

The world of conservation

An interview with Clive Lucas

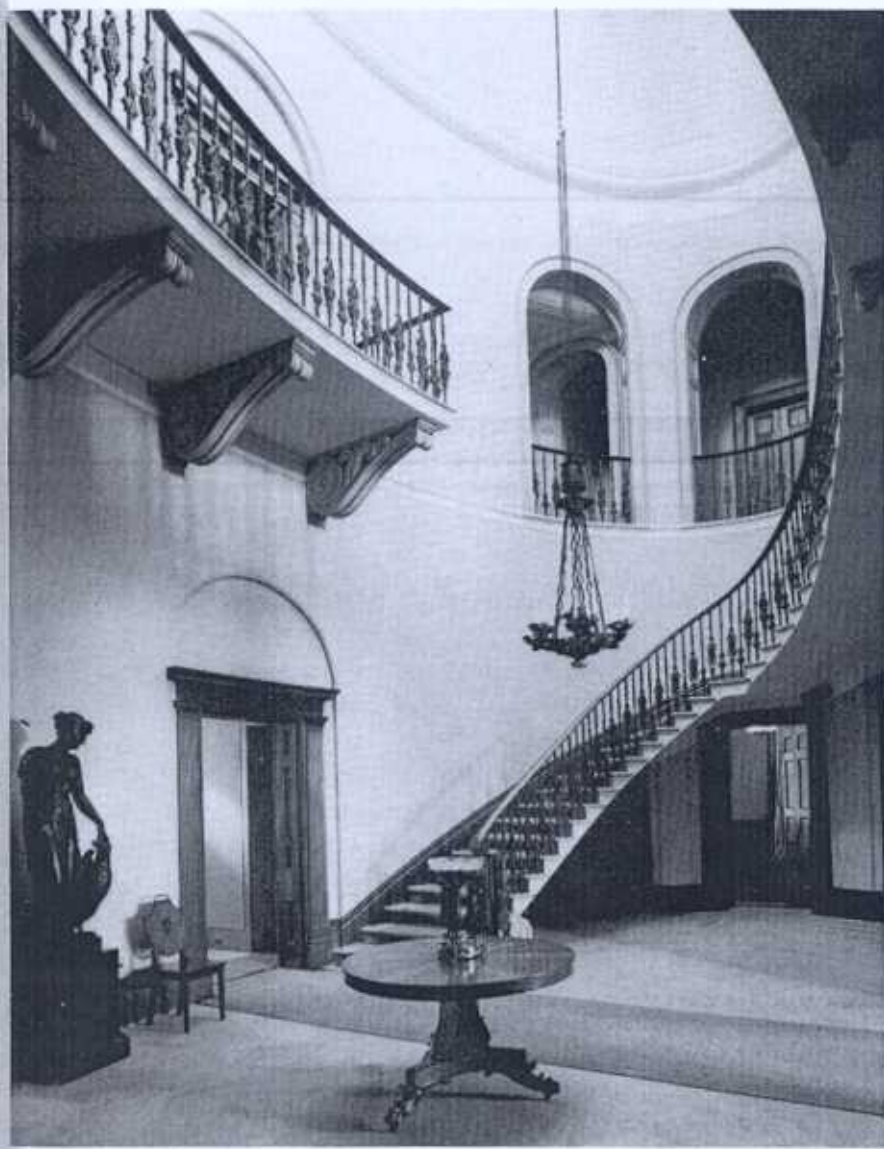


FIG. 1. Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney, NSW: the Staircase Hall (*Richard Stringer*).



Fig. 2. Clive Lucas.

Two hundred years ago there was no Australian architecture. On 26 January 1788 the first English ships carrying convicts destined for the new penal colony anchored at Port Jackson and unloaded their human freight; and on that day

the building of a nation began. Marines paraded while convicts toiled and swore, felled trees, cleared ground, set up a forge, landed provisions and erected the first structures in Australia—tents and marquees for the officers and guards.¹

Yet such was the rapidity with which the colony prospered that by 1891 the rateable value of Melbourne, which had been founded only in 1837, was the third highest in the British Empire.² In that relatively short time a civilization based on the British model had been transferred almost 11,000 miles (18,000 kilometres), and the churches, universities, public buildings and private houses which form the currently most prized part of the Australian architectural heritage, had been erected. This reduced time scale provides an obvious difference between conservation in Europe and Australia.

We discussed this with Clive Lucas (*Fig. 2*) in his Sydney office, and he drew our attention to the historical importance of a book published in 1924. Now a highly prized collectors' item, *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania* contains beautifully drawn plates made by W. Hardy Wilson of the most important buildings then remaining from the early nineteenth century. In the introduction Wilson wrote how

years ago, when I returned to Australia from the study of architecture in Europe and America, my enthusiasm for ancient buildings was immense. Immediately, I began to search for early architecture, and found a few beautiful old houses in the neighbourhood of Sydney, where they were hidden away and unknown because of the apathy which is felt in a new land towards a past not far enough removed from the present to awaken veneration, or to stir the spirit of romance.³

Yet, believing that 'the work of the past is the surest foundation on which an architect builds', Wilson began to record old buildings in New South Wales and Tasmania. He was occupied with this work between 1912 and 1922, and it is significant that although he began with the intention of making an architectural record, 'the pictorial beauty of the subjects proved irresistible, and I looked at the buildings with a painter's eye as much as with an architect's'. When he had to select for publication, Wilson chose 'those that would make the most attractive pictures', and 'the design of the buildings drawn has been reconstructed where the original was partly destroyed or lost in remodelling, but only when no doubt existed about the form and detail to be replaced'.

The significance of Wilson's beautiful images (*Fig. 3*) in the evolution of an Australian conservation philosophy cannot be overemphasized. Like the restorers of Williamsburg in the United States of America and the restorers of the 'Cape Dutch' architecture in South Africa, the first generation of Australians to interest themselves in their own historic

¹ Freeland, J.M., *Architecture in Australia*, Penguin, Ringwood 1968, 10.

² Briggs, A., *Victorian Cities*, Odhams, London 1963, 285ff.

³ The original is now available in a reduced facsimile, published by Ure Smith, Sydney in association with the National Trust of Australia in 1975.

buildings concentrated on one aspect, in this case the English ‘Late Georgian’ style of the early nineteenth century. And, as in most countries, they subtly modified the reality to conform to what they wished it to be or what they thought it should have been. White exteriors, green shutters and doors, and polished cedar joinery became the almost obligatory elements—the outward signs of restoration. After the National Trust of Australia was founded in New South Wales in 1948, most of the houses of which the Trust became owner were restored in this manner.

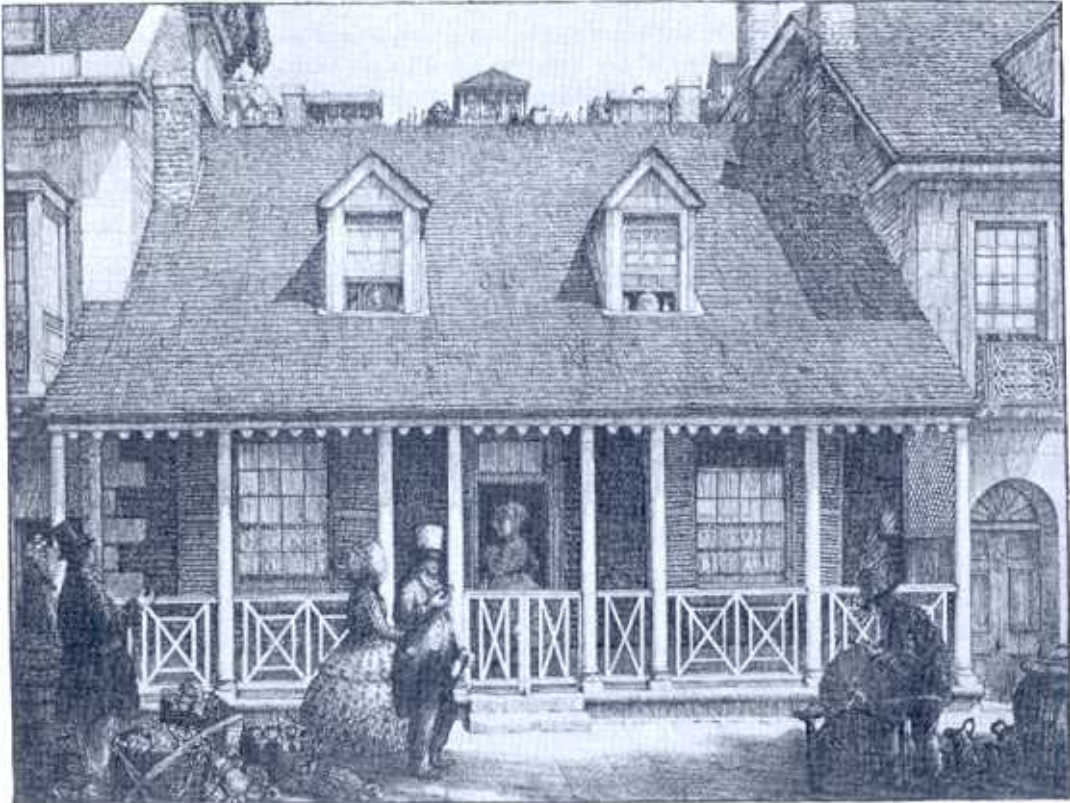


FIG. 3. The Hardy Wilson image: ‘Cottage in Princes Street, Sydney, New South Wales’ (from *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*, 1924, pl. xxxi).

This was the foundation of the current conservation movement in Australia, and we asked Clive Lucas how he had become professionally involved. Like many of his countrymen, Mr Lucas’s family background was agricultural with ancestral English ties to the County of Somerset. From the age of eight, when his teacher commended his work in a school project and said he would make a good architect, he never gave another thought to his future career. He was a student at the University of Sydney,

from which he graduated in 1966, and he is grateful that he was in time to be taught in what he describes as 'the old-fashioned way'. In other words, architectural history and traditional building construction were still included in the course curriculum. Historical studies and measured drawings were what he enjoyed doing more than anything else, and he believes that by the end of his fourth year he had looked at most of Australia's old buildings. He stressed the word 'looking', and declared he had been taught by looking, by photographing, and by attempting to identify the qualities inherent in the best of his country's early buildings.

But he stressed that at that time there was a reluctance to consider any buildings of the Victorian period (in practical terms in Australia this means post-1850) as valuable historically. The emphasis was on the much-loved Hardy Wilson image, and the fine nineteenth-century buildings and interiors in which an authentic Australian taste was manifested (as opposed to the earlier buildings derived from British taste) were almost totally neglected when he began to practise professionally.

Mr Lucas's own enthusiasm for historic buildings was greatly stimulated during the year he worked in London. This was in 1968, and like many Australians he took the opportunity to make extended journeys to and from the Antipodes. He visited Angkor, Isfahan and Leningrad, Greece, Italy, France and Germany, USA and Mexico; but predictably it was the architecture of the British Isles in which he was most deeply interested because of the precedents it provides for that of his own country. He saw for himself the many similarities between nineteenth-century provincial British architecture and that of Australia; and after his return in 1970 he felt he had acquired a greater understanding of Australian architecture and craftsmanship. He joined the practice of John Fisher in Sydney, becoming an associate partner in 1971 and a partner two years later. In 1981 he set up his own practice. Fortunately for his personal predilection, he found himself undertaking a conservation project within a year of his return to Australia.

This was Glenalvon, a house in Campbelltown, New South Wales, dating from *c.* 1840 (*Fig. 4*). The aim was 'firstly to preserve the house as one of the eleven proclaimed historic buildings in the County of Cumberland, and secondly to provide a house suitable for modern occupation'.⁴ Mr Lucas realizes that to some extent he was feeling his way in this first commission. He had observed how conservation projects were organized in England, although he had not worked on any, and he knew it was essential to make a close investigation of a building before taking any decisions. Accordingly, his report on Glenalvon examined the materials and methods of construction and internal finishes, and it noted the changes made since the house was first built. Now that he looks back on this work more than a decade later he is almost surprised to find that such methods of investigation which any serious architect-conservator

⁴ See *Architecture in Australia*, August 1970, 579ff.

would consider normal practice today were an innovation in Australia in 1970. Even now he believes there is

still a tendency to want to restore old buildings rather than to preserve them . . . For example, most architects have some idea of what a colonial building looks like and armed only with a copy of Morton Herman's *Early Australian Architects*,⁵ they undertake a costly restoration of an important building. The result is of course usually a disaster. Restoration of a building, as indeed of any other artefact, is a specialization requiring knowledge which can only be gained from years of involvement and a preparedness to research a building fully.

The building itself will tell you everything, he insists; historical research can confirm, but it should not be the main basis of information. That can be provided only by the building itself.

His work at Glenalvon was well received, and then came the more important house, Elizabeth Bay, in Sydney. Now closely surrounded by other houses in a Sydney suburb, (*Fig. 5*) this house which originally stood in an extensive garden and was a well-known feature in the landscape of the magnificent Sydney harbour, has been described as 'the

⁵ No criticism is implied of this excellent pioneering book, published in 1954; but it is hardly sufficient as the basis of a conservation project.

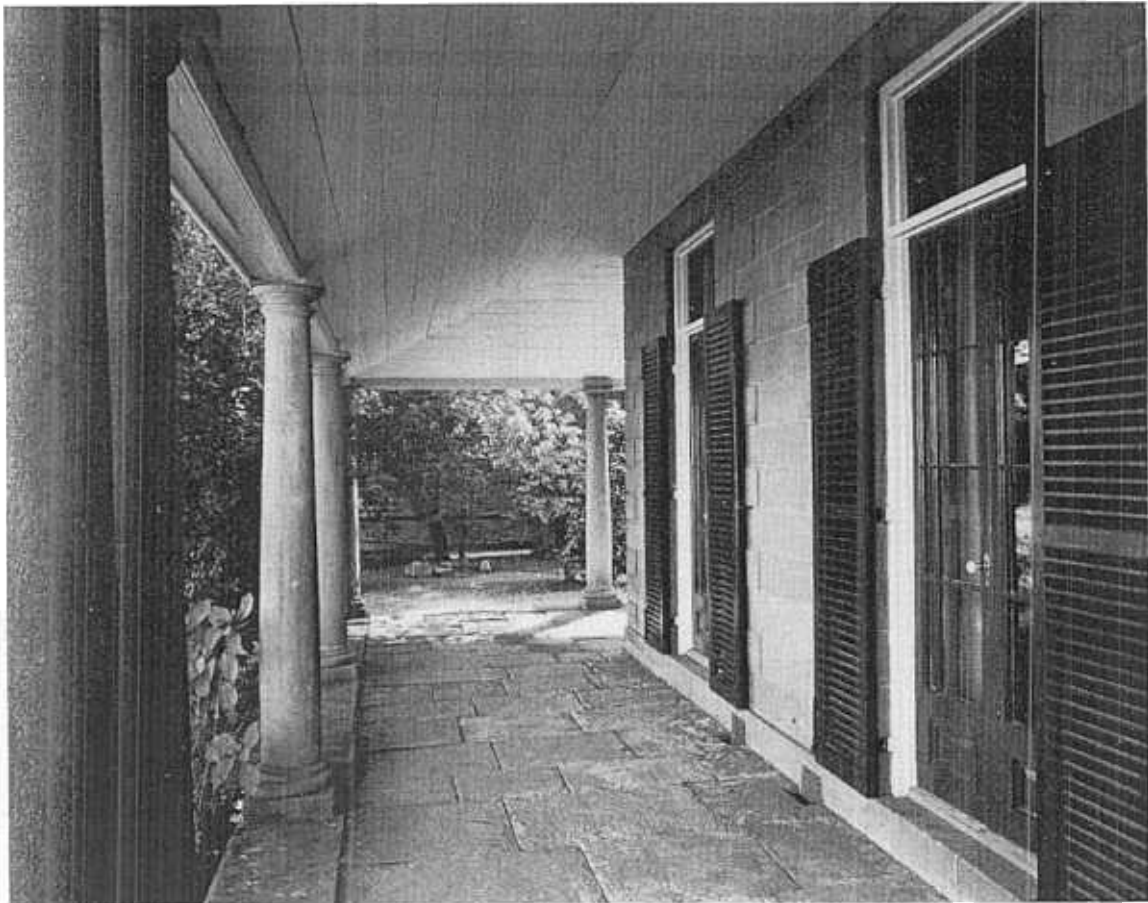


FIG. 4. Glenalvon, Campbelltown, NSW (*Kerry Dundas*)



FIG. 5. Elizabeth Bay House, Sydney, NSW (*Richard Stringer*).

⁶ See Freeland, *op. cit.*, 81. For more information about Verge, see Clive Lucas's contribution to *The Golden Decade of Australian Architecture*, Sydney 1978.

⁷ See 'External Restoration at Elizabeth Bay House', *Architecture in Australia*, December 1973, 51ff; 'Elizabeth Bay House, Restored', *Art and Australia*, September 1978.

epitome of the style . . . introduced into Australian architectural history' by John Verge—'the architectural giant of New South Wales' in the 1830s.⁶ It had been converted into fifteen small flats with additions at the sides in 1941, but it was bought by the Cumberland County Council in 1963. Nine years later Mr Lucas was employed by the New South Wales Planning and Environment Commission (which had taken over the responsibilities of the Council) to restore the house as closely as possible to its original appearance. (*Figs 1, 6, 7*). In this case the intention was to display it as a complete house of the 1830s with the quality of London furnishing it was known to have had.⁷

A direct outcome of this restoration was the formation of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, and there is no doubt that costly restorations such as that of Elizabeth Bay House have helped to draw public attention to the Australian architectural heritage. But such buildings raise questions of how they should be interpreted; they also seem still to be perpetuating the earlier image of a concentration on a

relatively small number of individual buildings rather than considering the character of urban groups and entire districts. The so-called Burra Charter, which Australia-ICOMOS has published as a guide to conservation standards, provides clearly defined definitions of the various processes—conservation, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation—but these too refer only to buildings.⁸

However, the interestingly varied conservation policies in such areas of Sydney as The Rocks, Glebe, Woollahooloo and Paddington have explored the broader aspects of urban conservation.⁹ Together with other architects, Mr Lucas has undertaken some individual projects within some of these areas (*Figs 8, 9, 10, 11*). While accepting the financial reasons why, for example, houses should be converted into shops in The Rocks, he feels some concern about drastic changes of use.

⁸ *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, adopted 1981.

⁹ See also the National Trust of Australia's *The Conservation Plan*, 1982.

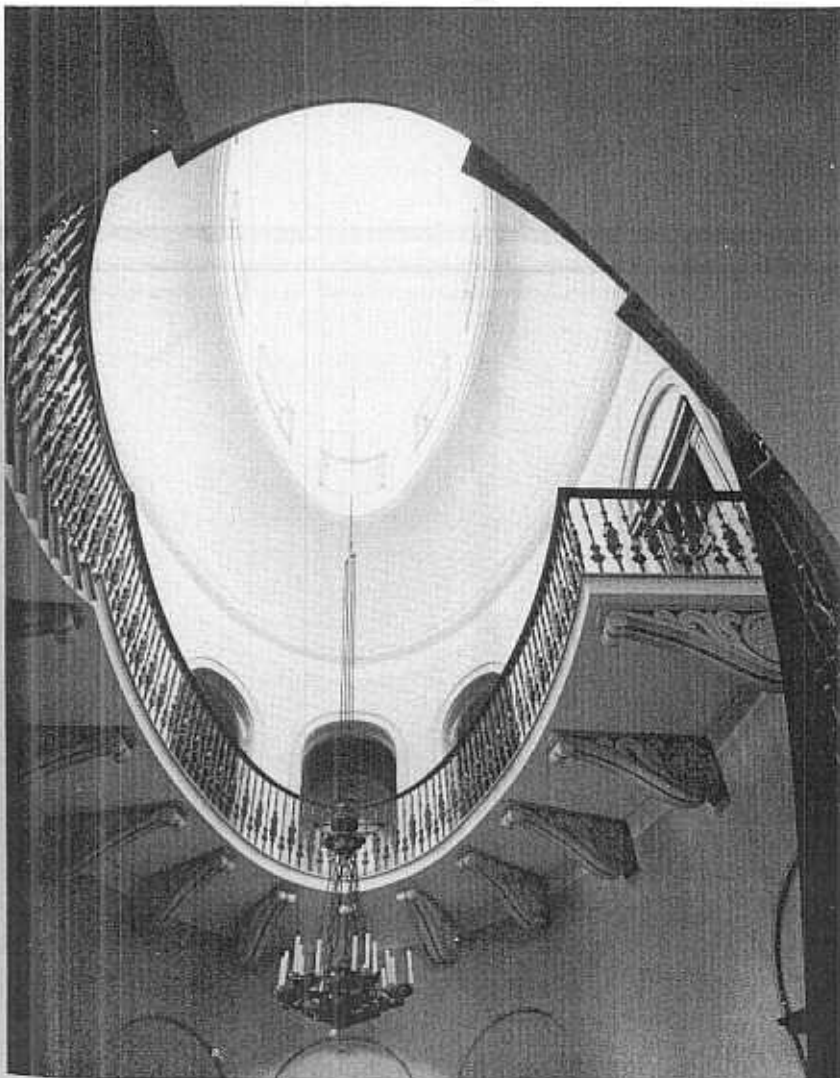


FIG. 6. Elizabeth Bay House: the staircase (*Richard Stringer*).





FIG. 7. (*Extreme left, top*) Elizabeth Bay House: the Library (*Richard Stringer*).

FIG. 8. (*Extreme left, bottom*) 118–124 Forbes Street, Woolloomooloo, Sydney, NSW before restoration (*Ian Stapleton*).

FIG. 9. 118 Forbes Street, Woolloomooloo, Sydney, NSW after restoration. This house is on the extreme left of Fig. 8 (*Ian Stapleton*).

In rehabilitating a group of houses in Woolloomooloo, he retained all the changes that had been made to their external appearance. We asked if he had returned any missing features. 'Certainly, he had reconstructed the balconies, using standard elements of the date of the houses'. To what extent does he believe in using the same material as the original?

I take the greatest pleasure in looking at the way our buildings generally have been constructed; the way the bricks have been laid, the way the stone has been tooled, the way the carpentry has been jointed; the way the joinery has been wrought; the way the slates have been laid; the general hand-made quality of an old building. When one restores one must essentially copy this faithfully. In other words one must lay the bricks in lime mortar; one must repair the plaster ceiling in solid hair plastering; one must tool the sandstone as closely as possible to the old work; one must carve the gargoyle in the spirit of the original; one must remake the joinery or repair the joinery as closely as possible to the original. This means



FIG. 10 .3–31 Playfair Street, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW before restoration (*Tim Collis-Bird*)

that no matter how skilled or knowledgeable the architect is, he must have at his disposal craftsmen who can do this work and this often leads to problems. But there is no alternative.

We suggested this might seem to be an advocacy of the ideal, and asked if he never uses modern substitute materials. He admitted the inevitability of this at times, but felt that in such cases the genuine material should be used at ground level even if substitutes were used higher up. And so aluminium instead of cast iron, fibreglass instead of other moulded materials, have both been used as expediencies, 'but it is much better to repair the building within the tradition in which it was built'. But Mr Lucas has demonstrated a flexibility in his own work. For example, in 1962 the handsome Neoclassical house, Clarendon, in Tasmania was acquired by the National Trust. When it had been built in 1838 it had been given a giant-order portico, but this had been removed about fifty years later. In the book already referred to, Hardy Wilson had reconstructed



FIG. 11. 13–31 Playfair Street, The Rocks, Sydney, NSW after restoration (*Tim Collis-Bird*).

the portico in his drawing of the house, basing his design on an old photograph.¹⁰ In 1972 money was available to reconstruct the portico, but although the original columns had probably been built of brick and stuccoed in imitation of stone, Mr Lucas decided to reconstruct them of reinforced concrete.¹¹ Why? 'Partly for structural reasons, but also because since it is a complete reconstruction there is a good case for treating it as such without impairing the aesthetic effect. This is more than repair'. In this case he feels reasonably certain that the replacement is close in appearance to the original (*Fig. 12*), but in another house, Lyndhurst, in Sydney he is declining to replace a missing cast-iron verandah because there are no known records of its design. Inside the same house he is providing some fireplaces in the rooms where they are missing; but although they are known to have been made of marble originally he is constructing them of wood and painting them to resemble marble.

Such decisions demonstrate the extent to which Mr Lucas has worked

¹⁰ Wilson, W.H., *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*, Sydney 1924, pl. xxvii.

It is a foreigner, both in plan and design, an importation from the office of an English architect whose name is forgotten. Long ago, the foundations collapsed, as if aware of the false verticality of the portico they carried in horizontal Australia.

¹¹ See 'Restoration at Clarendon, Tasmania', *Art and Australia*, July–September 1975, 3ff.



FIG. 12. Clarendon, Tasmania after the reconstruction of the portico in reinforced concrete (*Clive Lucas*).

¹² The National Estate is defined as

those places, being components of the natural environment of Australia, or the cultural environment of Australia, that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance or other special value for future generations, as well as for the present community.

¹³ *The Heritage of Australia*, Macmillan in association with the Australian Heritage Commission, South Melbourne 1981.

out his own conservation philosophy. He pays great attention to details, especially of decorative elements and finishes (*Figs 13, 14*); and his pioneering work in attempting to define the original colours used has set a standard in Australia which some of his younger colleagues are now developing enthusiastically. Indeed, one of the features of the current architectural scene in Australia is the developing recognition of the importance of conservation. The setting up of the Australian Heritage Commission under 1975 legislation with responsibility for the National Estate¹² was an official action which complemented the work of the National Trusts. The recent publication of the more than 6600 buildings and places on the Commission's Register must be seen as a significant event,¹³ as well as an indication that later buildings than those reflecting the first limited interpretation of the heritage are being correctly evaluated.

The Heritage Commission is a Federal body with headquarters in Canberra, and its powers are related solely to properties controlled by the Commonwealth Government; but in some States there are also Government agencies. In New South Wales there is the Heritage Council,

a broadly based advisory body . . . representing expertise and interests of a comprehensive nature. It gives advice and makes recommendations on matters affecting the environmental heritage and on the implementation of the Heritage Act to the Minister for Planning and Environment.

We discussed the Council with Mr Lucas, who welcomed this relatively recent development (and all the new legislation designed to protect the heritage), but he wondered if it was able to use to the full the powers it had been given under its constitution.

As an official body it is subject to government pressure, and it was noticeable that at the time we were talking to Mr Lucas in Sydney the most publicized conservation issue, the objection to the demolition of the Rural Bank (an outstanding representative building of the 1930s Art Deco style) was being organized by private citizens. It may be that a rationalization of the roles and fund-giving possibilities of the Heritage Commission, the Heritage Councils, the Historic Buildings Preservation Councils, the National Trusts and the Municipal Councils would benefit conservation in Australia. Nevertheless, the training of a good number of Australian architects in specialized courses in Europe, the setting up of post-graduate courses in the Universities of New South Wales and Sydney, the outbreak of popular demonstrations against the proposed demolition of familiar buildings, and the positive activities of Australia-

FIG. 13. The entrance hall, Aberglasslyn, Maitland, NSW (*Max Dupain*).



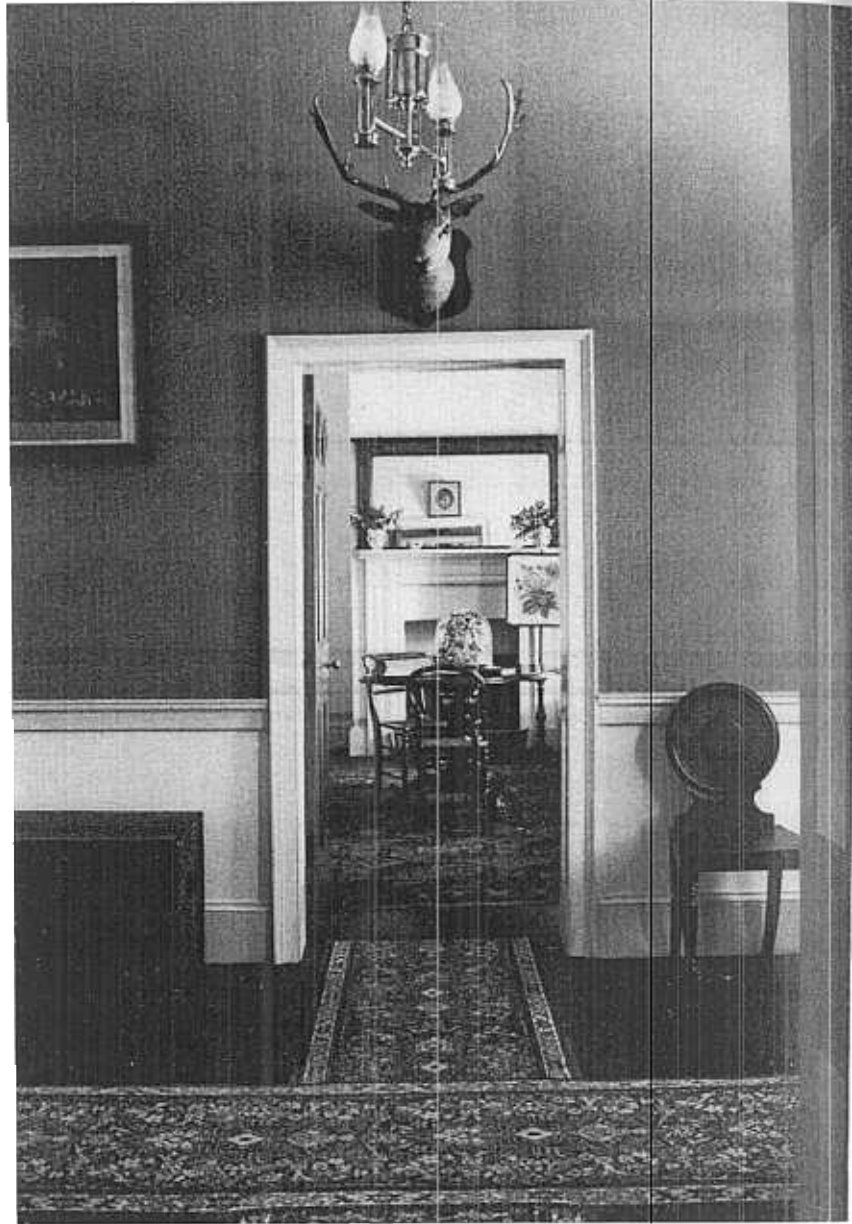


FIG. 14. Collingwood, Liverpool, NSW. The view from the front hall into the drawing room, including a fireplace brought from the demolished Bushgrove House, Sydney (*Clive Lucas*).

ICOMOS (of which Mr Lucas was Chairman from 1979 to 1981), are indications of a great change since he began to practise professionally in 1970.

He is critical of some of these activities; for instance, he knows there are not sufficient experienced architects to staff more than one post-graduate conservation course and he would concentrate on building up the quality and reputation of one course only. He would like to see a soundly based introduction to conservation incorporated in the training of every

architect. But undoubtedly there is positive thinking that puts Australia far ahead of many other countries, even within ICOMOS activities. Out of the sixty National Committees, for example, only four produce Newsletters; of these, only the Australian is in English. Maybe the best summing up can be found in the account of the 1981 ICOMOS General Assembly in Rome which appeared in the Winter 1981 Newsletter: 'Most delegates [to the Assembly] were amazed that Australia had gone to so much effort to achieve a national consensus among its professional practitioners of conservation of places of cultural significance'. In the case of Clive Lucas, his personal reward had come four years earlier when he was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for his services to architecture—by which could only have been meant his work on behalf of the conservation of his national heritage.¹⁴

¹⁴ Mr Lucas has won nine Merit Awards from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. In 1979 he gained the Greenway Award for the restoration of Collingwood, Liverpool, NSW, and in 1982 the Macquarie Towns Preservation Society Restoration Award. He is currently involved with the conservation of six official residences at Port Arthur, Tasmania; Lyndhurst, Sydney; Pitt Street Church, Sydney; Bronte House, Sydney.

Résumé

Relativement peu de temps après le déchargement des premiers bateaux anglais de condamnés aux travaux forcés, en 1788, une civilisation sur le modèle anglais s'était développée à près de 18.000 kilomètres de sa source et la partie la plus ancienne, la plus précieuse du patrimoine australien avait été construite.

Ce laps de temps très court—dont découle la spécificité des problèmes de conservation en Australie par rapport à ceux de l'Europe—fut l'un des sujets de notre conversation avec Clive Lucas au cours de notre rencontre avec lui dans son bureau à Sydney.

M. Lucas, en évoquant l'origine de l'intérêt pour la conservation du patrimoine dans son pays, nous montra un livre de W. Hardy Wilson publié en 1924, *Ancienne Architecture Coloniale de New South Wales et de Tasmanie (Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania)*. Les magnifiques illustrations des bâtiments les plus importants (du début du XIX^{ème} siècle) qui avaient survécu décrivaient une histoire dont la réalité avait été subtilement, peut-être inconsciemment, modifiée afin qu'elle fût conforme à ce que la première génération d'Australiens concernés par leur patrimoine souhaitait qu'elle fût (ou pensait qu'elle avait été). Après la création du National Trust australien de New South Wales en 1948, la plupart des maisons dont cette organisation devint propriétaire furent restaurées de la même façon.

Nous avons interrogé M. Lucas sur les débuts de son activité professionnelle de conservateur. Dès l'âge de huit ans, nous dit-il, il sut qu'il serait architecte bien qu'il n'eut aucun antécédant familial. Pendant ses années d'étude à l'Université de Sydney—terminées en 1966—son grand plaisir était d'étudier et de faire le relevé des monuments.

A la fin de sa quatrième année il avait regardé,

pense-t-il, la plupart des bâtiments anciens d'Australie et son intérêt fut encore stimulé au cours de l'année qu'il passa à Londres. Il mit à profit plus grande partie de son temps hors de son pays pour voyager; pourtant, et cela est logique étant donnés les liens avec l'architecture de chez lui, ce fut à l'architecture de la Grande-Bretagne qu'il s'intéressa le plus. A son retour à Sydney en 1970, il travailla dans l'agence de John Fisher dont il devint associé en 1971 et directeur deux ans plus tard; c'est en 1981 qu'il créa sa propre agence.

A peine un an après son retour en Australie, M. Lucas devint responsable d'un projet de conservation, celui de Glenalvon, une maison du début du XIX^{ème} siècle à Campbelltown, New South Wales. Il admit que, pour cette première commission, il eut en partie à inventer sa méthode de travail, méthode qu'il adapta de ses observations en Grande-Bretagne. Il fit une étude des matériaux, du mode de construction et des finitions intérieures et il nota les changements apportés au bâtiment original. A présent, dix ans plus tard, il est presque surpris de se rappeler que cette méthode—qui est à la base de tout travail sérieux de conservation—était une innovation en 1970. C'est le bâtiment lui-même qui nous apprendra tout, souligne-t-il: les recherches historiques peuvent confirmer les informations directes mais ne sauraient en aucun cas les remplacer.

Après celle de Glenalvon, il entreprit la restauration d'une maison plus importante à Sydney, Elizabeth Bay, qui avait été convertie en quinze petits appartements et à laquelle on avait fait des additions sur les côtés en 1941. Lorsque la Commission de l'Environnement en devint propriétaire, il fut demandé à M. Lucas de restaurer la maison au plus près de son aspect original. Il n'y a aucun doute que des restaurations

coûteuses de ce genre contribuèrent à sensibiliser les Australiens à leur patrimoine architectural mais elles ne vont pas sans créer des problèmes d'interprétation.

Nous avons remarqué que la 'Charte de Burra' publiée par Australie-ICOMOS pour fixer les standards des travaux de conservation, ne se réfère qu'à des bâtiments isolés et non à des îlots urbains ou à des secteurs entiers. En revanche, les projets variés de conservation de certains quartiers de Sydney comme The Rocks, Glebe, Woolloomooloo et Paddington tiennent compte des aspects les plus larges de la conservation urbaine.

En association avec d'autres architectes, M. Lucas fut chargé de la restauration de plusieurs bâtiments de ces quartiers; aussi notre conversation porta-t-elle sur l'opportunité de remplacer les motifs décoratifs détruits et sur l'effort à faire pour employer des matériaux originaux. Nous fîmes la remarque qu'il parlait en général de circonstances idéales et il admit alors que, quelquefois, il avait utilisé des matériaux modernes; par exemple pour reconstruire le porche de Clarendon, une maison néo-classique de 1838 en Tasmanie, il avait utilisé des colonnes de béton à la place de colonnes de bois; mais, il est à peu près sûr que, dans ce cas, le résultat est proche de l'original; en revanche, il se refuse à remplacer la véranda à armature de fonte d'une autre maison, Lyndhurst à Sydney, parce qu'il n'existe pas de documents connus permettant une copie exacte.

M. Lucas a forgé sa propre théorie de la conservation: il est très attentif aux détails, particulièrement aux détails de décoration et de finition et ses efforts pour retrouver les couleurs originales ont établi une tradition respectée avec zèle par les architectes plus jeunes.

L'importance accrue donnée à la conservation est l'une des caractéristiques actuelles du paysage architectural en Australie et il existe d'ailleurs un enchevêtrement un peu difficile à démêler d'organismes dont c'est la responsabilité comme la Commission du Patrimoine, les Conseils d'Etat pour le Patrimoine, les Conseils pour la Conservation des Bâtiments Historiques et les conseils municipaux. Tous ces organismes spécialisés sont relativement récents—ils n'existaient pas au début de la carrière de conservateur de M. Lucas—ainsi que l'idée d'une formation spéciale pour les architectes-conservateurs: M. Lucas aimerait que les principes de base de la conservation soient inclus dans la formation de tous les architectes. Si ce projet n'est pas encore tout à fait adopté, il y a néanmoins une orientation dans ce sens qui place l'Australie très en avance dans ce domaine sur de nombreux pays, même si l'on considère les activités d'ICOMOS. Quant à la contribution personnelle de M. Lucas, elle fut officiellement reconnue en 1977 lorsqu'il fut décoré de

l'Ordre de l'Empire Britannique pour services rendus à l'architecture—certainement une évocation de son travail de conservateur du patrimoine national australien.

Resumen

En un espacio de tiempo relativamente corto después del desembarque de los primeros buques ingleses de presos en 1788, se había trasladado a casi 18.000 kilómetros una civilización basada en el modelo británico y se había levantado la parte más antigua y más preciada del legado arquitectónico australiano. Esta reducción de la escala cronológica, que da lugar a una diferencia evidente entre la conservación en Europa y en Australia, fue uno de los temas que comentamos con Clive Lucas en su despacho de Sydney.

Al ir siguiendo los comienzos del interés en el legado arquitectónico australiano, Sr Lucas nos hizo notar un libro publicado en 1924, *Arquitectura colonial antigua en Nueva Gales del Sur y Tasmania (Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania)*, de W. Hardy Wilson. En las láminas preciosamente dibujadas de los edificios más importantes que quedaban todavía de principios del siglo diecinueve, Wilson dio una imagen de la historia en la cual la realidad era sutilmente, quizá inconscientemente, modificada para conformar con lo que la primera generación de australianos interesados en su legado querían que fuese (o con lo que creían que debería haber sido). Después de que se fundara el National Trust de Australia, en Nueva Gales del Sur en 1948, la mayoría de las casas que pasaron a la propiedad del Trust se restauraron de esta manera.

Preguntamos a Mr. Lucas de qué modo se había convertido en profesional de la conservación. Recordó que desde los ocho años había sabido que la arquitectura iba a ser su profesión, aunque no existía la tradición en su familia. Se licenció en la Universidad de Sydney en 1966, y durante sus años de estudiante su mayor placer habían sido los estudios históricos y los dibujos a escala. Al finalizar el cuarto curso cree que había visto la mayoría de los edificios antiguos de Australia, y su entusiasmo recibió gran estímulo durante el año que trabajó en Londres. Aprovechó el tiempo pasado lejos de los antipodas para visitar otros países, pero era de esperar que se interesara sobre todo en la arquitectura de las Islas Británicas a causa de los antecedentes que proporciona respecto a la de su propio país. Después de regresar a Sydney en 1970 se unió a la empresa de John Fisher, pasando a ser

asociado en 1971 y pleno socio dos años más tarde. En 1981 estableció su propia empresa.

Antes de un año después del regreso a Australia, Mr. Lucas se encontró metido en un proyecto de conservación: Glenalvon, una casa de principios del siglo diecinueve en Campbelltown, Nueva Gales del Sur. Se da cuenta de que en este primer trabajo, hasta cierto punto, estaba tanteando el terreno, pero siguió los métodos que había observado en Inglaterra. Su informe examinaba los materiales y métodos de construcción y los acabados interiores, indicando también los cambios efectuados desde que se construyó la casa. Al ver ahora este trabajo en retrospecto, más de una década después, queda casi sorprendido al darse cuenta de que tales métodos de investigación, que cualquier arquitecto conservador respetable consideraría normales hoy en día, eran una innovación en 1970. Insiste en que el propio edificio lo dice todo; la investigación histórica puede confirmar, pero no debe ser la base informativa principal.

A continuación de Glenalvon vino otra casa más importante, Elizabeth Bay, en Sydney. Este edificio, que databa de los años treinta del siglo pasado, había sido convertido en quince pequeños pisos con añadidas a los lados en 1941, pero después de que pasara a manos de la New South Wales Planning and Environment Commission (Comité para la Planificación y Medio Ambiente de Nueva Gales del Sur), se acudió a Mr. Lucas para que restaurase la casa a su aspecto original tanto como fuese posible. No hay duda de que las restauraciones costosas como ésta han contribuido a llamar la atención pública sobre el legado arquitectónico australiano, aunque plantean la cuestión de cómo deban ser interpretadas.

Nos fijamos en que la llamada Burra Charter, publicada por Australia-ICOMOS como guía de los estándares de la conservación, hace referencia sólo a edificios en lugar de considerar el carácter de los grupos urbanos y distritos enteros. Pero la política de conservación, interesantemente variada, en zonas de Sydney tales como The Rocks, Glebe, Woolloomooloo y Paddington ha explorado aspectos más amplios de la conservación urbana. Junto con otros arqui-

tectos, Sr Lucas ha emprendido algunos proyectos individuales en estas zonas, con motivo de lo cual hablamos de si deben reemplazarse aspectos decorativos desaparecidos y de si debe emplearse el material original. Sugerimos que sus respuestas podían parecer la defensa del ideal; él admitió que algunas veces había utilizado material moderno de sustitución. Al reconstruir el desaparecido pórtico de Clarendon, una casa neoclásica en Tasmania, de 1838, se había valido de columnas de hormigón armado en vez de madera. En este caso siente bastante certeza de que la nueva estructura se parece mucho a la original; pero en otra casa, Lyndhurst, en Sydney, se niega a reponer una perdida veranda de hierro de fundición porque no existen datos conocidos de su diseño. Sr Lucas ha elaborado su propia filosofía de la conservación. Presta gran atención a los detalles, especialmente los elementos decorativos y acabados; su labor de vanguardista en la tentativa de definir los colores originales ha creado un estándar en Australia que está siendo desarrollado entusiastamente por arquitectos más jóvenes.

Una de las características del panorama arquitectónico actual en Australia es el desarrollo creciente de la importancia de la conservación. La Heritage Commission, los State Heritage Councils, los Historic Buildings Preservation Councils, el National Trust y los Municipal Councils forman un grupo algo confuso de organizaciones responsables. Se trata, en su mayor parte, de creaciones relativamente nuevas desde que Sr Lucas empezó su práctica profesional, como lo es la idea de la formación arquitectónica especializada en conservación. A él le gustaría que se incorporase una firme introducción a la conservación en la formación de todo arquitecto; pero incluso si esto es todavía una especie de ambición irredenta, no hay duda de que existe una actitud positiva por parte de muchos que coloca a Australia muy en cabeza de muchos países, incluso dentro de las actividades de ICOMOS. La aportación del propio Sr Lucas fue reconocida en 1977 al ser creado Oficial de la Orden del Imperio Británico por su servicio a la arquitectura, lo cual sólo podía significar su obra en pro del legado nacional.