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Minimum Documentation Fiche 2003

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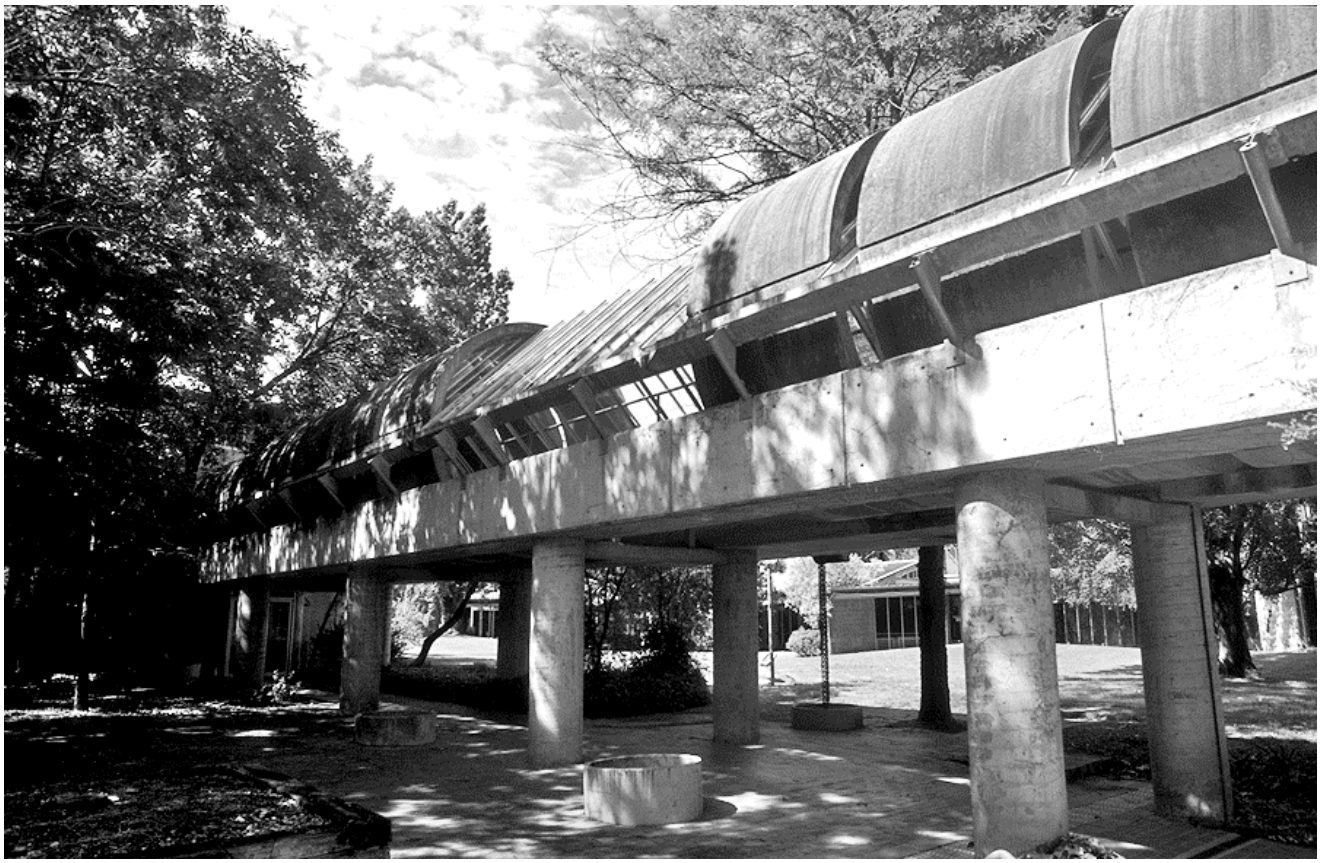
composed by national/regional working party of:

0.1 Picture of building/site



depicted item: Exterior of raised reinforced concrete walkway
source: Photographer D. Evans
date: 2005

depicted item: Interior of raised reinforced concrete walkway
source: Photographer D. Evans
date: 2005

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depicted item: Interior of main entry foyer
source: Photographer D. Evans
date: 2005

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depicted item: Detail of exterior
source: Photographer D. Evans
date: 2005

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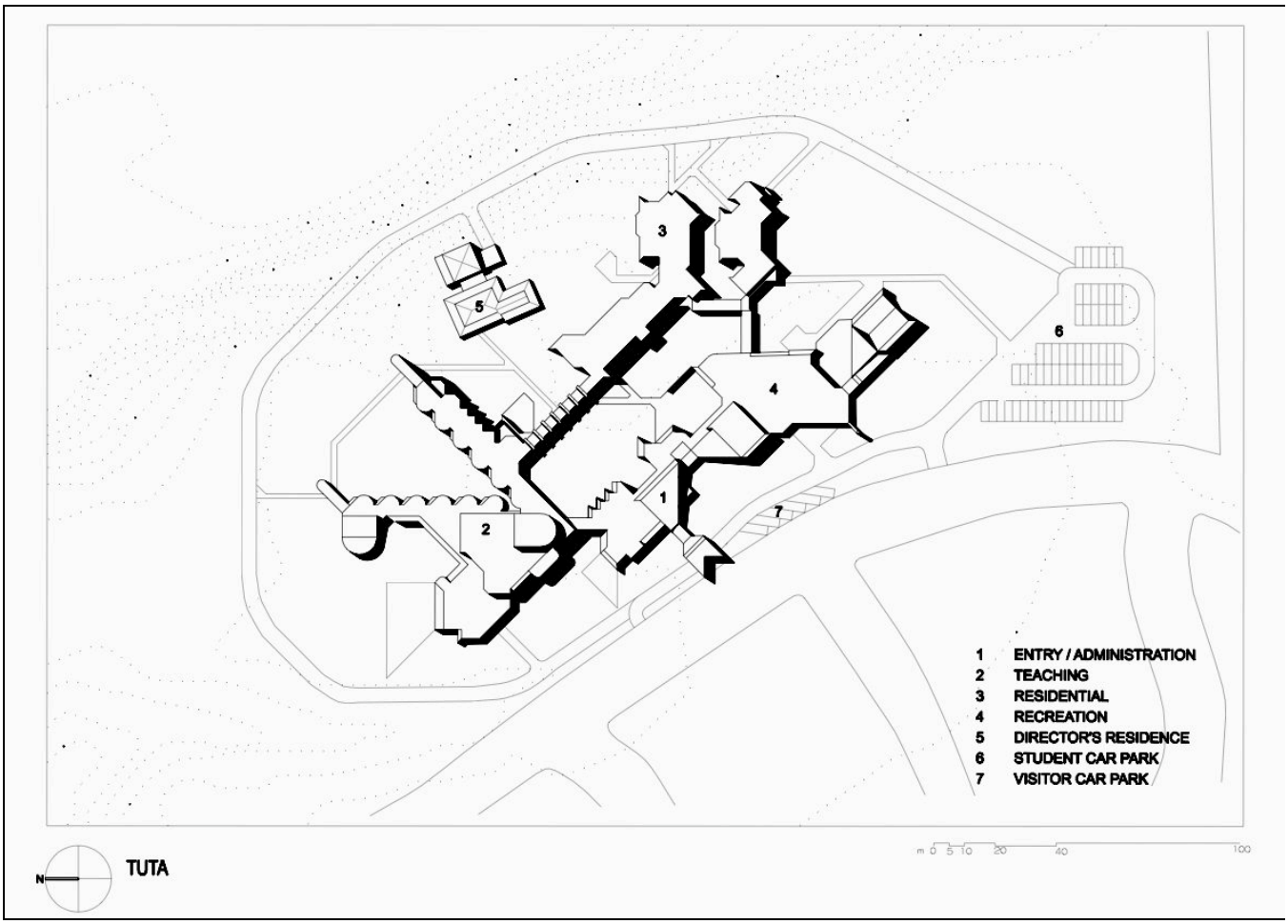

depicted item: Plan of completed design
source: H C Borland
date: 2006

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concrete block walling, industrial steel framed glazing and with giant bolted timber trusses carrying the roof over main 'public' spaces such as entry foyer and dining room. Use was made of pre-cast concrete storm-water culvert pipes as the main elements in a variety of connecting passages and walkways. The detailing was intended to showcase the skills of the various building trades and contains many idiosyncrasies and eccentricities.

3.3 Context: The physical context of the design is quintessential dry Australian farmland rising to low dry hills on the southern outskirts of Wodonga regional town in Victoria close to the banks of the Murray River that forms the border with New South Wales. At the time Wodonga, together with its twin city of Albury on the New South Wales side of the border was designated as a major regional centre. The location of the Trade Union Training Academy in Wodonga was part of this development program. 22

4 Evaluation

4.1 Technical 23

4.2 Social: The Clyde Cameron Trade Union Training Academy has high social significance as an attempt by a progressive albeit colorful and somewhat chaotic social democratic (ALP) Australian Federal Government under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam to modernize the labor movement via education. This was to be a workers university intended to better equip the Labor movement to better resist capitalist exploitation, a socially unique concept in the Australian context. 24

4.3 Cultural & Aesthetic: Culturally the building has been linked to the growing sense of independent self-confidence characterizing the Australian community at this time. Aesthetically the project is a vigorous (even eccentric) if somewhat late expression of the 'brutalism' that sprang to prominence in British architecture during the 1960s. Although sharing common ground with the early work of Alison and Peter Smithson and James Stirling and the late work of le Corbusier, Clyde Cameron Trade Union Training Academy carries the unmistakable characteristics of the work of Kevin Borland the director of the Architects Group in charge of the project. Borland had instigated the formation of the Architects Group in 1972. This was a group practice intended to carry out larger commissions obtained by both Borland and the architect Max May, who was also a director of the Architects Group. Borland was an unusual figure in the Australian architectural context. He was the son of working class parents both of whom were social activists and belonged to the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). Kevin Borland was a member of the CPA from 1947 to about 1954 and had many friends and acquaintances in progressive (left-wing) cultural and political circles. He was one of the designers of the iconic swimming and diving stadium for the 1956 Olympic Games which were held in Melbourne, the co-designer of the equally iconic Harold Holt Memorial Swimming Centre (1968) that introduced 'brutalism' to Melbourne architecture, and in the 1970s was a major influence on the trajectory of Melbourne architecture with a string of somewhat romantic, rough hewn regional-modernist domestic and small scale institutional commissions. Despite the relatively small design input from Borland himself, Clyde Cameron Trade Union Training Academy was the culmination of the nexus between left wing politics and an idiosyncratic Australian take on 'brutalism' which so strongly characterized the mature work of this important Australian architect. 25

4.4 Historical: The chaotic but progressive Whitlam Labor Government (1972-77) was controversially dismissed during construction of the project by the Queen of England's representative in Australia the Governor General. Coming at the time it did necessitated the 'fast-tracking' of the construction process to advance this sufficiently before the funds dried up to ensure the project's completion. The 'dismissal' as it became known reinforced the popularity of the Republican movement in the Australian community. The association of Clyde Cameron Trade Union Training 26

Academy with the Whitlam Government and its controversial dismissal makes it historically significant as an icon of these events.

4.5 General assessment : The former Clyde Cameron Trade Union Training Academy is highly socially significant as the only existing example of a unique educational experiment. It is culturally and aesthetically significant both as an icon of growing Australian cultural self-awareness during the 1970s and as a major– perhaps the defining work, of Kevin Borland, an important Australian post-war (modernist) architect. It is historically important as an icon of the tumultuous events marking the tenure and dismissal of the Whitlam Federal Labor Government. For all these reasons, this is a highly significant work of post-war Australian architecture. 27

5 Documentation

5.1 Principal references: 28

1. D Evans, H C Borland & C Hamann, *Kevin Borland: Architecture from the Heart*, RMIT University Press, Melbourne, 2007.
2. 'Clyde Cameron College', *Architecture Australia*, February-March 1977, 78-82.
3. 'Clyde Cameron College', *Architecture (Melbourne),* August 1978, 12-13.

5.2 visual material attached: 29

5.3 rapporteur/date: D Evans July 2007 30

6. **Fiche report examination by ISC/R**

name of examining ISC member:
date of examination:
approval:
Wp/ref. no: NAI ref. no:
comments: