

Defining a 'New Civic'

Redesigning Adelaide's Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga within an era of reconciliation

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Adelaide is distinguished from other Australian cities by its history as a planned free settlement and its gridded plan complete with wide boulevards, five city squares, and a parkland boundary. The largest central square Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga has been the focus of countless redevelopment schemes aimed at reinforcing the space as the heart of the city. This paper examines the latest vision, designed by landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean and architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer, with the City of Adelaide. It explores how the design team conceptualizes the role and form of civic space within an era of reconciliation.

This research highlights the influence of interpretative practices associated with the new museum on the conceptualisation of civic space. This is demonstrated by the introduction of a 'cultural curator' Peter Emmett, best known for his curatorial ethos for Museum of Sydney, into the design team. Review of design documentation highlights the adoption of a 'new civic' philosophy, which borrows heavily on museological framings. We argue that this approach problematically conflates placemaking strategies with an understanding of civic space.

In this new vision for the square, civic is understood as an expression and representation of culture, stories and histories achieved largely through interpretation, narration and way finding strategies. Conversely, civicness within urban space is assumed to encourage individual and collective expression, interaction and dialogue of democracy. Positioned within a reconciliation context, civicness would extend to building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and other Australians. We argue that the adoption of these place making strategies not only limits the square's ability to perform as space of collective expression, but potentially continues practices

of spatial exclusion that have marginalized Indigenous relationships to civic space in Australian cities.

Keywords: urban design, reconciliation, civic space

Introduction

The city of Adelaide is notable in Australia, unique amongst the penal colonies as the only planned free settlement. The design of the city by Colonel William Light was based on a utopian European model, dating back to the theoretical city imagined by Vitruvius, a feature which also serves to distinguish Adelaide from the other state capitals. (Bechervaise, Legoe et al. 1986, p.2.) Light's much-celebrated gridded plan features wide boulevards, intersecting with five city squares, and a parkland boundary demarcating the city from its surrounds. Underpinning this plan were nineteenth century attitudes to urban civility and sanitation, which framed a colonial ideal of behaviour and practice within civic spaces. Hall suggests that the plan of Adelaide can be understood as "an emblem for how city life might be purposefully and humanely lived in the industrial age." (2004, p.54.)

Victoria Square, as the six-hectare central civic space in the Light plan, is repeatedly referred to as the 'heart' of Adelaide. The location of this square overlaps with a major site of significance to the Kurna people, the traditional owners of the Adelaide region. Anthropologist Daisy Bates recorded the site, known as Tardanyangga, as the central camp of the Dundagunya tribe. (Jones 2007, p.5635.)¹ The square sits on a geological formation of significance in the Kurna dreaming.² This convergence of colonial and Indigenous significance has meant the square has long been a site of territorial anxieties. Hall (2004, p.54.) suggests that the establishment of Adelaide on Kurna land through the design of spaces such as Victoria Square was "both an attempt to erase what was and an act of colonial palimpsest."

Not surprisingly, Victoria Square has been significant site in the political history of Indigenous civil rights in Australia. The Aboriginal flag was first unveiled at Victoria Square on National Aborigines Day, 12 July 1971. A memorial river red gum was planted in the square in memorial to Alice Dixon, an Indigenous woman who advocated for greater awareness of Aboriginal deaths in custody.³ The first prominent civic art work to represent Aboriginal people in the City of Adelaide, the 1968 Victoria Square Fountain, or 'The Three Rivers', by sculptor John Dowie is also located there.⁴ It is recognised as a contemporary meeting-place for Indigenous people, due to its central location in the city of Adelaide, its proximity to transport, and to the services and civic buildings which sit on its perimeters. It is also known to be a space of public drinking, and was subject to a re-zoning as a 'dry area'. (Hall 2004, pp.66-69.)

Given its position as a contested space of shared significance in the history of Adelaide, it is not surprising that Victoria Square/Tardanyangga has become the focus for an engagement with reconciliation. In no other city in Australia will you find a space so valued for both its Aboriginal and civic significance. Further, South Australia is recognised as having a socially and politically progressive attitude to Indigenous affairs, being the first state to give all men including Indigenous men the vote in the 1856 and all women including Indigenous women the vote in the 1895; one of

the first to diminish segregation practices under the Aboriginal Affairs Act (1962); and the first to appoint an Aboriginal person to a vice-regal position in Australia in 1976, Sir Douglas Nicholls.

Thus, Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga offers a rare convergence in an Australian city – the combination of a state and local governments committed to reconciliation and Indigenous issues, and an appropriate space of civic importance perfectly positioned to express the aspirations of reconciliation. Before engaging with the design, it is necessary to understand the origins and ambitions of reconciliation in Australia.

Understanding reconciliation in Australia

Reconciliation remains a fraught issue in Australia given the continuing absence of a treaty. Mark Harris describes the resulting landscape as one of “disquietude, a tension between those who have been displaced and those who have replaced them.” (2003, p.71.) Muddied by colonial power relations, the ill-defined parameters of reconciliation are embedded in our very understanding of the term. This semantic ambivalence, according to Fiona Nicoll (2004, p.17.), “has proven to be extremely convenient for politicians of all colours anxious to indefinitely defer the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty.” Providing a more explicit definition of reconciliation, Jackie Huggins (2005, p.9.) clearly identifies the mission of Reconciliation Australia – “To promote and build reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.”

However, the ‘disquietude’ inherent within the political landscape of Australia, tied up in notions of territory and discourse, makes this process of reconciliation difficult to conceptualise. Academics, politicians and Indigenous leaders continue to debate the motives and success of any action or event linked to reconciliation. The tension between symbolism and practice is the focus of much discussion. This dichotomy is evident in discourse emerging from landmark events, such as the Corroborree 2000 Sorry Walk and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s landmark parliamentary apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008.

The Corroborree 2000 Sorry Walk, which resulted in 250,000 people crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge on Sunday 28th May, 2000 was viewed by some as simply a symbolic gesture. Huggins (2005, p.8.) stated that while the walk marked a symbolic triumph for the reconciliation movement, “the walks masked the harsh reality of a lot of what we call ‘unfinished business’ – issues tied in with reconciliation that have not been resolved.” Similarly, Andrea Durbach (2008, p.16.) argues that while such symbolic events “are all significant manifestations of an expanding appreciation” the focus on them has “obfuscated a critical understanding of the essential prerequisites for reconciliation and delayed the execution of a government responsibility to create mechanisms to secure economic, political and social justice for Indigenous Australians.”

Similarly Rudd’s Apology to the Stolen Generations on 13th February 2008 has attracted criticism for not leading to a strategy of compensation. Andrew Gunstone (2007, p.403.) was critical of the expectation by non-Indigenous Australians that the Apology would mark a sense of closure to the process of reconciliation, that “there will then be no moral connection between the past and the present.” However, Durbach (2008, p.17.) identified the productive promise of the Apology for its “potential to regenerate a cautious belief in the process of reconciliation.” However, Durbach’s

optimism is on the understanding of an apology alongside the implementation of a national scheme of compensation.

Indigenous leaders such as Noel Pearson (2008) similarly question the ethics of an apology without compensation, while expressing concern that “this apology will sanction a view of history that cements a detrimental psychology of victimhood, rather than a stronger one of defiance, survival and agency.” However, Chris Healy (2008, p.217.) suggests that the apology authorises an “emblematic memory”, the symbolism of which could provide a scaffold for practical change [a concept borrowed from Stern in relation to Pinochet’s legacy in Chile]:

“In this sense, the apology to the stolen generations is a particular assemblage which integrates personal memories and experiences, evokes the past and provides a framework of interpreting that past, and articulates this in the public sphere in ways which authorise and popularise a new sense of the past.”

Despite these debates, reconciliation has become a requirement for public institutions across Australia who now must develop Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP). According to Reconciliation Australia (2012), the body that administers the policy development of RAPs, the motivations of reconciliation surround the creation of a dialogue of mutual benefit, between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians:

“Reconciliation involves building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and other Australians that allow us to work together to solve problems and generate success that’s in everyone’s best interests.”

The RAP is framed as an action – a measurable outcome-based strategy that emerges from this critique of reconciliation, from the tension between theory and practice, the past and the present, the symbolic and the pragmatic. The Adelaide City Council (ACC) was one of the first local councils in Australia to adopt a Reconciliation Vision Statement in 1997, which included a commitment to recognise Kurna heritage through the physical features of the city.⁵

Adelaide City Council’s vision for reconciliation

The renaming of the Adelaide parklands formed one of the first actions of the ACC RAP. This is seen as a significant step towards reconciliation as the parklands of Adelaide are considered some of the first spaces through which Indigenous people were marginalised in the city. To date all 29 Adelaide City Park Lands have had new signage installed, including the River Torrens/Karrawirra Parri and the central space of Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga.

Contemporary to the development of council’s RAP has been a broader move towards the regeneration of the central business district of Adelaide. Architect Donald Bates (*City needs Federation Square*, 2007) suggested that Adelaide, like Perth, risked “falling behind in terms of civic profile if some thoughts aren’t put into rejuvenating and revitalizing the [city]”. Council’s focus on the redevelopment of the city has seen the production of reports such as Jan Gehl’s *Public Spaces and Public Life: City of Adelaide 2002* (updated in 2011) and the Adelaide City Council 2007 Community Land Management Plan, both of which highlight the importance of Victoria Square

within a wider move to reinvigorate the city. The ACC aspires to regenerate Victoria Square as part of its 2008-2012 'Creating Our Future' Strategic Plan as "a space to celebrate culture and identity".

In 2008, a Community Ideas Competition for the design of Victoria Square was held by the ACC in partnership with the State Government of South Australia, seeing 115 entries submitted. (Bildstein 2007) The competition asked designers to respond to the civic significance of the space, as well as the dual-naming as an act of reconciliation. This position drew on the 2004-2007 City of Adelaide Strategic Plan through which council aspired to work with local Indigenous communities to "build effective Indigenous cultures in the community." (Adelaide City Council 2012) The framing of the competition also acknowledged the significance of Tardanyangga /Victoria Square more broadly to Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. (ACC 2007b)

In response to the competition, council issued the 2009 Victoria Square / Tarndanyangga Vision and Guiding Principles, and sought expressions of interest for teams to propose a suitable design. Of the 16 guiding principles, "Cultural Diversity and Unity" asked the design teams to explicitly produce a design that would "foster strong links with Aboriginal culture." (Taylor Cullity Lethlean 2011, p.90.) Through direct consultation with the Kurna community, designers were asked to interpret the spiritual significance of Tarndanyangga to enhance the identity of the space, as well as to 'creatively introduce' Aboriginal culture into Victoria Square/Tardanyangga through education and celebration, drawing on practices of dance, music, performance, interpretation and design. (TCL 2011, p.90.)

Landscape architects Taylor Cullity Lethlean (TCL), along with architects Tonkin Zulaikha Greer (TZG) and engineers QED were engaged in 2009 through this process to develop the masterplan for the 6 hectare Victoria Square/Tardanyangga site. Construction of Stage 1 of the masterplan commenced in 2012 and is slated for completion in early 2014.

The design philosophy

Working in conjunction with local council, the design team is comprised of the lead consultant landscape architects TCL and architects TZG working in collaboration with a Kurna Indigenous consultant, Karl Telfer, and a cultural curator, Peter Emmett. The designer, the late Kevin Taylor, describes the project explicitly in terms of the relationship between both civic and Indigenous significance, describing Victoria Square as 'the civic heart of the city'. (ACC) The new design of Victoria Square/Tardanyangga, illustrated in Figure 1, aspires to draw together the various cultural threads of symbolic significance together through a multi-scalar experience-driven design outcome. The Square is positioned as a metaphysical node of regeneration for the city.

Taylor's approach aims to infuse 'spirit' into the place of Victoria Square through linking the identity of the space to Indigenous culture as a strategy of 'regeneration', an approach which optimistically suggests that "the heart of the city is beating again..." (ACC)

Six guiding principles are nominated to reinfuse the space with activity. These are:

- "to tease the site out of the edges" – To draw-in a base population of users from adjacent offices and businesses;
- to "enable the new civic" - To facilitate socialisation, exchange and daily encounter in a particularly '21st century' way;

- to “make the market connection” – to make a physical and programmatic linkage to Adelaide’s Central Market;
- to “create new sources of light – a hybrid square” - develop a mixed-use space;
- to “tell stories with meaning” – to embed an appreciation of the cultural significance of place, particularly in terms of the Kaurna community;
- and to generate “a centre of the symbolic and actual life in the City” – to link a strategy of heavy programming with symbolic significance.



Figure 1: Victoria Square/Tardanyangga Masterplan perspective, (TCL 2011, p.17.)

This paper is most interested in how the notion of ‘the new civic’, the second principle, is constructed by the design against a twenty-first century framing of reconciliation. Of particular interest is the introduction of museological strategies into the realm of urban design, as demonstrated by the role of ‘cultural curator’ Peter Emmett in the design team. Emmett is known for his role in the development of the curatorial ethos for Museum of Sydney, noted for his ‘art and

artifice' approach to museum curation developed during the 1990s. In an introductory essay for 'The Curated Square', produced as part of the Design Development documentation for Victoria Square/Tardanyangga, Emmett defines the new civic in the following manner.

"The 'new civic' shifts the paradigm of urban culture from grand city symbols, strategies and master-narratives to many stories about personal and collective memory of its citizens, interpreting place through spatial experience and interaction with others. Place becomes experience and not thing. We ask not what is this place but what is taking place here?" (TCL 2011, p.107.)

Emmett's description draws from the language of museology and in particular the 'new museum'.⁶ We argue that this direction problematically conflates ideas of placemaking with the concept of civic space. This is particularly troubling in the context of reconciliation where there is intent for open dialogue and collaboration. There are two ways in which this is manifest - the insertion of the Mullabukka Cultural Centre into the space, as well as the explicit narration of place in the external civic space. The remainder of the paper explores these two aspects of the design proposal.

The insertion of a cultural centre – a reversal of interior and exterior

The Mullabukka Cultural Centre is located within 'The Garden', the southern vegetated zone of Victoria Square/Tardanyangga. It is situated in 'The Native Garden', a mosaic of organically shaped garden beds composed of native plantings that act as a narrative thread throughout the space. 'The Garden' zone also includes a productive garden and a bio-retention garden to process rainwater on site. By contrast, the northern zone is an 'Event Space', an amphitheatre accommodating 6000-7000 people. Building on the design principles, the two zones of entertainment and culture are conceptually reconciled, linked by an overarching 'arbor promenade' structure, equipped with infrastructure to accommodate markets and other temporary events. The arbor, swathed in vegetation, clearly plays to associations with wine and broader agendas of South Australian tourism.

The architecture is designed in collaboration by architects TZG and Indigenous consultant Karl Telfer, acting on behalf of the traditional owners. Telfer prototyped the form of the building, its curving roof structure rising up from the ground plane as illustrated in Figure 2. A symbol of authority and protection, the form is based upon the Kurna shield Mullabukka to resonate with the ongoing survival of Kurna culture in Adelaide.

Less understood is the purpose of the cultural centre. Telfer and Emmett describe the Mullabukka Cultural Centre as a space for "Living Kultja" a place for the transfer and activation of the knowledge of country, ritual, song, custom, memory, place and belonging. (TCL 2011, p.127.) It is framed as space through which tourists will pass in order to gain knowledge of country before venturing into the rest of South Australia. (TCL 2011, p.127.) The interior and exterior spaces have been designed to flexibly accommodate a number of "modes" - Workshop mode, Performance Mode, Display mode, Function mode. A vast array of functions potentially accommodated within the building are suggested, including special ceremonies; various dinners; storytelling; forums; seminars; performances; workshops; retail; films; lectures; school programs; video conferencing. Yet interestingly the building is imagined as simultaneously without program, described by the architect as an unprogrammed space. This indeterminacy is reflected in the words of Emmett and Telfer:



Figure 2: The Mullabakka Cultural Centre, (TCL 2011, p.131.)

Mullabakka is not a building with a garden around it, or a garden with a building in it. It is not a museum or gallery or theatre or garden. But it does all the things that these places do – and more (TCL 2011, p.128.)

The absence of program in the interior space is in contrast to the heavily programmed and narrated external spaces of the square. The immediate surrounds of the cultural centre is in itself are densely designed. This will be discussed in detail later in the paper, as the external spaces throughout the square are highly curated and scripted.

This anomalous reversal of the centre's internal and external spatial relationships raises two questions, especially when contextualised against the history of Indigenous cultural centres developed throughout the 1990s. Firstly, the on-going viability of an unprogrammed and as yet unfinanced cultural centre must be questioned. The experience of extensive cultural centres constructed throughout Australia in 1990s lesson suggests that structures of governance, programming and economics are the key determining factors of ongoing investment from the community, and ultimately success.⁷ This position is echoed by McGaw, Pieris and Potter (2011, p.308.), who argue that

“Ensuring that the flows of community to and from a cultural building continue to breathe life into it after building works are complete involves a deep understanding of relationships, and an interrogation of the legal and organisational structures that settler society often places around them.”

Telfer is the driver of both the form and program of the cultural centre. However, in terms of ongoing sustainability it is problematic for a single representative of a cultural group to be the sole driver of both the form and program of the cultural centre. This is not to diminish the expertise, experience and role that Telfer has had within the design team. Rather, it points to a potential vulnerability in relying on a single individual or perspective to be representative of a diverse Kaurua and Aboriginal community, as opposed to a wider community investment in the project.

Secondly, the reversal of active-passive spatial relationships in Victoria Square/Tardanyangga reduces the ability of the external open to space to function with accepted meanings of civic. As discussed in following section, this compromises the ability of the public to use the space for unscripted use. Further this limits the political and social potential of the site. Is civic in this case understood as the expression and representation of culture and history, or instead of space to facilitate experience, interaction and dialogue of democracy?

Programming the Civic Square

Notions of civic space and the right to city are the subject of extensive scholarship crossing urban design, cultural studies and geography. (Lefebvre 1972, Rowe 1997, Massam 2000, Mitchell 2003, Harvey 2012) Within a western context, civic space is understood to encompass competing tensions of singularity and pluralism; critique and accord; fluidity and transcendence; familiarity and development; and the collective and the individual. Accordingly, to Rowe (1997, p.218.), civic space:

....is as once familiar, pluralistic, and critical - at least to the extent that this last quality can be sustained architecturally. It is also specific, socially relevant, transcendental, and concerned with everyday life, including matters of both individual and collective experience. Furthermore it is inextricably bound up with the continual advancement of the expressive means by which it is made and elaborated.

Mirroring Rowe's definition of civic space, Massam (2000, p.77.) suggests that there are five seemingly contradictory imperatives of the civic state:

- Citizens assert rights – citizens have obligations
- Citizens seek security – citizens seek liberty and freedom
- Citizens assert individual rights – citizens contemplate collective rights
- Citizens are concerned about the present – citizens contemplate the future
- Citizens are concerned about us and we – citizens contemplate the situations of strangers and unknown others.

Emmett's definition of 'new civic' is not positioned within the lineage of this theoretical understanding. Instead it can be argued that Emmett's framing is responding to museological strategies rather than understandings of urban space. Although Emmett (TCL 2011, p.107.) claims a "fresh approach to the concept of the public domain created by informal people experience rather than formal urban planning" there is little evidence in the proposed design interventions of people's ability to use and gather in space in an indeterminate manner. This is somewhat surprising given the site's history as a space where Aboriginal people have gathered to live, protest, commemorate and celebrate.

Instead, it can be argued that Emmett’s understanding of the ‘new civic’ is aligned with techniques developed for the Museum of Sydney, maintaining a focus on material culture while also engaging with the ‘poetics of place’. This approach to museology practice emerged in the ‘new museum’ movement of the 1990s, reflecting the increasing understanding of the contingent nature of evidence and historical truth. (Gregory 2006, p.2.) Emmett typically worked with an array of creative practitioners, eschewing the conventional dominance of the writer, “to both compose and liberate the metaphor of place.” (Emmett 1996, p.114.) The ‘new museum’ typically deploys technology and interaction is demonstrative of its image of newness. (Message 2006, pp.604-605.)

The new museum’s emphasis on the intersection of art, new media and museology clearly shapes Emmett’s strategy for *The Curated Square* which highlights an “integrated approach to public art, design, interpretation, heritage, digital interactions and wayfinding.” (TCL 2011, p.107.)

This philosophy is most evident in three major elements:

- digital installation,
- textual inscription,
- ‘the arcadian grove’ installation.

What is puzzling is the intent to construct and heavily interpret place as distinct from allowing the place to operate as a civic space.

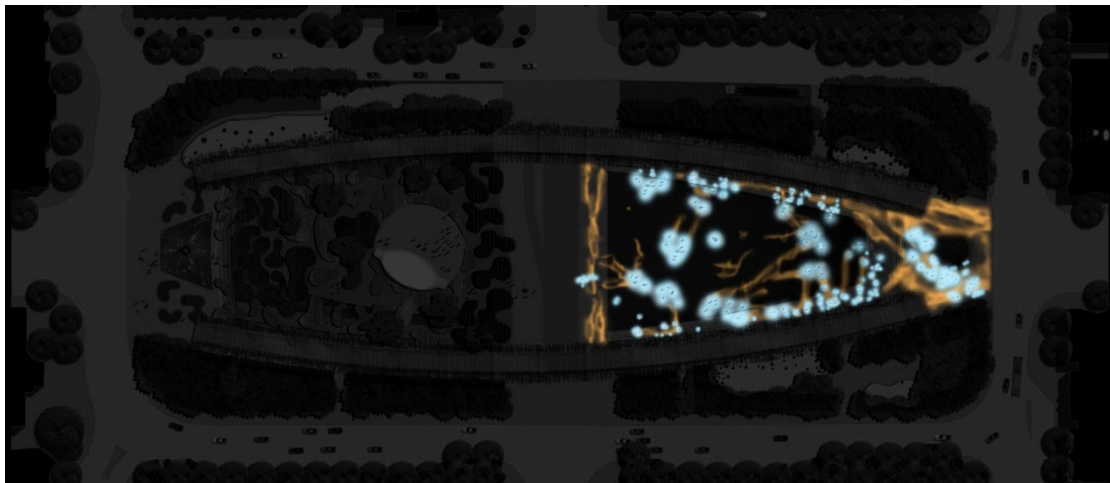


Figure 3: The Digital Sigh (TCL 2011, p.116.)

Real-time digital installations and projections, drawing on technology, lighting and social media, suggest a new interactive landscape. For example, the “Digital Sigh” projects the passage of people through the square onto the urban surface, offering a kind of residue of movement as shown in Figure 3. (TCL 2011, p.115.) Other strategies include a large digital scrim suspended from the arbour, a series of OLED ‘augmented reality’ pillars, digital pod sculptures, and digital graffiti projections. However, a closer interrogation of this interactivity reveals a highly curated and prescriptive

strategy, best illustrated by the concept of the digital graffiti. The digital graffiti strategy offers the user the opportunity to generate 'digital messages' that could be projected onto the surfaces of the square and publically 'tagged' to a geospatial location using smartphone technology (Figure 4). However, this strategy implies a level of content control with all messages running through the 'digital graffiti' application. This inevitable form of censorship institutionalizes interactivity, removing the subversive edge and creative potential normally associated with graffiti and urban art projects.



Figure 4: Digital Graffiti (TCL 2011, p.124.)

A highly curated approach to history and meaning is further developed through the Arbour Text Fragments. Inscribed quotes on the surfaces of the arbour promenade structure have been drawn from the historic record by curators to tell the "rumblings of the collective unconscious of Adelaide city - musing and debating about who has the right to be or not to be in this place?" (TCL 2011, p.108.) Ironically, while the surfaces are embossed with text about exclusion, the whole design strategy is an exclusionary practice. In particular, Indigenous users of Victoria Square/Tardanyangga do not need to be reminded of spatial 'exclusion', as this is engaged through their own lived experience. According to Hall (2004, p.62.), the community of Aboriginal people who have regularly met in the square over the past 30 years are some of the most marginalised and traumatised in the Indigenous community, as members of the Stolen Generations.

This heavy narration is continued through the Arcadian Grove, a ruin-like installation through which the colonial statutory of Victoria Square/Tardanyangga are dismantled, "knocked off their pedestals" as conceptualized in Figure 5, and repositioned alongside a sound installation. According to Emmett these statues are reconceived as 'The Oracles of Victoria Square' which act as witnesses to past events in the Square. This installation is clearly derivative of the practices developed at the Museum of Sydney. At the Museum of Sydney Emmett utilised a strategy of juxtaposition, through the manipulation of image and text, in order to counter a linear view of history and reveal new

meanings. (Carter 2004, p.75.) For example, both the sound installation by Paul Carter, *The Calling to Come* and the forecourt installation designed by Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley, *The Edge of the Trees*, utilise the juxtaposition of language and objects to interrogate relationships between Eora and colonial subjects at the site of contact. At the Arcadian Grove we find the direct application of these same techniques. In the case of the Museum of Sydney, Emmett consciously adopts these techniques to generate a sense of place through the metaphor of absence. (Emmett 1996, p.112., Gregory 2006, p.12.) This is designed to reveal a place that is obscured, the archaeological dig site of Sydney's First Government House buried underneath the new museum, and is located in a space that contains no existing users. However, this approach is perplexing when positioned in a civic space with existing users and associations of place.



Figure 5: The Arcadian Grove (TCL 2011, p.112.)

Read against the historical development of Adelaide, the goals of reconciliation and an understanding to civiness, these interpretative ambitions and techniques expressed in this new vision for the square appear somewhat out of place. Rather than delivering a space of civic engagement inclusive of Indigenous Australians, the scheme serves to institutionalise and neutralise civic space, while shutting down opportunistic and spontaneous uses of space. Further, the heavily designed external spaces erase the existing civic relationships and meanings inherent to the site, while the proposed cultural centre appears to have minimal purpose, funding or engagement with the existing Indigenous community.

The importance of Indigenous spatial engagement and ownership has been discussed extensively in scholarship from architecture, urban design, cultural studies and history. (Jacobs 2002, Fantin 2008, Go-Sam 2008, Gulson and Parkes 2010, McGaw, Pieris et al. 2011, Muldoon and Schaap 2012). Consistent to all is the importance of engaging with the practices of everyday life, arguing for an engagement with the dynamics of contemporary Aboriginal life, rather than the representation of Aboriginal culture through static artifact or symbolism. This framing also holds true to the notions of civic space. This understanding is less preoccupied with the meaning of space, but instead how space can support individual and collective expression.

Conclusion

The redesign of Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga Square offered the potential for demonstrating a fresh design approach for a civic space reflective of a new era of reconciliation. It is important to acknowledge the challenges faced by the design team given this task. Victoria Square/Tardanyangga is the first urban design project of its kind, and is a project without precedent in Australia in terms of encapsulating the aspirations of reconciliation within a civic space.

Unfortunately the strategies suggested by the design team allow for limited engagement with the broader politics of civic space, and do not appear to build upon the lessons learned by other designers in developing culturally driven design outcomes. The siting of the Mullabukka Cultural Centre within the square, with a limited sense of community connection, governance or funding structures raises significant questions over its viability.

The adoption of a 'new civic' philosophy derived from the experience of the new museum, rather than an understanding of physical and political space leads to the privileging of representational strategies of narration, symbolism and inscription over spatial practices reflective of collective and individual expressions of democracy. Rather than interrogating what civic space might be in an era of reconciliation, the design instead offers a new 'interpretation' of place layered over a space that is already imbued with significance and meaning realized through lived spatial practices.

Problematically, these strategies potentially represent the continuation of practices of spatial exclusion that have marginalized Indigenous relationships to civic space though out Australian cities. The formalisation of program, the restriction of informal use, the heavily narrated spaces and the highly curated interactions all act to control and institutionalise how the public perceive and use public space. Combined, these strategies may act to 'museumify' the square rather than redefining the square as the vibrant heart of the city.

¹ The Aboriginal people who live in and around the Adelaide area, the Nunga people, are composed of descendants of the traditional owners, the Kurna, and nearby bordering people of the Narrunga and Ngarrindjeri territories. Today, the city's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is recorded at 15,597 people (2011), representing 51.25 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of South Australia, and 5.6 per cent of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia.

² The area south of the Torrens, the location of the city of Adelaide, is identified in Kurna language as Tandanya, meaning 'red kangaroo rock'. The area is a special place, linked to a sacred being, *Tarnda*, who transformed into a red kangaroo.

³ According to Jones (2007), the tree was planted during the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which ran from 1987 through to 1991. The Royal Commission was called due to public concern over the disproportionate number of deaths of Indigenous inmates in custody in Australia's prison system throughout the 1980s. The report found that Aboriginal people were over-represented in Australia's prison system. The publishing of the report formally began the process of reconciliation in Australia.

⁴ Commemorating the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Adelaide in 1963, the fountain incorporates three figures, including an Aboriginal man, representative of the three main rivers that supply water to Adelaide, the Murray, the Onkaparinga and the Torrens. Dowie used the commemoration of a Royal visit to reflect on the respectful recognition of Aboriginal people and culture, and their inclusion in the broader citizenship of the nation.

⁵ The ACC also became one of the first councils to sign the National Sorry Day Acknowledgement in 1998, which formed the basis for the ACC Reconciliation Action Plan.

⁶ This approach to museology practice emerged in the 'new museum' movement of the 1990s, reflecting the increasing understanding of the contingent nature of evidence and historical truth. (Gregory, 2006, p.2.) The 'new museum' typically deploys technology and interaction is demonstrative of its image of newness. (Message, 2006 pp.604-605.)

⁷ This experience has been shared throughout Australia, in the failed Galina Beek Living Cultural Centre at Healesville, the unrealised Musgrave Park Cultural Centre in Brisbane, and the contested Melbourne Museum space of Bunjilaka.

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