

CONFIDENTIAL

CABINET DECISION

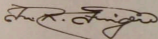
NO. 266

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Submission No.: 230

Title: MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, DARWIN CITY

Cabinet approved Bullocky Point as the site for a proposed Darwin Museum and Art Gallery, subject to an environmental impact statement. In giving this approval Cabinet adopted an unofficial policy of ensuring that nothing more is built on the foreshores around Darwin.



(M.R. FINGER),  
Secretary to Cabinet.

22.3.78

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CONFIDENTIALFOR CABINETSUBMISSION NO. **230**

Title:	MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, DARWIN CITY
Cabinet Member:	MR JIM ROBERTSON MLA CABINET MEMBER COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Purpose:	Cabinet Approval for and a decision in respect of the site for the Darwin Museum and Art Gallery
Relation to existing policy:	Approval by the immediately previous government was made in principal, and \$2 million was allocated in the present annual budget but denied because the site had not been finalised and the special purpose lease had not been issued.
Timing/legislative priority:	Funding for construction, on the basis of an estimated provision of \$5 million, as outlined in the Board's estimates, with any initial provision of \$2 million in 1978/79, the balance to be expended over 1979/80 and 1980/81 will be the subject of a separate submission.  1978/79 Financial Year Legislation exists - ref: Museums & Art Galleries Ordinance
Announcement of decision, tabling, etc.:	Press release ?
Acting required before announcement:	Cabinet approval
Staffing implications, numbers and costs, etc.:	If Museum and Art Gallery activities are to be brought to a level similar to those in the other States a substantial increase in professional and support staffing will be inevitable. This is the subject of a separate staffing submission, is indicated and, supported in the accompanying documents but does not immediately effect this building site submission.
Total cost:	\$5 million (building costs)

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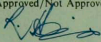
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Comment by  
Director of  
Finance:

No objection.

Signed:

Approved/Not Approved



Date:

17/3/78.

Comment by  
Public Service  
Commissioner:

Approved/Not Approved

Signed:

Date:

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A MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY AT  
FANNIE BAY, DARWIN  
FOR THE MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES  
BOARD OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

OUTLINE DESIGN REPORT

BERT READ + D. R. WYLLIE, ARCHITECTS

MARCH 1978

## INTRODUCTION

These drawings illustrate outline proposals for a building to accommodate the activities and functions of the Museums and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory. They have been developed in consultation with the Director and some members of the staff who have assisted in the resolution of the Brief. The design is not final, but it is, we believe, flexible enough to permit sufficient adjustment to accommodate any changes required during the Detailed Design Stage. This report describes the over-all design criteria and the general brief which the building is to satisfy and identifies the next stage of the Design Development.

## 1. THE SITE

The site is at Bullocky Point to the north of the Darwin High School. Its area is approximately 7 hectares, and it overlooks Fannie Bay to the west. It is near to the centre of the Darwin population, both the residential and the main city areas. It is, therefore, a good location for a building which will serve the residential and the commercial areas of the city. However, it is not a city site, and most visitors and staff will arrive by car or bus. The design of a building on this site must, therefore, take account of this in the provision of parking and means of access.

The site is virtually treeless, and although no foundation survey has yet been carried out, it appears that apart from some pockets of overburden, there is good rock. There is a small gully draining the area which runs from the southeast corner to the northwest. The primary and secondary surge lines for the area have been plotted. They affect very little of the site, and the building as designed is well above them.

## 2. ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

Collections, field work, taxonomy, research and display

### Human Sciences

### Natural Sciences

### Support

Aboriginal Art	Reptiles	Administration
Aboriginal Material Culture	Molluscs	Touring displays
Aboriginal Ethnology	Insects	Displays (perm.)
Aboriginal Archaeology	Fish	Education + lectures
S.E. Asian Art	Echinoderms	School's activities
S.E. Asian Material Culture	Birds	Conservation
S.E. Ethnology	Mammals	Library
S.E. Archaeology	Crustaceans	Workshops
Australian History (N.T.)	Paleontology	Publications
Agriculture History & Tech.	Geology	Site survey programme
Mining History & Tech.		Photography
Peering History & Tech.		Restaurant
Transport History & Tech.		Toxidermy
Commercial History & Tech.		Plant rooms
Art, Australian Historical		Museum parking/garage
Art, Australian Modern		Public parking
Art, International		Restaurant parking

3.03 The conservation function includes the preparation, preservation, and maintenance of the Museum's collections. This function includes the provision of facilities for toxicology, spirit preservation, toxicology, photography, the restoration of artefacts, and accessible storage for the Museum's collections.

3.04 Apart from the over-all educational value of the exhibits, the Museum has a specific responsibility to provide facilities for teaching of the school population of Darwin. Space must be set aside as a school activities area for lectures, elementary research, and for the sale of publications.

3.05 The publication of the results of the research carried out by the Museum, information about its collections and acquisitions, and more general educational material will be carried out by the Museum and Gallery staff. Facilities for this function include photography, printing, and publication sales.

To support these five basic functions, support facilities are required.  
These include:

- administration
- staff work, study and amenities areas
- a restaurant for the public and staff, including a kiosk
- general building services and maintenance, including air conditioning, toilet areas, lighting, and a standby generator
- servicing and storage of Museum vehicles
- a survey section which is the base for field work outside the Museum



#### 4. FLEXIBILITY, GROWTH AND CHANGE

The Museum and Art Gallery will develop over time, and its future specific needs may vary from those identified now. The sorts of material with which it deals are very disparate, varying in size from microscopic fish to whole buildings from abandoned mine workings. For both these reasons, the spaces and the uses to which they can be put must be as flexible as possible.

5. DESIGN CRITERIA

These criteria for design have been identified:

5.01 Access and Parking

Most of the staff and visitors will arrive by car or bus. Parking should be provided, not necessarily under cover, with adequate access to the building. Access should be separated to provide for:

- a. individual visitors
- b. groups of visitors--tourists, school groups
- c. staff
- d. goods vehicles, including service vehicles
- e. the restaurant
- f. the administrative area

(5. DESIGN CRITERIA - Continued)

5.02 Circulation

The circulation systems within the building must provide segregation and controlled access between:

- exhibition areas
- school groups
- conservation areas
- administration
- staff and scholars research areas
- staff and public amenities
- the restaurant
- service areas
- display preparation, photography, publications

The movement systems resulting from this segregation and controlled access should be clear from the physical relationships between the design elements of the building, so that visitors can visualize the system and respond to it with a minimum of sign posting and directions. In addition, there should be contrasting environments for display, teaching, lecture rooms and amenities to produce interesting variations in atmosphere. This will help to minimise boredom and encourage complete exploration of the public areas and the material exhibited.

#### 5.03 Numbers

The present staff of the Museum is approximately 18  
with a site survey complement of 6  
Ideally, this total number should be increased to handle  
the present collections by a further

$$\frac{10}{34}$$

The ultimate staff requirement could be approximately 60.  
There are 20 vehicles which will be serviced by the Museum.  
Maximum numbers of visitors cannot be accurately determined.

#### 5.04 Internal Environmental Standards

A number of specific criteria have already been identified, and others  
will develop during the next stage of design.

- The conservation and display areas of the building should be entirely artificially lit. Any daylight must be indirect, to minimise the effects of ultraviolet light on the collections.
- The building must be entirely dust, sand and soot-proofed.
- The building should be fully air conditioned to provide a relative humidity of approximately 50%, with precise temperature control, in all storage and gallery areas.
- The lighting and power grid must be as flexible as possible. A standby generator is required.
- A public address and sound system will be required throughout the complex.
- The internal and external acoustics of the buildings should be moved by selection of appropriate materials.

5.05 Ground conditions, cyclones and the requirements of regulatory authorities

These have been considered only insofar as they might determine over-all design strategies.

The design of the structure must be such that it can resist the maximum loads which may be imposed on it by the wind.

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## 6. THE BUILDING

The building has been sited to provide maximum exposure to views over Fennie Bay past the galleries. It uses the fall on the site and the gully to provide an internal court, and the design minimises its exposure on the entry side.

The elements of the building have been arranged to separate functions within the complex, to provide a clear expression of the organisation of these functions, and to provide flexibility between the various purposes for which the building will be used.

Access is controlled to separate goods vehicles, Museum vehicles and staff, access by the public, including tourist and school busses, and access to the restaurant and administrative area. The school activities, library, theatre, and administrative areas have been grouped to provide direct access from the main vehicular set down point. The gallery adjacent would be most appropriately used for travelling and temporary exhibitions. Access to the galleries is from an elevated circulation spine, and in each gallery, the public moves down through two levels to the conservation areas. From the main floor, there are views of the Bay past the gallery drums under the roof overhang, with access to the terrace.

Goods and service vehicles approach past the vehicle servicing area to the loading dock. This serves the service and plant area and a goods circulation spine at the lowest level. Transport of equipment and goods through the building is through this spine and will be carried out by fork lift trucks, giving flexibility

6. THE BUILDING - Continued)

of movement for large and heavy equipment through both main levels. Staff offices, study and amenities areas form a barrier between the exterior of the building and the conservation and museum work areas.

External spaces have been provided, integrated with the geometric organization of the building to provide exhibition courts and an amphitheatre. The most important internal court will not only provide visual interest, but is intended as a research tool for investigating and displaying marine and aquatic reptiles, fish, and plant life. The total external expression of the building reflects the natural, rugged and exposed landscape of the shores of Fannie Bay. The landscape treatment will be as natural as possible and should involve minimum maintenance.

Approximate areas to accommodate the activities and functions of the Museum are:

6. THE BUILDING - (Continued)

	<u>m<sup>2</sup></u>
Exhibition space on two levels in each of four galleries	490
Conservation areas associated with each gallery:	
Restricted public access	150
Secure	340
Foyers, circulation and display external to galleries	1,000
Library and theatre, each	177
Restaurant and kiosk	345
School activities	300
Administration	350
Staff and research offices	575
Access spine and loading dock to galleries and conservation areas	400
Display preparation, taxidermy, survey, photography and publications	1,000
Services and plant	330
Gallery vehicles maintenance	245
General maintenance, house carpenters and display corecasting	245



(6. THE BUILDING - Continued)

External courts for exhibition and teaching  
(one arranged as an amphitheatre)

Car parking in segregated areas for

- Museum and staff vehicles
- Public, including buses
- Restaurant and administration

## 7. FUTURE PROGRAMME

The national building which we have developed now needs to be tested in detail in a number of areas. These are:

- structure
- materials
- protection of collections and exhibits
- security
- access
- fire regulations
- building regulations
- the detailed planning of individual departments and user reactions
- costs and budget

We believe that we have now developed an understanding of the problem and the site which has enabled us to solve the over-all planning problems. The next task is to carry out a more detailed investigation in the areas outlined above. This investigation will require assistance from a total consultant team which should include a Structural Engineer, Services engineers, and a Quantity Surveyor. It will also require detailed discussion with all the authorities having control over and interest in the building. We would like to discuss with the Board the selection of these specialist consultants so that the project can proceed as quickly as possible.

SITING OF DARWIN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY: BOARD POLICY

The Museums and Art Galleries has been attempting since 1970 to obtain a suitable site for, design and build, an adequate and urgently needed Museum and Art Gallery.

Prior to the cyclone a site was sought on East Point, but nothing eventuated and funding specifically for architectural fees was repeatedly denied.

Following the cyclone the Board communicated repeatedly with the Darwin Reconstruction Commission proposing several alternative sites, but, although some consideration was given to a site on the Esplanade, no effective progress or decision eventuated and the Chairman of the Commission finally indicated that the granting of a site rested with the Department of the Northern Territory, not his Commission.

Accordingly on 30 March 1977 the Board wrote in detail to the Secretary, Department of the Northern Territory, copied to the Cabinet Member and Director General, on the Board's behalf, summarising the situation, listing those sites which the Board regarded as suitable and seeking the urgent granting of a special purpose lease.

At a meeting with the First Assistant Secretary and the Town Planner early in April, 1977, the Department indicated that it regarded the Bullocky Point site as the most suitable and the Board agreed to this.

The Board was asked to prepare sketch plans to enable the Department to process approval for the lease through the Town Planning Board and the DRC, and the need to prepare these plans as quickly as possible was stressed.

The Board had previously considered the possibility of an architectural competition, but there was clearly no time for this at this stage. Accordingly a Canberra architect, with whom the Board had had previous contact when he quite voluntarily prepared conceptive sketches for a Museum and Gallery in Alice Springs, was approached. Apart from the fact that he has done the preliminary conceptive design for the new Parliament House, he and his associate have considerable experience of designing prestigious buildings and an international reputation.

The architect has completed this work, which is now prepared for presentation. Preliminary plans have been presented to the Department of the Northern Territory to support the application for a special purpose lease, and these are acceptable to them.

The Board wishes to adopt the plans and it would certainly produce yet another considerable delay to start again from first base. However as has been discussed with the architect, this would not preclude local architects who would inevitably be employed in partnership with him for supervision, co-ordination and administration, and local building contractors would clearly be given prior consideration at the time of tendering.

SITING OF DARWIN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY: BOARD POLICY

For very good and proven reasons it is a well established, internationally and historically accepted principle that Museums should be situated in or as near as possible to the centre of established cities. A museum is one of the most prestigious buildings in any city, and its necessarily excellent aesthetic appearance alone, irrespective of its contents and the activities within it, contributes to the image, reputation and kudos of the city and to the cultural stimulation of its inhabitants. This necessitates a commanding and central position and a building of excellence.

More people within the urban and suburban areas of any city visit the centre of that city than visit any one of the several and increasing suburbs which surround it. To isolate a Museum in any one suburb is to limit its use by people in the centre and other suburbs and to deter interstate, international and rural visitors.

At the same time, as cities grow larger and more suburbanized there is a need to provide additional facilities in suburban areas. This is best provided by touring display units, such as will be introduced in a few weeks in the Territory, and by the provision of simple, single display galleries for touring displays and exhibitions, perhaps as part of a suburban cultural centre.

The idea that culture facilities should be in the areas of greatest population concentration, which may be the suburbs in toto but in a large city is certainly not any one suburb, has much more relevance to Theatres, which people visit on the whole in the evenings, but does not apply to Museums except in the limited sense allowed for above. Moreover Museums are 'cultural' in a different way from Theatres. Apart from school children and visitors, people tend to visit Museums at weekends and/or as a deliberate visit, as they visit a Zoo or Botanical Gardens, and for the casual droppers in a central position is preferable to a suburban one.

The majority of visitors to Museums are students visiting in groups and they invariably visit in organized bus tours. The location of the Museums is not therefore so important, but proximity to as many schools as possible has obvious advantages.

In terms of functionality, high-rise Museums have been found to be detrimental to the collections, display and public utilization and are only tolerable where a city central area is already overcrowded but where a centre location is recognized as highly desirable, if not necessary. Existing examples in Australia are disastrous ones. Accordingly a site which allows a single/two storey building spread over a large area, but still aesthetically pleasing and a landmark, is preferable.

NOTES OF COMPARISON

BULLOCKY POINT

1. This is a prestigious site, elevated, attractive, overlooking and physically linked with the sea (relevant to the interests and contents and research of the Museum - marine biology, maritime history and the Port of Darwin). Aesthetically this is the best site in Darwin.
2. It is as close to the centre of the city as can be achieved, in the light of 1. within the Town Plan.
3. It is centrally situated for tourists, interstate and Territory visitors.
4. The site lends itself to a single/two storey or split level building which is functionally desirable and of a unique and excellent character.
5. It is close to the Darwin High School, Botanical Gardens, East Point and beaches, hotels and Tourist Bureau.
6. Plans are already prepared and the site is available.
7. The situation is ideal in terms of the view from the planned restaurant, regarded as an important feature, both as a facility and an attraction.

#### NORTHERN SUBURBS

1. This is a major (but not by all that much) area of housing and population in the evenings, but this is not a major consideration when the factors outlined earlier are borne in mind.
2. The whole area is essentially flat land. This is a disadvantage in that, if the building is to be of architectural significance, it will have to be high-rise to be seen, and therefore functionally crippled from the beginning.
3. Presumably adequate land is available.
4. Architects plans will have to be redrawn or recommenced, which will mean a delay of at least a year, and Museum staff will have to repeat briefings, wasting time and money already spent, and a further detrimental delay in the conservation and care of the collections, research and educational display will occur.
5. The view from the Museum and the restaurant is likely to consist of suburban housing blocks, playing fields or scrub and cannot compare aesthetically with Bullocky Point.
6. The exact proposed site is uncertain, but appears likely to be well away from the sea. In any event, if a coastal site is available, the sea coast here does not have the same complementary scenic attractions as do Fannie Bay and the Harbour.
7. A display gallery, perhaps in conjunction with other cultural facilities, e.g. theatre and crafts centre, appears to be what is really needed in the Northern Suburbs, and this would have the political advantage of obviating any embarrassing criticism that the Governing Party had not fulfilled pre-electoral promises of cultural facilities in the Northern Suburbs.

The Board's very strong view after considerable deliberation over the past eight years, and particularly during the past two years, is that the Bullocky Point site is by far the best one in Darwin for the Museum and Art Gallery complex, and that a site in the Northern Suburbs would be quite unsuitable. At the same time it recognises that some satellite facility is desirable in that area.

## MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### 1. The Issue

It has been suggested that a more appropriate site for the Museum and Art Gallery might be either the Casuarina Shopping Centre or the Brinkin area. Bert Read and D. R. Wyllie were asked to examine the implications of alternative sites and to form an opinion to present to the Cabinet.

### 2. Background

Since 1968, there have been a number of submissions from the Board of Museums and Art Galleries to the various parties who have at various times been responsible for the allocation of a site. In addition, the Hassell Report considered six sites for a cultural complex which was to include a Museum and Art Gallery. A conceptual scheme for the Bullocky Point site has already been prepared to validate the decision taken in late 1977 to make that site available for the Museum. Two city sites were also suggested by the Town Planning Group, and these were considered in addition to the Casuarina, Brinkin and Bullocky Point sites.

### 3. Consideration of the Issue

.01 The Consultants had discussions with Mr. Millburn and the Town Planning Group, with local architects, and Department of Construction personnel who are carrying out preliminary environmental impact studies of foreshore areas in Darwin. They also made an assessment of the Bricklin site on the ground and with a contour plan of the area. The Town Planning Group gave information about over-all population projections for Darwin and an introduction to the policy guidelines for future development of the city, which are contained in the plans at present on public exhibition.

.02 The development of the brief for the Museum and Art Gallery has identified five functions of the complex:

- a. research
- b. display
- c. conservation
- d. education
- e. publication

The organization of these functions into a conceptual scheme has revealed the overwhelming advantages of a low-rise solution, preferably with a change in level on the site which allows a satisfactory segregation of access and circulation between the staff, the public, and goods and services.

.03 Seven criteria for decision have been identified. There may be others, and it could be possible that they carry more weight than any one of those identified here, but without further information and discussion, they are not self-evident.

These criteria are, for any site:

- a. Its physical size.
- b. The view. (Aspect is virtually irrelevant for this building since it will be artificially lit).
- c. The availability of services (sewer, water, power, waste disposal).
- d. The configuration of the land.
- e. Availability within an appropriate time scale, bearing in mind the urgency of the proposal.
- f. Accessibility for the staff, the public, tourists and school children.
- g. Appropriateness in terms of social and planning relationships with adjacent developments.

#### 4. Options

The city and Casuarina sites were rejected as they are too small. The Bullocky Point site satisfies the first five criteria. The Brinkin site satisfies the first three criteria, but is less than ideal in its configuration and, according to the Town Planning Group, could not be made available within less than two years. It may be that this time scale could be reduced by a variation of the standard administration procedure. Two suitable areas of the Brinkin site were identified in terms of criterion (b), but they both have a slope of approximately 4 metres in 140 metres, as opposed to the 4 in 70 slope on the Bullocky Point site.

The Brinkin site and the Bullocky Point site were assessed for accessibility using a diagram prepared with information supplied by the Town Planning Group and the Tourist Bureau. A copy of this diagram is appended. The population projection for Darwin is about 100,000 by 2050, based on a growth rate of approximately 3% p.a. The areas in which it will be accommodated depend on a further extension of the Northern Suburbs and a development of Darwin East, dependent in part on a mosquito control programme in the area. However, the general disposition of the population is as shown, and it indicates that the Brinkin site is on the periphery of the development envelope of the conurbation, and dissociated from major transport and access routes throughout it.

The last criterion, that of appropriateness, resolves into a consideration of a CBD site as opposed to a regional centre. The CBD can be defined as an area which contains functions which relate to the whole city and the territory which the CBD



serves. A regional centre contains the functions appropriate to the suburbs which it serves, providing convenience facilities for residents, but minimising through traffic and intrusions from the outside. This is the reason why functions such as supermarkets, dry cleaners, pubs, and satellite art galleries should be in regional centres related to dormitory suburbs, and the centres of commerce, government, and culture define the CBD. The reinforcement of the CBD will encourage (particularly in a community as small as Darwin) the development of a sense of place and of civic identity.

5. Recommendation

Using the functional assessments and the criteria which have been identified, the Consultants are of the opinion that the Bullocky Point site, which is immediately available, is undoubtedly the appropriate place for the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.