastic. It’s so diverse. You know you see, just in one glance, you see 700 species - so amazing. It’s incredible

*1.45.22 1 hour*

*SML* That is amazing. I suppose though, that comes down to…it raises a discussion about monoculture

*MP* Yeah
And how do we hold on to that, or recreate it, in Australia’s case, where we need to sort of move away from our very, very limited pastures and agriculture and redevelop diversity or re…how do we…

I know…have you read Tim Flannery’s book? Really depressing about Australian agriculture

Yes, I suppose it’s moving beyond – how do you maintain a positive outlook and see the positives…in

Oh, I think he does and I think Australians have no problem there, you know, they’ll get out of it, absolutely no doubt about it – I have tremendous confidence in Australia as a…

Mmm?

Oh, yeah, yeah, I mean there’s no problem about getting out of it, it’s just being aware of it that’s worrying

Yeah, right, ok, so it sort of getting the issues out…

And there isn’t much time either, I mean, that’s the trouble

That’s the real dilemma
But I’m quite sure you’ll get out of it

Well, when it comes to… when you say “Get out of it”

I mean you’ll find a way

To, to re-diversify

Yeah, there are enough resources, human and natural to…

have the solutions, um, yeah, are not unavoidable. What about in Zimbabwe? Do they have to hold on to their…?

Well, there it’s a different one, because you see, the energy problem uh, isn’t a problem, people don’t use any energy at all. The fossil fuels don’t exist, I mean they… there’s no petrol at the filling stations

Oh, is that right?

Oh yeah, I filled up my car in the backyard, someone’s backyard, with a pump from a 44-gallon drum.

A gallon drum, right.
You carry a jerry can if you want to get around, so you… and so the actual consumption of energy is practically non-existent compared with here.

But let’s say… let’s look at what’s happening in China and India, there.

Well that’s, that’s very worrying, I mean I think they… they’re very conscious of it now, but they’re tearing down a road which is disastrous.

Yes, yes.

I mean, China’s much more of a worry than… to urbanise 400 million people in 10 years has never been done – and I don’t think it can be done. I think they’re going to run out of resources…

Yes, I, I mean I was just listening to a report about world watch, just released a report about… in the car as I was driving down, talking about China and India being… you know, looking at the problems that they’re creating for themselves and for the rest of the world, but also looking at some of the sustainable… the ways they’re addressing the issue of sustainability and that there is people in government, powerful people in government people who are ministers for energy and ministers for the environment who realise that they… that there has to be sustainable outcomes. That they can’t just look at progress as resource intensive, they have to find ways to control their resource consumption. But at the moment, they’re doing things like banning you know, the deforestation within their own boundaries. They’re heading off overseas and looking for other forests to pull down…
To exploit

So um, yeah, and so unless people become very serious about organic forms of archit... of agriculture or permaculture or, um, use materials that are recyc... that have very short regeneration times, maybe like bamboo, or, you know, products like that. Um, you just wonder how the scenario is... is disastrous if you don’t take very very radical...

Yes, I think, on the other hand, the Australians are going to cope less well when the oil runs out than the Chinese or the Africans, the Africans have got quite used to coping

That’s right

But the Australians haven’t. And the Americans

Yes, we’re a very high level of dependence

Yeah, so it’s uh, and that’s an important factor, you know.

And again, that’s sort of the mindset that needs to be um, altered. You know, how do you prepare an average Australian to become less energy hungry
It’s difficult enough stop them using so much water.

They use a fantastic amount of water, um per capita. It’s absolutely appalling. Um, you know, if you go to cultures in a place like Sudan, you’ll learn how to wash yourself with a glass of water. Perfectly well

Um, and this is women, that do it.

There’s a French woman I know who does a lot of travelling in Sudan, and she learnt how to do it

Right, wow. It’s all information isn’t it, and access and communication, yeah, open mindedness

Yeah

Alright, um, so can I talk about reflective practice, do you know, do you um, you know, do you deliberately pursue techniques for
thinking about processes that you’ve been engaged in during the day and refining that process. I mean, do you do anything like that, or…

¶1751:  

¶1752: MP No I don’t, not thinking of um, a process of thinking. Look, I mean, the main processes that I use is a pencil and a sketch book

¶1753:  

¶1754: SML Mmm, right

¶1755:  

¶1756: MP I think that you…uh, drawing on paper. Uh drawing on paper is much quicker than drawing in a computer, and it’s much more direct with your mind, so you think up things, and I don’t think you can escape from that. I mean other people may be able to, but I cannot design on a computer, I design in sketchbook, and I keep the sketchbook. So the process is the sketchbook.

¶1757:  

¶1758: SML Sure

¶1759:  

¶1760: MP And it’s a good one. Um I don’t know whether other, I mean, perhaps today the young use different method. But there’s a danger with computers that you’re simply regurgitating…it’s so easy

¶1761:  

¶1762: SML Yes lots of cut and paste.

¶1763:  

¶1764: MP Cut and paste, yeah.

¶1765:  

¶1766: SML Yeah, it’s very tempting
So, beware of that. I mean, the computers are so enormously valuable as computerised drawing but you can also very easily, that’s a huge advantage. Um, but um, getting the concept across in your mind and developing

Yes, you can be waylaid by computers by the way that they think, by the way they do things. You tend to tailor your thinking to attune yourself to the computer when really that’s not what you set out to do when you sit at a computer

Yes it’s very important to gauge the right moment to switch to the computer

mmm hmm, that’s a good point

You know, you can move in to it far too early and then you just end up a mess

Very true. Alright, um. So I suppose what I’m trying to do here is I’m starting to look at that more intuitive side of the way we handle our self development, and so and that’s why I’ve asked you about reflective practice, and I’m looking at intuition, and wondering how you bring that in to play. Is that something that you, you know, because, really we’re talking about those psyche…those levels of psychic attachment to our, you know our, to who we are, the fact that we have evolved with the earth, we have evolved in this space, we are of the Earth. But often we, and that’s sort of there down
in our intuitive sense of self, it’s not often expressed in our rational, logical sense of self.

\[\text{1779:}\]

\[\text{1780: MP}\quad \text{That’s right, that’s right}\]

\[\text{1781:}\]

\[\text{1782: SML}\quad \text{So in a way, I’m you know, my reading is saying well we need to draw on that intuitive sense of self, in order to fast track this sort of change of rational thinking. Because our rational thinking is not logical, well it’s not very rational. We might think it is, but we’re not getting rational outcomes, if you look at the state of the world. So, we need to be, um, promoting intuitive thinking in a way that is, um, constructive to sustainable outcomes. And so, (laughs), I’m just wondering, have you ever thought of it or?}\]

\[\text{1783:}\]

\[\text{1784: MP}\quad \text{You see, I’m very lucky because I work in Africa}\]

\[\text{1785:}\]

\[\text{1786: SML}\quad \text{Right, so are you saying there’s already an energy there, a psychic connection}\]

\[\text{1787:}\]

\[\text{1788: MP}\quad \text{They’re fantastic to work with, they, you know}\]

\[\text{1789:}\]

\[\text{1790: SML}\quad \text{Very fortunate}\]

\[\text{1791:}\]

\[\text{1792: MP}\quad \text{Yeah, it’s very lucky because you can’t escape from that in the way they do things.}\]

\[\text{1793:}\]
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1794: SML Right. Have you brought any of that in… (phone rings) My apologies, I think that’s me

1795:

1796: MP You, I mean, here you get enormous value from aborigines, I would have thought that’s…

1797:

1798: SML That would be the, that’s the obvious connection, because of the…

1799:

1800: MP Because their knowledge of

1801:

1802: SML Psychic forces and energy…

1803:

1804: MP All these things, they should be…

1805:

1806: SML Well, it’s totally undervalued inside our white, um…

1807:

1808: MP Exactly, and you see though their art and, of course, that is another thing that I should do more of, I should paint. Do more art. But the… but actually working with Zimbabweans on a building site or anywhere, um, you can’t escape from that, because they just, you know…

1809:

1810: SML It sort of exudes… oozes out

1811:
It’s there, yeah. They haven’t a problem, and you…we’re brought up with that feeling, the whites and the blacks have very similar values in Zimbabwe. Very similar values.

And that…is that reality?

Yeah, it’s happened. And it’s happened because of contact over the period, and u

SO can you explain those values, then, or describe them?

It’s very physical, well they’re very physical people

Ok, so they they’re not in to, they don’t rely on their mental view of the world, they rely on their tactile, you know, senses in order to…

Yes, very much so, and they’re very good at singing and dancing

Yes, yes. Oh, their speaking is like a song. Beautiful.

And then, um, I’m very bad at language but their, what I do know of their language is fun. And their language is all metaphorical, too, which is quite good, so they’re very good at metaphor.
So everything’s like this or like that so it’s

Mmm, sure, so very… so they draw in lots of environmental examples to speak about the way they feel or think or…

And of course the kids, you know, you’re brought up as a kid in Africa by blacks. Always.

Right

So, you have a black mother and a white mother,

So you get a very sort of well balanced mothering experience

Very much so, I mean, my grandchildren, you just see them now, they uh…you know they haven’t sort of patience. My grandson came home from school in one of those awful negative moods where you want to throttle him, doing his homework. And his black mother was there, god she was patient…and eventually got his sister to explain it to him, which worked fine. She’s just right. But, um, there is a wonderful relationship that we are very lucky to have, a sort of cross-cultural thing.

Ok
Um, I don’t know how we got in to that.

Well, we were talking about intuition, we were talking about how…

Yes, that’s right, and they work intuitively, very much so. Um, so you…

So you feel you yourself…

…you listen to your feelings much more

Yes, and do you feel you’ve benefited from that

Yeah, I mean I’m um normally very bad at that, you know, my sort of heritage prevents me from listening to my feelings

You’re talking about your British…

My English…my British…yes absolutely

(laughs) Right, and so the exposure to Zimbabwe has been very positive
Very positive

Yeah…enriching for you

Enriching, yeah, and the third world gives you that. That’s why I go back there all the time, it’s fantastic. You go to Bali, and places…so um, that’s…

So, do you see that as a very positive pathway towards drawing on those…

Yeah

…submerged or devalued in a way, in our society anyway, devalued.

The other thing is that you’re actually, in Africa, uh, not…I mean you suffer the humiliation of being white. I mean you’re despised.

Ooh, oh, OK, in South Africa did you say?

In Zimbabwe
In Zimbabwe, right

By the government, not by people.

Right, ok, it’s political

So, you, you know, you have your passport taken away, you have all this nonsense going on, and you can’t vote and uh

Oh, so you’ve become completely powerless

It’s payback time

It is payback time, it’s revenge, yeah, politics.

So going through all that, um, you know, it’s not too bad for you, I don’t think. I…spending 48 hours in prison isn’t bad for you

Alright…it gives you a taste

Perhaps, um
Well, really you’re talking about experiences aren’t you, and the fact that the more you embody an experience, the more it actually becomes you…your experience. The better able you are to empathise, to really…

That’s right

and in a way, that’s when we get back to you know, ecological sustainability, we have to find ways to experience for ourselves the pros and cons – what are we going to miss out on, or how is the…what is the taste of being without, so that we can appreciate the flavour of what we’ve already got.

But actually, being without is quite good. You know

Yes, yes, yes, of course. To moderate.

I’ve lost a huge amount of money in the last four years in Zimbabwe, and actually, it’s quite liberating

(laughs) right, ok

Yeah, I don’t have to worry about it anymore…

Yes, that’s a great philosophy, I’ve heard that
It’s very liberating, you don’t need all these fetters

OK. You know, I’m a student at the moment, so I uh, empathise with the freedom of not having anything to worry about…which is alright

Sure

Um, Ok, now this is…a lot of what I’ve been reading about is, you know, the Bruntland definition of, you know, human need, and you know, how we satisfy current…our current needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future. So this idea of need is really problematic, because it’s relative., and it’s contextual, and you know…So, how have you managed to grab on to that message?

Yes, well, it’s partly living in Africa too, you realise that, um, you don’t need so much of this stuff. Because you see people without it. I mean, the whole time, you’re conscious of people who live at a much lower level of consumption.

But then, of course, the argument would be that they’re outside of the sort of…the, the way…well you look inside here, I mean look at all the technological props that we have here. The computers, the communications…and I would presume that African nations would be, um, you know, they’re impoverished because of the fact that they’re outside the mainstream of…
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1936: MP Yeah, because they see what they can’t…what they don’t get

1937:

1938: SML So in a way, they might not wish to maintain that level of need that you’re describing

1939:

1940: MP No, no they won’t, and that’s the worry, that, um, although we, you know, we can get it, so we can do without it, but if you don’t get it, then you can’t do without it, you know, that’s a huge problem.

1941:

1942: SML Mmm, that’s the dilemma.

1943:

1944: MP And it’s very worrying, it’s why they all move in to cities,

1945:

1946: SML That’s right, that’s exactly right

1947:

1948: MP in vast numbers. And cities in Africa are growing at 6%, and they’re not getting a house, or a job, or any benefits, and it’s um…so need. People need a tap to turn on water. They’ll need power. SO we’ve actually got to, um, provide vast amounts of energy somehow. Um, and I don’t believe that the Chinese are going to go back on their objective to urbanise 400 million people. Um, we’ve got to find a way of doing it.

1949:

1950: SML That’s right

1951:

1952: MP And keep the planet going. I mean, that’s the problem. So.
That’s right

You know, the need is not going to disappear

No

Or, I think that the consciousness of…

Of what can be achieved is

Of the circumstance. Of the…of where we are and the results of pursuing all of these needs must be got across, it must be part of our education, we all should learn about Gaia and about Now?? and about the consequences of climate change.

Yes, and maybe…but it seems to be that it’s a, um, it’s…we’re tackling it as a generational thing. That we’re…our children are much more aware of these scenarios, and are much more ready to understand…or are much more understanding of the concept of connectedness…

Hopefully they are

Hopefully. But, so you’ve got that happening at one, in one hand, and in the other hand you’ve got this incredible surge in technological
progress. You know, I’ve been following Susan Greenfield’s ideas about where all of this technology is... how it’s changing out engagement with one another, with our wider environment. So, uh, it’s a very, in a way, the scenarios that she’s painting are scenarios where the environment is pushed further and further away from our daily consciousness, that we’ve...that there are so many more layers, so many more filters that we put between, you know, our physiology and the environment around us. You know, we’ll be wearing glasses that sort of have a print out on them that tell us what the temperature is. I mean, we could feel it, but we sort of escape inside this virtual reality, because we can. You know, and a lot of the technological development is really basically because we can, not whether or not they’re of any um...

\[1971:\]
\[1972:\] MP Need. It simply creates a need

\[1973:\]
\[1974:\] SML Mmm, it creates a need

\[1975:\]
\[1976:\] MP And then you have to have glasses which tell you the temperature. It’s crazy.

\[1977:\]
\[1978:\] SML That’s right.

\[1979:\]
\[1980:\] MP It’s a marketing thing too. It’s crazy.

\[1981:\]
\[1982:\] SML Yes, well, these are the forces that are out there, you know...can...which are distorting the way we go in to battle for sustainable
outcomes. And they have to be battled as well, and they’re working um, unconsciously.

MP Yeah right, I see, but it is coming…becoming part of the young people’s consciousness. I can think of at least two or three people who have said to me they prefer to go back to Africa than come here, because they’re missing…

SML something

MP and what is it? It’s actually freedom from need.

SML That’s right. That’s a good point.

MP It really is. And when I arrived this time, two days ago, in Perth, I had to go through customs and they had this ridiculous business of inspecting shoes because there might be mud on them, so I had to give them my shoes, and they were taken away to be purified. Um anyway, the guy that did that was an Indian, and he came back and he said “Oh, you’re from Zimbabwe, how fascinating” and he said you know, lots of my friends wish they were back in Africa – he was from Uganda.

SML Oh, he was from Uganda

MP And he was missing it. Yeah, that’s…and it’s to do with that
But see, but what you’re talking about is where people have the opportunity to experience the contrast

Yes, that’s right

Whereas, people who are within their own…

They don’t have that experience

No

That’s right. So they can’t get rid of the need. But we can

No, they don’t know how to, yeah

But and, the first world people can go back

They can

And enjoy not worrying about the need. Not caring about the need. Not needing the need

Yes. Yes. Anyway. So, what I’m looking at here is, is happiness considered our ultimate goal, so this comes down to these needs as
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well, and uh, so I suppose, I suppose what I’m trying to say here is that the reading that I’ve been doing keeps on coming back to the idea that we need to satisfy ourselves in ways that are ecologically sustainable. That’s the level that we have to engage in. We have to realise that our needs and our sense of enjoyment, or our sense of pleasure or sense of happiness need to be tailored, we have to make conscious effort to redirect them

Yeah

2 hours

And um, so, you know, I’d like you to talk about your sense of happiness when you’re engaging in in, um pursuing the …in joining in these battles for getting sustainable outcomes

Yes, well look, I, um…My state of happiness is there to do with the space I have to create in. You know, I need to make things, and um, that’s when I’m happy, so, uh, when that’s restricted, I’m not happy. So, I’m always looking for that, um…

that creative space

The creative space, yeah

But of course, you’re tailoring it because, I mean, we can be creative, we can…it depends on what we’re being creative for, you know, what the outcome is of our creativity, that we need to be more mindful of.
Yes, my, my happy state is without much baggage to carry around, I need less and less baggage or property, and stuff. You know, provided… whenever I feel depressed I don’t just take out a pencil, I need to make something. I need to….And so what, what I’m looking for always is the opportunity to create, and I need that opportunity. And that’s what worries me. If I was put in jail that would be the end of me. I’d lose all of it, more or less.

Right. Ok. Alright, I mean, you’ve talked about the fact that we’re, in the Western societies, we’re well educated, we’re affluent, and we’re powerful in relation to past generations, and in relation to other societies, and how do you believe these factors affect our sense of happiness, and our concern for ecological sustainability?

Well, they’re very distracting aren’t they? They take us away from ah,…you know, that’s a real problem with the west, that um, we can escape. We can go in to the airport lounge and get away from the crowd, um, because we have the money and the means to do it. And, yeah, we lose that touch, that contact with nature. I mean, it’s very much to do with that fire business…

Because, you know, you…there the wood cuts, they have people in a field with the flames, they’re women in England, um, burning the stubble, and they have long dresses and it looks as if their dresses just about
catch on fire, but they know exactly how to handle it, it’s part of their lives. Whereas we don’t know how to handle it, we’re terrified, and we get all of these huge machines to put it out…

119

Mmm, that’s right, we have many barriers…

Of course it is terrifying, but we don’t…I mean, in Africa, little kids sit around fires, and the way they learn about hot water, boiling water and fires, they get burnt. They burn something. That’s how they learn

33 10 mins

Yes, it’s experience. It’s experiential.

There’s direct relationship.

There is

That’s what worries me, that we, we don’t um…

Yes, it the level of connectedness, the directness of our connections which have been severed and our affluence, and our technology keep removing

There’s that lovely story of the young kids, teenagers who were taken to live in Utah, in the desert through a television program, and it was
brilliant, and they were totally impossible children, taking drugs, and everything. And they were sent off

SML mmm, to a wilderness experience

And, you know, it did work, just because they had to actually learn to make a fire by rubbing two sticks together

Yes, well, actually, that reminds me there was another, you know a very similar situation in the Torres Strait aboriginal community up in Cape Yorke, where, you know high levels of alcohol abuse and drug abuse, and so, the a social worker, along with the local police and school community got hold of the worst offenders and took them on you know a week’s wilderness experience. And they took them on a second trip, and basically said, you know, we’ve given you a bit of shelter, and we’ve given you some food, but now you have to go and live for a week just by yourselves, and survive, because what they did with the first trip is they introduced all of the bushcraft to the young offenders, and the second trip out they had to use that bushcraft, and with no props, no other food to take with them, and things like this. And they were just talking about how they followed up that experience, and how those young people have been transformed by that experience

Yeah, I’m sure, absolutely.

You know, and, and so that, so again it’s sort of…the whole problem seems to be this lack of direct contact and self…self…natural self sufficiency what we’re used…you know as you say the relationship with fire, or the relationship with growing food, or the relationship with animal
husbandry or something like that that allows you to um, you know, be more than just a...living in a virtual sort of virtual world experience, which...

Well, the Weeping Camel and those people in Mongolia. Did you see the Weeping Camel?

I didn’t, no.

that’s exactly the same, how the contact is retained.

Yeah, so, you know, I suppose, as an architect...

Well, that, you see consciousness of sustainability brings back that, it’s all about changing our attitude to nature.

Yeah, and using building to give you know that sense that there is life, that they’re not, um, you know they’re very close, you can have a very close relationship even inside your normal working life – you can have that close contact.

The building responds to nature, in the same way that a tree does - reaching - is what, exactly what I’m talking about.

But it’s also, you’re also bringing it to the workplace.
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2090: MP Yeah, yeah, that that… have you seen the façade going up now at CH2?

2091:

2092: SML I’ve seen the timbers

2093:

2094: MP Those are all open vents

2095:

2096: SML Yeah, yeah to moderate the afternoon light, is that right?

2097:

2098: MP Yeah, yeah. That’s exactly the sort of thing that I’m after, that the building responds to me, so there’s a new relationship between the city and nature that develops out of that.

2099:

2100: SML And really, it comes through the workers in this work space

2101:

2102: MP Yeah

2103:

2104: SML And, so, what are their expectations, do they talk… Are they talking about this new relationship that they’re going to experience? You know, are they aware…

2105:

2106: MP Well, that’s up to them but you know the building around them is.

2107:
Yeah, right. Well, thanks very much I think that’ll... I’ll close the conversation

TOTAL transcription time: 14 hours

Annotations

1 i must reread the crucial texts discussed. MP's point about entropy needs to be better understood. E.O. Wilson comes to mind

2 cross-checking is the operative word.
NP I formally joined [RAIA] in year 2000 and for a few years it was quite active and we did a lot of work and prepared events and focused on World Environment Day and did papers for architects. Ben Wittenall was the chair during that time and then he resigned from everything at the Institute and I got nominated as Chair of the Environment Committee. Then for a period of 6 / 9 / 12 months it really took a dive in terms of attendance and people being interested in being there and doing stuff and everything, until it got to the point where early 2005 I was at a point where I was saying back to Elizabeth there was no point even having a committee if no-one is going to line up, I wasn’t prepared to give my time if there was no interest blah blah ... So she suggested a format similar to that which the Practice Committee had taken up which was the large and small practice forum and suggested that that would be an equitable thing for environmental architecture. That took a little while to organise and what we did in October was we held a facilitators workshop where we sent an open invitation to all Victorian members to come along. We had a guy facilitate it formally ... we had a fairly big agenda. I think we only got through about two thirds of it. About 40 – 50 people turned up which was brilliant and some really key people came along and what ended up coming out was about six main objectives – a vision for all Victorian architects and six main objectives for what we wanted to do. We then held another forum in December and we distilled those six objectives down into three working
groups. One being Sustainable Architect which is focusing on getting the message out to the profession. One being Public Advocacy focused on liaising between the profession and the rest of the industry and Government and community which is a fairly big mandate for that group, which actually had the biggest membership. And the third one was focusing on Education And Training. So we’ve had two forums so far this year, all three working groups are up and established. They’ve developed charters and they’ve already produced some outcomes – all three of them. And I guess in the Sustainable Architect and the Education and Training Forum there’s probably about anywhere between 4 and 6 key people, active people that continually meet. The Public Advocacy one – its not as um well ... ahh ... hasn’t been as well run I guess, not well, but hasn’t met as frequently as they ought but there’s a larger group of people that are potentially interested. Its really good. And I’m the convenor of the whole thing – its called the Sustainable Architecture Forum. So once every three or four months – every quarter basically those three working groups come together to report back and discuss. We have a presentation from the industry. So its great, brilliant!

We’ll just talk about that forum you’ve been engaged in ... that’s now starting to be seen as a obviously a relevant activity and I suppose the thing that I’m trying to do is connect ecological sustainability to reflective practice. I’m looking at how architects deal with reflective practice being the core of design ... the mechanism that we operate through ... how we conduct our professional thinking so ... I’m interested in how you as an architect conduct your reflective practice ... how do you look at it ... how many layers do you operate with. And then I’m really interested to know how the RAIA push the idea. So ... I’ll just say that ... when we do reflective practice (this is my understanding looking at the profession) that our reflective practice can be task-oriented ... so we’re looking at the actual project and reflecting on that and working through on that. And then there’s the other level of reflective practice which is our own needs. To my mind there’s two layers which are constantly meshing with one another as we go through the design process. So
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my concern is how do we bring focus equally onto those two aspects of reflective practice.

12. NP don’t think I understand the second one properly. What do you mean by about the need, our own needs. Is that the way we conduct our own practice or the way the framework within which we set up our – the way we work or ...

13. SM-L Well because we’re looking at taking the lead in ecologically sustainable design we’re being asked to do a lot of change to our own thinking, change to the way we conduct our daily practice whether its an architectural practice or whatever it is. So, and that really comes down to having to re-assess our own core values – what is it we want to do as architects and also how does that mesh with our own aspirations ...um ... because obviously there are reasons for becoming an architect – we have our own private reasons for that – and we’ve got to make adjustments so that the whole ... you know, there’s an alignment between what we believe in and how we conduct ourselves in our professional practice. So in a way ecologically sustainable design (that whole area) is really pushing open new ways of thinking about architecture so it means that instead of there being a prescribed process, a new one is being developed and I presume that’s what you’re really noticing in your role.

14. NP I guess. My practice is pretty small ... um ... I work at it two days a week. My projects are primarily domestic. Which I really enjoy ... Because I’m only doing it two days a week and I’ve finally worked out how much I can take on during that time and because I do get quite a bit of work referred to me I guess I’m in a pretty good position whereby somebody who isn’t all that ‘green’ then I probably would pass them on to somebody else. So I’m not forced by whatever to take on every client that comes through the door.

15. SM-L that gives you a luxury in being able to make a decision. And those people who do come to you - they are quite well aware of your stance.

16. NP yeah which doesn’t mean anything really ... because clients come to you and say ‘I want to be really green (with my) building ... and I’ve come to you because you’re a sustainable architect’. But then they either don’t take my advice on what to do or they don’t ask me and go off and make decisions
and buy things or whatever without ... So I think I have fairly high expectations in terms of if you want to say you are doing a sustainable building ... I don’t think they’re high expectations but I have experience to think they must be, but they’re fairly simple decisions to make and I don’t see my clients always following through with them, so it’s pretty disappointing in a way. I’ve only been practising for a couple of years by myself and I’m sure it will change over the next three to four years but at the moment I don’t have a project that I would hold up as a sustainable example. I’m of the opinion that every decision that you make that ends up with a better outcome than it would have been before is a plus ... so I don’t think ... [CONCEPT - client relations/architect's expertise/challenging the status quo]

¶17: SM-L that’s your fallback position.

¶18: NP Yeah I don’t think that ... what’s his name Shane ? said that every building needs to be an iconic building ... you know ... we’re all big green architects. I’m not ... if someone can make a simple decision about either the way they live or what their designing into their building then that’s good. They should be congratulated for that. However, I wouldn’t call a building a sustainable building unless their was a fair bit in it really. And it’s not even going to be a sustainable building so I wouldn’t even say that.

¶19: SM-L Okay, so the standards that you – so what you’re saying is that there is still a real mismatch between your standards ...

¶20: NP Yes and what I can actually produce through my clients you should come and see my own house actually. I’m quite pleased with the way we’ve worked that out ... of course ... I can’t obviously talk about this without practising it within my own place. So I work two days a week so I’m pretty lucky in that I can pick and choose my clients. But that doesn’t always get the best outcome. With respect to the way I practice ... um ... I try and take my approach all the way through my business really. So I bank with a bank that I don’t think is as unethical as some of the major banks. All my investments are in ethical investments. My mortgage is in an ethical investment. I try and live that way. All the paper I use is recyclable. I work from home because I guess because of the necessity, because I’m only doing two days a week, but I like that because I don’t have to travel. There’s
obviously good and bad things about working from home, but I see that as an advantage. ... um ... I would try and through my business support organisations or events or people or you know whatever, if I think they are trying to make a difference. So if I can assist them in any way ... [concept - CONSISTENCY as PROPERTY of commitment]

¶21: SM-L  Okay. So you’re looking at ways of actually – outside of your practice – maintaining that level of commitment or ...

¶22: NP  I think its fundamental to practicing architecture sustainably that you actually practice sustainability.

¶23: SM-L  I’m going to talk here about expertise and how you develop your expertise. And I’m starting to already see that its an attitude that you’ve taken on that allows you to keep building your expertise. So can you explain to me what do you understand to be the major changes that are required of a designer in working with ecological sustainability or putting yourself into that frame of mind.

¶24: NP  The major changes someone would need to make to practice more sustainably? The decision to do it. I don’t know. I’m instilled with a sense of urgency. I don’t think I’m alone in that. I certainly feel that there’s a sense of urgency to address these issues. To as point where I feel panic about it.... but that helps as a driver. I don’t know what it would take for people to do it because ... I come across people all the time who don’t believe that there’s an urgency about what we need to do. so why would they do it. Because your community’s asking for it, because its the latest thing to be ... But to practice it properly I think it’s just a decision and then a commitment to ... research it ... although again I probably can’t speak from a ... ohh I could because at Williams Boag ... its a commitment and its a financial commitment because you just have to allow someone to spend time to – or everyone – to raise their awareness and to spend time learning about it and sharing their experiences because ... the best way of gaining this expertise or an expertise in anything is actually trying it and working through it. So for a couple of years I worked full time for a medium sized firm in Melbourne and the trick I think is to try something and then capture the lessons that you’ve learned in a communal place for everyone to learn from and you just work through that in your
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practice and you collect quite a body of knowledge whether its on processes or materials or ... contracts or whatever it is. Really the ... way of gaining your expertise is to try something. [concept - BEST PRACTICE/EXPERTISE]

SM-L Yes it really comes down to experience. Both theory and experience and to keep on reinforcing the two. Okay so you’ve just really talked about how you handled that in your work place ... and so ... I’m also interested in those attitudes that you hold. Now how do you keep on reinforcing those. Do you have an agenda that you pursue?

NP I guess I probably do. When I went through university ... I don’t think it’s something I’ve created. I think I’ve always been like this. It wasn’t till I left Uni after third year and went travelling and gained a little bit of ... grown-up knowledge I guess, I came back to Uni and realised what I wanted to do. I wanted to focus on sustainability – it wasn’t called that at the time. ... in my final two years at Uni I spent half my time doing final two years at Uni and half my time working for the Wilderness Society campaigning on environmental issues and ... um which also helped me get through uni because everybody else was freaking out ... but I actually had this separate focus which was almost as critical to me apart from university - the campaign that I was working on.

I’ve been a campaigner ever since and I’ve been involved in setting up environmental groups and I’ve ... have found that through my history that I either ... if I’m only doing architecture then I’ve got to go to campaign in the evening. But when I feel that my job is campaigning within my profession – which is ideally what I wanted to be doing – then I’ve been doing my architecture in the evening which is funny ... so ... I found that when I was at the Institute I felt that that was quite an advocacy role where I had some advocacy involved and so I wasn’t practising architecture during the day but I was doing my first little jobs by myself at night. When I worked for Williams Boag ... I guess I felt that I was practising during the day and that’s when I got involved in the Institute’s committees, that was my advocacy. And now I’ve got both. I’m practising and I’ve got an advocacy role. And that’s my ideal.[concept of IDEAL] So ... how did we get onto that? [concept -
REINFORCEMENT of COMMITMENT through ADVOCACY and PRACTICE]

28: SM-L  Well we were talking about how you actually reinforce your attitudes.
29: NP  Um, every time I turn the news on ... reinforces that I’m doing the right thing. And I’ve also got friends who are of the same opinion and so I bounce ideas off them and they confirm or affirm that I’m not crazy.
30: SM-L  So being amongst supporting networks is also ...
31: NP critical yep
32: SM-L  ... so ... I’m now looking at how you absorb extra information. ... what are the critical things that you do to absorb extra information? You’ve obviously got a fairly busy life so how do you ...?
33: NP Well the thing is, I reckon that you can create your own opportunity.

[STRATEGY of commitment] It is really difficult if you’re working as a full-time architect to actually get out there and absorb all this information. I was fortunate enough that when I was at the Institute to be involved in a lot of industry activities ... then as a member of the committee and Chair of the Committee and now at the City of Port Phillip, in these advocacy roles you have time to go out to conferences. And because of the position you hold you get asked to attend an event and through the Environment Committee anything that the Institute is asked to participate in from an environmental perspective I get asked if I can go along. So I can almost pick and choose the things that I am interested in to attend, which is brilliant because you learn so much. You have to make the time and its mostly on my own time, obviously when I asked by the Institute. ... um the other thing is engaging in competition which has been really good fun over the years. I’ve engaged in competition with colleagues in every instance and that’s been another way of expanding your experience on these things because you’re forced to explore and research some things that you wouldn’t normally have get a chance. In a competition ... you’re pretending to be your own client ... so ... they’re really good for exploring and researching and ...
34: SM-L  okay ... that answers the next question which is really looking at how you prioritise your activities.
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¶35: NP Pretty much as to whose shouting the loudest. (laughter)
¶36: SM-L right ... but it seems to me that ... whose shouting the loudest ... but you’ve managed to streamline your focus so that you’re ... working very solidly inside thinking streams that are to do with ecological sustainability ...
¶37: NP yep
¶38: SM-L ... in the architecture stream. So you seem to have set yourself up with a very supportive wider professional environment which is your advocacy roles which you’ve been talking about .. and your volunteerism. Now .. do you get a chance to test or experiment or ... you know ... promote new ideas and so you’ve started talking about competition as one way of doing that. How do you do that inside your advocacy roles inside the RAIA?
¶39: NP my advocacy role within the RAIA – probably not as much in terms of getting it ... um ... no that’s not true. For example, one of the things that the Education and Training Group achieved this year was we felt very strongly that there should be a component of sustainability in every PD event for example. We feel there should be a layer over whatever you’re talking about and that it is possible to look at it from that point of view. So we went to the state PD manager and he looked at it and went ‘oh yeah, well that’s an idea, why don’t you do as test and run it by Clair Newton’ whose the National PD person. So we did and she was really keen to take it on so we worked with Clair on her most recent seminar series ‘Devil in the Detail’ and we got some details in there about ... solar heaters, or something like that. So that was successful and what we’re about to do is get Clair’s feedback on that and then try and set it up so that when somebody is supposed to present a seminar series and they’ve got this thing here which they need to address which is sustainability. So I guess that is potentially how I influence it. I can also influence the Institute because they’re so open to suggestion that if you give them a suggestion about a PD event for example, they’re very supportive about what we’re trying to do. There have been very few instances where I’ve gone to them and said this is what I want to do and they’ve said no. There’s been a few key ones which is a bit of an issue but ... um ... by and large, if you’ve got the energy to do something then they’ll give you the support. I’ve found that particularly since Elizabeth Raut has been manager. She’s been
quite good and she’s got a really good staff around her. Um ... in terms of making a difference out there .. my role at Port Phillip is really useful for that because I can actually see changes in development projects as a result of people talking to us. So that’s really good.

40. SM-L so you’re starting to see that there’s a measure of improvement just by you being there in your position of influence.

41. NP but the biggest thing that I think ... all this stuff is – yes there’s going to be a few GHG emissions saved and there’s going to be a bit of water saved but I think what I’m mainly doing is working towards first is cultural change / shift.

42. SM-L Yes and obviously that’s the level we have to be at. The real trick is moving from this layer of design and moving into our ... developing an ecological worldview that we can actually ... we don’t even give it a second thought. A bit like the industrial world view we have at the moment – its just so totally ingrained into our psyche that we struggle to think what is an ecological world view and .... well architecture is one of those things that are structured into long term infrastructure that its difficult to ... we don’t even give it a second thought. A bit like the industrial world view we have at the moment – its just so totally ingrained into our psyche that we struggle to think what is an ecological world view and .... well architecture is one of those things that are structured into long term infrastructure that its difficult to ... this period where you can try and push new ideas in but there’s a whole mechanism that operates in a certain way and buildings stand for a long period of time and all of those decisions get embodied into this very slow evolving infrastructure ... and this is the role of the architect / designer and the RAIA is pushing that we’re the lead group, you know ... we’re the thinking end of the industry to push the ideas in. And in a way it means, as you say, before you can be taken seriously, you’ve got to demonstrate that you are serious. That you’ve got validity, that you are not just saying these things and so often it comes down to your personal practice. So can you talk to me about ... I’ve just got to be careful hear that I don’t take too much of your time. I’ve got a whole range of questions that are to do with governance and leadership, about how you change the controlling mindset and its dominance and that could get quite detailed talking about that ...

43. NP we can meet again if you want to ... after two and a half weeks (laughter)
that’s fine. I should have transcribed this by then ... I really want to come to these more generic type questions and I’m just going to look at commitment. We’ve talked about it and I’m listening to what you’re saying about how its an integral part ... how you make sustainability an integral part of your life and then from there it flows out into your daily practice and into your professional practice ...

I suppose what I’ve been looking at is the RAIA programme which I find is a very outward bound approach. There’s a lot of talk about influencing people around you. Now I’m interested in you first the designer first, making sure the designer feels very well grounded before they can go out and influence those around them. So when I’m speaking to you about commitment I really trying to get you to think about all those mechanisms that you use, all those structures that you are using for your strength, inner strength. So ...

this is me personally, not the Institute ...

you personally, so that you can then move out into your practice. So you might feel that you have already answered this question but ... how do you go about developing your commitment to this idea of ecological sustainability. I suppose what I should ask first ‘what is ecological sustainability to you when you hear that term’?

um ... I’ve sort of shifted away from ESD more towards this idea of sustainability because I think that we need to look beyond ecological issues and start to take responsibility for where our materials come from, who prepares them, who’s involved, who’s impacted on ... you know

so you’re looking at social equity issues ...

yeah but that’s really hard because that’s where ecologically sustainable development was 20 years ago but that’s what I’m trying to do. So for me sustainability is ... different depending on what you are trying to achieve and ... it looks at global environmental and cultural issues right down to local cultural and environmental issues and addresses what is appropriate for whatever it is that you are trying to do. It looks at macro and micro scale so trying to address things that are at the molecular model right up to ... how whatever you are trying to do fits in with the broader urban design. And also
from looking at things from addressing the immediate needs of whatever ii is you are trying to do and the broader responsibilities while at the same time establishing a vision for how whatever it is you are trying to do is going to be relevant or appropriate in future ... So that’s what I understand sustainability is all about and I don’t think were going to reach it. But I couldn’t say we’re working towards sustainability, we’re working on lower impact ...

fair enough too ... so you appreciate the scale and the scope and as you say it ranges from the micro to the macro and it seems to me like your saying that ecologically sustainable design or development, that there has been an emphasis there that tends to obscure the social equity side of it ...

exactly and I think sustainable design ... you know it doesn’t exist – impossible. ... and I think that in 100 years time our concept of architecture will change from creating buildings to modifying existing landscapes

mmmm, yes. And really you are touching on again this idea of the paradigm shift aren’t you

yes

from architecture being something to do with built form to architecture that’s something to do with ecosystem management. So, that is the quantum change which I’m looking to see whose making it or ... working within that ecological worldview. And therefore, it needs to be supported by language as well. As you say you can use old language like ESD and its already got lots of layers of meaning on it which might not be suitable now ... and therefore ... are you finding that you’re using a different language in order to get your message across?

I am. Since the last couple of years I’m talking to people more about achieving outcomes rather than you know ... getting them to try and think in terms of environmental issues specifically and how to achieve outcomes in each of those areas ... and I’m also turning away from a concept of a 5-star building, away from that because ...

because of the focus

ahhhh I don’t know about 5-star buildings, I mean, a 4-star or 3-star or whatever. I think that yes its okay to aim for a building that’s got a stamp of
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recognition within the industry and I think that’s really important in terms of creating a shift within the market certainly but we should be designing to achieve outcomes rather than designing to achieve stars. And that’s how I try and talk to people ‘you know you’ll save energy if you use this instead of this’ you know – that’s a good thing. And if you do this ... you won’t be ... and that’s a good thing and this is why.

yes ... so the regulatory environment can skew the ... baseline standard. What you think that you feel people might be happy to achieve if you keep away from (prescription)

ummm ... yes ... just in terms of language that I use, that’s what I use. I try and avoid talking about green buildings as sustainable buildings and talk about outcomes and impacts . However, I am strongly in support of regulation and I think that without that there’s not going to be a cultural shift. But once you start to regulate something you need to be able to measure it and once you measure it you distil out the design stuff and it becomes quite quantifiable and non ... non sort of esoteric design stuff . So you, by its very nature get down to the nuts and bolts and you lose some of the quality of the architecture which is always going to be impossible to measure. So, you know, catch 22 really.

okay ... alright ... we’ve talked about what it means to you and that’s what you’re committing to ...

but I’ll evaluate each thing like in terms of whatever it is I’m trying to do I’ll see what I can do from that particular point of view ...

so its an adaptive process

it is and I think the minute you try and ... define sustainability. I mean you do in a way ... everyone needs to know what you are generally talking about. But its quite involved. I think the more involved it is probably the better. The more applicable it is to what you are trying to do the better. So I’m all for setting up a series of environmental, social and cultural objectives for a project ... based on the needs of that project and then working through how to address those.

so when you’re actually establishing your architectural brief that’s how you actually do that.
NP yeah and then often they are similar very similar, but that will often change depending on the scale of what you are trying to do. [CRITERIA FOR ESD - concept of BEST PRACTICE / STARTING POINT]

SM-L okay. Now we are going to talk here about this idea of living in a state of equilibrium or, you know, minimum impact. It could mean living harmoniously (that is an old idea) and it could also mean a more ... looking at the environmental energies and the psychic energies and spiritual energies. There’s a whole range of ways you can talk about energy. It can sound fairly mystical or it can sound very engineered but its still an energetic force that you end up wanting to enhance. And ... so I’m wanting to know how do you generate an understanding, an ecological approach to ... I’m thinking of ... um ...Christopher Alexander and his whole idea of energised buildings / energised architecture and so that there are / there’s a way of designing that embraces that subtle energy – people and buildings and ecosystems. We’re all part of this wider ecosystem so how do we generate, how do we keep the energy moving positively through the designed elements that we put into this ecosystem. So how do you think about those things?

NP ... the buildings that I design I design for the people that are meant to be being in them so, I’m not sure if this is going to answer the question, but ... I design them so that they’re going to be comfortable to use. [concepts of CLIENT RELATIONS]

SM-L alright. I suppose I’m trying to push this idea of how do you get your buildings and the people that you’re designing for to be part of this / to think about this ecosystem that they’re part of that they’ve actually created or enhanced or altered or ...

(That not only are we energised by the ecosystem but we energise the system in turn. That we diminish or enhance ecosystem energy through our sense of need for interconnectedness and the subtlety with which we sense this and generate energy through this need)

NP so the building is the educator or the building is the inspirer to create more sustainable patterns of living

SM-L or the medium or ...
NP: yeah well that’s the critical issue. I don’t know how successful anyone has been with that. I mean you’re talking about the setting up of built space that modifies peoples behaviour towards more sustainable patterns of behaviour? Yeah I think that’s fundamental and it is something that I think about all the time. That was something that we tried to put into our competition in Adelaide. About how to create a building that does create this culture change and this disposes people to you know make the changes that are required or whatever and I think its really tricky ... and I don’t know how to do it. I’ve got some theories about it that have never been tested and ... but yeah I think its fundamental because I do believe as architects we can shape the way a community or a society works together and thinks subtly. I don’t think its what we are doing now. There’s lots of really obvious ways of doing it that are more to do with the measuring approach that [science]... and ... if people aren’t used to experiencing space then it ... I don’t know if one would have to be really subtle or really obvious. [concept of EXPERTISE/CULTURE CHANGE / BEST PRACTICE] Um ... another way is, and I don’t know if I can apply this to my buildings is a way that I practice is ... and try and influence people is leading by example.

(Engaging in ecosystem energy exchange consciously – as well-being for all - for people distracted by everyday cultural activity this is far too subtle a concept to activate consciously. It requires intellectual support – a building can only support an intellectual initiative. Once people become attuned the space works to its fullest. a building can allow its inhabitants to pursue eco-sensitive thinking, a building can disallow this as well) [concept of BEST PRACTICE / linking PERSONAL to the PROFESSIONAL(STRATEGIES TO COMMIT)]

my approach when I got into the Institute, when I was talking to the Institute about working with them ... they were asking about how are you going to get someone to subscribe to the Environmental Design Guide or to do ... etc ... well I said you sort of take them round the first time and you show them something and maybe they’ll pick something up once. And then the next time they go through that process or they go through that building ... they’ll pick something up. And so its a collection and over time you’ll learn
something. So as you move through building spaces that it encourages you to think in a certain way. Then perhaps over time they’ll pick them up. I don’t know because I don’t think the stuffs ever been tested. ... it is critical though, but I don’t know how you achieve it.

76: SM-L okay. No that’s fair enough. I mean I’m also interested in how much you reflect upon the level of ... your ... embodying a lot of ideas and attitudes and ... I’m wanting to know how much of that you rely on in an intuitive sense and whether you hope that it comes through in your designs. Do you spend a lot of time thinking about that? Not the rational side but below the rational the intuitive side of your ability. Do you draw on that to ...

77: NP I don’t really understand I don’t think. Because I design my buildings with people in mind. I design my buildings for people I design places for people because that’s what I’m doing – creating a place for someone and my feeling is if you can create a place where people can be .. healthy and ... comfortable and inspired and ... something that makes them feel good, then they’re more likely to be able to look out beyond their immediate person and see what else is around them, what else it is that’s impacting on them. So ... when I think about a building I’m obviously thinking about all these background things like orientation, the climate what materials it might be. But its the quality of space and the experience that drives my initial thoughts. But that’s all tied in with how the building operates within its environment which I think is a part of the ... [concept of the IDEAL]

78: SM-L .... okay ... I suppose I’m ... what I was just trying to tease out there is just to see whether or not you draw on other practices while you’re in a design phase that allows you to be more open to ... all that embodied knowledge that you are. So I don’t want to put the words into your mouth but I’m thinking of ... there are various techniques, reflective techniques that you can draw on that, you know, be very in the moment or very aware ...

79: NP no I don’t. But design does take time. So I’ll think about something. It occurs while you are not at the drawing board. [concept of REFLECTIVE PRACTICE]

80: SM-L so you are aware that there are these intuitive ... energies that are basically bringing forth ideas ... whether you are working ...
NP driving, sitting in the car, walking the dog or ... you know what ever it is. If you are working on a design problem or working towards a design resolution ... it sort of happens sort of outside of the drawing board or your sketch pad or whatever. You get to a certain point where you think through something and ... you stew on it or you think over it for a few days so something will come to you and maybe you’ll sketch that up and then think over it. So I guess in that way its a bit reflective in that it occurs over a period of time but I don’t really employ any techniques to draw that problem out.

[concept of REFLECTIVE PRACTICE]

SM-L okay. Because I’m very interested in this idea of the applied you know, the deliberate logic that goes into thinking through all these issues deliberately and carefully and then the fact that often ideas do come from a totally different part of our consciousness and there are techniques that can sort of enhance that part as well as our more rational, logical level of consciousness ...

NP thought yes. Being at the site or part of the site is critical like the process of that. Like when you are visiting the site and your response to that later on. I tried to design a house recently where I hadn’t been to the site and its really tough

SM-L to put yourself into it

NP and the clients are trying to explain the quality of the site to me and you know, you can see photos and you can see plans ... you know ... its much different to what I’m sure would have come out of actually being there ...

[concept of CONNECTEDNESS]

SM-L and really again you’re touching on something that I think is absolutely crucial. This idea of the embodied experience that whole idea of understanding and having an ecological worldview is more than an intellectual engagement. It actually a full body engagement and in a way I’m trying to find techniques that give us that full body experience of engagement in a situation when we really can’t get access to it

NP you know what I think. I think actually that because I’m so passionate about it and because I am interested in learning about all this stuff, I read
about it over and over again that it becomes ingrained. As you say its intuitive. Um ...

[88: SM-L] so you’re really ... just ... pushing it into the pores really

[89: NP] yeah and there’s no decision to make but I know with some people there would be a decision to make [STRATEGIES to COMMIT]

[90: SM-L] and really that’s the point that we have to get to to get to a point where the decisions are automatic but at the moment we have still to get to that point. So you know, I’m looking at reflective practice that get us there quickly. As you are aware, as you said there’s an urgency. There’s not a lot of ... we’ve got a generation to try and make a huge impact. You’re aware and so am I from my little bit of reading that we need to be drastically reducing the impact at least by half in the way we are conducting our lives and we can’t wait for ... we have to make the move now because ... just this whole idea of progress is so ... problematic ... its such a problematic ... the fact that other huge populations all aspiring to this idea of progress. We have to be able to show that progress is actually something else

[91: NP] quickly

[92: SM-L] very quickly ... especially with China coming on board and India coming on board. I mean its scary stuff and we’re living in these old values ... we’re still expressing these old values, we’re still supporting them and exporting them and we’re making very little inroads into ..

[93: NP] mmm ... but even someone like me with my ingrained ... belief in all of this stuff ... you know ... I’m not living differently. And so I sort of often think well what hope have we got. You’ve got somebody like me I’m passionate. I’m way fit. I practice it as much as I can but really, you know I live in a three bedroom house. I’m out in the periphery I’ve got two cars I’ve got a dog

[94: SM-L] that’s right and you look at your footprint and you know you’ve taken up hectares of eco ... yes

[95: (hippy culture was about removing oneself from the corrupting influences of societal structures that inhibit freedom to change – but this is very difficult as a minority group — especially now that we live in a
global information society – there is simply no place that can exist unaffected by our socio-technological behemoth)

96: NP nah nah nah, you know. We’re not ... look I’m quite pessimistic about it. I don’t think we’re going to make it. (laughter)
97: SM-L but we don’t want to say those things do we ... (laughter)
98: NP no (laughter)
99: SM-L but what you’re saying is that you can do only so much as an individual
100: NP (laughter) but it’s not going to be enough
101: SM-L unless you’ve transformed society so much
102: NP but we need to do that at a molecular level
103: SM-L alright, now when you say that – molecular level, what do you mean
104: NP I’ve been influenced by William MacDonough’s work recently.

So I don’t think that we can make all the social, community changes that we’re ... it’s going to be very hard to encourage a community / a society like ours to step backwards in standards of living ... and unless we achieve this change both at a social, cultural, political and systematic and molecular level you’re not ...

105: (the step backwards has to be believed in as a step forward as human nature desires improvement and is inherently forward focused)
106: SM-L enjoined together
107: NP you know. And I go to the supermarket and I find my tea and its no longer in a packet but in a bag with a plastic box and a lid. And I write to the manufacturer and say what are you doing, you know you’ve got to go away from packaging ... they go thank you ... you know ... we’re not going to get there..
108: SM-L unless plastic is not made from petroleum and unless its biodegradable in 3 seconds as soon as you’ve pulled the covers off .. and as you say that’s the molecular level we have to get to ... (but this does not deal with the issue of resource consumption per see)
109: NP yes [CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATION]
okay. So ... I have got questions for later but I’ll go straight to them because you are talking about them which is about happiness. Now it's considered our ultimate goal ... there are lots of findings about happiness and lots of research done into it and its considered our ultimate goal because actually there’s nothing – you can’t justify it through anything else – its the ultimate goal. So ... really ... its our ultimate self-oriented need in that it is considered both our highest aspiration and our most fundamental need. And interestingly there’s a well studied idea that happiness is like its on this long string from extreme misery to extreme elation and we basically sit at about 75% up the string and that’s our equilibrium point, you know, where we sit most of the time. And obviously this idea of well-being which is being promoted as an important part of ecological sustainability of any sort of sustainability – there has to be a sense of well-being attached to it and ... so ... you know ... we’ve got a huge area that needs transforming and that’s this idea of what we attach our sensibilities to. And a lot of the information that’s coming out is stuff that we know intuitively – we are aspirational; we do look around to see what other people have got and that’s what we aspire to; we do get used to certain levels and we want better. That’s a very very fundamental part of being human ...

to more or less degrees ... between individuals  (I mean as a memba???) I read that book recently it was great! Actually it was quite depressing but ... (laughter)

yes. But I suppose what it comes down to is we have to actually discipline ourselves to train ourselves to understand what our happiness needs are and where our sense of well-being, you know, what can satisfy us and so in a way thats something that an architect has to get involved in because there are charges that architects work for the top end of the market, you know, the people with the most damaging lifestyles and we are their servants and we are producing for them. But we also have a um ... we’ve got quite a lot of leverage .. because we’re seen at that end of the market. There’s this other whole other you know, “mcMansion” level of the market that is also aspiring. So we have got leverage. So it comes down to ... how do you .. when you’re thinking about your clients and their state of well-being and their
quality of experience ... how do you make sure that their sense of well-being is sustainable you know, there's that level of connection ... how do you link their their aspirations to what is a sustainable option.

113: NP I give them information and explain why. [objective data, scientifically-based statistics] I’ve got a situation at the moment. They want a deck which is a great idea its going to face north its going to be great its going to let sunlight into their living space its going to create a place for them to be and work and kids to play and everything like that. Its this massive decking and I know that they think that the Victorian timber industry is sustainable and they’ll be quite happy to choose timber from the Victorian timber industry ... and I don’t think that it is. And its a bit of an issue for me because I’ve put everything on the drawings and its recycled timber and I sent them a memo the other day and said ‘listen you know it is going to increase the cost but I’d like to talk to you about timber’ The design inherently is a good thing for you guys as a family ... there’s a cost issue, there always is, but these are the issues and I think we should discuss them.

114: SM-L it sounds like you’re very upfront about what

115: NP And I try and give them impartial information so that they can make a decision. ... because I couldn’t live on a deck, couldn’t be happy on a deck that had come from a Victorian forest. I couldn’t. [concept of ETHICS and PROFESSIONALISM]

116: SM-L Sure alright could you explain that a little bit more. Is that because of the findings of not achieving the standards of sustainability ...

117: NP well I just couldn’t justify making myself happy off our native forests or off somebody else’s back for that matter. If I had time and looked into you know, where my clothes come from I’m sure I’d be horrified. If I looked into where my food comes from I’m sure I’d be horrified. But I happen to be an architect I happen to be able to focus on this stuff so I can be horrified about being on a deck and that ... you know is from a Victorian forest. It depends I guess what you’re prepared to be horrified by. ... And so its all real personal stuff you can’t, you can’t ... its the sort of thing you need to experience really. Its like any major thought changing thing or ... we’re talking about fairly fundamental things like what makes people happy
and what makes people horrified and if you haven’t really gone through that thought process or experienced that you’re not going to say make a decision I think, or its a real decision for me anyway, just not for them. But yeah I couldn’t sit on a deck that had come from a Victorian forest and I find it sticks in my gall to design it for them and to specify it for them. And its happened in the past too where I specified a timber deck and it came in three times over budget and I know that they’re building it now and I’m sure that they’re building it out of Merbau and I just don’t want to go near it. I question what I’m doing because ... I don’t actually know how much longer I can do this sort of stuff ... I find in particular like just recently ... I don’t need to work, I don’t need the money from this stuff if its just going to make me feel dodgy. I’d rather not do it. [PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT needs to be aligned to ethical values]

¶118: SM-L does that put you into a moral spin at all. Just thinking about if you don’t take that work on ...

¶119: NP yeah I know I know. Like if I can be out there talking to people and explaining why there is an issue then that’s better and maybe yes. But at the same time you know ... if I got a job where they said they wanted everything to be sustainable then that would be just fantastic, then you could have a case study that you could show somebody. But then all the case studies in the world are not going to change mainstream (laughter)

¶120: SM-L well, not until they become mainstream ... its all about the process. All right so what keeps you thinking positively, because really that’s all about your happiness levels.

¶121: NP yeah Andrew and I were talking about this the other day. I mean ... I had a setback the other day when we were supposed to talk.

¶122: SM-L right okay that was that long telephone conference

¶123: NP yeah ...

¶124: SM-L you did sound as if it had been a fairly trying experience ...

¶125: NP an unexpected setback and ...um ... I have high fairly expectations of the Institute I think which isn’t – definitely- shared by all members but ... um ... you forget – its like the people you hang out with – you forget that there are other people out there. You know what I mean. You
forget that there's people out there who don’t think like you. Even though you try not to but um ... so I actually think that if we talked about this in great depth we’re all stuffed, but that’s okay. I prefer to go down fighting. (laughter) I prefer to go down fighting so ... ultimately we are all just animals we are just part of a bigger ecosystem. I mean this is a bit of a cop-out. I mean we are all just part of a massive experiment and humans are part of it and as an animal our goal lies in reproducing you know, we have thought processes therefore we aspire and we consume and we ... you know ... like we’re all going to end up down the tube but does that really matter? I mean it doesn’t really. And I don’t think it really matters if the human race becomes extinct but I kind of like this idea that we’re all trying to save ourselves. I’m quite entertained by this whole thing

¶126: SM-L so you’re really looking at – there’s a bigger war going on and there’s a bigger issue that you can subsume yourself in

¶127: NP but the only reason I subsume myself in it is because it entertains me and I’m passionate about it. You know if you think about it really, you know the only reason I have ... um enough time and energy to devote to this is because I’m fed and I’m loved and I’m housed.

¶128: SM-L very true

¶129: NP its all selfish ... its all driven by self-need. [concepts of SELF-NEED] When you get down to it Su don’t you think? (laughter)

¶130: SM-L well. I think you can look at it a slightly different way

¶131: NP (laughter) I mean that’s how I see it if you really get down to it if you’re talking about happiness. But I get very very upset when I see people you know ...there’s that fundamental level where I think we’re all stuffed but at a day to day living with community type level I do get very influenced and driven and passionate about it. [concept of SUFFERING] But ...

¶132: day to day living with community type level I do get very influenced and driven and passionate about it. [concept of SUFFERING] But ...

¶133: SM-L but as you say you have to go down fighting. Its a great way to live your life. Definitely. I take the Buddhist approach that because we’re living in this lap of luxury we have an extra responsibility and we’re fortunate
to have this responsibility because there are many many millions of people struggling just to put food in their mouths and they don’t have the luxury, we have the luxury to ... contemplate ...

¶134: NP therefore we have responsibility, definitely

¶135: SM-L So I agree with you at many levels and because we have this homeostatic level of happiness in us (75%) we are fundamentally positive in our outlook even though it can be absolutely dire. But we are just genetically programmed to be positive. I mean we might think negatively about the world around us ... but often we tend to think quite positively about ourselves. Its a very interesting dilemma. And the more difficult the situation tends to be like in times of war or ... attack or whatever ... people’s happiness levels as a community rise, so its a really interesting phenomenon that we are genetically predisposed to being aspirational ..

¶136: But okay now this is again going back to this idea of urgency ... and there’s a lot of new ideas coming out of science so ... what are those ideas that influence you most. Now you’ve just talked about ...

¶137: NP climate change, loss of biodiversity, salinity, loss of water. You know things that when you get down things that are going to affect you ... loss of water ... but internationally ... things that happen like international climate disaster that result in widespread humanitarian disaster is just uncomfortably unbearable from your comfortable couch to watch really.

¶138: SM-L One of my last questions is ‘what does an ecological worldview mean to you?

¶139: NP ... um ... well the ego versus eco centric world view if that’s what you mean?

¶140: SM-L yeah well I just wondering if you’ve ever tried to philosophise about what an ecological worldview is

¶141: NP Andrew and I were just talking about this the other night too ... that’s right ... it was in relation to what happened the other day ... and it was related back to whether or not you took the precautionary principle on something and ... by not taking the precautionary principle and putting other things into place I felt was a very egocentric approach where as what I was trying to push was an eco sense in that it would take in precautionary
principles and I think for me that’s how I put it into practice – an ecological viewpoint, worldview – is to take the precautionary principle on everything ...

¶142: SM-L and you’ve also established in my mind anyway where you place humanity inside the ecosystem

¶143: NP and so I think that’s a really important issue because there are a lot of people who don’t put humans inside the ecosystem ... you know ... we come from ... there’s this very long Christian tradition of placing humans outside of the ecosystem in a direct relationship with God so I’m interested that you’ve put – as part of your ecological worldview – put humans back within this natural system, we are no different and ... um ... so I know that science has been instrumental in bringing us back and placing us firmly in the natural ecosystem and yet at the other level science and its offshoot technology is also fundamentally pushing us into the bizarre world of virtual reality where we’re going to find where every, sort of, environmental space is going to act like a virtual world as a backdrop to some sort of data projection whether its ... you know ... the clouds in the sky or the ... so we’ve got s really / there’s a very complex um ... well we know that its very complex. There’s no clear cut direction that’s being given. We tend to have all these mixed messages coming at us and ... as architects there’s so many fronts that you’ve got to fight its not just buildings at all and obviously you’re obviously working from an advocacy sense. So could you just talk about finally how can an architect really genuinely make a change.

¶145: NP I think its about the intention. About their intention. And this will have to be off the record ...

¶146: SM-L alright

¶147: NP ... I think that the intention to do something or to achieve something and to achieve that in design is fundamental.


Linked Memo
Memos:PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT_Open Code_properties and dimensions
Appendix C8: NP_2\textsuperscript{nd} interview_18.10.06

\texttt{18.10.06}

\texttt{INTERVIEW No 2}

\texttt{Between NATASHA PALICH (NP) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)}

\texttt{Recorded at Chimey’s Cafe, Park Street, South Melbourne}

\texttt{Recording 10.45 am (52 minutes)}

\texttt{Transcription (Sahr Willis) 6.0 hours}

\texttt{SML What’s the guys name?}

\texttt{NP Andrew Walker Morrison}

\texttt{SML Andrew Walker?}
MP: Morrison, and he’s an architect and he works at, um, RMIT, and he’s the one that you know runs the competition he’s an amazing guy, and he has been working with some people who run these workshops and to date we’ve only run them on Peak Oil, but there’s one coming up in the next couple of weeks on climate change.

SML: Yes, right

NP: And, it’s a methodology like it’s a group sort of participatory workshop-y

SML: Therapy type of thing

NP: Therapy type of thing, that’s you go through. Like the first half of it is where you, you look at what’s going on and you get really depressed!

SML: Right

NP: And the second half of the afternoon is where you look at what’s going on to mitigate that and what you could actually personally do and apparently there’s the sense of community and empowerment that comes out of these workshops at the end of the day is amazing

SML: Fantastic
NP Yeah, so. And they’ve been doing them on Peak Oil, but there’s some coming up on climate change so

SML Yeah, good, yeah yeah

NP …you might be interested in that…

SML Yeah I’m actually interested in that methodology, um mainly because I’ve been…as I keep telling you I’m looking at social collective practice and sort of trying to um, draw out our own um, sort of the energy levels that we need in order to cope with theses issues, and you know, it’s a standard it’s a sort of a very…you know it’s a…the method is to to have all the facts and then to develop the anxiety or develop the energy or understand the significance of the problem

NP Yep, yep

SML And then, actually really contemplate that quite deeply so that it actually becomes a sort of…deeply ingrained into you - you can’t just sort of skim over the surface intellectually, you have to actually embody that whole sense of concern, and and anxiety and fear, and then once you’ve achieved that level of energy, then you now look at the way to mitigate that, and you look at more positive approaches, so…(laughs) I mean it’s a well, it’s a well tried formula and it’s really…it seems to be the best way to get that emotional level of commitment going before you can integrate...
NP Before you can change, which is the message was in our fourth film, really. You go from, um, first is denial before you get to denial, try and be...you know, instead of getting to denial

SML Yeah, instead of getting to denial

NP You take action

SML Yeah, yeah, OK

NP It’s very hard, we were very depressed in that film (laughs)

SML Yes, because you know, it’s so well researched, it’s so thoroughly analysed, yeah. So, now, I’ve got here, I’ve drawn these questions out of our last interview, I’ve got questions to do with the RAIA here, and I’m hopeless, I’ve forgotten to bring along the form for you to sign but look, before the thesis gets published I’ll get you to sign it, and also I’ve got some personal. So I thought I’d start with the personal first and then, and go to the RAIA stuff

NP Yep

SML So, my first question is self-reflective practice is about understanding the human condition as it pertains to yourself, right, now you
talk about your extreme discomfort and and distress watching the ?? situation from the comfort of your own lounge, ok ok

NP Yes, yes

That is a really difficult concept, and it is, we all find that. So, how do you understand the human propensity to cause suffering

NP Oh, I can’t fathom it, I can’t fathom it. It troubles my mind that people can inflict this upon each other and I see it every day, I see it on trams I see it in the way we

Mmm, from the smallest incident through to world wars, and climate change, etc. Right, so it seems to be an endemic…

Yeah, and it angers me and it frustrates me and I, I feel, I guess I feel I’ve got a bit of a luxury in that I’ve probably surrounded myself by and large, with people, and I am attracted to people generally who aren’t like that, but you know, you can’t ignore what’s goes on, the reality of what goes on

OK, you haven’t you haven’t been able to fathom that one out, alright. Now, within the medical profession I’m really interested that they have developed a…they’re much closer to the idea…to mind. OK to the…working with the mind so they’re…and working with human suffering, so they’ve been developing approaches to service delivery um that are more holistic, a very holistic approach, and um, what they’ve…some of the regimes they’ve come up with one of them was called bio-psycho social program
which is where you look at the biology, the sociology and the psychology and not only of your patients, but of yourself so that you’re included in the whole, whole event which is in turn interconnected the sense of interconnectedness is very pronounced so um, I’m trying to see how ESD can be seen inside that, that approach that service delivery approach. So I’m going to ask you is it ever, ecologically sustainable design, seen as a healing program within Architecture. Do we talk about it as a healing…strategy?

Um, actually I see that as a characteristic of good architecture. For me, ecological or sustainable design is about it’s very factual for me it’s about impact reduction, it’s about um um yeah, placing it within the broader environmental both built and natural context and having as low an impact as possible. The, the impact of architecture as a potential healing quality, and yeah I agree that it certainly can, I don’t really relate that to ESD.

Alright, that’s fine, I’m wanting to know where you come from that’s the important thing. Um. Ok, so I’m I’m then asking would ESD benefit from being seen as a healing process? If we took that attitude…would it make a difference?

Um, look, I think I hope what would happen in the future is that we don’t have this focus on sustainable design, and all our buildings have to achieve a certain level of, you know, responsibility with respect to what impact they have…and the impact. Um, I think what you’re talking about is a
look harder to achieve actually than sustainable building from an environmental point of view, because you can, within reason, crunch that approach down from fairly pragmatic nuts and bolts and fairly ??? investment but what you’re talking about is a design quality, and the design aesthetic, design response and design feeling that I think is an outcome of a whole range of things. The ability of the designer, the um, interaction between the designer and the designee

7.57 30 mins 28 Oct. 06

SML Mmm hmm, mmm hmm yes

NP The person who…the way people use the building and you know, the success of all those things put together

SML Yes

NP Um, so that sort of stuff definitely contributes to what I would frame as good architecture, so in that sense, yes it would…ecologically sustainable development would benefit from that but only in the context of it being one aspect of good architecture. At the moment it sits outside, and um as an add-on and something that isn’t you know holistically…

SML Integrated

NP into yep, building.
Yep, alright. OK, now, in our last interview you were talking about how you set up your social environmental and cultural objectives at the start of each project and um…as part of your architectural brief

And um, and that you have already mentioned that your personal agenda is to change from creating buildings to modifying existing landscapes, so that’s the, that’s the direct quote from you

What did I say? What did I say?

You said that you were looking to change thinking from creating buildings to modifying the existing landscape, ok?

Change thinking by modifying buildings to…

No, from creating buildings, so from seeing it as just that to seeing it as modifying existing landscapes

Oh, yeah, ok

So you’re you’re talking about that as you know part of your vision
Broader perspective

Yeah, your broader perspective. Now what I want to know is what resources do you draw on to clarify this idea

(laughs) Um, I work…well, I don’t know what resources I draw on um, I guess there’s maybe projects or buildings spring to mind when I think about that, but it’s more probably imaginary projects than real projects

OK

Um

So, you know, I’m thinking that that whole idea of modifying existing landscapes now, I’m thinking of biomimicry or I’m thinking of those sorts of ideas where you see buildings as you know you try and mimic natural processes in order to achieve a building more attuned to its immediate and wider environment

Yep

But, I don’t know that’s what you’re thinking about, so…
Well, I think that there’s an architecture in natural landscapes you know, a natural architecture, and you can describe a natural landscape as an architecture.

Mmm hmm, yeah

And you know a natural clearing or a view or a skyline or a…

Alright, now this is sounding, this is sounding very much like Christopher Alexander and his pattern making

Is it?

Mmm, very similar

Well I think that the, you know, I do think that you can describe natural landscapes as architecture, and…

I suppose in a way, what you’re really saying is that because we have evolved inside our natural landscape, we have a natural inclination to see form and relationship and symmetry and a whole range of, sort of, design criteria inside the natural environment, which would then apply to our own design

Mmm, I guess. I mean if you look at all the ancient, you know, from really early stone constructions to you know the placement of
Pyramids and the mosques and like they’ve all had an influence, you know, landscape and the topography and all those sorts of things have had an influence on where they go and I think that’s obviously lost a fair bit. I guess what I try to do is that, um, I guess what I’m about I guess what I’m saying, I think what I’m saying here is that I want the natural and built environment to encourage change, because I really do believe that it does. We create our environment and then it creates us. I don’t know who quoted that, but that’s a quote from somebody or other and I believe thoroughly in it, and so I aim and aspire to create architecture that encourages that.

Alright, yes

And the way I do that is to engage with the client and ask them what inspires them, and ask them um…and I guess I must lead them towards a conversation about, you know, their relationship with the outdoors and whatever features they have in their immediate site and so forth, and what they want to, you know

Draw from their built environment, or?

Yeah, the materials used, sunlight, shadow, air and all that sort of stuff is a real part of the brief that is…it’s part of what I try and set up as part of the brief.
Ok, alright. That’s alright. Um, OK, now the thing I’m going to ask you, what I got out of our interview last was that you take responsibility in many ways, you know, through your architecture, you take up advocacy, you take on leadership roles, ah you contribute through… by setting an example, you know by by being true to yourself, as closely as possible. Ok, now. You try and calibrate your lifestyle and living standards, so maybe not totally to your satisfaction but you are at least attempting to make sure that, well you, you’ve you say it’s a fundamental principle, that if you can’t live sustainably, how can you design?

Mmm

Which, ah, makes perfect sense. Um, and while nobody and nothing is perfect, we still strive for this ultimate standard of perfection, so can you talk about what it is that drives you, you know, where are you getting these…? Why are you so (laughs)

Driven?

Driven like this?

I don’t know, I don’t know.

You’ve never sort of sat down and…has anybody said anything to you about yourself that can explain it to you?
It’s always been there, it just took me quite a few years to identify it, you know, through high school it was misplaced as some sort of you know. I don’t know

Alright, it was misplaced somewhere was it?

You know it was identified as some sort of patriotism or something by my friends you know…

Oh right, interesting

I was right in to, you know trees and stuff, and then it took me a while to actually work out and learn about what it was,

And modify it or apply it

and then apply it. And then, and then, redirect that energy into my profession because at one time I was…I had a dual focus, one that was quite um…

Was that your wilderness…

Yeah, yeah sort of the more green end of the campaigning, and then I managed to apply that my profession,
Mmm hmm, ok

So, I don’t know where it comes from, but it’s always been there and um...

Right, and so you’re really learning to actually manage it, and that, that’s...

Well, yeah, I was able to...to direct it towards what I had been trained in. But I often describe myself more as a, as a greeny first and foremost, over and above an architect, but it’s it’s becoming better, because they’re becoming more and more integrated like, um

Yes, and that’s an interesting journey too, to see, you know how how, you know architecture, coming from a much ah you know, a much a much more (what’s the word) conventional profession, it’s taken a long time to build up the speed to to you know be seen as progressive and be be able to embrace these green ideas which ,you know, and it might have something to do with the fact that we’re working in a built environment and there’s a... long changeover times and um

And we’re often, we’re not all that great at going back and learning from our, you know, past experiences.
And that’s a real, you know, that’s a real issue within architecture, and it must be the nature of the industry that it can’t seem to get back to those projects and and be able to measure those, and you know, analyse them

You reflect on them from a design point of view, quite often

But not from a um, sort of client user

User…yeah

Response

Yeah

And, um, I mean, I was talking about CH2 to one of my colleagues and um, I was saying how it’s really important to keep this ongoing relationship with the building in amongst…you know user satisfaction etc etc. And um, I was saying how critical it was for the actual designer to be involved in that, whoever the architect was, must be involved in that post design phase. And that didn’t seem to be…there was, you know, a little bit of a misunderstanding as if it should be other more independent people that come in and do that analysis, while I’m…meanwhile I’m thinking it’s really good feedback for the actual architect

Mmm
Yeah, so it needs to be some sort of uh, arrangement set up where the architect can be trusted to go and do those post occupancy analysis.

That’s right, without being biased about it.

Yes, without being biased. Ok, now when we first started this conversation, I was talking about design being, you know, a transformative process, not only for the design, the task, but also for you, the individual, right?

Mmm

And at first you had a bit of difficulty sort of locating what your personal needs were, when I was talking about you the designer and your personal needs. Um, so that it emerges that your own needs are satisfied through combining action-based advocacy with your love of architecture. So that’s what I consider your personal…that’s how I read it, anyway, and you need both to actually feel that level of satisfaction. We were talking about happiness and satisfaction. Now so, your personal growth, is that transformative aspect of the design process, so you’re growing because you’re engaged, and um, as I said in the first interview, it’s an important aspect of the process, and it requires its own space, its own analysis, its own recognition, right? Now, you base your needs on a desire to practice sustainably and this is an…I would call this an ethical desire. Because to my mind, this is a…

Mmm hmm
So, what are your…where did you form these…how…what sort of…ah, what were the formative factors that you might be able to pick out in your development as an ethical being?

It’s like the question before, isn’t it?

It’s a bit like it (laughs)

Um, I don’t know, I guess it’s about a basic sort of um…

Is it family upbringing? Is it um, have you got a…you know is there a philosophy of life? Is there…do you follow a religious idea about it?

No, I had a fairly conventional upbringing, I think, fairly um…

Was it a secular upbringing?

Well, no, we got shoved along to some sort of Christian, you know…

But that’s… fairly non committal?

No, no, I scratched that as soon as I could but
So it’s more a humanist approach?

I think it is, I think I’ve…it’s more about what right has, you know, one person got to exploit anything, person, animal, ecological system for their own sort of need, I guess. I don’t know where that sense of justice or equality or um, thing has evolved from. I guess my father has always tried to you know

Instil that?

Instil that sense of fairness, and maybe there’s been other maybe, you know, but very long ago and you know, he’s quite conservative (laughs)

Alright

But I don’t know

But still, there’s nothing wrong with you know, that that to my mind, that’s a very conservative value, but it’s a fundamental value really, to as you say, it’s a “fair go” mentality

Mmm

That you’re…you share
Mmm, well both my parents sort of said that don’t do to others what you wouldn’t do unto yourself

That’s right

I mean, that was proven in

Yeah, and it’s a pretty good tenet

Yeah

Yeah I know

…that is a really good one.

Yeah

Alright, um, so again, I’m now, I’m looking really…we’re really critiquing your sense of self, right? And I’m really interested in this sense of self, because there’s been a lot of new ideas about self as a totally interconnected emergent phenomenon of the brain, right? And that it’s a
really transient, temporary it really, there’s nothing very substantial about this “self” that we consider is fundamental

¶298:

¶299: NP Yep, it can be knocked around by ??

¶300:

¶301: SML And, and so we have um, we um, we tend to see ourselves as relatively separate in spite of the fact that we do know we’re totally interconnected, and they’re totally interdependent and we are transient and ever changing, etc. But we have a different intuition about it, you know, right?

¶302:

¶303: NP Mmm hmm

¶304:

¶305: SML And, a lot of the discussion that’s especially coming out of the cognitive sciences is really coming to a better sense of, uh, how the mind develops this perception. How we perceive, and how we tend to simplify our world in order to cope with it. You know, just the act of perception is the simplification process because there’s, there’s so much information out there, we can only absorb so much, and therefore, our whole body, you know our whole sort of genetics is built in to extracting only the sort of information that we can cope with.

¶306:

¶307: NP Mmm hmm.

¶308:

¶309: SML Now, what’s really fascinating is that this is not just a psychological exercise, this is also a molecular exercise, so when you get down to, you know, cells and their metabolic sort of activity, science is saying
“well, it’s not a mechanical process, actually, it’s actually cognitive process, it’s a meaning making process” so, at the level of individual, cellular activity, they’re getting choice-making happening.

¶310:

¶311: NP   Mmm

¶312:

¶313: SML   In that, you know, for the survival of that cell, it’s…there’s a choice being made about what it will absorb and what it won’t absorb, so uh, it’s not a mechanical, uh activity, dynamic. It’s a cognitive dynamic. So our meaning making starts from that point. Upwards. And therefore cognition, you know, the idea of um cognition or sort of choice making is a pre-conscious activity, so, every living, every living thing is making cognitive decisions, it’s a really interesting idea. And, you know, it’s only in the higher animals, or the higher living forms that consciousness is arrived at.

¶314:

¶315: NP   That there’s consciousness. Yeah.

¶316:

¶317: SML   And so we’ve got self-reflective practice and can look back at ourselves and think about this whole thing. So, in a way, we’ve got to pull this idea of interconnectedness and selflessness into our understanding of ecosystem dynamics. That this is a fundamental principle behind ecosystem dynamics, which we are of, you know we’re an emergent phenomenon

¶318:

¶319: NP   Mmm hmm

¶320:

¶321: SML   We co-create. It helps us, we help it, we build it, it builds us, you know, and it’s not there before us, it’s there because we’re there etc. It’s
a really nice concept that we’ve not yet really absorbed intuitively. Our science is telling us it’s there, science is saying it’s really the facts of the situation. Now we’ve gotta try and absorb it, and so, at one level, it’s sort of moving out through the through the um you know the medical profession, and a lot of that information is still being absorbed in to that especially through their psychotherapeutic program, and eventually it’ll spread further and further with the information, and so, I’m trying to see how that can actually be absorbed as a…you know, within architecture, we’re we can see it, we can understand interconnectedness as a physical thing, as a say as a geological thing or as a biological thing, we can understand that. It makes sense. (laughs) But what we haven’t sort of yet, really crunched,

Mmm

Is this real understanding that our buildings are really only an extension of our minds, and so there’s that…we are really totally interdependent at that level. We tend to sort of keep on separating ourselves away from the process that we’re engaged in. So I’m really wondering, how much of that discussion is part of any of these new initiatives that you’re seeing coming in to the profession about sustainability, about sort of visioning, or imagining or rethinking our design approaches.

Um…

Is architecture anywhere near that yet?

I feel like I’m only going to give a very practical um example to a… you know what’s…
And I guess, you know, the closest that I think it’s probably coming to is, um, providing a built environment that educates with you.

Mmm

And I don’t know, I don’t think it goes anywhere near to addressing the sort of the concept that you’re describing.

I suppose what I’m just trying to discuss with you is is there a way for that type of information to be accessible within the architecture profession, would it make sense to an architect to engage at that level of interdependence, to understand interdependence at that level in order to design in a holistic way?

Um

Would it make any difference?

I don’t know if it would make any difference, I think it’s probably a…a very personal approach that individuals might take on board and you’d get varying levels of understanding and commitment to it, depending on who you’re actually working with.
Yeah, OK

Um

No? That’s alright.

I don’t know, I don’t know, I mean I personally do think that we are heavily influenced by our buildings and they can shape our behaviour on many many subconscious levels and that we can act to, you know, create spaces and places that create a certain type of behaviour. But where I’ve tried to incorporate that in to projects and talk about it with people, it’s actually quite hard to tangibly describe…

It is

And design in to a project, and um…

Yeah, and we have to somehow work a way around that difficulty. That’s a difficulty which we need to…there’s a gap there we need to close. So that we can actually have, um, valid discussions, have a language that we can use, that we can make judgements, and they’re valid judgements because they’re valued by you know the wider community, or…who you’re talking to. That’s and I think, you know, when we talk about quantitative measurements and qualitative investment, that’s the gap we’ve got to fill there, and we’re very you know, quantitative measurements give us certainty and they’re factual and um, you know, we value that, that’s very important. And there are certain things that we can quantify, and we can quantify
freshness of air, just on the amount of cycles, you know we can quantify a 
number of sort of qualitative things, um, but there are other things which we 
can’t quantify, part of the qualitative system. I’m just thinking when you go 
to Europe, I mean I’ve got this photograph in my head that Mark…professor 
Mark

362:

363: NP Burry?

364:

365: SML Burry. One of his favourite photographs.

366:

367: NP Yes. I’ve got an appointment at 11.30 – that’s alright, I was 
just checking.

368:

369: SML And a shot of…you know, he’s taken a group of students 
around Europe and this shot is of a whole bunch of them, they’re absolutely 
splayed out on the steps somewhere in Venice. You know, and they are 
absolutely unconscious, the whole lot of them, they’re just exhausted. But 
he’s saying that they weren’t exhausted from exhaustion, they were 
overwhelmed

370:

371: NP Mmm hmm

372:

373: SML The whole…everything that they had seen was just so 
overwhelming they were knocked out…so we’re talking about a qualitative

374:

375: NP That’s right, and some spaces create that feeling in you, but not 
many

25
Not many

No

And that’s the challenge

The problem

Yeah. Understanding that essence, you know.

You know, our built environment by and large isn’t all that inspiring, and that’s probably why we are like we are.

Very true. And, that comes to my last question in the personal which is…OK. Visioning. Vision making. Now, um, what vision do you hold on to for your inspiration, or what do you draw. What sort of vision making do you have?

Um, for my architecture?

Mmm, for your architecture, or for your sense of self-development. But your architecture is your sense of self.
Look at a practical level, it’s the quality of light and space and sound and music and um, colour it ties to a much broader vision, I’m tying that all to a broader vision.

OK, alright

Yeah, for my work, those are the sort of

Yes, concrete and practical

Images and visions, yeah, but not, you know, like the play and the interaction of those together. So, something really small, but might sparkle or…

But has a subtlety or…

Mmm,

And so…

It’s quite physical, I guess
Yes, well you have to find a

Practical beauty and…

Physical expression, yep, yep. No, that’s good. Ok, now, RAIA. As chair of the sustainable architecture forum, what sensitivities to you expect an architect to take on leadership roles in implementing sustainable design?

Um, I’m only going to really speak from experience rather than my expectation, but in my experience people that emerge as leaders are the ones with the passion.

Ok, and so, that’s the most important thing

Yep

Ok, and that’s irrespective of knowledge or um

Ahhh, no, combined with knowledge. Um, and I guess, I guess a lack of, um…that they don’t compromise.

Yeah, OK, good. So they’ve got a fairly strong core, core value.
Alright. Within this forum, which really is a reflective practice in itself, that’s what it is, um, is self-reflective practice ever on the agenda?

No

Alright. Um, now, you’re promoting sustainability through your professional development events, right?

Yep

Um, what about promoting mindfulness on the suffering of unsustainable development?

Um,

Have you ever taken that tack?

Well, you could, and I guess this is a bit what Al Gore’s film is about to me, perhaps where that question is leading, and in…and I’m not sure if I’m correct, but it’s saying “If you don’t do this, this is what’s going to happen”, and that’s OK to a point, but at some point you have to step away from that and say “OK, well this is what you can do about it”. So, I guess, in taking…I’m going to use the Port Phillip example, Waterco, like if planners training there in why should we be caring about this stuff, and it’s fairly
depressing and they system’s really bad and da da da da dah. But then, like, the rest of the training is focussed on what they can do, so um

Alright

I guess if you’re starting out you probably want to know why you’re doing it, like if it’s a really important part of understanding what you’re doing

Sure, yeah

But, to dwell on it I think isn’t all that helpful. You must be aware of the issues.

And, so I’m really saying, you must also be aware of your own self. Your own, the issues that actually you embody as well, I mean, we’re all part of this conundrum – we can’t step outside of it and say “well, we’re we’re clean, our hands are clean, it’s everybody else’s problem”. We have to keep sort of looking at what it is we’re doing, so do you focus in on that when you’re, you know, thinking about these programs?

Ah well, every sort of information that we put out has a “you can change the way you work” component to it

Ok
Alright, so now you talk about your role at Port Phillip as basically working towards cultural change, right? And you believe that…as I said before, that you, your personal belief is that the change is from creating buildings to modifying the existing landscape, right? Now, is that how Port Phillip council…do they support you in that philosophy? Is that their philosophy?

Um, achieving cultural change through modification of the…look, yeah, you know, but the council changes over time. Um, as a council, they’re obviously focussed on key performance indicators and outcomes and so forth, so the more of those that you can achieve, the better, but they do very…they do have a great level of support for the advocacy work that I’m doing. And, what I’m doing, and the impacts that I’m having in terms of real environmental issues is almost impossible to measure. Really. But, you can get a sense of how we’re going from a, um, you know a momentum, a gathering of thoughts a gathering of peers and like minded people and so forth

Alright

And they do very much support that

OK, I mean moving…
Appendix C8

¶479: NP And I think that they are quite strongly focussed on getting behaviours back. They’ve got lots of behaviour change programs throughout the council, so, the idea of the building…I don’t think it’s as sophisticated an understanding of the built environment, you know, has an interaction with the self and can change behaviour, but they’re very, um supportive of behaviour change approaches. It’s all very practical.

¶480:

¶481: SML Fine, but really, what it’s doing is generating that energy. You’re talking about the more people that

¶482:

¶483: NP People taking responsibility for their own actions

¶484:

¶485: SML Yeah, and that sort of creates a momentum in itself.

¶486:

¶487: NP Yeah.

¶488:

¶489: SML Now, what about the RAIA, how do they approach this idea of um, your…how do you get that idea into the RAIA, this idea of moving from building to modifying landscapes.

¶490:

¶491: NP Oh, this is hard. How do I do that? Um. I think it’s hard, because architects are always so pressed for time. They’re struggling to implement things that will achieve a practical outcome, let alone something that’s going to, you know, foster a greater sense of understanding. But, again, you know, I think that’s part of the architecture itself. You know, modifying…

¶492:
Modifying...I don’t know what I meant by that but I think what I meant is that by modifying the landscape versus our buildings our actual built landscapes um, we can influence the way people behave.

That’s what I think it is. And, I’m not sure if too many architects have got too much time to think about that

To touch them.

OK, in the day to day running of business?

Yeah, and I’m not sure if that really comes across in what we do, I’d say there’s probably

An undercurrent there
Appendix C8

¶513: NP Perhaps, yeah. But the way we get messages out to other architects I guess, is through professional development you know. And, it’s mainly focussed on strategies, you know, rather than

¶514:

¶515: SML To, sort of, get that information just on practical…

¶516:

¶517: NP Yeah, and I guess it’s also up to the architects for example there’s a PD event coming up on the East Melbourne library, and the architect’s talking. I don’t know what he’s going to be talking about, theoretically about the approach to the building, and if he…and his brief is from a sustainability and an access point of view, and maybe, if we asked him to talk about the design philosophy as well, some of that information might emerge.

¶518:

¶519: SML Mmm, yes, that would be good. Ok, you consider it OK, now you consider it important to bring about cultural change through designing for ecologically relevant outcomes as opposed to designing to standard, you’re talking about the problem with standards and

¶520:

¶521: NP Oh, yes, yep

¶522:

¶523: SML So, this implies a higher-order understanding of sustainability than is necessary to designing to standard. Now, a higher-order understanding implies sensitivities that can best come from personal experience of sustainable outcomes. It’s difficult until you have those experiences to take it on board. Now, so are you suggesting that architects are best to evaluate engineered standards against experience gained of sustainable outcomes? Is that what you’re saying?
Oh, look. Are best to evaluate? Yeah, for sure. I mean, you’ll find that engineered outcomes are probably your minimum best…your minimum standard. So, they’re set at some sort of a minimum level, and um,

It’s a fairly generalised…you know

Yeah

Abstracted sort of standard

But it’s also aimed at the lowest common denominator. And, so by evaluating your own experience against that you’ll probably find that you can bypass or surpass that, or find a better way of doing that. You know, exceed the targets.

So, you get a sense of judgement, you’re able to make judgement

Yeah. And you also know what difficulties are going to come up, and you can learn about them and there’s nothing like experience to be able to um

Yeah, to base your ideas on. Ok. So, I mean you mentioned that, when you were talking about how how to get people to subscribe to the EDG environment design guide, this idea of showing them through a building
that has got, you know that has achieved particular sustainable standards. How is the RAIA doing that? Are they looking at sort of implementing something sort of like that? Where…

¶540:

¶541: NP Um, I don’t know. I think what they should do is that the person that’s managing that needs to have a very hands-on approach, because, um, you know a personable interaction is going to achieve far more than a comment on a newsletter is or a mail out. And, you’ve probably got…it was reached a long time ago. You’ve probably got as much sort of involvement with the environment design side as you will get without having some sort of personable interaction, whether it’s training on how to use it, or um, awareness on what’s in there, or whatever.

¶542:

¶543: SML Site visits, or…you know, or feedback from users? Is that something that the EDG could do?

¶544:

¶545: NP Um, I think it’s a very problematic format, and I don’t know what the answer is to it, really. I think it’s usable. I can use it, and um,

¶546:

¶547: SML Yeah, I find it very good myself

¶548:

¶549: NP Yeah, I think it’s just about knowing that it’s there, and time, and time and time and time and time

¶550:

¶551: SML It is time, it really is

¶552:

¶553: NP Yeah, and money for time. That’s the issue.
It’s a real catch 22. OK. SO we talked about standards being a two edged sword, (how are we going for time, you’ve got to go soon)

Ah, I’ve got about eight minutes

Yeah, ok. Let me see. OK. We’re talking about, you know we talked off the record about intention part of how do you judge something, that there this sort of practical level where you can measure it quite clearly, and then there’s these other things like intention, right?

Yep

So, does visioning receive any sort of consideration when you’re judging something as good design, because we…our society needs a vision to influence and inspire us, is that sort of part of the RAIA approach to judging.

That is mentioned…that’s more personal than an RAIA, I mean I was able to…since we talked about it, talk with my colleagues and you know, I guess say that it was a key factor, and I guess that’s maybe the same sort of thing as a vision. Your intention, your vision.

Right, ok
I guess that’s what I mean by it, it’s that intention or…by starting off from an established position, you’ve already created your understanding, and your position and your responsibility and your role and your vision and your standing on something and then you set off to create something with those…that background of…background position, I guess.

Yes, to move it beyond that

Yeah, um, I always, when I’m approach my major architectural projects I always try and establish a vision for that project and we keep coming back to it and saying “are we are achieving that? Is that, you know, are we being successful in that?” and you sort of, you know, we’ve all got a sort of campaign approach to things, but from an RAIA point of view…is that something that they’re encouraging? Is that what the question is?

Well, in their 39 steps, when, you know, they submitted to the sustainable cities government forum, they lamented this lack of visioning and they felt that there should be a special role assigned to architects to create vision for the future. That was one of their 39 steps.

Right

So, I’m just wondering how that theme has been taken up.

I don’t know. I don’t know if I can comment on RAIA’s position on that.
Ok, that was a national agenda

Yeah, that document hasn’t been widely spread, I was actually talking with David Parkin about that, and I have no…

‘Cause it’s quite in-depth, and I thought you know, very thorough

Ok, look, I may have seen it, I may not have

Ok, now, you state that you’re fundamentally…it’s important that you live sustainably, if you’re going to be a designer of sustainable options or futures you’ve got to be able to demonstrate you understand it personally

Yep

Now, how does the RAIA push this to its members?

I don’t know. Through the Environment Design Guide?

Ok.

Ah, through the policy. Well one of the key points of the policy is that you practice sustainably.
SML: Yeah

NP: Yep. I’m not sure that they’re all that effective in pushing environmental messages to their members, I guess that’s what the SAF is trying to do. That’s what the Sustainable Architecture Forum is trying to do.

SML: Oh, yes. OK. Well, in a way, there’s things like the sustainable living foundation, something like that. Now, how close is the RAIA to that sort of an organisation. If they haven’t, you know…do they sort of employ or have a relationship with that organisation which is more to do with the living sustainability, as opposed to designing. Are they sort of…?

NP: Um,

SML: Have they sort of seen a mechanism that they can use to say we support this organisation and this is what you know you can learn more about yourself and your design capabilities

NP: It may be that Lerina spends um…shares that information in The Edge newsletters. I don’t think there’s a…Lerina’s the person that’s employed at the Institute on sustainability issues, so she would know if there’s any connection between the institute and that.

SML: Ok, so maybe I should ask her.
Yeah, I think so.

Alright. And, in the end, again, I’m looking at this interconnectedness you know, it’s a great…it’s going to be one of those other terms, a bit like sustainability, you know, we talk about it, and we absolutely don’t know what it means, so I’m wondering (laughs) you know, the RAIA, how interconnected is the RAIA.

With their members?

With other bodies. I know that the Environmental Design Guide is a great opportunity, they’ve really got that idea in their head and you know and they’ve got the planners and they’ve got you know, designers, the other designing organisation

Building designers Association.

Yeah, Building designers Association, and they really have worked in a much more integrated manner, I gather, well they certainly set up

Oh, with the Building Designers? I uh…

(laughs) In writing, anyway

Oh do they? Oh.
Well that whole thing…

I think it’s really hard to define the RAIA, I think…I don’t know if you’re having trouble with your other interviewees but to define…for one person to give a view on the RAIA

It’s very hard…

Yeah

And I’m not really…I do appreciate that, because you’re…it’s a representative organisation

And I’m…this question? I don’t think there is much interconnectedness, I think there’s a real gap with what the RAIA should be telling their members, I think that there’s…there’s such an important role for the members who do represent the institute and the staff to take a leading role in this and really stand out as a beacon of, you know, public opinion on this issue. And I know that there’s a reluctance in there and it’s really frustrating. And, the members don’t know what the institute does, and there’s…you know the institute should be engaging with other key organisations like the ACF, like the Sustainable Living Foundation and getting together and really progressing this issues and providing outcomes and they don’t do it, and it’s really frustrating. That’s what I’m trying to do, and I’m not sure how successful it is. I think it really needs to be a lobbying…more lobbying and
Within the RAIA

Yeah, well, within the RAIA, but within the industry and the community in general, it really needs to make a stand and it just is so conservative and ?? history, and I think it’s partly generational and partly you know fear of litigation and so forth.

Yes, yes. OK, no that’s a good point. Well look, we’ll leave that one then.

Yeah, it really is frustrating. (laughs)

I can imagine, and fortunately there are people like you who are in inside. I mean, a lot of people would simply just opt out.

Yeah that’s right.

They do! And that’s a real problem. Just a minute. Yes

I think I might have to take off

Alright

I’ve got someone coming in.
OK, I think you’ve…you’ve really spoken everything I mean
the last question was to do with you don’t feel we’re working towards
sustainability, we’re working towards lower impact.

Oh, yes, I know.

Which not a huge vision isn’t it?

No, it’s not, but I’ve tried to frame that. For example…I know
that, and I know about that and I’ve tried to explain the recent revision of the
new Port Phillip policy around that so it’s not lowering our impact, it’s not
being efficient about everything, it’s being effective about everything. It’s an
idea that Peter…oh, it’s an idea that’s been around for bloody ages, um, yeah,
you’re right, I don’t think that’s generally well understood. The efficiency
versus…

Effectiveness. Yes, I mean because, again, it comes back to our
desire to quantify things, it’s the only solidity we have in our ever changing

Yeah, but we’re also working within a distinct strategy – the
techniques and technologies that we understand

That’s right
Appendix C8

683:NP And what we actually need is to shift away from that because they don’t work! And they won’t ever get to you know

684:

685:SML Very true. And this is this vision that we have to…thankyou
Interview between Seona Gunn (SG) and Su Mellersh-Lucas (SML)

Café @ Princess Bridge next to sixdegrees architectural office

10.56am – 12.06pm

SML... I have to get some sound on this because it’s too good, so say that again because we are coming to a really interesting phase in our culture

SG I think that an individual has – the individual has been lost and individual responsibility is no longer important. It’s all about having your life organised for you.

SML organised in a way that – who’s pushing this?

SG profit is pushing it isn’t it

SML that’s exactly so and why are we so obliging – that’s what interests me

SG because we’re told to be obliging I think. We’re being encouraged to be obliging and to realise that the economy is all.

SML is paramount yes. And um I’ve just been reading a little bit of um Snodgrass. Do you know Adrian Snodgrass? From Sydney. He writes a bit about Buddhist mandala construction and stupa construction. He’s just written a book last year on architecture as interpretation – he calls the book – and he was talking about Heidegger’s understanding of technology and how you know the individual is now a cog in the technological structure; that our life is just feeding this technological dynamic. We’re no longer in control of
our technology. We’re just a cog along with all the other tools inside this technological society.

12. SG yeah and individual emotions you know – responsibility, feelings are lost in that and we become much like a machine.

13. SML yeah yes. And um this idea of not valuing our emotional side seems to be – everything I’ve been reading – seems to be the crux of the problem. That we’ve forgotten that it is absolutely paramount to our sense of well-being is our emotional maturity.

14. SG yeah, even worse is that we’re not encouraged to think about other people’s emotions and what our actions um how our actions impact on other people. They become dehumanised in some way. So we don’t have to think about them. We don’t have to think about who ever it is we might be treading on or persecuting in our desperate grasp for everything that we ought to have, and we’re told we ought to have. And what we need.

15. SML now these are all questions that I’m going to be asking you so we’d better get started. This idea of need is right at the front of ecologically sustainable design

16. SG oh absolutely

17. SML an yet nobody really is capable – its not a concept that really capable of being defined narrowly at all. So that’s one of the real problems. I’ve just got here what I sent you in my email. And basically I want to talk to you about how

18. SG how

19. SML how is a really important topic. And your strategies and your structures, the way you might structure techniques into your life into your thinking as an architect. What I’m trying to do in my thesis is say okay there’s two parts to the design process. There’s the self-transformative part and then there’s the transformative part - that’s what actually comes out as the
design outcome. At the same time we’re being affected as designers or as participants in the process as well so we’re changing, along with whatever the outcome we’re creating. It’s also changing its um what ever function its meant to have its also going to transform its environment or the people that come through it in the same way that we’re going to be transformed in the process as well. So I’m just looking at how we get transformed. What does it mean to us - the self-transformative part.

20: SG As architects or people?

21: SML yes as architects

22: SG okay

23: SML to my mind there’s a crossover.

24: SG some people separate the two

25: SML yes and I’m interested in that as well

26: SG and I don’t know if that’s what I do

27: SML right yes well. I’m asking you about ecologically sustainable design because its got such a large um there’s so much that can be gained from engaging in it at all levels. It such a large ideology that you can take hold of. I want to know from you first of all what’s your understanding of ecologically sustainable design. What does it mean to you when you hear the term. How much meaning do you give to the concept?

28: SG well I suppose in a nutshell it’s making the smallest footprint possible on the environment. And that has very wide implications. And I think it has to be looked at from a very broad perspective so it has to be started by questioning how big a footprint you think is ethically correct, as opposed to how much you would like to have. Or how much you think you should have because other people have it too. So there’s a lot of – how will I put it - from a Buddhist point of view you have to look at ego and ego is very important in the design process. However, there’s a responsibility I think for pointing out
to your clients that perhaps what they need may not necessarily be what they would like or want or what would be responsible. But quite often – sometimes you just have to suppress that because um the code of practice states that we have to design for our clients.

\[29\]: SML right that’s a really interesting tension there.

\[30\]: SG yes so it’s difficult. But going back to – I think ethically we have to, um, make as small a footprint as we possibly can on the planet.

\[31\]: SML terrific Um my second motherhood statement is about expertise. And you know, improving capability relies on continual improvement that challenges your own beliefs and ability and your knowledge base. So how do you, you know what are you doing at the moment that you find is challenging your development of ecologically sustainable design. you know, what do you find that’s really challenged you in that whole process?

\[32\]: SG um One of the major things is total lack of understanding of just how much we have to change our way of life. And it concerns me that to reverse the current um situation as regards climate change or global warming we have to do something drastic and I think that it is quite challenging to me because I look around and see that people are being just as profligate as they used to be and perhaps even more so in the name of the environment. For instance, things like desalination plants that use up extraordinary amounts of power for very little return.

\[33\]: SML yes, or nuclear energy which is on the agenda now

\[34\]: SG yes. So that challenges me in that I, if I’m a good Buddhist, I have to see other people’s point of view and I have to be compassionate and sympathetic. But at the same time um part of me rails against that sort of – rails against those actions.

\[35\]: SML yes sure
Appendix C9

36: SG and confirms for me that um we’re not as – well humanity is not as sort of idealistically kind as I thought it was.

37: SML uhum yes, and do you put that down to individuals or down to society or to structures, organisation, awareness. You know what

38: SG I think all of those. I think individually people are very unaware. I think society in lots of ways has fragmented so much that I think people are a bit directionless. They don’t have a sense of community.

39: SML or that drive for unity.

40: SG yes that ‘s right that drive for unity. There’s not that sense of communal purpose.

41: SML mm yes okay.

42: SG is this what you want.

43: SML oh yes yes, (laughter) the interesting thing about interviews, the interviewees think they’ve got to sort of provide what the interviewer wants.

44: SG no, no I don’t think that because I wouldn’t change what I would say just to please you (laughter)

45: SML oh good, good

46: SG I’m just wondering if this is going to meld in with your

47: SML with my thesis yes (laughter) Well my whole purpose is to try and work out where the um more emotive, intuitive, the human, the phenomenological heart of the design process – how important it is because I don’t think it is well recognised within the ESD literature. There’s not enough acknowledgement that part of the design process is also, it feeds into whatever ESD outcomes are or the options that are taken up. And so um I’m interested in self-reflective practices that encourage a more phenomenological awareness of – awareness of the phenomenology of the process – that design thinking um is influenced by a whole range of parameters not just the lack of
facts to do with say the sciences of ecological sustainability. But our attitudes our – as you were talking about – our sense of values our care and our commitment and our compassion. All of those things are parameters that affect how we take up ecologically sustainable design and what bits of it we utilise.

48: SG utilise yeah. But I didn’t – well I don’t know if I answered fully the previous motherhood statement in that how do it affect me or how does it challenge me. It does challenge me and it does challenge all my Buddhist teaching and I have to um I have to watch my emotions and I have to remains compassionate and understanding and um and try and um

49: SML sort of communicate that somehow to your clients. Because it is a dialogue

50: SG it is a dialogue yeah and you can only hope that some of your er some of your compassion um affect the attitudes of your client as well.

51: SML that’s right. Do you find that you will judge your clients? Meaning will you take on clients or you look for clients who are more capable of embracing you know your values or do you steer clear of clients that you’re going to have trouble with

52: SG (laughter)

53: SML (laughter) You know how do you maintain your integrity when you’re dealing with clients who might not be …

54: SG I don’t think that one can be completely discriminating and I don’t think that’s the point of architecture. I think that you have to um, accept your clients as they are in lots of ways and just hope that if they do prove to be narrow minded or um, rather set in their ways that some of your understanding and compassion rubs off. I would however, refuse any um, dealings with people who are dishonest or

55: SML alright
56: SG or um, irresponsible or want to do something that I would – like I wouldn’t design – I probably would find it difficult to get involved in the design of an abattoir. (laughter)

57: SML okay yes you might step back from taking on those sorts of jobs

58: SG yes

59: SML I mean I’m just thinking of some of my previous interviews and some of them talk about how it’s a real – you know – they see it as quite a fight – not confrontational – but you have to be very firm in what you are trying to push – what you stand for and um, that often, you have to be very tenacious in pursuing that idea all the way through and bringing the clients along. And some of my interviewees have had real trouble – I shouldn’t say trouble – they find that they get very personally affected when they see their clients – even though they don’t say this to their clients – as far as it’s not a um, point of issue. What they’re saying is that they find it disconcerting when their clients don’t take on their advice and go down a path maybe using wood unsustainably or unsustainably harvested wood. I find that some of my interviewees find that really emotionally quite personally distressing to see that their advice is not being picked up not being taken and that gives them quite a lot of you know, angst and emotional upset. So how do you deal with that sort of …

60: SG I don’t think you can really afford to get too angsty otherwise you would commit suicide I think (laughter)

61: SML (laughter)

62: SG I don’t necessarily think that aspect of the design process um, affects me as much as a client being um, ethically and morally corrupt.

63: SML umum so its not an ignorance that you’re
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64: SG it's not an ignorance that I’m concerned about. It’s a stubborn wilfulness that I’m not going to pay the builders because I don’t like him and that sort of thing. And that upsets me far more than say the client wanting to use you know, unsustainable timber.

65: SML okay, alright

66: SG Because um, I think its easier to deal with a client that doesn’t want to use recycled timber. But it’s very difficult to deal with a client who’s stubbornly egotistical and thinks that his way or her way is the only right way.

67: SML a very good point. Alright. Yeah. Um, I’ll just move down my notes and we might cut back and forward. The next statement that I was looking at was this idea of commitment. You know its sort of central to the RAIA environment policy – it’s the number one, right up at the top and its basically saying you have to do this with your client, you know, you have to encourage them to take on board these initiatives. And my feeling is well, that’s important. But first of all you’ve got to look at yourself before you can go out and encourage others. And that’s not there in the Environment Policy which is what I’m concerned about. That advice for architects is all of this outward focus. You know the advice is all external to the self-focus that we need as practitioners/architects. So my, my query is – to commit – you know if that is what we’re asked to do – how do you go about it – you personally. What are the strategies that you take up, the structures? What sort of way do you take that up? This idea of being personally committed so that then you can go out and encourage your clients and the world around you to commit.

68: SG well I drive a very small car.

69: SML right (laughter) yes

70: SG We live very simply. Um we plant trees. We live on land that we’re sort of cultivating ah organically. And I let my clients know that. And

71: SML do you think they come to you because of those qualities?
A couple of them have. Yes a couple of them have. Not that I’ve had many private clients. I can’t say that my private practice is the main concern in my life at the moment. And I find private practice much more difficult for reasons other than convincing clients to be sustainable.

(laughter) right

But I think that you have to demonstrate – you have to be demonstrably living the life of small environmental impact.

right. I mean we started this conversation talking about – was I talking about issues that are architectural or are they personal. So I’m interested – have you – do you come across situations where there is this very strong separation between private and professional approaches to ecologically sustainable design.

I don’t know. Like architects who don’t live the life of …

well yes. I mean that’s often a complaint. And I probably shouldn’t be asking you your opinion. And we won’t pursue it.

Okay lets say it worries me that there are architects who perceive ESD as being hair-shirt and straw bales. That sort of category.

alright okay

and that they would never you know. The cutting edge of design

is not hair-shirts and straw bales (laughter)

and they don’t believe that the two are compatible

is that so. Alright. There seems to be a lot of discussion about ESD ecologically sustainable design as you know say the McDonough approach – Braungart and McDonough approach – alright. And to my mind that’s not straw bales and (laughter) hairshirts so. So how much of that thinking (say the McDonough approach is say inside the architectural environment that you’re in?
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¶84: SG um I don’t think I really don’t think that the majority of architects are committed to ESD. To be perfectly honest.

¶85: SML okay. Is that because there’s a lack of understanding of what, you know, is ESD is too broad, their view too narrow?

¶86: SG no I don’t think that such things as the Eureka Tower over there lends itself to ESD. And that’s what clients are demanding and um, the majority of architects respond to the client first rather than to some issue that the RAIA has regarding ESD. And I don’t think we’re ever going to change the way we live or we’re ever going to pull back from the brink of total environmental collapse unless everybody stands up and says I’m sorry we can’t do this any more. (laughter)

¶87: SML ummm (laughter) It’s a fairly desperate scenario you …

¶88: SG yeah maybe ten years we would have had a very very different conversation about ESD when it was seen as being some sort of you know, hobby.

¶89: SML hobby?

¶90: SG yes (laughter)

¶91: SML (laughter) it is fascinating the way the whole issue has arisen. Its historical roots which you know, come from a counter culture in the West anyway – a counter culture movement you know the hippy back to nature, anti-establishment stance and how that’s become gradually more and more mainstream. And the fact that there’s been all this baggage that’s still attached to it because its been a counter movement, a critique of society. I mean everything basically starts out as a critique of the status quo. So ESD is still a critique of the status quo and the mainstream society is reluctantly trying to mould it so that not too much damage is done to the status quo while trying to take on board the reality of the situation.
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92. SG yeah. But I also think that people are so overwhelmed by the prospect of environmental collapse that it’s just too difficult to know where to start. And um, for that reason I’m concerned that we’ll never start. And um …

93. SML okay, so alright. Well we know that if everybody started then that would be you know, great. So when I’m speaking to architects I’m asking how do you start I mean you obviously start – you’ve talked about yourself personally.

94. SG with clients?

95. SML yes

96. SG yeah. Um, I suppose you just put the suggestions forward. And I think you you have to – in the briefing – you have to start in the briefing process. So you find out all what the client requires and then you put forward suggestions – well we can do this - its all achievable and its all achievable in a sustainable way if we do the following. And you present strategies to them for reducing ah environmental impact.

97. SML okay. Do you follow a structured line of presentation?

98. SG no no I think it’s very much pushed by the client. I think one thing I tend to do is read the client very carefully. And listen very carefully to what they’re saying and present strategies to them in a way they will understand. And you have more chance of them accepting it if

99. SML if its within their grasp

100. SG Yeah. If they can understand what you’re trying to get at and they realise that they won’t sacrifice anything or it won’t cost them a great deal more.

101. SML okay. Do you talk about you know, whole-of-life. Are your clients owner-operators, developers?
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102: SG  no they’re mostly – my private clients or domestic clients. Yes they can look at a long life cycle. I have to say most of them have been very happy about including strategies for reducing energy usage and um reducing environmental waste. Except for one who is not interested in it at all.

103: SML  okay.

104: SG  and never will be. So I think you just have to accept that.

105: SML  yes. Because everybody comes to their own appreciation. It’s the old adage isn’t it? You can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink. So you can only lead it to the water and say well here are the options and its up to you. Alright. So..

106: SG  and unfortunately that client is a politician which is off the record (laughter)

107: SML  right. How interesting. Great. (laughter) Well it says a lot about what our society is thinking. You know if that’s the sort of people we’re promoting as our leaders - our voice. Then that’s the thinking that’s current. That dominates - and that’s another one of my questions. This dominating mind set. You know our worldview. How do you go about – what do you consider to be our current worldview and how closely aligned or not do you find your own points of view. Where do you differ?

108: SG  yes its very hard not to be cynical. Because you feel that you’re becoming more and more marginalised I think. If you um,

109: SML  humhum. Yes you’ve got to avoid thinking that you are marginal.

110: SG  you’ve got to remain positive and um,

111: SML  and that’s the Buddhist adage isn’t it. You got to be with the right people. So how do you – who are you surrounding yourself with?
112: SG  yes the Buddhist terminology is sangha and so you stay within your sangha. Our friends do tend to be likeminded people and I think you can gain a lot of strength through that. And it always a great pleasure to find and discuss these sorts of issues with strangers. But there are many more like minded people than you would think. But I think world view um, I’m hopeful. I think that more and more people are going to realise that its individuals – or the general population – who have got to take the initiative. And I don’t think it will work otherwise because there’s no apparent initiative in our leadership (laughter) of any persuasion except perhaps for the Greens.

113: SML  I couldn’t agree more on that. Um okay. So how do you broaden that sangha inside your professional life. How are you doing that? Do you work on that? Is there a supportive environment within your architectural practice?

114: SG  yeah I think well I tend to – I work for architects who have a very similar sort of view – um, I try to encourage architects that I am working for to change the nature of their standard specification to make them more green. And to a certain extent the industry – well to a certain extent the unions for instance are forcing some of the issues.

115: SML  right. In the building industry?

116: SG  within the building industry itself there tends to be …

117: SG  and is that the unions who are doing that?

118: SG  well, the unions are forcing the issue on things like dangerous goods, health and safety, you know the use of MDF, those sorts of things, so we, as architects are probably being made more aware of the fact that some of the things that we’re specifying are toxic to the people who are installing them.

119: SML  yes. And so you find that there’s a… I’m interested that there’s a siloing of the whole building process – the design and building process. There seems to be very very narrow silos of expertise and the cross
over is so poor. And so ecologically sustainable design talks a lot about participatory design you know, bringing in um, the workers and the clients and the end-users and all sorts of experts and other interested parties right up at the front end of the design process. Now are you able to do that?

120:SG ah you are able to do that if you have the builder appointed before the design process starts. In lots of ways you can then ..

121:SML is that something you negotiate with your client. You know.

122:SG sometimes if the client has a particular builder in mind. If they want to go to the tender process then what you can do is try and influence them into a choice a builders that you can tender to.

123:SML okay

124:SG for instance. And there are builders that have an environmental policies that they will – that they’ve issued that they will – er large building companies that recycle on a regular basis. So you can suggest to the client that they tender to possible builders. So you can do a sort of crosspollination between the various experts. But I find that some of the consultants are lagging very far behind.

125:SML very interesting point.

126:SG And so people like the electrical engineers need to catch up with (laughter)

127:SML and why do you think that’s so? How come? Is it that our professions …

128:SG I think they’re lazy. (laughter)

129:SML it’s the status quo …

130:SG yeah I think its easier to operate within you know …
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[131: SML] this is this whole idea of expertise and challenge and you know. The difference between a competent person and between an expert is that the competent person narrows down their field of interest or of knowledge so that they’re very, very good at very, very little. It doesn’t challenge them to think outside of what they’re good at.

[132: SG] but I think that the more projects that are done in a more collaborative way, the better. And particularly the projects like the Melbourne City Council building. Because now we can see that you can do it. And that its successful

[133: SML] yes and you’ve got lots of opportunity to hear the feedback too from the building users as well. and to know that the design process – it might have been an unusual design process – but you know its been successful.

[134: SG] and the technology is not – the technology is simple. Maybe that’s the problem with people like air-conditioning engineers. That they’re no longer required.

[135: SML] yes. It’s a bit like the loggers. Everybody’s looking after their own patch and putting up barriers when really …

[136: SG] but a lot of clients are loathe to investigate different sorts of systems too. They know that airconditioning works for instance, um, but they’re not quite sure about other sorts of cooling, or that just that insulating their home properly can make a difference.

[137: SML] sure. But they are relying on professionals to advise them. They’re the ones that are supposed to be giving them the information. So inside your architectural practice how are you getting hold of that information? Are you putting a lot of effort into research yourself?

[138: SG] yes yes we have to research um other ways of doing things and read widely.
and how’s that set inside your practice. As part of an organisation do you find that someone is dedicated to amassing all that information? Or is everyone being asked to develop an expertise in some part of ecologically sustainable design?

no oh well unless you are a sole practitioner then you have to know everything. Um, but within an office it doesn’t necessarily work along those lines. I don’t think any one person can be responsible for the whole area. I think the sharing of knowledge is very important.

are there structures set up to share that knowledge? Do you have meetings to talk about what you’ve learned, libraries?

the two small practices I work for at the moment we share the knowledge. And that’s easy to do because you’re working with next to yeah working with people. In large practices it’s a little more difficult.

yes. You might need a little bit more structure.

Yeah and I think that the large practice I worked with they had a sort of internal system. So a new ideas and um, new technologies were flashed up for a week or so um, on the intranet and people could access it and there’d be seminars, little weekly talks by someone about something interesting, something overseas.

yeah um. So do you go back over your projects and pick out what are the new ways you’ve come up with –resolutions - and feed that back into the rest of the office.

yes we can do that. We talk about individual projects and strategies that we’re using.
so. Um. Um, I’ll just go back through my notes. I’ve sort of slipped into … because I’m also interested in how you change the culture within an office?

well yes. Within an office. Because you know, you’re also part of that office culture and if you’re challenging yourself to bring in ESD that’s also affecting the culture that you’re in so how supportive is that (getting back to that sangha idea again). How do you encourage more support for the ideas that you want to bring in?

well mostly I have worked for people who are reasonably enlightened.

alright so you haven’t found that you’re hitting a brick wall or …

not within the office. I think outside the office with people like some of the services consultants and clients that then you do hit a brick wall. Particularly with that question is it going to cost me any more. And I don’t think that …

so you have to have a very well developed answer to that

yeah and if you say touchy feely things like well you may not have a planet in ten years

(laughter) it doesn’t sort of strike a vibe

(laughter) So you have to talk in economic terms that yes, it will initially cost this much but the cost savings on energy consumption or employee sickness – or those sorts of things will um, offset any initial upfront installation costs.

yeah sure. And you’re clients are open to those suggestions?
most of them are I think now. There are clients who will never change and they are mostly quasi-governmental clients. Schools, hospitals aren’t interested in environmental – it’s the bottom line: budget.

(laughter) wow that’s scary

it is scary yeah. That’s why it’s difficult not to be cynical. Because these are the decision makers.

yes so it’s keeping the decision-makers in touch with the outcomes – the effects

it is quite difficult to introduce new technologies into cultures like hospitals where the environmental requirements are very specific.

yes there are strict environmental requirements. In fact I was at a hospital forum a couple of months ago and I’ve forgotten the name of the architectural firm and they are big on hospital design. And there were a lot of hospital managers that came along to the forum and there was another consultant that also spoke and they were international consultants that travel around all over the world troubleshooting bad hospitals. You know, where are the problems inside the hospitals and it usually comes down to poor building practices and then poor management practices. The wrong fittings and fixtures that allow dust to collect and germs – difficult to clean. You know air conditioning systems that have been installed after being exposed to all the building environment and suddenly you’ve got this dirty airconditioning system even before you put it into the hospital itself. And so it was a really – it was just interesting to hear them talk about their particular issues and you know, how environmentally insensitive - in the ecologically sustainable sense - in reducing the airconditioning load and the sorts of you know, these other ideas about healing, how patients respond to views they respond to fresh air they respond to sunshine.

Yeah and a lot of medical practitioners know and understand that. But it doesn’t
it doesn’t come through in the final outcome.

and so the difficulty is to hold on to that original knowledge that understanding. How do you hold on to it to get it through to the final outcome. that’s the real challenge.

and that’s the real challenge in all architectural practices. And so much of it is lost along the way through the process.

okay, so can we talk about how you can hold on to that?

(laughter)

(laughter) is it because - can you talk about why does it get diffused and compromised.

I think because so many people are involved – so many people with – how can I put it – with their own selfish reasons get involved in it.

now you know the architect is um, is the leader – is that more than a nominal title?

in large projects the project manager pushes the project and the architect is just a consultant along with everybody else and I think that any major changes in how we hold the spirit of the project through the whole process. How did I start that sentence? I think the project manager is the person who has to be persuaded to remain loyal and committed to it. And quite often the project manager hasn’t got any interest in it at all – in the spirit of the project.

right. Is that so? So is that – alright. So inside your office do you have project managers? To try and counter that?

no no. they usually – the project manager is an external consultant. In large projects for instance its an external consultant employed by the client directly to make sure that you know … I’m quite sure that the
architect – we don’t have any silly nonsense from the architect about good design.

so you’re saying architects are viewed with suspicion

yeah and that um,

and good design is viewed with suspicion

suspicion, yeah because it costs, its costly. And I think that that is a perception that is cultivated by project managers to consolidate their position in the project and er I think its unfortunate. But there are ways of dealing with project managers. I think that architects should learn strategies for dealing with all those people who want to in some way reduce the scope of the project and certainly undermine the spirit of the project.

I think that’s an absolutely crucial insight that you’ve just spoken about. That the spirit of the project, the scope of the project meaning the wider sense of responsibility – I think that’s what you’re alluding to

the way that its misunderstood and, and those issues just aren’t seen because your project managers and your various other consultants are not actually engaged in thinking through as a designer in the design process those issues. And that’s why I suppose participatory design is seen as this sort of great white hope in that they all come in at the outset of the design stage and are actually engaged in the actual design thinking: These are the bigger issues we’re got to sort of make the architecture represent – re-present those bigger issues in this smaller project.

Yeah, but the will to be there as well. I think that will of everybody participating in the project needs to be there.

to my mind there’s a level of ownership that has to be encouraged and it seems to me that because the architect is the first … you know the first designer – the first real design thinking happens with the
architect; the architect has that bigger responsibility to you know pull everybody into the project.

\[188:SG\] yes I think that requires quite a lot of skill and er requires quite a lot of compassion and a generosity of spirit. And also to a certain extent a um, a suppression of ego I guess.

\[189: SML\] mmmm humility

\[190:SG\] And there are certainly some architects that would find that difficult. (laughter)

\[191: SML\] Okay alright

\[192:SG\] but I think that that idea that everybody on the project owns the project is very important. And that they’re not just adding another layer. That their little layer is crucial to the whole.

\[193: SML\] yes it is if they see that it is to the whole rather than them just getting their bit of the job done that expansive thinking. Do you?

\[194:SG\] yes and also the spirit is – well I suppose putting the spirit into a physical shape and form is the, also directly um attributable to the architects ability to understand the client’s vision. I think it takes a lot of skill and care for the architet to truly understand; try and truly understand the client’s vision and turn that into physical form.

\[195: SML\] and it seems to me too that also critiquing the client’s vision and seeing where its limits are and where its opportunities are. And in a way you’re also again, I presume, you’re trying to look at the bigger picture first before you …

\[196:SG\] yeah and encouraging the client to expand their vision and make it …
or find out how expansive your client’s vision is and how that can be brought into the project itself. Um, okay. I’ll just go through some of the other motherhood statements which I’ve got here.

I’ve got to be careful of time, so yes okay alright.

I haven’t got time.

we’ve gone about an hour that fine

we were talking about spirituality and that was one of my motherhood statements. This idea about the fact that we can talk about it at so many different levels. You know, spirit is energy. We can talk about it as um, energy is heat energy, its electrical energy, its sort of more intuitive forms of energy its our sense of well-being and health and things like that. So there’s all these different ways we speak about spirituality. So what do you find when you’re thinking about those things and you want to talk to your clients about it, what level are you finding yourself speaking to your clients when you’re thinking about spirit.

the spirit?

the spirit of the project. And all the different ways you can speak about spirituality as an energy?

Well it think that also depends on your reading of science. There’s some reading of science where you can speak very openly about spirituality and on all levels whether its personal or more ephemeral. Um there are some science that probably haven’t thought about things very much on the spiritual level. And I think you have to be very careful to read your client well and pitch your um, approach and language very carefully to their way of thinking.
another question was about happiness. That seems to be – I mean most of these motherhood statements I’ve taken out of the literature that I was pursuing or being led to read in looking for the human element inside ecologically sustainable design so happiness seems to be a big thing - a big deal (laughter)

(laughter) well happiness yes. Happiness can be a lack of guilt for instance. Because you know that your footprint on the environment has been very small. (laughter)

(laughter) and so its important for me to know what it is that makes you as a designer happy.

well for me as a designer happy is knowing that the client is happy in their new environment. And um, content I guess and have everything they need and want and that the space works well around them. And so I think that the architect – I think my level of happiness in a project is whether or not the client is happy.

right. Okay. Um. I’ll just look at the questions on happiness here. So you’ve just answered what does happiness mean to you when your talking about your client. And and what I want to know do you actively cultivate it is another question that I’ve got here.

actively cultivate happiness? That’s a hard one. I haven’t thought about that. Either you are or you aren’t happy. Um I’ve never really tried to consciously make myself happy. (laughter)

(laughter) okay. its not a deliberate thing that you sort of say okay right to these are some happiness exercises

today I’m going to be happy!

a few of these happiness push-ups will get me in shape for the day
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216: SG that’s really hard. That’s interesting. I hadn’t really thought of it like that. I think happiness depends a lot on what’s happening around me.

217: SML okay alright

218: SG yeah. So I think if I consciously put myself in a pleasant situation then I’d be more happy. And that begs the question do I avoid (laughter) putting myself in a awkward situation.

219: SML yes that’s right. And do you do that. Do you find yourself deliberately you know putting the mirror up to yourself and saying right, I know I’m going to be dealing with something – how am I going to ..

220: SG Oh yes I think you do that all the time. Because in architecture you can’t avoid unhappy um, the unhappy moment.

221: SML yes. So how do you move through those moments. How do you sort of process them?

222: SG I try and get well, putting them off only prolongs the agony so you have to get them over and done with as quickly and efficiently as possible and try and not get emotionally involved in them. And let them go. So once they’re done with you let them go – its quite hard. But um, I think that’s how I would deal with them. Or how I try to deal with them.

223: SML hmmh alright. So my next question is when you think of ecological sustainability how does that affect you? Not just what does it mean to you rationally but how does it affect you emotionally?

224: SG emotionally. Ummm … Well, I’m happy in that I can have an effect, I suppose. That being an architect you are in a position where you affect the environment. It depresses me when I see other people ignoring the environment. And sometimes I get angry because I see a profligate waste of materials and the environment.

225: SML mmm right. Now you know, as individuals we’re now very well educated, we’re more affluent than we’ve ever been, we’re very powerful
in relation to past generations in the way we deal with other people and the environment. We are in much greater control of our environment and we have a lot of control over other people as well. So how do you believe these factors affect us in our sense of happiness and in our sense of ecological concern?

SG: I think it’s all too easy to become egotistical and I think um, that we have to avoid that. We have to avoid seeing ourselves as individuals and see ourselves more as community – part of a community. Otherwise we’ll never hope to regain that um, attachment to our roots, our earth.

SML: yeah. I mean we know so much about this now. Our understanding of interdependence or interconnectedness. We understand through our sciences of ecology and biology; we understand how connected we are. Yet we seem to have a sort of a psychological disconnect.

SG: oh absolutely. Because well, the majority now know there are more people living in urban environments than there are in the country. That’s specific that’s an issue. Most people in the city have no idea um what what um, what affect their lifestyle has on a patch of land or the earth or a tree. Because they’ve lost that connectedness. And I would challenge the idea that we have power over the environment.

SML: hmmhm

SG: because I think the environment is doing a very good job of telling us that we haven’t that power.

SML: very true. Of course there are a lot of technologists who seem to think that no worries we can solve the problems because we’ve got the technology we’ll be able to come up with better ways of running our cars or mining the earth. You know, we’ll find a technological way of getting ourselves out of this predicament. How do you, what do you think is the way out of this. what is the challenge?

SG: oh. I think there’s a problem in specialisation, for instance. I think, I agree with you that our knowledge base is much, much wider than
ever before. However, its this idea of compartments that um, people have, particularly scientists, have very little appreciation of the global effects of their particular piece of science. So we have geneticists who don’t really understand the possibilities of their science once it’s released into the environment. And I think that we’ve lost that ability to um, look at the world from a holistic point of view. And I think gardeners for instance are very good at that. I think people who touch the earth and touch plants um, have a much better appreciation than someone who works in a laboratory.

\[233\]: SML    alright mmm. I think what you’re talking about is a really I think there’s a whole another hour of discussion we can go on about with science. Because it doesn’t, it deliberately takes an objective view, where it says the values … that’s not part of our scope. We’re not going to be engaged in valuing what we do. We’re going to allow the rest of society to value what we do. We’re just going to do it and everybody else can worry about the ethics of what we’ve created – the knowledge that we’ve found out. Our knowledge about genetic engineering – its up to the rest of society to put the ethical brakes on it.

\[234\]: SG    yes and I also think that architects are very well placed to perhaps affect – well have some affect – I’m not quite sure how. But in that, architectural education is very broad. It’s not only scientific. It covers a lot of ground its quite eclectic actually.

\[235\]: SML    yes it is isn’t it.

\[236\]: SG    and I think for that reason um, architects could have a better understanding of um, humanity’s imprint on the environment.

\[237\]: SML    I’ve just had a thought. I was talking to a friend of mine. We were talking about this idea of profession. And my friend seems to think that architecture isn’t a profession and she makes the argument that say the medical profession that’s a profession because of the way it generates cohesion amongst its members and we sort of got onto this discussion about preventative health. Right. Now that is a
come and sit down Suzie. This is my next meeting. … We’re just about finished.

we were just talking about preventative medicine and there isn’t that sort of thing inside architecture – preventative architecture right. We have built urban environments – we are responsible for the urban environment and yet we don’t have an idea that we need to be prepared in that there is going to be some illness created …

yeah environmental illness yes

and so her argument was that that is why we’re not really professional at what we’re doing because we haven’t got this culture of preventative medicine when it comes to our environmental design – urban design.

well I think in lots of ways the possibilities haven’t been properly, the possibilities of architecture have not been properly pursued by the profession.

that’s right

and um,

and whose role is that

well one would hope that the Institute would take a lead. But I think they’re far too involved in self-congratulation (and I hope you don’t publish this either) um, they’re fine at putting out great statements about how architects should um, act. But they’re not very good at following it up and they’re not very good at um, self-advertising for instance; getting the message out to the public. And they’re seen as being – I would think they’re perceived by the public as being quite elitist.

that’s a real issue that architects have to deal with. This idea that we’ve become unnecessary in a way or elitist.
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248: SG    well project managers think we’re unnecessary.

249: SML    yes it’s a real problem that we have to deal with somehow. Alright well, look we had better close.

250: SG    we can carry on the discussion later.

251: SML    yes thank you so much I really appreciate it.

252: SG    that’s good. There’s far too much to talk about

253:       

254:       

Linked Memo

Memos'self-interest
Appendix C10: SW_1\textsuperscript{st} interview_01.12.05

\begin{itemize}
  \item 01.12.05
  \item INTERVIEW No. 1
  \item Between STEPHEN WEBB (SW) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)
  \item DesignInc offices, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne City
  \item 5.19PM – 6.26PM
  \item The reason why I am conducting this interview with you stems from my literature review on ecological sustainability. Within the architectural discourse on ecologically sustainable design there is an overwhelming bias towards design intervention as opposed to designer transformation. I appreciate the necessity for this; however, I argue that it is not sufficient.
  \item My argument is based on a common understanding backed up by my reading of the discussion outside of architecture that transformation does not necessarily follow intervention. It’s recognised as an age-old struggle to tighten the connection between the two in recognition that transformation brings about a deeper level of commitment to change. So this is my justification for bringing it into the architectural debate.
  \item MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 1
  \item We tend to operate at two levels of need, both of which are open to change:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Our public / professional needs which tend to be task-oriented.
      \item Our private / personal needs which are primarily self-oriented.
      \item I argue that design intervention aims at task-oriented needs while designer transformation aims at self-oriented needs.
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}
So this interview is to discuss with you your own blending process. How I want to discuss this is through two broad topics:

the concepts of commitment / need

the need for an environmental ethic

SML: what I’m trying to do is look at the difference between design intervention and designer transformation....and trying to get a blend between those two, a blended understanding…I think of Paul Keating’s statement about self interest and how if you’re ever in doubt it’s the one horse you can back, its something that’s always in there trying and I think it’s a really positive thing a really positive force and how do we draw upon it to maintain our levels of commitment and our sense of purpose. It’s a very powerful force…

SW: yes

and I’m trying to look at how we engage with it as a professional body…how to bring it into professional development practice is really what I’m looking at so…what I’m concerned about is that we have two levels of need and one is our public professional needs which tend to be task oriented and the other is our private personal needs which are primarily self oriented. So I’m interested in the fact that we need to blend those two…so the interview that I’m wanting to do is talk to you about how you blend that process…

SW:yep

through the concepts of commitment and need and also through the need for an environmental ethic…

SW: I read it all sounds… very interesting and something I think about a lot actually, so...

MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 2
Expertise is understood as being able to distinguish between competence and capability. It comes down to attitude. Improving capability relies on continual improvements that challenge beliefs, abilities and knowledge base.

Within architectural practice, while there are many barriers to ecological sustainability, there is also a growing awareness of the need to change.

SML: …great, excellent…alright, so the first set of questions are to do with expertise… and I’ve drawn my questions from management research… and so I’m going to ask you questions about… barriers to ecological sustainability or these challenges… how you overcome them within the office as office culture and how you look at that yourself personally…

SW: okay

SML: with office practice, could you tell me a bit about the OFFICE CULTURE here and what your feelings are about it when it comes to handling improvements in ecologically sustainable design knowledge and process.

SW: its very much a changing process…driven by personalities in the office…its been bubbling in the background and probably only become quite a integrated or more overt part of the design practice in the last 2 or 3 years so its really become something that we look at cross the board…in fact its really only in the last year that we’ve actively tried to draw from previous projects and gather information for the next project…so quite often it was just reliant on individuals that may have had that experience carried through, but now actually we’re trying to extract that information and put it up front for the next project to the extent where (Claude’s already probably mentioned this) we’ve actually got at least one person now dedicated to just doing that as opposed to being involved in projects. So she’s just physically interviewing, researching, collating lessons learnt on previous projects. The biggest gap at the moment
is getting everyone in the office to a certain level in terms of knowledge. I’m
talking here of purely professional knowledge, obviously the personal interest
and self stuff is very varied depending on different people so this is purely in
terms of the way management of the office works…

30: SML: yes

31: SW: and then we also in the last couple of years formalised a lot of that in
terms of check lists and matrixes and QA systems so…have a library that is
set up via the Greenstar rating…and all of that sort of stuff…

32: SML: so you’re really looking at structuring it into the office and making
that as accessible as possible…

33: SW: yes

34: SML: and it seems to me if you’re bringing in somebody who has a level
of expertise…it is a …flattening of the knowledge base…

35: SW: correct, yes and it’s a wish to not lose the information that we’ve
gained so it’s…in a lot of ways a business decision as well as an
environmental design decision.

36: Sml: yes, okay…so… how you initiated these processes and is that
something that’s director driven, is it something that’s coming from the body
of your staff, or is it client driven…

37: SW: it’s a combination. So you mean the actual process of formalising…

38: SML: your internal office process

39: SW: its probably director driven, me and one or two others…but then
we’ve got probably two other people that are very passionate and they’ve
always had some kind of ..not project role in the office …co-ordinating and
doing things...so there’s always been a pressure or wish to…have things more
accessible for everyone, so it doesn’t just fall on a couple of people to spread
the load. So yes, I’d say it’s a mixture, but primarily director driven.
SML: this is about RE-ARRANGING THE VARIOUS PARTS IN THE OFFICE…and looking at staffing arrangements…so how do you…disseminate this information amongst your design teams and groupings

SW: currently it has been done in an informal way via presentations of projects on lunchtimes or we have Friday night drinks so there’s an update of where we’re at and what we’re doing on built projects, competition projects. So there’s that more informal knowledge for people who obviously haven’t been on that project…you’re going to learn from it. I think the gap has been that there’s that informal side of it and there’s the beginnings of a very well-documented quality management system and check lists that we’ve got and have had in place. But its that transfer of knowing that…when you start a new project or get involved in a project that its more detailed…that’s what we’re trying to fill in at the moment with…having the people more dedicated to do that…to get that raw information from the projects into a format that everyone in the office can read and access. It might be in the form of discussion papers, presentations that are more targeted at specific material systems rather than just generally talking about a project…so you’ve caught us at a transition time but at the moment it’s a very loose feedback process.

SML: and is the person that’s set up and is collating this information…how is that person co-ordinating that or disseminating that information because obviously that person is a node of expertise…

SW: yes she is working directly with me and Jenny in the office, Jenny Dudgeon… putting together a series of topics and discussion papers and then she’s got a number of questionnaires…she sits down with the various project architects and for instance at the moment she’s doing concrete and she’s matching different topics within concrete with different projects and then she’s putting that together in, not a full-on report, but a report as such and then we’re currently looking at what are the different outlooks from that and some of it will be in-house presentation, some of it will actually be a formal document people will be able to go to….we’re also looking at extracting parts of it in some way for the general industry as well. How we do that we’re not
sure, but there’s that side of it that we want to kick on with and whether that’s whole industry or whether its just a way to facilitate our discussion with clients for instance to discuss ‘these are the lessons we’ve learnt, so the intent is its not just something we keep to ourselves but…it has a broader use. It’s an ongoing project.

44: SML: so there’s obviously a number of levels that you’re operating at…I’m interested to hear that it’s not just an internal process that you’re looking to transform but that you’re making connection into the wider industry to show / provide that level of expertise experiences…

45: SW: I think that at the moment with the professional side of it the biggest juggling act is where we’ve got to a position where a lot of us have thought this for a long time where sustainable design is good design not something that needs to be marketed or should be pushed forward specifically. So its something that a lot of us would normally do as a matter of what we think of as good design, however, in the market place, to actually compete or promote yourself you actually do have to be quite explicit about it. So it’s getting that balance of information and putting enough groundwork…and too that depends on different clients, as to whether that’s part of their agenda. But that’s something that we’re grappling with with this information we’re putting together is ‘wow look at us look at what you should do’ as opposed to consolidating what we should be doing.

46: SML: okay… When you’re actually in the office how do you make sure that people are FRESH AND EXCITED and they’re gaining new ideas and new levels of knowledge…

47: SW: good one...difficult …Probably on a basic level is try and keep a very up to date a library. I’d probably get a couple of books every couple of weeks and at a team meeting every week or two weeks say what books we’ve got and journals as well, and a lot of those are sustainability publications. Then we also fairly regularly (its dropped back actually in the last couple of months), but on a weekly or fortnightly basis we would have these internal presentations. (I want to?) actually encourage people to not just present a
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project, they’re not formal, they’re just…they could actually be a topic they’re interested in, whether they’ve been on holiday, all sorts of things like that…and its yeah probably an area we could work more on actually. We’ve talked of having more silo type groups in the office that might look at current status of different areas around the world, best practice and other things. We haven’t quite formalised that yet, its actually one of the roles of the person (that Elizabeth) is putting together all the research for the sustainability is to look at future trends…another part of her role…and get information back in the office as well.

48: SML: so in a way it’s the level of connectedness in the office which is the dynamic that you need to keep on massaging

49: SW: yeah I think that’s true of any architectural office whether it’s an issue of sustainability or not. There are very different levels of how connected architects or draftsmen or anyone else choose with the wider world. Some people are very interested in what’s happening, others are more focused on doing their task and doing it well.

50: SML: the next question is about…ATTAINING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE OFFICE AS A PROCESS. So how do you go about that, have you got stated goals, have you set up…Claude was talking about the fact that a lot of your decision making is based on 5 star. That’s basically how you set up your whole design process and how the teams are built around standards that are to be maintained.

51: SW: in terms of where we are, in terms of sustainability… it does vary a lot depending on the client and the project, how we set it up. We do have what we call an inception review or workshop for a project, so that happens before we put pen to paper. And one of the things in that review is (it’s always a loaded question) ‘what is the level of sustainability commitment by the client’ and ‘what are the expectations of the team’. So we talk a lot about that before we start and then usually because it just is a practical way to do it we have our 4 or 5 page sustainability check list which covers what is broadly set out in the Greenstar headings and topics. But it’s not just for office buildings.
It’s a broad thing that we’ve adapted and we have a first cut at what we think’s applicable, what’s wishful thinking and once again depending on the client, we may discuss that with them up front or we may just have that in the background till its appropriate to use.

52: SML: there is a level of sensitivity you’re reading into each…

53: SW: yeah, because we do it no matter what because its good practice…there are special things we want to focus on and we do a lot of to-ing and fro-ing at least with the services engineer or with the actual dedicated environmental engineer. We make contact with them in the beginning as well.

54: SML: so when we’re talking about RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AND RESTRUCTURING those engagement processes…power over how the work gets done is real power. So its developing governance strategies and operational strategies to make sure that the processes that you’re talking about actually are embedded into the office. So what are the rules here that allow the decisions to be taken…

55: SW: well, informally it’s the fact that we have very hands-on directors certainly the 3 or 4 of us that get to develop projects are passionate about it and have done a number of buildings in the last few years, so that short circuits a lot of things. We’re not…sort of…here’s a project for a team and then go away… we’re involved all the way through to some degree. But also it comes back to the reviews that we have. We have reviews at regular intervals where we… target people that are involved in the project. So we have one at concept, schematic concept, detailed design and a big part of that review is that sustainability get picked up 3 or 4 times throughout the process…it just remains to make sure that those things happen and if things haven’t been addressed its not too late for it to happen. So it’s really as simple as that. It’s just how diligent we are with these reviews

56: SML:…as you say there are a number of the directors who are hands-on and directly engaged makes a big difference to the energy..
SW: it does yes

SML: the next question is about INFORMATION FLOWS and you’ve talked about how you’re building a library, the way that you have informal discussions to keep the information flowing across the office and also that helps information to flow up as well as down… so you seem to be tackling information flow in those directions so I think we’ve covered that…and also you’ve been talking about feedback mechanisms as well with your review processes.

So the next question is about the PARAMETERS that your operate and I’m looking at...you have certain levels of people working in the office and they are being supervised by people further up the chain so…I’m wanting to find out how you make sure you’ve got people in the right position (for those) who are being mentored, that it’s a successful process…

SW: I think a lot of that is up front. You’ve got to select the right people, we tend to select the right team for the right project. Given the linear nature of architecture projects at least the core people in the team are there from the beginning. Probably the most - certainly traditionally within the office - the most likely change of personnel would occur between documentation administration. But in fact that is not happening a lot now because there are a lot of architects very keen to stay involved in projects which is really good, certainly good for the project, in terms of the integrity of the ideas … So we’ve got less of the dedicated administrators that look after the office…but they would usually work in partnership with someone on the team that was previously involved with the design so…I think it comes down to the initial selection of the team, getting the balance right. We do try and have probably 75% people in the office are architects, architecturally trained - whether they’re only a graduate or whether they’re registered - and try and keep a core team of that proportion and then supplement that with contractors and more drafting type staff. That balance works. It’s much harder when you’ve got a team when you’ve got it the other way around.
¶61: SML: far too much responsibility…the stress of having to manage far too many people…

¶62: SW: yes that’s right

¶63: SML: because architects are trained to think and manage in a certain way…

¶64: SW: in a certain way but also a big part of it is flexibility and ‘all-rounder’ (skills) in architecture. So that’s something this office has worked very hard at in the last few years is having more people in the office that are like that so that, although they might have an interest or speciality, they’re able to really work well at any phase of the process and certainly its significance to sustainability is very important because its such a start to finish thing. It’s as basic as site selection and as complex as managing something on site so…yeah…you’ve got to have that ability across the board and with trying to - for the people that aren’t in the office with that experience - trying to get them into other phases. So we’re working towards really strong teams but there’s a way to go yet.

¶65: SML: alright. Now the next lot of questions are from interviews that were done about REFLECTIVE PRACTICE. …you’ve really talked a lot about how the office engages in reflective practice, so this is looking at how you personally engage in reflective practice.

¶66: So the first question is about DELIBERATE INDUCTION. So how much time do you take in looking at a whole range of issues. Is that a big part of your reflective practice.

¶67: SW: are you talking specifically about me as a designer

¶68: SML: yes

¶69: SW: …that’s the whole area of what is design. But my personal account of the design process is one that the more experience you have and the more things you’ve experienced, places you’ve been and projects you’ve worked
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on, the more automatic synthesis goes on in a design problem. It doesn’t change nature of the design problem being one that needs exploration and retracking and a whole series of processes that is still there. But the more experience you have the more it appears as though that becomes a creative event. So the exploration of options can happen almost intrinsically with choosing one option…so that it could be that you’ve got a problem or that you’ve got an idea and you haven’t been actually thinking about that, but its in the back of your mind and you come up with an idea. In your own mind you’ve already synthesised 2 or 3 other options and not bothered to draw them. But the less experienced designer needs the whole process of putting those (options) down on paper and looking at them. Putting another one down is just a longer version of the same process. So to answer your question I probably do look at one or two ideas or options but what I’m really focused on is coming up with a very simple diagram or idea to explain a broad principle first and have that as something that can be embraced by a larger team so that everyone can then build on that. So it is one that does vary on size as well plus the importance of the project.

70: SML: I’m interested in the fact that you establish a very fundamental platform…that seems to be the important design focus…

71: SW: that is something that we have initiated in our design reviews as an issue in that if you get asked to do a design review you get asked where’s your diagram, where’s your explanation of what the main concept is and that may be a little bubble plan diagram or it could actually be an analogy of something but its not always one thing but we try and synthesise it as early as we can.

72: SML: and I presume that that helps …it’s a communication tool within the office…it helps you broaden that input

73: SW: it does and it helps when we’re trying to flatten or broaden the design processes within the office so it doesn’t just rest with 2 or 3 people. Obviously everyone’s involved but the more explicit you are at developing a office practice and culture around certain philosophies then the more we’ve
actually got to visualise it and verbalise it so everyone can know what it is. Rather than designing a building and saying how beautiful it looks...

74: SML: yes and it’s a mystery to everyone in the office

75: …so you’re obviously testing hypotheses as well. When you’re doing your research, you’re looking at other problems and seeing the connections and the whole idea of having an expert within the office is actually doing a lot of that work for you….how do you draw on that information

76: SW: yeah I think at the moment it’s more of a knowledge base being gained so it’s purely used as a resource in terms of what worked, what didn’t. It’s probably less influential in that design process although it obviously helps you make decisions on what systems and materials to use. But I wouldn’t necessarily put it in the …upfront category …that’s much more about trying to integrate functional aspects of a building with sustainability aspects, whereas most of sustainability research we’ve done so far is gathering the more hard stuff. Having said that what she hasn’t got into and what’s on my agenda is more of the social aspects of sustainable building. Now that we’ve got a few larger buildings built or just finished and it’s down to do some post doc on those …and that will probably have a bigger bearing on those initial concepts.

77: SML another thing that’s just come into my mind…how much of your own PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDINGS do you bring into those very early platforms those very early statements.

78: SW: when you say philosophy do you mean where we live and life in general or do you mean design…

79: SML: well things like when you’re thinking about ecological sustainability there’s so many different ways you can approach it so do you have to bring in the statement to say well…I’m wanting to find out more about this (particular) aspect of environmental sustainability
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¶80: SW: just so that I understand your question I’ll re-ask it…do you mean how much of an idea comes from my ‘take’ on problems and aspects of the environment and what is important to push and promote.

¶81: SML: well it’s obviously an evolutionary process and so you must be building your own appreciation through the work that you’re doing.

¶82: SW: and I think it comes back to generally design and architecture. That if you’re at all interested in it, it becomes much more than just your job and complete feedback (if you like) you do independently just by the shear extent of the stuff that you deal with and the amount of time and effort that goes into it. So yeah there’s a constant feedback there but I think my personal interest in sustainability which has been there for 10 or 15 years since I grew up in Brisbane and I learnt some real fundamental things ages ago is less globally about the aspects of sustainability and more about how to search more for elegant solutions in architecture. So it also relates back to the idea of good design actually embodies sustainability. What I bring to it from an individual point of view is trying to get a solution that is…when I say elegance I don’t mean visual elegance, but getting back to addressing a whole lot of different things

¶83: SML: ockam’s razor sort of elegance

¶84: SW: yes absolutely. It’s almost the aesthetic of something in the process rather than the final output. Its like …when you’ve solved a mathematical problem I guess (not nearly at that level) but…that’s what I try and bring to it. So it’s more about synthesis of all the different aspects of design rather than trying to push a specific aspect of green or environmental design. So…on that personal side of it that’s an overwhelming aspect of why I’m interested in green design. It just gives such more meaning and reason to the ideas behind that elegant solution rather than purely looking at form and function, proportion, symmetry whatever other design elements you put into it. You just build so much more meaning into a building….it sort of answers your questions…
MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 3

To commit - place sustainability at the core of (architects’) practices and professional responsibilities - is the first principle upon which the RAIA Environment Policy is based.

Examples given on how to do this involve the practitioner in ‘actively encouraging clients to include sustainability as an integral principle…’ of their project and to ‘maintain(ing) commitment to the delivery of sustainable outcomes…’ These directives encourage the outward-bound efforts of the practitioner to influence others in a social contract once the practitioner’s own level of commitment has been forged. These are not directives aimed at forging practitioner engagement prior to encouraging outward-bound efforts.

SML: it does. Now…moving into these other statements which are about commitment and how I feel at the moment that a lot of the emphasis is…outward bound and I’m really trying to flesh…tease out how people actually INTERNALISE COMMITMENT. For you when you’re asked to describe the nature of commitment can you …talk about what you see as its major qualities.

SW: as a concept

SML: …as a force that operates within you.

SW: it conjures the aspect of a future and thinking beyond the short term whatever that’s in. It also for me ties back into having some sort of integrity about what you think of to start with. Because you can’t also be… use the word commitment without accepting that there are fundamental things that you accept to believe in. So to me it’s more of an… acknowledgement of your own attitudes to things rather than necessarily buying into or accepting a particular way of looking at something. It’s not a word that I’ve used that much actually
¶93: SML: I suppose it’s because it sits there as the number one principle within the RAIA environment policy…I’m grabbing on to it

¶94: SW: to extract…

¶95: SML: it’s the only way I can get into this personal psychological approach…

¶96: SW: because if in the professional connotations of it rather than the broader ones, commitment really would infer or imply (whichever) that an office is going to embrace something as a total way that they do something…and that really from a business point of view (for most offices anyway I think) it would have to have some … financial aspect to it…it’s very hard for offices to give total commitment to something that’s not within a business…case. So I think its … different when you start thinking about commitment as architecture as opposed to a general (concept). As architects we can all commit to be passionate about sustainability and do it as much as we can but that’s I think different from a practice making an overt commitment to always do something…it’s written into their contracts with the client…

¶97: SML: in a way the commitment comes down to how you deal with the client in order to promote that financial balance

¶98: SW: and then it goes back down to fee structure …what you actually write into your contracts and what ethics about which clients you actually choose to deal with. All of that comes in to it if you’re really committed to doing something.

¶99: SML: do you find, just by the by, that you are making decisions about the clients that you will work with in order to promote your particular …

¶100: SW: ahhh…certainly would be …targeting certain… types of buildings…that more suit what we do. Our office has probably got two real cores (I don’t like separating them out) but we’ve got a very strong culture and history of doing education and laboratory research buildings at
universities and... associated types of facilities...that ties into hospitals...so we tend to call that complex buildings and then the sustainability side of it cuts across different types of buildings. But in the last year of so we've tried to look at what it means to combine complex building with sustainable building and interestingly enough some of the recent projects eg CH2 have been very interesting in that while not being loud some of the complexity of the systems and services really draw heavily on our experience from those buildings. We're at the beginning of coming up with some kind of real core building type that we can move forward with...

¶101: (back to the question) we're certainly not into...we’ll take on a challenge...if there is someone that doesn’t express an interest in something we’ll do what we can to make the best building. I think it comes down to any design or any building. You can’t really look at the end product and get a true picture of what’s gone into it to get it to that level. So it’s a process and what people learn through that process that for the future is as important as the final building. You can look at a building and it doesn’t win any awards, doesn’t get in any magazines might not perform that well environmentally but only the team knows how bad it could have been if they didn’t do certain things so that’s always something to push for.

¶102: SML: so in a way its...FOCUS is also something very important when it comes to commitment and AIM...

¶103: SW: big picture

¶104: SML: ...the big picture focus but being able to tailor what it is that you can do to supplement that big picture or ... feed into it. So in your own mind what is ... it, when you are committing yourself to ESD, what it is that is your real aim.

¶105: SW: real aim...I almost said the dumb answer...to produce better buildings...but it isn’t that at all. I just have to think about whether I’m just speaking from personally myself or whether I’m thinking...because I do separate a little bit ... what my personal aims are as opposed to what I think of
as … what I want my aims as associated with the office to be. There’s a number of different levels there. My devotion to doing architecture is very much process driven to do with the…enjoyment of procuring a building in a certain way and that whole aspect of the art and science coming together and the elegance of a solution. (and this is changing over time) but I get more enjoyment and feedback from doing the design process than necessarily getting it built. I’m probably more ideas based if you like in terms of architecture. But I do like to see those ideas, if they’re not built, promoted and put forward so I’m not an artist that wants to sit in his corner and do his work, its very public thing. But certainly when I look at it more from the office point of view it is definitely to not necessarily produce better buildings but to generally lift the quality of the total built environment. I think there is a lot more important discussion beyond buildings. There is also a lot of fundamentals with the broader curve and pattern in civilization that we need to address before we get the perfect environmental building right. And I think as architects we’ve got to look beyond those four walls so, if anything, what…I’m hoping to do is slowly raise the quality of the urban realm through doing green buildings.

¶106: SML: so you’ve talked about the aim… and that should do for there.

¶107:

¶108: MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 4

¶109: There is a lot of discussion about spirituality and its importance to living harmoniously with the world. Architects are drawn to designing habitats that work in this manner. Space and form are seen as opportunities to enhance psychic as well as environmental energies. There is a lot of talk about buildings in terms of energy transfer potential eg ‘harmonising / energising / vitalising / refreshing / regenerating / respecting / relaxing.

¶110:
Appendix C10

¶111: So the next motherhood statement is about SPIRITUALITY. We as architects look at psychic as well as environmental energy flows we seem to talk across those...we’re happy to be working our buildings to generate these energy levels or subtle energy levels. I’d like you to just talk a little bit about the difference between psychic energy and environmental energies.

¶112: SW: …yes…aah…I wrote down there when I read it that I thought it was a very underdeveloped part of architectural knowledge. This discussion on …spirituality…the quality of the space right (that may be more a functional way of putting it)…I think it also ties back into one of my pet hobbies and that is lack of architectural knowledge bases in the profession and that one is what I’d put into the psychology of space. (there are) another two areas I think … where architects should be the dominant knowledge base. Psychology of space, the architectural sciences…everything to do with the science of building, and the third one would be understanding that the design process and what that means…that its not just about knowing it so you know what you do but too often we don’t / can’t articulate what we do and it has a very poor result in terms of doing good work and explaining what we do.

¶113: So…going back to the first one …a really big part of why we end up getting ourselves into situations where we’re backed into having to defend buildings against cost and quality is that we don’t actually understand the importance of the social aspect of the space and can’t actually have some form of knowledge and empirical data to back that up. We’re relying on other disciplines whether it’s in the social sciences…and it seems to have been the history of architecture over the years that we’ve slowly given up these different knowledges and it’s probably that aspect of the architectural science that I really latch onto that there is the beginnings or the re-emergence that architects can actually claim (I hope the environmental engineers don’t get it back) can claim some solid knowledge. So my take on the…aspect of psychology of space is that the architecture profession, us as designers, probably don’t do enough of actually experiencing buildings and documenting what those qualities are. A lot of that is because we end up doing a lot of work on the computer in the last few years and no matter how good the
rendering you can’t actually get a good three dimensional feel of the space. Universities have got a role to play in that that they don’t probably do enough of in terms of real quality of space. And probably doing a lot more post occupancy in those sort of areas as well

¶114: SML: so really you’re talking about experiential… (-based knowledge)

¶115:

¶116: MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 5

¶117: The thrust of human development is to satisfy human needs.

¶118: In acknowledging this the UN Bruntlandt Report definition for ecologically sustainable development is: ‘A sustainable society meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

¶119:

¶120: I suppose what I was looking at when I introduce the Bruntlandt definition of NEED is that a sustainable society meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. So the major thrust of human development is to do with satisfaction of human need. So what I’m really trying to ask you there is how do you grab onto something as big and profound as a statement like that in order to bring it down to something you can manage; a scale that you can manage.

¶121: SW: we certainly use that definition a lot. I don’t know whether we think enough about it but it goes into so many different reports and briefs and things. It’s a good way to explain things but the bigger picture of sustainability in terms of globally is one that I think really comes back to the individuals working in the office. Now we…there’s only so much that you can do in terms of emailing around articles of how to live better or how to make your lifestyle better. We’ve got champions in the office that try and make this place in here better which is a good thing to do, start in the office…but it is…also quite often a bit of a philosophical …decision about
top-up top-down or bottom-up approach and its actually quite interesting that there is quite distinct…takes on that in the office. We’ve got people that are very interested in the small scale local issues that you can do to make a difference and others that will really look to…major initiatives or major projects that can have the biggest / sweeping effect and its something I don’t really have a…haven’t really grappled enough with to know other than the fact that they’re both there and probably both needed – global and local – but in terms of thinking about future generations I think its up to the individual.

122: SML: these other questions are about looking at how happiness is considered our ultimate need as well as our most fundamental need. So what I’m really wanting to find out from you is - when you think of ecological sustainability – how does it affect you personally…what’s your immediate…

123: SW: immediate reaction is one of knowing how badly everything’s been done. I think first and foremost about our poor quality of our built environment. I think everything comes from that. When I think of ecologically sustainable development I do think about the problems we’ve caused ourselves…the ways we’ve actually set up our cities and the way we’ve set up our infrastructure…the car in itself has been a major reason for that. And then the whole mindset of whether it’s possible to use macro solutions to fix some of the problems in the world. And spirals into different articles I’ve read. I don’t have a clear…feeling when I think of ESD. I actually don’t use the word ESD any more…I try and have people avoid it but it still gets used but I prefer just to say sustainability because I just think its one of those words …sustainability is over-used as well, but when you say ESD quite often in the professions people think of it as a building type initiative where when you just say sustainability it makes people think a bit more broadly about their lives.

124: SML: I’m interested that you mentioned mindset. It seems to be one of the fundamental reasons for the state that we’re in. it’s basically the way we think about ourselves and the way we interact with the natural world and so in a way I’m wanting to find out …you’ve talked about built environment…and
I want to ask you a little bit more about the actual, natural…systems that we’re supposed to be engaging more with.

125: SW: we are still part of the biosphere…kind of

126: SML: we are, we do need it and we seem to operate as if we don’t... And in my readings anyway it seems to be the most fundamental problem…our mindset…that we don’t need to be engaged with the natural environment

127: SW: I struggle with understanding why we’re not because I have read and taken an interest in it so much that I automatically assume that anyone that can think should actually think – not just about sustainability – but just generally about bigger issues in the world and looking beyond our little globe and everything that goes into biology and physics and who we are that I can never get through the argument of why someone wants to not think about the biosphere and where we are. Even if they’re not concerned about the …future generations…its just a natural curiosity and wanting to understand our place in nature. …I do find strong correlation with people that are actually interested in sustainability in terms of design and the way they live. It’s very rare to find someone that unless they’re pushing it from a particular angle, to find someone that is …passionate about it in the building industry that doesn’t actually live it out as well. I think its overlooked a lot that half a dozen people in the office that are the most passionate are also probably the people think most about the big issues. So it’s not just about another part of design it’s connected to your life…

128: SML: and so in a way it gets back to that experiencing what you believe in and imbedding it into your own way of experiencing the world …it’s not just an intellectual pursuit. So I’m interested in the fact that …our scientific approach tends to be an intellectual pursuit and we might know a lot about biology and …physics and whatnot but its this juncture…between experiencing biology and thinking about it which could be problematic and…

129: SW: that’s true
SML: so… I’m trying to ask you how you actually EXPERIENCE your level of commitment to ecological sustainability that sustains you personally.

SW: I don’t know what more to add…it does come back down to the fact that at the fundamental level in terms of what I…whether you want to put it in terms of happiness or motivation or enjoyment I get from what I do. I’ve always been a strong advocate of an objective view of life - one where your ability to produce something is a direct measure of your self-worth so whether that’s to physically produce something in terms of ideas or whether it’s doing something. I’m a very strong advocate of the relationship between your own happiness and your ability to produce something. Whether that’s personal or public so therefore my main…aim in what I do is the enjoyment of the process and what I’m doing. The sustainability side of it is certainly a very strong motivator behind it but it’s not why I engage in architecture. It’s an emergent philosophy and if I wasn’t doing architecture I’d probably be doing something that…had some other sort of similar ideas/ based or creative aspect. The absolute bonus of what I’m doing is that it also has a very strong relationship back to my ideas about the world.

SML: yes it’s a real bonus that architecture allows this….

SW: I couldn’t imagine any other profession that has such a…scope for cross fertilisation.

SML: yes that’s right and that…integration of wider philosophical position…you can actually work it in on a daily basis.

MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 6

Happiness is considered our ultimate goal; it is now a well-tested fact that when asked, people overwhelmingly support this as self-evident fact and requiring of no further justification. It is our ultimate self-oriented need in that it is considered both our highest aspiration and our most fundamental need. Happiness rests within us as a state which acts like a
hydrostatic level of well-being. Research into this phenomenon concludes that most of us, most of the time consider this resting point to be equivalent to feeling around 75% happy.

A further understanding of happiness coming out of the behavioural sciences is that we experience it as a continuum of ‘constant struggle’ that rises and falls unbroken between extreme misery and extreme joy. This concurs with our understanding of happiness coming out of the natural sciences that see it as a natural aspiration common to all sentient beings. Being ubiquitous it fosters ecological sustainability through dynamic compromise between individual self-oriented needs and the common good and is a state of equilibrium which has always been maintained through natural checks and balances.

These questions are fairly large questions and they’re philosophical focused because I’m really wanting to get you to comment really more as a social commenter here why the connections about…the fact that our personal needs are always in balance with the common good and this is a natural process it’s not something that societies have evolved. Its actually a natural evolutionary process where the whole ecological system is a dynamic compromise and I suppose you can look at earlier cultures….

SW: they were really happy in what they were doing

SML: well they…there was a relationship an understanding that there were forces more powerful than the human…at play that needed to be appeased at some level. So …we’ve changed that relationship. Our relationship to the environmental forces we’ve changed our attitude towards it…

SW: yep yep

SML: …so I’m wanting to ask you about why these natural connections aren’t more appreciated in contemporary society.
SW: my social comment would be that...however you want to look at the evolution of man - that we were on a course way back when our ability to actually conceptualise (emerged) so there was a definite distinction...at some stage we had a way of viewing the world that was unique in the animal world and then that triggered (so the current theory goes) quite a rapid increase in brain size. I think that not enough thought is given to the fact that from then on we’re on some kind of path in terms of evolution of conceptualising of things to have to look at nature in a different way to just purely input-output as in a lower animal brain so the discussion I always find difficult is when people talk about primitive or less developed cultures...having a better balance with the world. When you actually look at the statistics and how they actually lived no-one wants to live like that, no-one wants to have ...80% mortality and all that sort of stuff so...(I know you’re not saying that but) putting it in that context where we’re always going to have to solve a lot of fundamental natural problems by technology because of our ability to conceptualise. So given that is a given I think we’re in a great position now that we know how to have hygiene and we know how to solve all our problems to actually take the best of technology and look at what actually is superfluous in our lives and whether that’s looking at purely the material aspect of life or whether its looking at all our petty status anxieties that we’ve all got. I think that’s sort of more something to be learned from our previous connections with nature...it’s more looking at what all you need in terms of the minimum requirements to live and then build on what we’ve got from a technological point of view. So I don’t necessarily means going back to thinking about things but it means to actually focusing more on what you actually need. Most of the problems in the world would be solved if we actually consumed less ...it’s a pretty big thing whether that’s in terms of emissions or ...in terms of materials

SML: sure, its one of the major findings of the Brundtland report that relationship between overconsumption and extreme poverty. And that’s our role as affluent resource hungry society. So it’s sort of really knowing as an
architect how are you engaging in that with the clients that you’ve got to work with and the fact that you’re in an industry that is a building industry…

¶146: SW: I know, it’s a bit of a contradiction some times. The first point on the check list is to do with do you need a building. You always skip that one

¶147: SML: unless you become process managers and tell them how to improve their functioning.

¶148: SW: I think its more related to the fact that we’ve got to look at our existing building stock a lot more and seeing how we can make better use of that. I think there’s a lot of scope there for architects to take a leading role there. There’s probably 30 or 40 buildings in Melbourne of 1960’s kind of vintage that really could be looked at as commercial space rather than build another tower. What was the question again

¶149: SML: …it was really looking at why it is that we don’t seem to be able to make that connection. We not able to appreciate what our real role is, which is to bring that balance, look at that balance again. At the moment we’re enjoying our situation at the expense not only of the environment but also of most of the world mainly because of our resource use.

¶150: SW: well there’s the obvious ones to do with materials. It’s just a given now that in just the simple use of materials and its just an educational process in terms that its really just an aesthetic as well for people to accept. But that’s a definite concrete thing that architects can do to reduce consumption. It’s not easy but it’s like black and white.

¶151:

¶152: MOTHERHOOD STATEMENT 7

¶153: The need for an environmental ethic.

¶154: Fundamental challenges to conventional scientific thinking such as Gaia Theory within the Biological Sciences; Chaos Theory and Quantum Theory within the Physical Sciences; and the theory of Autopoiesis within
Neurocognitive Science have instigated significant change in understanding the nature of existence and the role humans play in it. While this has spawned urgent calls to respect the complex logic of the earth’s living systems as a unique and irreplaceable phenomenon within the universe it has also spawned a quantum leap in technological prowess.

SML: and the last question that I’ve got here is really to do with environmental ethics and again these are fairly large questions. What is the theory that you actually draw on when your thinking about environmental ethics.

SW: I wouldn’t say that it’s developed as a theory but I think like probably quite a few designers that are interested in sustainability they are interested in looking to nature for solutions. So for a number of years I had a very strong interest in looking at natural systems …there’s obviously the emerging science of Bio-mimicry. Architecture has got a lot of scope to get into that. There’s complexity theory, all sorts of areas where at the moment in terms of an architectural philosophy we use it more as an analogy in the building process but the technology and our limited way of thinking is not sufficiently advanced to really draw from nature too directly in the processes. But I am just constantly inspired by looking at the way nature does things. I think it’s such an untapped resource in terms of not just buildings but everything we make and manufacture. It’s probably not quite an environmental ethic but its I would say is the dominant emerging theme to leads towards (whether or not we’re not necessarily talking about final outcome) but its looking at the process that nature might use. There’s no doubt that how nature does it is a way that’s sustainable. Everything suffers under the law of thermodynamics but within that a few things emerge so its not completely one way and that’s actually very interesting for the built environment. Looking at that scientific analogy of complexity and emergence, that actually out of some simple conditions quite complex systems can emerge and a number of architects are sort of looking at that. That’s very interesting.
¶157: SML; and in a way that ties us back into that whole satisfaction with the process

¶158: SW: absolutely and enables you to get a bit broader reading and understanding in what you do and so once again the openness of architecture is coming into it.

¶159: SML: alright, well I can’t think of any other questions to ask you but I really appreciate the level of your response and I thank you very much …

¶160: SW: its good to look broadly for an hour at the end of the day before I go back to my design crit …

Annotations

1 what is my focus and aim - write it down and stick it on the fridge

2 what is my focus and aim - write it down and stick it on the fridge

3 this comment links back to AR's discussion of sustainable cities / urban design
INTERVIEW No. 2

Between STEPHEN WEBB (SW) and SU MELLERSH-LUCAS (SML)

DesignInc offices, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne City

5.09pm – 6.10pm

SM-L I would like you to talk a bit more about Biomimicry. This idea feeds into regenerative design, and can you … come up with any examples you would say have come closest to achieving that in your own experience?

SW Yes. In fact I was just looking at a Biomimicry site today. There’s a great data base that’s being established by the Biomimicry guild. It’s … in construction at the moment and it’s amazing now how much it’s become a community on the net of different design tools and design people and people interested in it. So they are actually all going post up on the data base their example from nature and what the application might be. So you just type in ‘architecture’ and then there’s facades, structure, adhesives and listed all next to them all different types of examples from nature that … it’s all very early stuff. I mean no-one has really found out how to actually do true biomimicy, so, in terms of examples from architecture … I think most of them relate to envelope design and façade … where they’re really starting to look at smarter
materials that change. A lot of them are starting to be used phase-change type materials, both in terms of facades and internal climate modifiers. But I think we’re still a way off actually looking at … I mean if an analogy’s there, for instance Mick Pearce’s Harari termite mound … but its still really an analogy, its not really using the same system that a termite nest use. So I think it’s too early to say if any building actually does get to that level. It’s more an inspiration.

13:  
14: SM-L Yes … later on in the questions here I ask if you’ve actually been able to apply any of that thinking particularly …

15:  
16: SW… to a building part. I’ll have that in my mind as I think.

17:  
18: SM-L all right, okay. Now you point out that our ability to conceptualise has led into the development of technology through which to deal with naturally occurring processes … and the problem is not technology as such, but making the most of what is ecologically sustainable … and you cite overconsumption as one of our major problems and that’s probably overconsumption of technology as well. So, can we talk about this overconsumption and how as an architect, how can you take this on seriously … really engaged as an architect. I’m sure that you’ve got personal ways of dealing with it …

19:  
20: SWYes. Well, being both … as an architect you come in contact with lots of people in your both social and more professional day, so it is very much about how much you want to take on beyond your current project. Today I emailed around the office all the talks on at the sustainable living festival; about how you should ride bikes and take public transport. So I mean its all … basic stuff in terms of spreading sustainable ways of living. And at its
heart it’s to do with consumption. It’s as broad as using individual vehicles to get around in public or as basic as buying things that you don’t really need. It’s still consumption of resources or consumption of materials. So I think, as an architect, yes, definitely, there’s lots of scope and I guess, in my position where I have lots of teams that I deal with, even more so. How much of it is really influential? It’s very debatable. So, I think … the more strategic thing is when you’re in a position … by not saying anything it could be taken as ‘you agree with someone’ … that I think it’s very important to say something. So that’s when it can get more important. So there are two things: one is going out and actually doing things, and not sitting in a position and keeping your head in.

21:

22: SM-L yes being a little bit … courageous in making a point …

23:

24: SWyes

25:

26: SM-L okay … when we were discussing happiness as a state of equilibrium achieved through a dynamic balance of competing forces that we aspire to through moral reasoning, we strayed into a discussion about romanticising older more traditional societies and I’d like to say that the argument that I was wanting to push there was about how some of these pre-industrial or more primitive societies, how their relationship with nature … its not arguing against humanity’s quest to overcome many of the miseries associated with those lifestyles … but really looking at them as examples of highly developed land tenure and custodianship, that appear from this distance to have worked to the benefit of both human and non-human constituents. So, this seems to be part of this critical reassessment of the hubris that surrounds progress and development rhetoric and … forces us to look closely at how we’ve arrived at the current situation that we’ve arrived at. And it could be
through this idea of land tenure and ownership. So is that something that you, we as architects ... are we in a position to critique that ...

27: SWI think so. As soon as we take on board the broader aspects of sustainability as architects and start looking beyond the building, which we need to do in all the aspects of sustainability, then the issue of land and how you deal with that order of the biosphere is critical and I think part of that discussion last time and probably what I would reiterate there is the history of civilisation, the histories of more primitive cultures is littered with very poor relationships with the land and this quite modern way of thinking that all of a sudden since post-industrial revolution or however, that all of a sudden we’ve become separated. There’s plenty of precedent for man, homo-sapiens, hominids right the way back, having quite an imbalance with nature to the point of extinction for them and/or other species. For example, what happened on Easter Island, just as a very high profile example, so I think there is a layer and a level that we have to look to beyond the straight way that we live now and start questioning ‘well, what does it actually mean to be a conscious thinking hominid in the rest of the landscape and maybe its not as simple as saying that we can just work with nature. It’s some very different relationship to what the rest of the modern world have. (???)

29:

SM-L yes it’s a very good point. I’ve just been reading a sceptical overview of environmental philosophy which really does bring into question this idea that we can actually come to an understanding not only of ourselves but the natural world that we live in, and there’s such a high level of ambiguity about us that … we can keep pointing to what we think are problems but … as you say you can sort of keep taking those problems further and further back and it is difficult to rest on some of these starting points that a lot of environmental philosophy is trying to rest on, whether its … industrial society or the cult of reason or … theres a whole …
Appendix C11

32: SW… I’m not sort of suggesting there isn’t very good examples of societies living in balance with nature, there is. But its like, the bigger picture is how do we now create a new relationship with nature in the way we want to live.

33:

34: SM-L …and … in a way when we talk about how we want to create that relationship, the structures that we’ve got at the moment especially within the architectural / within the built environment tend to be … we rely on a scientific … validation ‘cause that’s the only way we feel comfortable … that we can allow ourselves to (be engaged in a rethink of sustainable practice) … because in the end the built environment is an expression of how far we’re prepared to go because we can justify the steps that we’ve taken. And often the environmental argument tends to run far ahead of … and … its not very well grounded which is problematic … so

35:

36: … you believe that self-worth is measured through productive work that expresses a philosophy of life and you’ve aligned your feelings of self-worth to the bigger picture of maintaining a viable earth as the basis for conducting a worthy life … that’s how I read what you’ve said …

37:

38: SWuummmm

39:

40: SM-L so to my mind you’re advocating that passionate ESDers who ever they are live it out and they think big. So can I … I know that you’ve been talking about a lot of the processes you’re pushing through into the office here … how else do you live this out, what other ways. I know that … it seems to me that architecture’s a fairly consuming occupation at the moment and later on in the questions I’m going to ask you about a comment
that you made about … earlier in your training in Brisbane and 10 – 15 years ago … you developed some fundamental associations …

¶41:

¶42: SWI think this aspect of living it or being a tie between professional is … its got a strong crossover with architecture in general … most … people that are good at architecture or enjoy it … it extends beyond their life so in that way it is an extension but on a more background layer is this aspect that ties into good design being sustainable design (should be) … and in the same way I think correct critical thinking about how we live should be sustainable thinking. So in life we don’t separate good design from good sustainability, I don’t feel any distinction in terms of living a good life or what I think is an appropriate way of living with a sustainable way of living. So yeah its all about thinking beyond not just what I do day-to-day but what is beyond earth, what is beyond my life, what happens to my life is a natural way of thinking about the world that I’ve always done and I think its almost the last two years since ESD or sustainability has become more of a tag or a brand that its even become explicit. Everyone can relate to that.

¶43:

¶44: SM-L yes,yes …

¶45: Okay now, I’ve found that ESD limits our understanding of sustainability to building function initiatives. It sort of tends to obscure all those other elements maybe social as well as biodiversity … do you find this as well or …

¶46:

¶47: SWyes its actually a topic of our sustainable forum we’ve got next week in the office where Elizabeth has pulled out and identified some of the definitions and common misunderstandings with ESD sustainability etc and particularly ESD being ecologically sustainable development. There’s quite a bit of … not so much confusion … assumption, that by ecological it often misses out on social and economic and urban. Other readings of ecology include those. And then there’s the further debate about sustainability and its
broadening of use throughout different aspects of the world and professions that that is becoming a very hard word to keep going as well so … I definitely feel that there is a … sometimes you sit in meeting and … on a more concrete level here … when ESD comes up and the clients eyes roll and ‘that’ll cost me money’ so it sort of ties into trying to get it into a more fundamental part of building rather than labelling it ESD to the point I think I mentioned last time that I tend not to use the label at all.

48:

49: SM-L yes you make that clear. So when it comes to the fact that there is an overwhelming focus on building technology as an approach to ESD how do you try and keep the … openness to these other issues that you want to deal with. I mean I’m looking at Brophy in particular here and I can see that you .. to my mind that’s a highly sociable project that you’ve tried to work through there.

50:

51: SWYes. Well, its almost in the last couple of years deliberately not focused on energy because that is really where the technology comes (in) and its all very very important but just to readdress the balance to always talk about healthy nature of spaces and indoor environment quality … biofilia … that means in terms of being a … having a environment that relates back to natural patterns in the way we use things in the environment … stressing the importance of that is as sustainable if not more than pure energy savings and reductions .. so … yeah and probably can be to the detriment of energy because energy still does cut across a lot of things but … I think its needed and a much needed approach especially for CH2 what came out of it from a costing point of view and a marketing point of view was a healthy building more so than an energy saving …
Appendix C11

53: SM-L energy efficient … and you did mention in your previous interview that something that you really wanted to focus on; you were going to … get Elizabeth to follow down that social sustainability issue …

54:

55: SWcorrect

56:

57: SM-L so how are you doing that …

58:

59: SWwell basically in what the research she is doing albeit quite targeted for instance she is focusing on … what she’s doing at the moment she’s finishing off a concrete analysis best practice use of concrete design where she’s looked quite specifically at an application … but the way that’s all coming together she’s looking at each item of the concrete from a social point of view, an economic point of view, an urban point of view and a natural point of view, so we haven’t said that … its environmental … as being just the natural would tend to split up. So it’s got the economic environment, social environment its all part of the environment, but use of concrete has got different influence and impact in those different areas which is basically the way we think about everything in the office. But its sort of an approach that you’re not just looking at concrete and then looking at the social aspects as some nebulous thing independent of that so …

60: 1

61: SM-L you’re trying to link specifically … okay … in our discussion on working with psychic and environmental energies you saw this as understanding and working with the psychology of space. In other words you took the position that this can best be developed through actually experiencing the buildings and documenting what those qualities are … I would like you to talk about those qualities which you pursue which you could lend to the discussion about environmental ethics
SWOne, I think dominant one, is the spatial appreciation of the outside whether that’s to do with light levels, quality of the air, experiencing movement of air, views, landscapes – all these aspects that tie back into … something that’s very much wired into the human experience whether its called biophilia or whatever you want to say. When you trace back history of qualities that people look to in a space (and they are quite often given more ephemeral names) … a lot of them do come back to those aspects of a space or building that have a relationship back to what’s either going on outside from a visual or a sight point of view or what we associate … umm … an example of that – we’ve been looking at with learning commons for some educational projects is what we’re calling domesticated space. So in some of the new ways of learning what we’re pushing is to create either landscape or access to use of food – it’s a very simple way of students feeling more in touch with natural environments and that has an impact on the way they learn and their propensity to work together which is a much harder thing to measure than say … how much natural light they’re getting when they’re working. But it also ties back down to the psychology or type of space that they’re in, so there’s a lot there. But I think that that’s the one that … brings it all together.

SM-L you raise some very important observations about what is lacking in architectural education and you believe there’s a need to improve an architects knowledge base in three fundamental areas – one which is the psychology of space, the other one which is the architectural sciences and the third one is articulating and promoting the design process that the architects call expertise. You’re talking about a blending of artistry with scientific thinking, environmental and social awareness-type thinking (this is a multi-faceted task) and purposely engages with both intuition and logic. I would argue that for it to be workable both intuition and logic require equal valuing and that its this equality that’s really lacking in our predominately rationalist society …
Can you talk to me about how you work in order to keep these two values at an equal standing?

SWyes … I would like to explore further (and its only so far you can take something like intuition I know) but I’m still a firm believer that there is a lot of values locked up there in our understanding of the brain that can be … that on the surface is not rational, but there’s plenty of processes in nature that can be understood that are nonlinear or nonrational that I think we just don’t know enough about how the brain works … whether you take it as far as to a very reductionist point of view in saying that there are logarithmic processes right back, there’s a lot of evidence to suggest that its not and that its something more emergent in terms of thinking and consciousness … I’m skirting the question … um consciously what I do do are sometimes little exercises or disciplines where I will not … I’ll stop thinking or take a break from a certain path of design or process – deliberately do something different. Because I have learnt that something in the brain helps fuse things together and gives you a different look. I guess it’s a simple as sleeping on something or … so that just some kind of intuition that suggests that nothing more to be gained rationally following a process like this. It parallels the idea I guess of trying to put yourself in different experiences and spaces and gaining from that. Probably on a more … lifestyle thing … I’m very conscious that the trips away that I take (and I have quite diligently been away for four or five weeks every year to a different place over the last few years) I’m quite – although I don’t necessarily go out to make it an architectural holiday I’m quite conscious that every time I do that my brain gets reshuffled from a design point of view in terms of influences – not just architectural but experiences of culture. So I guess that is a in a way a deliberate … way of trying to feed into that more intuitive way of thinking things out.
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72:

73: SM-L    … okay … do you think that its … I’m asking here is it a more workable solution if it’s a group responsibility or is it an individual project. In this organisation here do you sort of value people for their ability to be logical thinkers or be creative or more intuitive …

74:

75:

76: SWIt’s a balance. The preference is to have people who are all rounded or to have the group that has people who have different aspects so at the moment I’d say that its best to have people who can do lots of different things but are easily offset if you’ve got people are strong in other areas which I think is quite a good mix because sometimes the people that are all-rounders can get frustrated and they’re usually the bigger thinkers and if they’re on the one area on a large project they can get tired, whereas someone that is working within a specific area that they know about or like are more likely to get satisfaction from staying with that so … in terms of group v individual I value the individual growing an idea even in a group dynamic its usually in fact I think it always is even if it doesn’t look like that – its an individual idea that comes across no matter how many inputs happen its still one creative mind …

77:

78: SM-L    in trying to lift the quality of the total built environment you note that the discussion within architecture must go beyond building to embrace the broader curve and pattern within civilization. There’s an argument within environmental philosophy that our patterns of living have become neurotic and that our relationship with non-human others is autistic or monological. The charge could be levelled at architects that in focusing on urban environments and individual building performance that we still avoid acknowledging our lack of real partnering and solidarity with the other-than-human who inhabit the built environment that are not given any real recognition. It could be argued that developing greater respect for our co-
residents is important for the healing process to be activated at a deeper level. To formalize this might mean strengthening legal rights or contractual responsibilities. However the built environment can only be an expression of our current position – where we currently think … so where do you sit on this issue.

\[79:\]

\[80:\] SW Yes I think that last point where it can only be where we currently sit is where I always struggle with and its quite often when I think about the bigger realm its probably why I have yet or maybe will never take a step beyond architecture into an urban or city design type role (although I think its an absolutely critical one) is my current view and understanding of what is a sustainable model or the way that we should live in the city is with a very medium to dense quite small core with lots of natural environment, landscape – I mean it’s a little bit of a Dutch model … you only have to go a couple of kilometres out of Amsterdam and you’re into the farming. So it’s much more a series of dense satellites. Its quite well documented that it by far – in our current way of living- the most sustainable way to live. So what I’m really saying is that somewhere like Australia and indeed much of the world particularly the developing world is so far beyond achieving that model and ever getting back to that model that the best we can do from a strategic point of view is to improve on what we’ve got and I find it very hard to work from the bottom up … I’m much more – and I think in city planning, urban design that’s the only way forward unless you’re got the opportunity to look at new towns or cities so therefore I feel my biggest difference I can make and also have the most satisfaction myself is to look at examples and models of things within the current system that are really good … if that makes sense

\[81:\]

\[82:\] SM-L Yes … obviously you have to be a realist in the way that you attempt to move forward and as you were saying because you can’t influence a huge urban re-design …
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¶84: SW yeah, it can be viewed as a fairly selfish approach – it’s not to say that I’m not constantly advocating better ways to be in the city, but in terms of putting my – the rest of my life energies and efforts professionally – I don’t think the way I think and the way my brain works is suited to having to deal with the complexities and particularly politics of trying to make a better city fabric within what we’ve got.

¶85:

¶86: SM-L yeah, sure and really you’re dealing with public opinion much more closely … that’s really what you’re talking about. And that was one of my questions which is where do you think society ‘s thinking is and obviously it’s a long way from where you think and the difficulty is trying to bridge that gap and work in a way that’s constructive even though there is a gap there … that seems to be the way that you’ve answered that question.

¶87:

¶88: SW correct

¶89:

¶90: SM-L okay. You seem to accept that in maintaining a momentum towards sustainability there is the necessity to adjust the goal posts when looking at the outcomes and it seems that outcomes often fall short of expectations and that you’ll do what you can do make the best building. What is most important is how well the process worked in avoiding worse outcomes. So we seem to be operating in an environment of least worst options.

¶91:

¶92: SW true

¶93:

¶94: SM-L is this the way that you see it and as designers designing for the future how can we actually get out of that mindset.
SWI think this (I can remember) was related to the outside world not always knowing what constraints and problems were within each project so what internally you might feel is a very successful outcome from a process and initial constraints point of view in reality might be still a pretty average project.

that right. That was part of that

... so the solution there is if f why that building’s being built is what’s got to be looked at rather than the process. If a developer’s looking at something down at Docklands as architects and as design professionals we have to seriously do a lot more questioning before we go ahead and give him the three above-ground carparks and um … seventeen hundred square meter floor plates for forty stories or thirty stories. That’s the fundamental level. Because once you accept that brief and if you’re an architect that knows anything about sustainability you’ll know that that’s not a good way to build – any architect should know that – but once you accept that and all you do is try and make the best of it aesthetically or construction-wise you’re really just adding to the problem and you’re turning architecture into art or sculpture. The problem is how do you turn the developer and the Dockland’s Authority or whoever else is approving that to say to them in fact you want three stories of active edge and you want maximum of ten stories built in a more dense way with links etc

yes, okay … so really you end up actually having to make a political um … decision and you have to move beyond you’re role as an architect into another role which becomes an advocacy … you take on an advocacy role and it seems to me you’ve got to extend yourself beyond the
role you might be employed at or the level that you’re going to be employed at …

103: SW correct. That then leads on and relates to architectural input or architects being involved in broader planning and Government level and there’s a lot more precedent in Europe for architects being very much involved at local authority level in terms of reviewing and approving processes. One of the huge problems in Australia is the way that the planning system works – the lack of training for planners. They basically have no formal design training at all. And we could talk about that for two hours!! … but that really where it all feeds back to. And the fact that design architecture is not actually a valued part of Australian culture.

105: In Italy it’s virtually an undergraduate requirement – 50% of the population has a graduate degree in design … (laughter)

106:

107: SM-L yes. The problem is quite a deep levelled one as we do know. So in a way we have to deal with least worst options - we don’t seem to have other …

108:

109: SW well to make ends meet most architects have to. That’s what I’m saying and if you either accept the individual private house that you really like and enjoy and don’t ever get into the urban realm. Or you become a very good designer who can pick and choose and lead a good life – only a few can do that. The rest are left having to make those decisions all the time.

110:

111: SM-L that’s right, yes. That’s very true. Okay. … When we were discussing the nature of commitment your response was that you experience commitment through maintaining consistency in pursuit of a long-term scenario. This scenario must be built on ‘some sort of integrity about what
you think of to start with and this brings into play fundamental things that you accept to believe in’. Now have you noticed any shifts in what you accept to believe in. I ask this to discover how far you have travelled in your thinking.

112:

SW … it all hinges on belief … that’s another word that is a very broad one. (I’m just trying to get beyond that.) So to do with … what are the fundamentals that I accept as tenets to move forward with. Yes I’ve noticed a shifting to concepts – myself personally over the years – and probably exaggerated over the last three or four to reduce things a lot more back to fundamentals … by that I mean it is once again a balancing thing. It is to constantly be looking at the bigger things in life that count and matter (which sounds really corny) but in a lot of situations it’s very helpful in terms of perspective from a professional point of view. I’ve never been one that necessarily gets angry or overtly distraught but the same sort of logic / philosophy can be applied to anger in that a lot of people get angry with something, frustrated with something that they know perfectly well is going to happen or has happened to them before. So they should be able to internalise that that is going to happen or be prepared and not get angry and have all the following emotions and things to deal with. I mean road rage for instance – you know that someone is going to turn out so why get so upset – that sort of approach but in a bigger way I think I’ve led more towards – I guess you could say – it’s more towards … a more contemplative view of the world. I found that very very useful in having to deal with a lot more people and a lot more things happening from all angles is to be really have a better priority of what’s important. And that could be discussed a lot more but that’s one …

114:

SM-L ummhumm … because it does allow you to maintain a … by elevating your thinking above the detail … it allows you to strip clear …

116:
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117: SW  yes constantly. Its got to a point now where I’m reassessing it
because you can go too far with that (I think very easily) and lose passion for
very simple things in life that are really quite important from a day-to-day
happiness and getting the most out of life point of view. So you don’t want to
get so removed from things that you lose experiences …

118:

119: SM-L  okay, the human scale is important. Now have you found that
you’re position of responsibility within DesignInc has that modified your
thinking

120:

121: SW  … yes. Probably less so on a professional level and more so
on a social level having to – traditionally I’ve always as an architect always
been dealing with lots of people – but its far more based on project, technical
aspects. Being more involved as a director in managing people and dealing
with teams that there’s a much bigger social dimension that has definitely
changed the way I view the world and I also think its been a great benefit to
me in terms of dealing with people and that’s something I’ve just had to
confront.

122:

123: SM-L  and maybe that ties in with what you just said earlier

124:

125: SW  yes it probably does

126:

127: SM-L  it gives you that contact with the detail of human scale … I
just want you to step aside a little bit and just reflect on being a sole
practitioner which still provide the bulk of architectural services … and you
know … how difficult do you think it is to achieve these sorts of objectives as
a sole practitioner. So really I’m talking about what is the scale that’s necessary to engage …

128:

129: SW I think a lot of the issues are interdependent. But I think a lot of things are irrelevant whether what scale you are practising at. I do see in the profession quite a jump between those who have decided to take on a sole practitioner role and are naturally very good architects and want the full control of the detail and direct contact with everyone in the building process and I have many contemporaries from university that have done that. And that contrasts greatly with someone like following my path who is happy with dealing with lots of different projects and interestingly it’s a bit like the top-down bottom-up approach. But I think that no matter what you’re doing at the fundamental level decisions and things you have to deal with are the same. You are trying to deal with a taste of a individual house builder or a client or a developer – the impetus to build cheaply – they are all the same issues.

130:

131: SM-L okay. We were talking about your personal interest in green design is in finding the elegant solution and that it allows for you an opportunity to express deeper reason and meaning through a synthesis of all the different aspects of design. Elegance is the standard that exhibits the best response within a limiting environment which includes limits to your own understanding of deeper meaning and reason. Now you talk about your personal interest in sustainability going back ten to fifteen years as you were growing up in Brisbane where you learnt ‘some real fundamental things’. So can you clarify what those fundamentals were.

132:

133: SW yes. On a basic level it was exposure to some very well-educated lecturers at university. I had a very good strong environmental science and climatic course at Qld University of Technology – and everyone at university would have been exposed to that – but I think overriding all of
that (as well as the fact that Queensland has a very strong tradition because of the climate of … environmentally rational type design its much more overt in terms of long, thin buildings) you’re really looking at a much simpler palette of materials and techniques to achieve sustainability. With the more temperate climates it starts getting a lot different – its winter and summer and thermal mass and balance all comes into it with the more subtropical / tropical it is almost formulaic. So the fact that I grew up and learnt design and was able to use very (formulaic is being a bit too harsh), but being able to have very simple principles to build things around I think meant that I was always going to want to have something quite rational and related to fundamental aspects of the world to build ideas on. As opposed to many other schools that probably still had an acknowledgment of sustainability and environment but I can see now, say in the Melbourne schools, that it’s not a very well understood appreciation. I think a lot of that goes down to the fact that there’s a lot of complexities in getting the right balance in terms of the climate. So that I think was a good forerunner together with some highly influential people that I worked for at that time and a couple of professors that I still can quote from. So I definitely had role models at an early age.

... right. And obviously it was a transformative period in your life ...

... yes

... and you’ve answered this next question which is about how you see the world and how much of that you can attribute to your experiences in Brisbane. Obviously this more simple palette with which to achieve solutions … gave you a freedom in order to follow design …
I think so. There’s a side there that we haven’t got time to go into and that’s to deal with what is learnt and what is hard-wired. How much is education beyond a certain age. A lot of research now that suggests that a lot of the way you are and what you think has got to do with peer groups rather than parents and … but I think just from a professional point of view in terms of knowledge even if it doesn’t trace all the way back to fundamental philosophy. Certainly in terms of what parts of knowledge I want to draw on to build – definitely Qld.

okay. Here I was wondering if you were interested in Biomimiciry. Have you been able to draw anything into the Brophy project that you could say is a example of that interest.

probably not. Mainly because the focus as you mentioned earlier has been more on getting the social aspects of it right. Most of the advances in biomimicry as they apply to architecture - at the moment anyway – are more about structure, fabric, transfer of air and structure through an envelope. And the simplicity that we’ve been aiming for with Brophy has probably meant that it’s a more traditional construction. So probably more in the biophilia area rather than the biomimicry area – so its going to be more about quality of the spaces and all those aspects I talked about earlier in terms of experiencing the outside whether you’ve got back to something – all of that sort of stuff

alright, you also mention – how are we going for time

we’ve probably got another five
¶151: SM-L right. Um … alright so this here I’m talking about … you make the point that ESD needs to be normalised as good design and that you prefer to hide it within design decisions. The reality is though that you need to be as up-front as possible from the earliest moments of the briefing stages about ESD because it can only be implemented through largely non-traditional processes. You also mentioned that it needs to be written into the contract therefore what you can hide at this stage might not be all that effective. I gather that you use it as a device for leveraging support from amongst your clients and from amongst your fellow practitioners here. So when you say that it should be normalised as good design its really just a technique to get that support …

¶152:

¶153: SW yes yes it is. I think it’s a long-term goal as well. And it cuts to how original agreements are set up and costings are put forward. It’s a big difference if it’s a straight capital costs feasibility or whether you can look five or ten years in advance. But yeah, and also it comes back to the architect’s role and … green star itself - its very much beyond - the architects are doing a lot more beyond the traditional fee scope for an architect – so there’s a lot in there. But I definitely think it’s a work in progress to have it normalised into the process. The only thing that remains from our office and the reason why we wouldn’t do it is in amore competitive sense, marketing and trying to win jobs. There’s every other architect saying they practice green architecture. You have to in some way make it overt.

¶154:

¶155: SM-L okay. You mention that to achieve this level of good practice you do a lot of to-ing and fro-ing with the services engineer or with an actual dedicated environmental engineer. So it seems that your focus in environmental design is specifically on good engineering solutions. So I just first of all want to know how good you think the engineering advice is. Do you find that you’ve really had to search high and low to get good engineering advice – are they providing you with the back-up that you want.
SW: its mixed and its constantly changing. Probably there are different areas they’re strong and different areas they’re weak. Strong is in anything that can be measured and looked at from a green star point of view - exchanges of air rate, straight engineering things. Where it breaks down is where there needs to be some judgements made from a modelling point of view. As soon as you start looking at natural or mixed-mode ventilation for instance you struggle particularly at an early level with most engineers. I think that is across the board. And probably the other area that we’re finding it difficult is with engineers who put themselves forward as a co-ordinator of all things environmental maybe pertaining to Greenstar but then only really want to interface with the aspects that relate to their engineering disciplines - and as you know full sustainability is much broader than that. At the moment there’s a real overlap between architecture and sustainable architects practising and environmental engineers and I’m not really sure which way it’s going to go.

SM-L: yes, and that’s your critical point really to get that leadership right. So … and that was another question – who is leading who in this position of environmental co-ordinator.

SW: I think even if the engineer is say compiling and co-ordinating a Greenstar for instance – invariably the architect would be leading. Its … educated into engineers … I’m sure it’s to do with sub-consultancy as well – even with an engineer who is directly appointed by the client, there’s still an expectation that the head consultant is an architect when it comes to everything in terms of co-ordination. And they’ll use that for their own benefit as well in terms of alleviating responsibility.
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¶163: SM-L alright now beyond good engineering advice who else do you consult – do you find a need to consult – about biodiversity and about social sustainability issues – they’re not the sort of structured advice that’s out there.

¶164:

¶165: SW there’s not. I think from a landscape point of view there’s some good landscape architects that we deal with that have some good contacts with regard to biodiversity on those types of sites and also water where we look to specialists. In fact Jenny in the office has almost got a better knowledge of sustainable water initiatives than anyone in Melbourne including hydraulic engineers because she’s actually had to get innovative projects off the ground and work with councils so its another example of something way beyond our traditional role that we’ve had to work on and develop if we’re going to do these sort of buildings so it probably means that there’s not that much support …

¶166:

¶167: SM-L okay there are a few other questions that I really want to get to …

¶168:

¶169: SW I’ve got five minutes so choose two or three.

¶170:

¶171: SM-L okay. Yes. This is what I think is reasonably important. Umm … you state that environmental designs need to be supportable as a business decision which means there are limits to what can be accomplished. You mention that as a practice you test the client’s willingness and resolve to embrace environmentally sensitive design and then you push those boundaries very early on before establishing a limit. You also mention that with a staff that is predominately made up of qualified architects you can achieve a high level of skills, flexibility and adaptability and so that to me seems like it’s a deliberate … um … strategy. You seem to have your ESD advisors working
as trouble shooters as well as reality checking. So I’ve seen a little bit of that in the way they’ve been brought into the Brophy project. What I really want you to talk about is how has this affected your time and staff allocation, how have you had to strengthen your staff. Have you had to have more staff members dedicated to research or have you just widened the scope of the individuals within the office …

that’s a very good question and very relevant particularly on the small and medium sized projects because it is become a different mix … to make a project good and profitable. When I say a smaller project - $5M or less – it usually requires two or three all-round type architects that can both do the design, draw the design, deal with the consultants, … so as you have – I think it’s a transition phase – as soon as you have some extra scope required in terms of sustainability or … even in Brophy’s case a different procurement methods that we’re looking at – it does change the mix. So we’ve at the moment – say have the project architect in this case Claude Bertoni – not full-time on the project. He’s working at a strategic level in terms of co-ordinating and dealing with the client. But because he’s not full-time that enables us to have someone like Jenny Dudgeon who’s very much a reviewer and an input-er in terms of sustainable initiatives also working on the project. It does - obviously we’ve got a couple of others as well – in terms of drawing, but it means that we have got one or two extra people doing more part-time work which is something that we’re … I don’t think that we’ve fully got right yet, but it does still come back down to the fact that you need good qualified people because they’re then working on a number of different projects and having to meet quite a tight time frames.

yes and also have a broad range of skills. Okay. Alright. All these changes - I mean when we started the conversation the first time we had a fairly in depth sort of analysis of how you’re stimulating knowledge acquisition and the way that you’ve set up an ESD advisory node (I’ve called
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it anyway) and how you’ve structured your library … to resemble the Greenstar categories and you’ve got check lists and design reviews that try and promote diagrammatically the performance levels that you are wanting to achieve and you know, you are also developing focus groups to sort of target certain areas of knowledge within the office … um and you also look at the way you match your team to the project so it seems that you’ve got a lot of points that you ..

176:

177: SW we’ve actually added one to that now and that’s a sustainability forum that we’re starting this year every fortnight. We’re having – it’s a looser discussion forum – for sustainable ideas in the office. Some of its based on the research Elizabeth is doing … but there is a topic on every second Tuesday lunch and people are invited and it’s a way to … free up people project by project and input into the strategic direction of the office. What is – at its core running through it all – what is sustainability and what does it mean for us to have sustainable architecture as our philosophy. So that I think a lot of these were very technical and process things - we’re are now trying to get people more into a open discussion.

178:

179: SM-L so in a way one of my questions was what sort of attitudinal change have you noticed in the office because of the devices that you’ve brought in to activate – I gather this is fairly new – two to three years old and in the last 12-15 months its been the most intense …

180: SW its mixed and its varied because of the nature of the work load and a lot of these things require people to be working on projects that have these initiatives in place that there’s no motivation necessarily to … get up to date with what’s going on in the office if you’re working on a large project that has already been sorted or you’ll come in to a different stage of a project. So its almost like we’ve got to go through a couple more cycles of people working on different projects before it becomes a fully functioning system. But a lot of these things in our quality management system as well – so check
lists and other things are not just there periodically they’re actually part of what people have to do day-to-day.

181:

182:SM-L that’s it. So that its part of your auditing system … and is this something that flowing from this office out to other offices or are you getting … you know … is it running in parallel amongst other offices amongst the DesignInc …

183:

184:SW no its quite autonomous and I mean we’re all … separate individual offices … um and run quite different and we do share projects, but, … its DesignInc Melbourne specifically ..

185:

186:SM-L last question. What sort of reward mechanisms do you put in place that genuinely motivates not only yourself but also staff to perform to a maximum

187:

188:SW ummm yep I’ve found and it’s probably different for different generations and different peoples with different interests. In architecture for those who are passionately interested the biggest reward is … personally for me and other people I work with is opportunity in terms of types of projects you work on. We do have pure financial bonuses based on performance … on individual projects that we do but from my experience it is far more important for people is the fact that they’re working on something that they like and is interesting and there is something new about it. And so that constant balance is you know, someone who has proven themselves in some area and is doing a really good job, you’ve got to be careful – don’t just leave them there and just keep them working on that because they’re really good … make sure that you can then use the fact that you’ve found out that they’re really good on something that is really different and more challenging and I think I’m sure
that applies to most professions and everything else but I think its even more important in design because people do take it very much as a life experience.

\*189:

\*190: SM-L well thank you very much Stephen

**Annotations**

1 SW is intellectually strong - advanced reasoning and strength of ideas and commitment to implementing them.