

NR & NEW INTERNATIONAL SELECTION DOCUMENTATION MINIMUM FICHE

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Source: G Martin 2003

1.0 Identity of building/group of buildings/urban scheme/landscape/garden

1.1	current name of building	National Gallery of Australia and High Court of Australia Precinct	3
		A precinct was selected because both buildings are by the same architect and designed to compliment and contrast with each other. Both are linked by a bridge.	
1.2	variant or former name	National Gallery of Australia was known as the Australian National Gallery.	4
1.3	number & name of street	Parkes Place	5
1.4	town	Parkes	6
1.5	province	Australian Capital Territory	7
1.6	zip code	2600	8
1.7	country	Australia	9
1.8	national grid reference		10
1.9	classification/typology	Two buildings and their landscape setting in the Late 20 th Century Brutalist Style	11

1.10 protection status & date 12

The precinct is listed on the Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL), the National Heritage List and was on the former Register of the National Estate (RNE). The precinct is included in the Parliament House Vista Citation on the CHL. Both buildings also have individual listing on the CHL. The Sculpture Garden in the National Gallery of Australia also has individual listing on the CHL.

The buildings are also listed on the Australian Institute of Architect's Register of Significant Twentieth Century Architecture as well as the UIA Register.

2.0 History of building

2.1 original brief/purpose 13

The Precinct fulfils the design brief which was to emphasise the visual impact of the Gallery and the High Court, their entrance podium and the lake beyond. It also noted that the High Court and Gallery group were to become a single precinct in visual terms with the High Court the dominating feature (Pearson et al 2000).

The external form of the buildings, derived from the function of the internal areas, creates the visual strength of the design. The pattern of the columns of varying heights, the projecting and recessing forms of the off-form concrete shapes and the different building expressions on every building facade is an integrating feature of the design. The Gallery structure and spatial organisation are disciplined by the imposed order throughout of a three-dimensional geometry based on the four sided tetrahedron and equilateral triangle, which also informs the setout of paths and sculptures in the Sculpture Garden.

The High Court and National Gallery design and craftsmanship have been noted by Taylor (1990) as 'the most forthright examples of Australian civic architecture of their decade and in the case of the National Gallery, the most conclusive statement of the ideals and creativity of Madigan.' The High Court of Australia and the Australian National Gallery were awarded the Canberra Medallion by the Royal Australian Institute of Architecture, in 1980 and 1982 respectively.

The design teams from the firms of EMTB and Harry Howard and Associates along with the Director James Mollison developed the design plans for the Sculpture Garden and precinct planting. The Sculpture Garden's design continued the triangular geometry of the Gallery in its circulation pattern, spatial arrangement and concrete elements of bridges and terraces. The selection of local indigenous plants although informally grouped have a controlled aesthetic of foliage and colour enframing spaces for displaying the national sculpture collection.

2.2	dates: commission/completion	High Court	National Gallery	14
	Project Design	1972	1972	
	Begin Construction	1975	1973	
	End Construction	1980	1982	

2.3 architectural designers 15

Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs

Colin Madigan commenced formal studies in architecture in 1937 at Sydney Technical College. He served in the Navy from 1939 and after the war combined experience in the office of

David King in building design for hospitals and factories with the college tutorage of Harry Foskett, Miles Dunphy and Jack Torzillo. In 1948 he and Jack Torzillo joined Maurice Edwards in partnership and gained much work from the Joint Coal Board. The firm remained small during the 1950s but worked towards a rationalist approach to design. The firm gained work from the Public Works Department and Madigan designed many schools, the NSW Tourist Bureau building and the Round House at the University of New South Wales. By the early sixties Madigan, along with his partners was designing in the modernist style. After an influential trip to Europe in 1963 Madigan's work demonstrated more attention to the local context. The High Court, National Gallery and their precinct are the culmination of his achievements in public architecture (Taylor 1990).

In 1981 the Royal Australian Institute of Architects awarded Colin Madigan the Gold Medal, the Institute's highest accolade for lifetime efforts in the field of architecture.

Christopher Kringas was born in Orange in 1936, the second son of Greek migrants. After completing schooling at the local high school he enrolled in Architecture at the University of New South Wales, graduating in 1958. Following a three year period of overseas travel that included working with London County Council and a number of London architectural firms, Chris returned to work for the firm of Edward, Madigan, Torzillo and Briggs (EMTB). His reputation as a brilliant designer was evidenced by his designs for the Dee Why Library, Waringah Civic Centre, the Australian National Gallery, Bathurst Teacher's College, Warren Library, Cockel House New South Wales and Stephen's House Queensland. He was appointed a Director of EMTB in 1973. Undoubtedly his greatest achievement was as design team leader for the High Court of Australia. Tragically he was stricken with cancer in 1975 and although he continued to work to complete the final design he did not live to see its construction, which commenced one month following his death. He died in March 1975 leaving wife Anne and four children.

Harry Howard completed architecture studies at the University of Sydney and a Diploma in Town and Country Planning. As a student and throughout his career he was a convinced modernist. He worked for the modernist architect Sydney Ancher and for many years with Edwards Madigan Torzillo. He had a love of native plants which he shared with his friends, the landscape architects Bruce Rickard and Bruce Mackenzie. He was part of a group of talented Sydney architects, landscape architects and designers that had studios at 7 Ridge Street, North Sydney.

The expression of Australia design ideals held by the Ridge Street Group is now referred to as the 'Sydney School'. In 1996 Howard received the Australian Award in Landscape Architecture, the highest accolade of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, for his life's work (Weirick 2000).

2.4 others associated with building

High Court

The structural engineering for the project was by Miller Milston and Ferris (Engineers Pty Ltd), the mechanical and hydraulic engineering by Frank Taplin and Partners, the electrical and fire services engineering by Addicoat Hogarth Wilson Pty Ltd, the acoustic engineering by Peter R. Knowland and Associates, the

quantity surveying by D R Lawson and Associates and the contractor was PDC Construction ACT Pty. Miller Milston and Ferris gave particular attention to reduction of shrinkage through the use of specified low shrinkage concrete, through controlled placing sequence, and through planned jointing (EMTB et al 1980).

National Gallery

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The contractor for both buildings was PDC Constructions (ACT), subsidiary of White Industries Ltd.

The contracting authority for both buildings was the National Capital Development Commission, Roger Johnson, Chief Architect.

2.5 significant alterations with dates

High Court – Nil

17

National Gallery – In the early 1990s, under the direction of the Gallery Director, Betty Churcher, sub division of some galleries was undertaken with the insertion of mezzanine floors and changing or re-cladding wall surfaces, in order to create new galleries to suit the exhibitions. Other changes to the building include re-roofing with a metal deck and the creation of storage space under the new roof, and extension of the bookshop.

A temporary restaurant appropriated the marsh pond terrace and at a later date, an access road and small car-park to service the temporary restaurant were installed.

A new wing designed by Andrew Andersens of Peddle Thorpe & Walker (PTW) Architects was constructed in 1997, to be used for exhibitions. The new wing extensions included a courtyard garden sculpture designed and established by the artist Fiona Hall.

A new wing and entry designed by Andrew Andersens of Peddle Thorpe & Walker (PTW) Architects was constructed in 2010-11.

2.6 current use

High Court and National Gallery.

18

2.7 current condition

The condition of the High Court building is excellent. The building is well maintained and cared for.

19

The National Gallery is in good condition, but over its life has experienced problems with water leaks, failed glazing, condensation in winter and a lack of appropriate access for people with disabilities, the elderly and children. This latter issue was addressed in the 2010-11 alterations.

The initial design for the buildings included a National Terrace

where both buildings were to be part of an upper level terrace with parking below. However, in 2003 only the bridge link remains. This change of orientation is part of the reason for some of the shortcomings of the National Gallery.

A Gallery condition audit by Bligh, Voller Neild (1999) identified a number of shortcomings in the condition of the building and functional spaces.

A review of the condition of the precinct landscaping is provided in the report by Howard and Buchanan (1999), and the report by Buchanan (2000).

A summary of the main points is as follows:

The carpark and access road built behind the Henry Moore sculpture to service the temporary restaurant, is not part of the original design, brings cars into a pedestrian zone and is a visually intrusive backdrop to the sculpture.

The enclosed marquee which houses the temporary restaurant blocks visitor circulation around the Marsh Pond and prevents visitors other than restaurant clientele, from using the lower terrace. The angled water channel (part of the Woodward water feature) has been covered over in the section that dissects the terrace next to the Marsh Pond.

Much of the planting proposed in the original plan to emphasise the seasonal flowering concepts of the Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn Gardens was never implemented and existing planting needs maintenance.

A number of miscellaneous items such as concrete paving, bins, signs and drains have been introduced over the years, particularly near the Marsh Pond that adversely affect the values of the garden. Furniture in the Sculpture Garden has been allowed to deteriorate.

The prototype fountain from the High Court Prototype Area has been removed.

3.0 Description

- 3.1 general description The Precinct comprises two buildings – the High Court of Australia and the National Gallery of Australia - designed by a single architect and joined with a bridge. The precinct is a highly regarded expression of contemporary architectural and landscape design. 20
- The architectural design is an example of Late Twentieth-Century Brutalist style demonstrating a development of the modernist movement away from the constrictions of modular structural systems to a more flexible form of architecture.
- The landscape design using mostly local native plant material is an example of the Australian Native Landscape design style that developed in Australia in the 1960s, and is a fine example of the newfound idiom of landscape design being practised in Australia at the time, using carefully grouped, local species as informal native plantings against modern architectural elements.
- The original design was not fully implemented.
- 3.2 construction The High Court is arranged on 11 levels and rises some 41m. It houses 3 main courtrooms, Justices' Chambers and support facilities. The building is primarily constructed from bush 21

hammered in situ reinforced off white concrete as a monolithic structure. Large areas of glazing are supported on tubular steel frames as structural back up.

The National Gallery is a complex building of varied levels and spaces arranged on four floors. The building demonstrates an imposing and vigorous use of off white in situ reinforced concrete used in the triangulated space frame ceilings and bush hammered off form concrete walls.

3.3 context

In 1972 a competition was held for the design of the High Court. This was the first open design competition held in Canberra since the international competition for the plan of Canberra in 1912. The competition was won by Edwards Madigan Torzillo & Briggs. Christopher Kringas was head of the design team. Following Kringas' death in 1975 the design development fell to Colin Madigan. Kringas and Madigan's design style and use of extensive concrete was tested in the Warringah Shire Civic Centre and Administrative Offices at Dee Why, NSW, completed in 1973. As the designs of the High Court and National Gallery were vested in the same firm the opportunity for a consonance between them was high (Taylor 1990). The entry levels were determined by the proposed National Place of the 1971 plan.

22

The National Gallery concept was for a complicated building, located in the eastern corner of the Parliamentary Triangle, consisting of varied levels and spaces arranged on four major levels having a structural spatial order based on equilateral triangles. The requirements of the brief and the conceptual ideas were articulated in an open display of structure and structural materials.

The points of entry are also interesting in that the High Court entry is on a central axis while the National Gallery had its entry on the corner initially and was lowered to street level but still on a corner in 2010-11.

The High Court was designed to be read clearly from across the lake while the National Gallery is partially obscured by the native planting.

The other aspect of the precinct is the landscaping. The firm Harry Howard and Associates was commissioned to undertake the land design with the principal design firm, Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs (EMTB). The design team for the landscaping consisted of the principal designers Colin Madigan (EMTB) and Harry Howard, along with Barbara Buchanan (Harry Howard and Associates), Roger Vidler (EMTB) and James Mollison (Gallery Director). The water feature of the Marsh Pond was designed by Robert Woodward. Harry Howard had worked with EMTB as an architect and understood the language of their architecture, yet was inspired by the Australian bush and the need to humanise and localise the landscape experience for visitors (Buchanan 2001). The design consisted of Summer, Winter, Spring and Autumn gardens blending into each other. Due to a lack of funds, the Autumn Garden, restaurant, kiosk and amphitheatre were not completed.

Fluctuations in the political and economic climate delayed the beginning of the construction of the Gallery until 1973. The Gallery was 'moth-balled' for 18 months to finance the continuation of the High Court. The High Court was completed in 1980 and the National Gallery in 1982.

In 1975 the NCDC abandoned the 1971 Roger Johnson plan for the 'National Place'. This left the precinct 5 metres above the natural ground level and without the connection to a 'national place', Parliament or the National Library. In 1978 the change of plan by the NCDC from a one-way to a two-way road system along with the construction of a surface carpark to the south, meant that most visitors approached the Gallery from the rear of the building (comments by Madigan, AHC Workshop 2001).

In the early 1990s, under the direction of the Gallery Director, Betty Churcher, subdivision of some galleries was undertaken with the insertion of mezzanine floors and changing or re-cladding wall surfaces, in order to create new galleries to suit the exhibitions. Other changes to the building included re-roofing with a metal deck and the office space under the new roof, and extension of the bookshop. A temporary restaurant appropriated the Marsh Pond terrace and, at a later date, an access road and small car-park to service the temporary restaurant were installed.

A new wing, designed by Andrew Andersens of PTW Architects, was constructed in 1997 of concrete panels with some use of granite cladding. It is used for temporary exhibitions. The new extension included a courtyard garden sculpture designed and established by the artist Fiona Hall.

A sculpture of a globe by Neil Dawson, hanging over the forecourt area, was destroyed during a storm in late 1998. In September 2002 another sphere called "Diamonds" was installed by the same New Zealand artist, Neil Dawson.

The Canberra Medallion was awarded to the High Court in 1980 and the Australian National Gallery in 1982, by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. The buildings were further recognised by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 2001 in their listing of the two buildings for national significance.

The 2010-11 extension creates a new entry at road level with better access to the carpark and additional function rooms, galleries and facilities.

4.0 Evaluation

4.1 technical

The High Court of Australia building is arranged on eleven floor levels and rises some 41 metres. It houses three main courtrooms, Justices Chambers with associated library and staff facilities, administrative offices and public areas including a cafeteria.

23

The building form is almost a cube with administrative offices to the east and the vast south glass wall providing two disciplined faces, with the north and west elevations being more fragmented as internal functions break out or recede into the forms of the court room. The public hall has an internal volume some 25 metres high and is the central point of reference for the public areas of the building. Ramps and stairs climb through the space. The three courtrooms are all entered on different levels and arranged in plan around a single circulation core of lifts and stairs. The Justices circulation system is strictly segregated from the public circulation and travels from the underground carpark, through the intermediate courtroom levels, to Justices' Chambers and library at the upper level. A

roof garden is provided for the Justices' use.

The building is primarily constructed from bush-hammered, in-situ, reinforced, off-white concrete as a monolithic structure. The bush-hammering is achieved by constructing the walls using formwork and hammering the concrete when the form work is removed. Large areas of glazing are supported on tubular steel frame structural back-ups. Careful attention has been paid to detailing and the use of controlled natural light in the courtrooms is noteworthy. Internal finishes are rich yet restrained. Flooring is aurisina stone, Pirelli rubber or carpet. Wall finishes are concrete, plaster or timber panelling. Ceilings are plywood panelling, timber battened, plaster or concrete.

A number of specially commissioned art works complement the public hall as applied finishes or are integrated into the building's detailing. Included is a water feature in the forecourt designed by Robert Woodward, murals by Jan Senbergs forming an integral part of the public hall, doors at entry to Court 1 designed by Les Kossatz and George Baldessin and a wax mural by B. Maddock in the public hall outside Courtroom 1. (Buchanan 2001)

The High Court is further described by J. Taylor (1990):

'With its recessed and projecting forms, the building exploits the plastic characteristics of reinforced concrete. The differing expressions of each facade arise from the internal functions and the external conditions. The building was designed to read clearly from across the lake to the north.'

The axial planning contrasts with complex journeys in both buildings. The orthogonal grid of the High Court contrasts with the triangular grid of the National Gallery.

4.2 social

The gallery is important to the Australian public for housing, displaying conserving, curating and presenting the national art collections and for special exhibitions. The Sculpture Garden is important for displaying the collection of sculptures in an appropriate setting. It is valued by the community and visitors as an outdoor gallery and as a public area used by visitors and local people for musical, theatrical and other cultural and social events. The High Court of Australia is the symbolic focus of justice in Australia and has been the setting for memorable landmark legal cases.

24

The style of landscaping of informal, native planting is commonly known as 'Bush' style or 'Australian Native Landscaping' style. In this case, the landscaping material is predominantly species from the local provenance, carefully chosen for flowering times, leaf shape, size and colour, and grouped to provide interludes of sculpture and garden. This was an innovative approach to ecological landscaping.

4.3 cultural & aesthetic

The exterior massing of the National Gallery is lower, more articulated and more spreading than the High Court, but read together the bulk of the two buildings is reminiscent of a castle - the ramps, walkways, bridge, large blank walls, window penetrations and monumental scale of many of the internal spaces are also castle-like (Buchanan 2001).

25

The closure and horizontality of the National Gallery contrasts with the openness and verticality of the High Court. Both have a spirit of national building and faith in the future which is

expressed in a heroic architecture.

The buildings provide an exciting aesthetic with their projecting and recessing forms, textured off-white surface, and their vast entrance spaces, the verticality of high columns, the great glass wall of the High Court and the openly expressed triagrid ceiling of the Gallery. The aesthetic quality is enhanced by the relationship of the geometric white architectural forms, water, surfaces, the informal plantings of the Sculpture Garden and landscaping, with their predominantly grey-blue hues, fine foliage, dappled light effects and other ephemeral properties such as birdlife. Throughout the landscape the native trees are carefully grouped for aesthetic effect such as the CASUARINA CUNNINGHAMIANA near the marsh pond, the white trunked EUCALPYTUS MANNIFERA ssp. 'Maculosa', and E. POLYANTHEMOS, E. MELLIODORA, E. AGGREGATA, E. LEUCOXYLON var. macrocarpa and black-trunked E. SIDEROXYLON around the prototype area.

4.4 historical

The design style employed in the building is now named 'Late Twentieth-Century Brutalist' described by Apperly, et al (1989). It is considered a pure interpretation of the modernist architectural style. The style developed from using off-form concrete, enabling architects to fully explore the plasticity of reinforced concrete and to design buildings to follow function.

26

The Gallery clearly expresses the philosophy of form following function, particularly in the lift tower being expressed as a major architectural feature of the building's southern elevation (since been concealed with the 2010-11 extension). The Precinct demonstrates Madigan's great craftsmanship and artistry applying the philosophy of the style. In addition, the Precinct demonstrates the application of the Brutalist style in ceremonial architecture compared with other examples of the style in Canberra where it is used primarily in office buildings.

4.5 general assessment

The High Court and National Gallery Precinct is significant for its design achievement in the successful integration of a group of late twentieth century public buildings and landscape which were conceived by the same design team as a single entity. The precinct includes a man made landscape and sculpture garden which is a synthesis of design aesthetic social and environmental values with a clear Australian identify.

27

The design excellence of the precinct is acknowledged in the awards for design excellence achieved by each building, the landscaping and the structural engineering. The architectural design is an excellent example of late 20th Century Brutalist style.

The precinct has aesthetic importance with its monolithic off white concrete structural mass of bold angular forms projecting and recessing off from concrete on concrete terraces and in the case of the National Gallery emerging from a mass of native vegetation.

The precinct is significant in representing the high point in the distinguished career of architect Colin Madigan who was awarded the Gold Medal by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1981 and of initial designer Christopher Kringas who unfortunately died during the design process. The Precinct is a high point in the career of landscape Architect Harry

Howard who was awarded the Gold Medal by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects in 1996.

The precinct is much valued by the community and is held in high regard for its outstanding design qualities.

The following awards have been given:

High Court:

Canberra Medallion 1980

Australian Institute of Australia 25 Year Award for Enduring Architecture 2009

National Gallery of Australia:

Canberra Medallion 1982

5.0 Documentation

5.1 principal references

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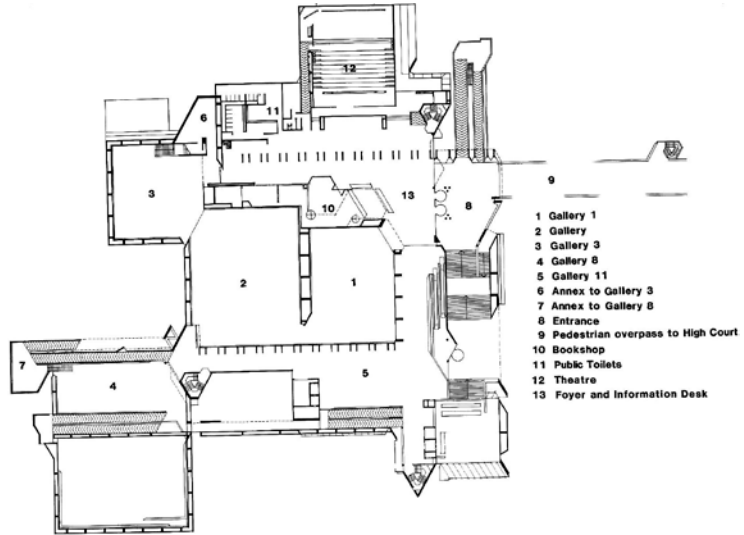
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Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs (EMTB) International and Harry Howard and Associates (1980) High Court of Australia: architects statement. Architecture Australia July 1980 pp 41-52.

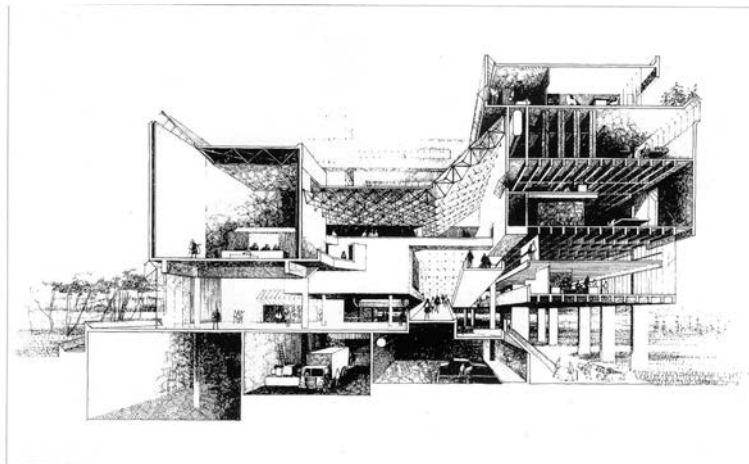
Weirick, J (2000) Obituary Harry Howard. Landscape Architecture 4-2000.

5.2 visual material attached

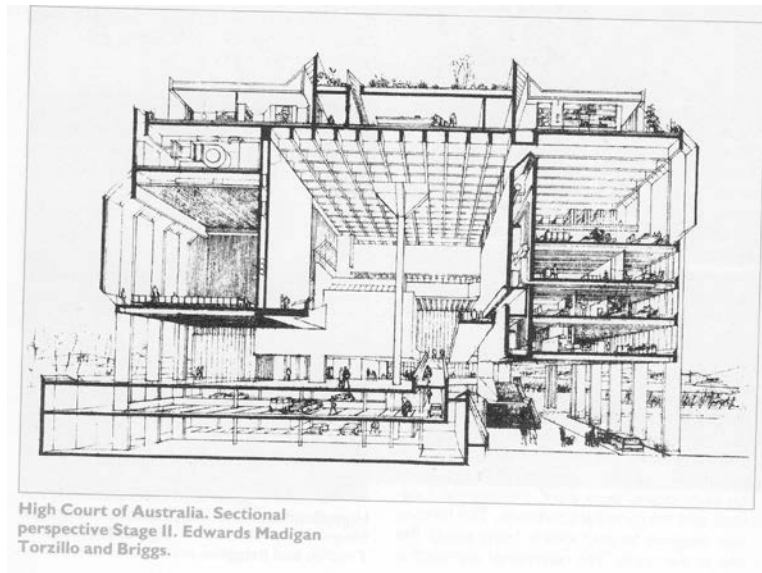
29



Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 1982.
Edwards Madigan Torzillo and Briggs. Plan
entrance and main galleries.



High Court of Australia. Sectional
perspective Stage I. Edwards Madigan
Torzillo and Briggs.



These plans have been taken from Taylor, J, *Australian Architecture since 1960*, 2ND ed, RAI 1990.

5.3 rapporteur/date

Eric Martin, Initial June 2010, Updated June 2014

30