UQ Summer Research Project

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<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Australia’s Civic Centres</th>
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<td>Project duration:</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
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**Description:**

During the 1960s and 1970s numerous civic centres were constructed in suburban and regional centres across Australia. These buildings often combined municipal administration facilities with cultural or community uses such as performing arts spaces and often functioned as the primary civic buildings for their community. They were a legacy of post-World-War-Two public policy and investment in national building, and came at a time of confidence and optimism in the architecture profession. The resulting late modern buildings include good examples of the brutalist style in Australia and give an insight into ideas about civic expression at this time. Most buildings have not been considered on state heritage registers and their value has not been clearly defined.

This research project aims to conduct a preliminary survey of this building type in Australia, collecting data on locations, construction dates, architects, building descriptions, building programmes etc., and ascertaining what historical research has been done on these buildings to date. This will be done primarily through database searches and surveys of Australian architectural journals published at this time including *Architecture in Australia*, and Royal Australian Institute of Architects Journals and Newsletters. At this stage the project does not include fieldwork.

The research seeks to identify these buildings as a significant typology in this period of Australian architectural history; define their architectural, social and cultural value; and consider their status in the present (for example in relation to heritage value, maintenance issues, and changing need for such facilities).

Research activities may include:

- Conducting database searches
- Surveying Australian architectural journals
- Collecting and précising journal articles
- Compiling research data (annotated bibliography, image library)
- Ascertaining what historical research has been done on these buildings to date by consulting key known texts about community and civic architecture and Australian architecture from this period.
- Identifying significant examples from the survey
- Undertaking basic analysis of the research data (scope of building programme, qualities of the type, architectural features and significance)
- Identifying contextual issues associated with the buildings (political and policy context, architectural debates etc.) and associated literature.
- Locating archives with holdings related to the subject matter.
- Identifying directions for further research.

**Expected outcomes and deliverables:**

Participants will learn and practice skills in historical data collection primarily from secondary sources, participate in preliminary analysis of data and discussions about the value of the data and directions for further research. There may be scope to conduct in-depth analysis of a case study, and consider case studies in a contemporary context (heritage value, maintenance issues, changing needs of communities, changing ideas about the expression of civic identity).

The participant will report research findings to the primary supervisor each week and may be asked to present the research to a larger audience (within the School of Architecture) at a later date.

The survey may also lead to further research that the participant may be able to be involved in, including presenting and publishing the research for a wider audience.

**Suitable for:**

1 student with an interest and demonstrated high achievement in architectural history and theory courses in the Bachelor degree. Good library research skills are a necessity.

**Primary Supervisor:**

Susan Holden

**Further info:**

For more information, please contact: Susan Holden, s.holden@uq.edu.au