



DESIGN MATTERS

With **TONY TROBE**

Hands off Anzac Hall

Tony talks to Philip Leeson, the president of the Canberra chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects.

The news of redevelopment plans for the Australian War Memorial has been plastered all over the press in recent weeks. What is your take on the proposal?

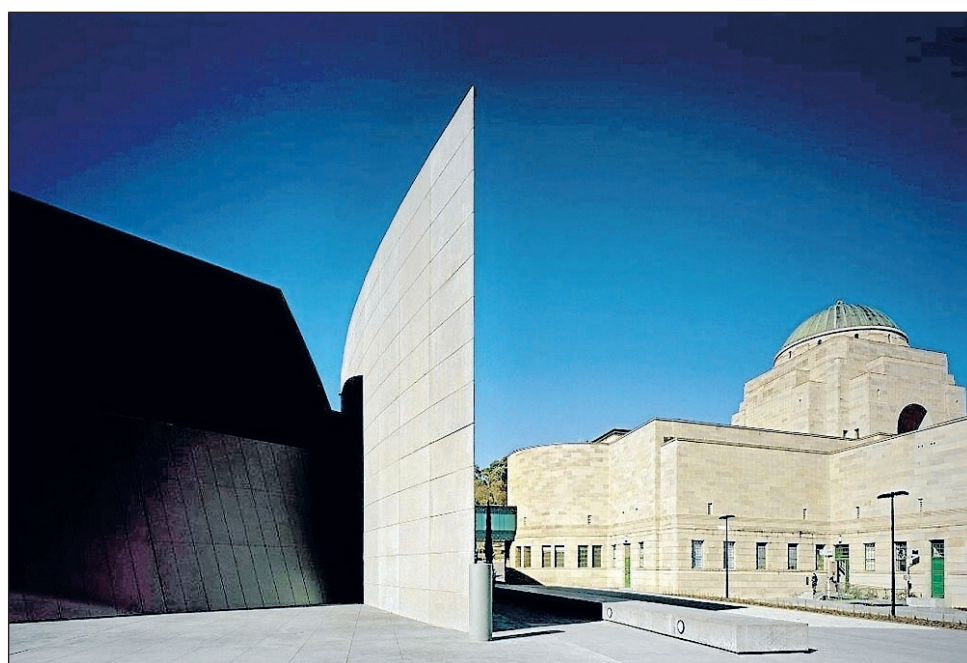
The local architecture community was shocked when news first broke of plans to demolish Anzac Hall. Surely this was a mistake. Where was the community engagement and consultation with the Australian Institute of Architects and the moral rights holders – the architects who designed the award-winning building?

Has the demolition been a sudden decision?

Well, apparently not; it was revealed that work on these redevelopment plans had been underway since 2015. Surely such a development within the public realm requires comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation?

This process of conducting planning behind closed doors requires scrutiny. Perhaps this secrecy was connected to the potential for community backlash against the wasteful demolition of an award-winning building 17 years young which holds the memories of Australians who served our nation. And, is it appropriate to say that constructing Anzac Hall was a mistake so demolition is OK?

You have stated, "We accept that the institution needs to evolve over time and



The Denton Corker Marshall-designed Anzac Hall. Photo: John Gollings

requires renewal to accommodate new functional requirements". So why the fuss?

Yes, the Australian War Memorial was conceived and built as a memorial and museum and we recognise that change will occur. However, the museum has reached a point where it cannot simply be extended and it is time to consider alternative ways of accommodating new programs.

At a recent meeting with Australian War Memorial director, Dr Brendan Nelson, he confirmed that 18 different options had been put forward for consideration, 17 of which did not involve the demolition of Anzac Hall. This clearly begs the question as to why the one option that involved the demolition of

the existing building was the one selected. We struggle to understand how this decision came about, the due process that should have been followed, and ultimately, who agreed to the proposed demolition.

What is your view of the architectural merit of the current extension?

Denton Corker Marshall of Melbourne, one of Australia's most innovative and respected architectural firms, designed Anzac Hall. Having previously designed the memorial's office building to the west of the main building, they knew intimately the challenges facing them when they were asked to design the hall. Their design response was an exceptionally

creative one, guided by the memorial director and staff, with a thorough and carefully considered conservation management plan, and respected conservation architects.

What design aspects make it special and worth keeping?

The completed hall, with its great sweeping metal roof, so beautifully evoking the wings of a plane, sits deftly in front of, but not obscuring, the memorial's northern facade. A more sensitive design is hard to imagine. The interior is finely crafted, and the grand spatial qualities are seemingly limitless and large enough to suitably display the largest of Australia's wartime heritage.

So impressed was the respected jury of the Australian Institute of Architects' National Architecture Awards that it awarded the building with its highest national honour, the Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Architecture in 2005.

Do you have public support for your objections?

We welcome an open public conversation with the Australian War Memorial, the government, government agencies, community, architects, planners and the media to test the public's appetite for this "knock it over and start again" approach to public buildings such as Anzac Hall.

We have started the Hands off Anzac Hall campaign and we won't give up until other voices in the debate over the Australian War Memorial's future are heard. Visit our newly launched campaign website:

wp.architecture.com.au/anzachall

■ *Tony Trobe is director of the local practice TT Architecture. Is there a planning or design issue in Canberra you'd like to discuss? Email tonytrobe@ttarchitecture.com.au*

More than 20 new retailers to enliven ANU in February

With **LUCY BLADEN**

The transformation of Canberra's inner city is set to get a boost early next year when the first offerings at the Lane and the Lawn in ANU's Kambri open.

Chatime, Commonwealth Bank, Daily Market, Harry Hartog and STA Travel are among more than 23 confirmed retailers to start operating across the two precincts in February 2019.

These retailers will be opening alongside a range of new offerings, mostly cafes and restaurants.

The Lane precinct will have a "laneway



New dining options at ANU's Kambri.

vibe", with a range of street food options – mostly Asian cuisine.

Gangnam Lane will offer Korean take-away food, including a mix of traditional and modern fusion while Urban by Asian

Tiger will serve Chinese breakfast from 8am. Authentic Vietnamese food van What the Pho, which now resides in the Pop-Up Village, will also be opening a restaurant as part of the new development.

On the other hand, the Lawn is the new "town square", featuring a vast lawn, amphitheatre, public seating and extensive landscaping.

The Lawn will be home to new pub Badger and Co. in the surrounds of Sullivan's Creek. The pub will span 500 square metres of indoor and outdoor space and will serve as a live music venue.

Leases for the precinct were offered in March. Laing+Simmons Commercial leasing executive Chris Antos told *Allhomes* at

the time: "The idea is to create a vibe where people can shop and also have a place for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a drink."

"While the development includes more student accommodation and is part of the ANU campus, this development welcomes all Canberrans and provides yet more options on the Western side of the CBD," he said.

The mixed-use development will also include 450 student dwellings and 400 underground car parking spaces.

The precinct is among a number of new retail offerings across Canberra, including nearby No Name Lane, DKS and a \$21 million redevelopment in Westfield Woden.



In times of crisis
you can give

HOPE
THE SALVATION ARMY
WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

Please donate now

13 SALVOS | SALVOS.ORG.AU