Making of Modern Vernacular Architecture in Aboriginal Australia: Insights from the Dugalunji Camp

Paul Memmott
Aboriginal Environments Research Centre,
School of Architecture and Institute for Social Science Research,
University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia
Email: p.memmott@uq.edu.au

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Abstract

The Dugalunji Camp in Northern Australia is a sedentary village for a core group of Aboriginal 'traditional owners' with a seasonal work population and a total maximum accommodated population of 80 persons. It is a residential base from which regional enterprise services are provided to the Aboriginal community. It also conducts pre-vocational training for young Aboriginal adults. Architecture of the camp involves a combination of Aboriginal socio-spatial principles, culturally-distinct behaviour setting design, and pre-fabricated industrialized buildings, overlaid with Aboriginal vernacular architecture, within a totemic cultural landscape. In this context, this paper examines the making of architecture in modern Aboriginal Australia evident in the Dugalunji Camp.

The research employs a case study approach, looking closely at the 'Dugalunji Camp' of the Indjilandji tribal group in the arid zone interior of the continent. This case study is contextualised in its historical, political and socio-economic fields and reveals why the hegemonic colonial policies did not eliminate much of the customary behaviours and knowledge of this Aboriginal group. It employs observations and interpretations of the architecture to derive data. A brief overview of traditional arid zone vernacular architecture styles including grass-thatched domes and the socio-spatial layouts of seasonal and intermittent camps is presented.

The paper reveals the traditional design principles and elements underlying the contemporary Dugalunji Camp. It recognizes that in this Camp, architecture is a part of a holistic cultural philosophy that dictates the design, management and everyday behavioural rules. Its analysis follows Bourdieu and reveals both the production and consumption processes, being closely intertwined in the encoding and decoding of meanings creating a congruency when encoders and decoders subscribe to similar socio-economic values. It demonstrates that 'architecture' can have a strong capacity in producing hybrid-built environments employing indigenous or vernacular components, lying on the periphery of the western canonical practice of 'Architecture'.

Keywords: Australian Aboriginal culture, cross-cultural architecture theory, vernacular architecture.

Introduction

This paper is premised on the idea that whilst the producers of architecture are also consumers and the consumers are also producers, the values of production and consumption whilst not necessarily aligned, nevertheless must inevitably be inter-twined. Moreover, seats of authority in the decision-making and legitimizing of architectural processes are often multiple and in contested competition and tension with one another. This paper thus explores aspects of the dynamic patterns of such complex sets of the production and consumption processes of building.

The aim is to explore how a broad inclusive understanding of the geo-political field of the case study: the Georgina River frontier history, facilitates the detailing and testing of a cross-cultural theoretical framework of what architecture might be in a more holistic and encompassing sense.

Theoretical Framework

Its theoretical base draws from a previous paper by Memmott and Davidson (2010) in which we argued for the configuration of a theory of architecture that can serve as a tool for understanding the nature of all designed, arranged, and constructed environments used as human habitats across all the cultural contexts. A corollary effort involves questioning why the Euro-American concept of architecture, sometimes referred to as "high-style", or "polite", and which we refer to as "capital-A architecture", has failed to achieve such a position, at times excluding non-Euro-American and indigenous building traditions. If we are going to contemplate the qualities and properties of building as a universal human activity, then surely we must address all cultures in all historical periods. We argue that vernacular and indigenous building traditions (or ethno-architecture) are no less significant in the value systems of their respective peoples than Euro-American architecture is to Westerners. We identified four principal themes to be central to such a cross-cultural architectural theory. They are as follows.

(i) The architect-builder-owner agency distinction and the significance of where authority lies in building and design production decisions;
(ii) Behaviour settings theory as constituting a critical consumer component of architecture;
(iii) Meanings encoded and decoded in buildings, and
(iv) The change of architectural traditions and their time properties.

The architect-builder-owner agency distinction can be elaborated from Bourdieu's theory of cultural practice (in Webster, 2011) which broadly accounted for the relation between production and consumption, and generated an analytic sociological method. Whilst the field of cultural production is a primary part of the analysis, the method prescribes that an understanding of the issues of the control of production, necessitates a contextualization within the wider field of power and politics. Thirdly, the actions of individual agents (who are nevertheless enculturated agents) need to be analysed in relation to transactions of economic capital and symbolic capital (or valued meanings). Bourdieu (in Webster, 2011) demonstrated that cultural production can involve a contrast (as well as a continuum) between the field of small-scale or restricted 'high art' production, in which there is a high degree of autonomy for artists or intellectual creators and which generates symbolic capital that may eventually be convertible to economic capital, and the field of large-scale or mass-produced production, which is more oriented to economic profit-making albeit with some limited symbolic capital generation; there are corresponding sub-fields of high aesthetics and popular aesthetics respectively. A consideration of Bourdieu's theory indicates it would be useful to broaden the distinction made earlier concerning the contrast between different modes of architectural agency from two to at least three categories. In addition to the architecture of practitioners outside of the formal profession of architects whom we could label 'ethnoarchitects', the formal profession can be divided into those architects who are famous, esteemed and whose works carry high symbolic capital (Bourdieu's 'taste makers' or 'capital A' architects), versus those

architects who are relatively unknown ('small a' formal architects) and whose work must conform with popular aesthetics and engage with mass economic production scales in order for them to generate their income (economic capital).

From behaviour setting theory, a theoretical concept devised in this paper to differentiate the cultural distinction and quality of the architectural product is that of an 'Aboriginal service setting'[1], as opposed to a government service setting or a commercial or retail service setting. An Aboriginal service setting can be defined as one that is largely controlled by Aboriginal people and is designed to be comfortable for Aboriginal consumers. This can be achieved through a congruent combination of managed behavioural patterns and environmental (landscaping) and artifactual features (built and loose structures, objects) and setting controls which are designed to be relatively comfortable, predictable, secure and conducive for Aboriginal people to use. There is also a sense of identity with and even ownership of such a setting by Aboriginal people when the service is being delivered in an effective way.

The theoretical focus for the paper draws from previous work by the author and his colleagues on the need for a unifying cross-cultural theory of architecture for all human building and place-making activity. I employ a theoretical frame that emphasises:-

(i) The architect-builder distinction and the significance of where authority lies in building and design decisions;
(ii) Behaviour settings theory and the idea of such settings as constituting architecture;
(iii) Meanings in buildings and environments and the subsequent role of meaning as a property of architecture; and
(iv) The change of architectural traditions and their time properties.

Research Methodology

The research employs a case study of Australian Indigenous processes of modern vernacular architecture in Aboriginal Australia.

Despite cultural changes for Aboriginal people since colonisation commenced during 1788 in Sydney, many distinct traditional cultural behaviours persist, especially in remote areas. In terms of settlement patterns and contemporary housing use, these traits are adapted around Anglo-Australian domiciliary norms, resulting in hybrid solutions to both the production and consumption of living environments, thereby generating modern forms of Aboriginal vernacular architecture albeit with acculturated elements and traits.

The methodology has been planned around the following steps. First to present an overview of a case study that appears useful to understanding the production of a contemporary vernacular architecture and which draws on both the traditional Aboriginal and the contemporary Western principles and elements. Second to elicit and expand on the nature of those traditional generative principles. Third, to show how the emergence of the vernacular form involves a dialectical interplay between consumption and production.

Both the theoretical framework and the study methodology are drawn and synthesized from the disciplines of anthropology, architecture and environmental psychology. The author has since 2007, been conducting three-day culture and history workshops for the regular intakes of young Aboriginal adults in the pre-vocational training course which occurs on average 3 times per year at the Dugalandji Camp of the Aboriginal Myuma Company. This regular visitation to the Dugalanji Camp has provided opportunity for the author to participate in a process of deep participant observation, as well as to conduct informal and semi-formal interviews with the Managing Director and many other staff working for Myuma. Simultaneously architectural drawings and much photographic recording of the Camp have been produced. A detailed understanding has resulted on the principles and protocols of the

[1] This concept follows that of the 'behavioural setting' which Roger Barker (1968), developed in environmental psychology and referring to a recurring behaviour pattern in a physical setting, creating a synomorphic relation or 'fit' between the human behaviour episodes and the physical and temporal environment of the setting.

training course and how the trainees are indoctrinated in a way that results in a significant type of a 'behavioural setting' according to the environmental psychology theory, which generates a close fit between environmental design and preferred participant behaviour.

The Case Study

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Indjalandji people occupied the upper Georgina River Basin and surrounding Barkly Tableland in far North-west Queensland and on the Northern Territory border. A young man named Idaya, a forebear of the contemporary Indjalandji group, experienced the first impacts of colonisation in December 1861, when the British explorer William Landsborough encountered and renamed three sacred Indjalandji waterholes on the Georgina River as Lakes Mary, Francis and Canellan. His favourable report on the surrounding grasslands triggered several waves of pastoral occupation by colonists during 1864–84.

The township of Camooweal was established beside Lake Francis in 1884 and was to flourish as a border customs post, a pastoral industry service town and a droving stop for the 'cattle barons' bringing cattle from the Barkly Tableland and the Kimberley to the Eastern coastal markets.

Fig. 1: The case study location on the edge of the semi-arid zone.
Source: Aboriginal Environments Research Centre

Decimation of the Georgina Aboriginal groups occurred during the late nineteenth century due to frontier violence and multiple diseases. Only a few Indjalandji families survived, together with remnants of the neighbouring Kalkadungu, Bularnu and Waluwarra tribal groups. Partly in response to the widespread demographic collapse, the Queensland Government introduced the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897*, which regulated, but also forced, Aboriginal people to labour in the pastoral industry. Uncooperative workers were sent to institutionalised penal settlements in the East of the State. Despite these adversities, many customs were transmitted in the pastoral camps as Idaya's descendants worked under 'the Act' and intermarried with spouses from these other tribal groups.

The contemporary Indjalandji elder, Ruby Saltmere, was born in 1933 at a traditional birthing camp. Ruby's uncle Dijeru Jack (the grandson of Idaya) performed rainmaking rituals to green the country at the request of the local pastoralists, and maintained the group's link to the rainmaking site of *Dugalunji*. As a result, a sense of a Georgina River Aboriginal culture and community survived.

Introduction to the Dugalunji Camp

This case study is one of 'small a' architecture, but which involves outstanding Aboriginal cultural and socio-economic empowerment; that of the Myuma Group of corporations whose Indjalandji people occupy the Dugalunji Camp near the gentrifying township of Camooweal. The Myuma Group administers a combination of enterprises, training, service delivery and cultural heritage activity, and facilitate a particular Aboriginal consumption style including the architectural environment provided to its Aboriginal workers and clients. The various innovatory and success features of this venture stimulated the author to profile it as a good-practice case study in both Aboriginal service delivery and enterprise initiative (Memmott, 2010). In this paper I expound on the Aboriginal production and consumption of their distinct form of architecture.

The Dugalunji Camp is an Aboriginal owned, controlled and created village which hosts an enterprise staff, training staff and bi-annual intakes of 30 prevocational trainees. It contains a complex of buildings and spaces which include many pre-fabricated, commercial 'dongas' (as they are colloquailly called, similar to mobile houses) typical of remote area mining camps and considered to be of non-sustainable design by many architects, but it also includes a range of customary Aboriginal design principles and architectural elements that contribute along with camp 'setting' rules to a distinct quality of Aboriginal lifestyle. The Aboriginal Director of the Camp conscripts professional design inputs on his own terms which are influenced by customary Aboriginal camping principles as well as pastoral camp experiences. The result has been a strong satisfaction by Indigenous workers and residents in the informal architecture of the Dugalunji Camp. At the time of writing, the Camp had been redesigned by the Myuma Manager with a 'small a' architect and was being upgraded using national training infrastructure funds.

Findings

The Political Field of Remote-area Aboriginal Affairs in Australia

During the latter 20th century, the recurring economic model of the remote Aboriginal community was more often than not, a passive recipient of welfare, with little employment or enterprise, and having negligible bargaining power within the open market, despite being a consumer, and having a set of acute social problems including violence and sexual abuse. In such a state of welfare dependency, certain needs often remain unfulfilled from the uni-directional supply of government sponsored or prescribed services, including the provision of culturally inappropriate housing and civic architecture. This market phenomenon can be termed 'directed consumption'[2] but its institutional nature has not readily been able to alleviate basic poverty and material hardship in the last 40 years.

In contrast, Myuma is a unique good-practice case study in market participation, (Fisher et al., 2010) positioned with complex production, supply and consumption functions, or multiple diversified market networking and interfacing. Accountability has become lateralized (as market place performance) such that many players in the economic chain (including Myuma) have become inter-dependent upon one another. This is in contrast to vertical accountability in a top-down service to a bottom-up demand context, typical of many remote Aboriginal communities (Marx, 2001). A key challenge for Australian Aboriginal groups has been how to 'lever' themselves out of welfare dependency and to insert themselves into the market in this way, without substantial readily-available, 'start-up' resources. The Myuma Group has provided a case study of how to achieve this practice.

The leader (and architectural agent) of the Myuma Group, Colin Saltmere, was the Chairperson of the Mt Isa Gulf Region of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in the 1990s, gaining experience of bureaucratic transactions and sub-cultures, which was to later prove useful when he advocated on behalf of his clan group and for other Aboriginal people in north Queensland. During the 1990s, he also became active as an initiate within Aboriginal customary Law drawing on the regional support of the wider Georgina River

[2] This term follows Edward Spicer's (1961) 'directed cultural change,' i.e. imposed change to effect a specific aim.

cultural bloc (see map in the Figure 1). Colin's leadership attributes had originally come to the fore as a Head Stockman in the mid 1980s, in charge of teams of 10-12 cattle stockmen both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal of various tribal origins. In dealing with different human resource problems in the Myuma Group during his later life, Colin Saltmere has continued to draw on his learnings as a boss in the Georgina stock camps. The cultural components of the lifeway that manifests in the Dugalunji Camp thus draw on the customary pre-contact Aboriginal law and the pastoral economy which are embedded in contrasting time frames, the former extending for millennia prior to European arrival in this region in the 1860s, and the latter pastoral lifestyle following through the last six generations.

Contemporary Economic and Political History

Levering up Myuma from the Native Title

In 1998, the Indjalandji descendants submitted a Native Title application under the Australian Government's *Native Title Act 1993* over the upper Georgina River around Camooweal. The river and its lakes form a complex Aboriginal landscape of sacred and secular sites with dominant Dreamings being Rainbow Serpent, Rain, Picaninnies and Blue Tongue Lizard; knowledge of such has been maintained by the group through the difficult frontier era of disease, violence and discrimination all of which was key evidence in the Native Title Claim. In 1999, Queensland Main Roads Department commenced the development of a new Georgina River Bridge. The Indjalandji, using the cultural capital of their Native Title claimant status, managed to negotiate various project outcomes and benefits from Queensland Main Roads, including employment and training for themselves and other Aboriginal members of the wider community. In addition, a construction camp (the '*Dugalunji* Camp') was left in the hands of the Indjalandji group after the completion of the bridge so as to assist participation in the subsequent highway upgrades. The bridge was officially named *Ilaga Thuwani*, meaning 'the Camping Ground of the Rainbow Serpent', and was viewed as a most successful partnership project (Memmott, 2010). By 2002, the Indjalandji had established the Myuma Group of corporations to further the well-being, cultural maintenance and quality of lifestyle of the Aboriginal people of their region.

The enterprise operation Myuma Pty Ltd, provides road maintenance, fencing, cultural heritage services, labour and plant hire and also delivers accredited training programs to young Aboriginal adults in civil and mining construction and related support services, including horticulture, hospitality and catering. The number of workers employed by Myuma ranges between 40 and 80, depending on shifting project demands and numbers of trainees (at peak level, over 90% are Aboriginal). Myuma packages these individual services together to secure major projects, resulting in its strong economic growth. The gross revenue gained by Myuma from these contracts during 2001 to 2009 was AUD $19.8 million, or an average of $2.5 million per year. This income has since been increasing annually. Whilst Myuma Pty Ltd pursues enterprises to make a commercial profit, the profits are largely invested back into the company's infrastructure and into charitable projects for the regional Aboriginal population. These expenditures are arguably for forms of collective consumption based on Aboriginal values.

During 2006, the Myuma Group designed and trialled a prevocational, accredited training program to equip Aboriginal participants for pre-identified, employment positions in civil construction and mining operations in remote Queensland. The program was then stabilized as a best-practice national training scheme with secure income of several million dollars per annum from government and the lucrative mining sector. A bi-annual intake of 30 trainees from remote and rural Queensland has since occurred (i.e. 60 per year), largely Aboriginal school-leavers or young adults, either long-term unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment. The geographic origins of the trainees (see map) ensured a stimulating interactive experience given their diverse and differing Aboriginal cultures.

The Relationship between Myuma's Activities and Aboriginal Customary 'Law'

Australian Aboriginal customary rules for living are known as 'the Law', derived from ancestral creator beings in an ancient formative period (perhaps over 50,000 years) known as

'The Dreaming'. The Myuma Group's practice, including in relation to production and consumption, is based on a strong commitment to Aboriginal Law and culture. This is in contradiction with an often quoted assertion by the late Professor Stanner. "Ours is a market-civilisation, theirs not. Indeed, there is a sense in which The Dreaming and The Market are mutually exclusive" (Stanner, 1979). This sentiment of Stone Age incompatibility has been echoed in recent years by a number of national politicians and Aboriginal leaders who advocate for centralized economic assimilation of Aboriginal people.

Despite these views, a strong commitment to Law and culture permeates through the Dugalunji Camp on a daily basis via a number of mechanisms and behaviours that include visitation and residence of regional Elders, the delivery of cultural heritage services and cultural induction programmes to regional industries by Myuma and workshops on strengthening cultural identity for the prevocational trainees. Workplace policies also synthesise customary Aboriginal Law and some personnel in the Camp are involved in regional Aboriginal ceremonies and sacred site protection. Aspects of Aboriginal governance based on family, clan, kin network, cultural bloc, and initiates network, are forms of social capital crucial to the success of the Myuma story but are so often undervalued, unrecognised and unrecompensed by government. The constant daily respect of Aboriginal Law by the Indjalandji Elders and leaders is one that gradually pervades into an awareness that comes upon staff, trainers, trainees and visitors; they are in a cultural landscape of ancestrally created places and sacred histories. There is thus a unique symbiotic relationship between the practice of Aboriginal Law and the practice of commerce in the Dugalunji Camp whereby the two are mutually supportive of one another, generating a strong consumption of Aboriginality in the way that day-to-day 'business' is run by Myuma. This consumptive style extends to the use of space, architecture and landscaping in the camp.

The Pre-European Aboriginal Vernacular Architecture[3]

Aboriginal cultures evolved over many millennia in Australia prior to the arrival of Europeans and British colonization. Processes of cultural diffusion and change were always occurring but at a scale much slower than contemporary change processes driven by the instant global communication of electronic media. This slower scale of change facilitated the formation of regional variations of stabilized vernacular architectural styles that were nevertheless constantly under minor adaptation in terms of detailing and other stylistic variation by local ethnoarchitects and clan leaders.

Fig. 2: Spinifex grass was the most widespread and commonly used resource for the cladding of wet weather domes in the Australian deserts. (Source: Howard Hughes, 1961)

[3] This section is reproduced from Memmott (2007).

The standard repertoire of architectural types used throughout the arid zone region consisted of windbreaks, dome-shaped shade shelters, fully enclosed weatherproof domes and storage platforms. Spinifex, a type of hummock grass (*Triodia* genus) was commonly used as a cladding on the timber-framed domes (Figure 2) as well as for windbreaks and shade cladding. Dome forms included circular and oval plan, the bi-dome form, and multiple intersecting domes, collectively providing a set of modular options for enclosing space at heights most often 1.5 to 1.7m internally. The external dome forms were generated from a range of structural configurations depending on availability of tree limbs (length, thickness, shape), as well as preferred construction style, employing either cantilevered arches or single and double ridge poles on posts. Different structural styles were maintained by and enculturated within particular families and lineages to create regional sub-styles. Although spinifex grass was the dominant cladding material, others could be substituted or incorporated if available e.g. bark, tussock grass. Double cladding layers of spinifex interlocked by their root systems, were applied up to a metre thick. It is hypothesised that spinifex cladding has outstanding thermal insulation and water-shedding properties due to its open structure (interconnected air pockets) and resin content respectively. Layers of clay, mud or sand were applied over the grass to make composite cladding systems.

The size and length of occupation of traditional camps varied; ranging from small temporary camps with one or several domiciliary groups for a few days (Figure 3), to large camps of a specialized nature containing numerous clan groups (up to several hundred or more people) for up to six weeks or more when concentrated seasonal food supplies were available (structural frames were left intact for the seasonal year and reused). Larger camps were organized according to sociospatial rules – that is, the division into spatial zones, each being occupied by an aggregate of domiciliary groups that possessed some common social identity and characteristic social structure. Such sociospatial structures facilitated the expression and maintenance of kinship through behavioural styles and group identities of various forms, as well as minimizing conflict between groups through spatial distancing.

Although it has been six generations since this pattern of traditional shelters and camps was fully utilized, many principles and techniques were transmitted in acculturated pastoral station camps by the Indjalandji and their wider Georgina society. Now let us return to the contemporary Dugalunji Camp to see which of these architectural properties are still employed, and to verify that modern building practice has not banished all aspects of tradition.

Architectural Elements in the Dugalunji Camp and the Dual Roles of Architectural Agency

Myuma's Dugalunji Camp is situated on 1.5 hectares in a remote semi-arid setting of red sand, spinifex grass and open eucalypt woodland. In early 2009, the Camp was serviced with town electricity and modern communication technology, and was made up of an air-conditioned dining hall, well-equipped kitchen, three office buildings, two training rooms (including workstations with computers), accommodation for 65 people, semi-enclosed recreation area and workshop, gymnasium, laundries and ablution units, first aid centre, workshops, covered carparks, storage buildings, outdoor barbecue and ground oven facility, artefact keeping place and manufacturing area, fowlhouse, duck pond, water tanks and vegetable garden. All fully-enclosed buildings were one storey, pre-fabricated, transportable and temporarily fixed to foundations. This in itself presented a particular challenge because such pre-fab 'dongas' are not well designed for passive climate control in the warm arid winter and hot monsoonal summer climate, being without overhangs, insufficient insulation and totally reliant on high-energy consuming, wall-unit air conditioners in every room.

The name of the camp is symbolic; *Dugalunji* refers to a sacred mussel shell used in ritual Rain-making and thus emphasizing the Dreaming identity of its owners. The word 'camp' is also salient, conjuring up notions of temporariness, hearths, bush materials and external orientation to the landscape. Colin Saltmere has stated that the design of the environmental, artifactual and temporal character of the Dugalunji Camp, is based on a traditional Aboriginal camp achieved firstly by setting it up on his country and drawing in extended family to

participate, with a clear role for the senior members as Traditional Owners and ethno-architects within the precepts of traditional Aboriginal Law; and second, by employing the Aboriginal camping principle of allocation of individual sleeping spaces (albeit rooms) according to the subdivision of married couples, single men and single women, a principle also used in regional stock camps (see Figures 3 and 4). A third basic principle is the diurnal emphasis on external orientation and activity, which necessitates architectural elaboration and maintenance effort on external spaces around the prefab buildings. Hence the use of spinifex shade roofs, parasol roofs, foliage windbreaks, outdoor furniture, winter hearths, outdoor hot and cold drink facilities, landscaping of shade trees, lawn punctuated with some flower gardens, and the use of partial 'green walls' on semi-enclosed roofed outdoor spaces (vines suspended on wire strands). All of the spaces are hosed down early in the morning to keep free of dust and promote evaporative cooling.

In 2011-12, the camp was being upgraded and its layout entirely transformed according to Colin Saltmere's overall design with architectural assistance from the young firm of James Davidson Architect of Brisbane. The layout (Figure 5) was based on a combination of traditional camp and stock camp principles with an emphasis on external orientation and surveillance to maintain secure moral order. Whilst Colin Saltmere was controlling camp layout, combining pre-fab techniques whilst maximizing local onsite trainee labour and introducing customary bush methods such as spinifex shade roofs, termite soil slabs, earth walls, James Davidson was complementing him as a dual agent with other architectural services such as visual design, construction detailing, overall service integration, engineering integrity and government planning approvals.

A useful comparison can be made here with an analysis by Kingston Heath (2009) of the use of a similar structure to the 'donga' used in the USA, the mobile home. Heath compares mobile homes architecturally embellished by users in Montana and North Carolina. In the snowy Montana mountain region, architectural adaptations included an extra umbrella roof, lower walls of hay bales, and an entry portico airlock to attain improved thermal insulation; whereas in the much warmer Carolina climate, Heath found that user adaptation of the mobile was more preoccupied with architectural symbols denoting social status, wealth and power. In the Dugalunji Camp, the donga has been redesigned as prefab kit to provide assembly experience for Aboriginal trainees and then embellished with a supplementary customary bush elements for climate control; however there has been no attempt to add architectural symbols.

Development of the 'Aboriginal service setting' in the Dugalunji Camp

A critical method of architectural psychology employed by Myuma in its influence of service demand and consumption style, is the use of the 'Aboriginal service setting' integrated into the Camp architecture. As an Aboriginal service setting, the Camp is the remote end point in the service supply chain to interface with the consumer, but is under the control of an Aboriginal facilitator (the Myuma Directors). Several key conditions permit successful Myuma practice between consumers and service-providers. Firstly, the consumer needs of the workforce are self-identified and suppliers are then invited to visit the Camp to fulfill some of those needs, either by educating the employee-consumer about the availability of the service, or by delivering the service in-situ at the Camp. Secondly, such government and private sector agencies must present their services in the Aboriginal controlled 'service setting' which is a culturally appropriate environment for the Aboriginal recipients. This setting 'levels the playing field' and alters the imbalance of power which often characterizes the many government and commercial transactions with Aboriginal people in urban delivery settings, whereby delivery is one-way with prospects of consumer negotiation intimidated or barred by discriminatory practices.

Integrated with setting design is setting management. The Camp is run in a manner reminiscent of the stock camps of Colin Saltmere's earlier adulthood (Figure 4), providing a set of lifeskills and lifestyle discipline. The Myuma day starts with a dawn bell and a cafeteria breakfast; then workers make their own sandwich lunches. Management staff attend a 'pre-start' meeting to plan work activities whilst others perform the morning Camp clean-up. There

is a strong sense of daily order in the Dugalunji Camp, reminiscent of an institution with a defined set of rules and a fixed timetable, but not one that is forcibly imposed (because individuals are free to leave); rather, one in which there is a voluntary engagement. Nevertheless individuals are advised they must accept the consequences of their actions if they break the Camp rules.

The managerial attention to the daily workings of the Dugalunji Camp necessitates a monitoring and maintenance of the individual responsibilities of every participant. Individual morality and harmonious relationships within, contribute to the notion of an overall camp morality with minimal behavioural deviancy. Myuma is able to provide its trainees and workers with a sense of 'at-homeness', of self-confidence in Aboriginal identity, of residential harmony and a social relatedness of order and security, experiences which are often in contrast in particular ways with the dysfunctional aspects of their home community life. The Myuma experiment denies socioeconomic disadvantage as being Aboriginal destiny and aims to lift young Aboriginal adults out of such disadvantage with a prospect that their parents never shared. This is achieved partly through settlement planning, architecture, landscaping and the device of the Aboriginal service setting. The Dugalunji Camp displays a popular Aboriginal aesthetic created by Indigenous people overcoming "extraordinary hurdles to foster emergent social norms and new institutions to negotiate the difficult space between the Market and the Dreaming" (Altman, 2009).

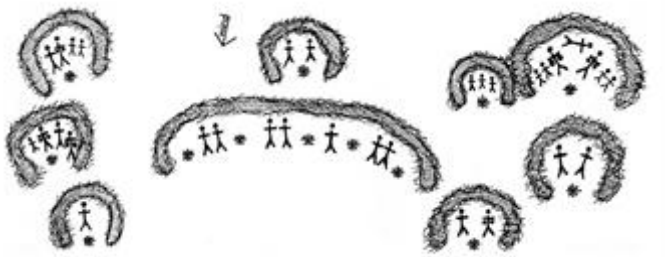

Fig. 3: A traditional Aboriginal nocturnal camp layout inside windbreaks, showing open-air sleeping beside hearths, and the separation of single men from nuclear families.
Source: Paul Memmott

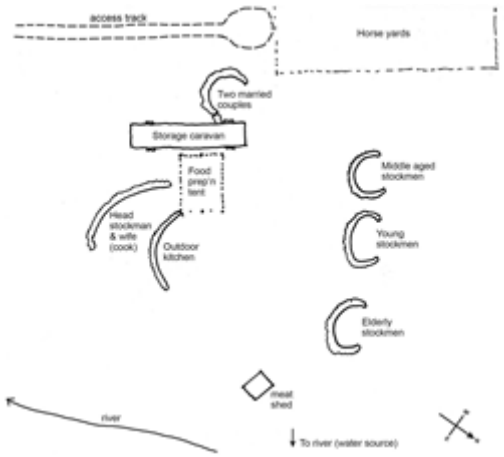

Fig. 4: Schematic Plan of Wunada Stock Camp in c1960, used by Aboriginal stockmen in the cattle mustering season – windbreaks are oriented away from the cold southerly wind.
Source: Colin Satlmere of Myuma Pty Ltd.

Conclusions: Relevance of the Study to Theory Building

A premise of this paper is that production and consumption are inextricably intertwined in the experience of the built environment. For successful architecture in the broadest sense of its definition, both architectural production and service delivery should be designed and cross-linked to satisfy both needs and consumption styles or choices. The encoding of meanings into the work by the producer and decoding of the meanings from the work by the consumer rely on a shared set of cultural concepts and values for successful architecture to result. Because of this relationship, it is argued that quality functioning architecture can be produced by sensitive cultural agents who are not necessarily widely recognized ('capital A') professional architects. To explore this treatise, a piece of designed environment was examined that was implemented by Indigenous producers primarily for indigenous clients, attaining a substantial degree of success in the politics and processes of procurement as well as in the product.

The four sets of properties emphasized in the Memmott/Davidson theory of architecture have been shown to be salient. Despite the inherent symbolism of the name Dugalunji Camp, and its position within a rich cultural landscape of Dreaming sites, this set of geographic meanings was not chosen to be architecturally expressed. Rather it was the simple emphasis on an externally oriented spatially organized architectural setting that has been deployed, combined with strong setting ownership, management and control by Aboriginal staff. A close fit between daily Aboriginal behaviour and environmental design is ensured as design decision-making is firmly in the hands of the Aboriginal leader of Myuma (an ethnoarchitect) and the role of the formal architect is complementary but subsidiary, being one of a 'small a' architect. Thus production and consumption tend to be congruent and based on a common set of lifestyle values generating modest architectural forms, yet with a culturally distinctive local aesthetic, reflecting an Aboriginal demand-driven form of cultural appropriateness.

Fig. 5: Transformed Dugalunji Training & Accommodation Centre.
Source: James Davidson Architect, in collaboration with Colin Saltmere of Myuma Ptd Ltd, 2010.

Fig. 6: Colin Saltmere stone knapping knives under a spinifex bough shed at Myuma training camp, Camooweal
Source: Paul Memmott, 2005

Traditional meanings are more simply expressed through the use of spinifex for traditional shades and windbreaks, and the inclusion of dedicated spaces in the camp for traditional activities such as stone tool knapping, pit roasting of game and manufacture of timber artifacts. The project draws on Georgina Aboriginal, pastoral and mining traditions in the architectural processes of production and consumption. Some of the technologies (e.g.

prefab dongas) are relatively recent (less than 50 years) whilst other customary ones are ancient, many millennia in time depth. The analysis of this set of properties contextualized within the Georgina regional history, provides a revealing explanation of the architectural success of the Dugalunji Camp for its constituents, one that does not draw on the canons of academic architectural history but on the effective convergence of production process, product and consumption style.

The case study is a fusion of customary Aboriginal architectural elements and principles, Australian colonial pastoral traditions, contemporary pre-fabricated transportable buildings practice and Australian building code parameters. As such, some theorists such as Kingston Heath (2009) might consider it a combination of his categories of stabilized vernacular form (or folk), extinct vernacular, and traditional or evolving vernacular, all synthesized through regional filters. However it is our theoretical purpose to ultimately reconcile all building production within a single theoretical frame rather than to perpetuate or isolate the abstract category of 'vernacular'. Architectural developments occur with ever increasing intensity, involving different permutations of agency, together with regional, traditional and global influences, which are a syncretic mixture of ethno-architectural practice with possibly some 'small a' and 'capital A' architectural components. Case study analysis requires careful modeling of these properties so as to understand more about the deep complexity of variation and change, including the multiple time properties of the different architectural elements that are synthesized, such as life expectancy, recyclable prospects, and the depth of tradition of each element used.

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Availability of Data: Data presented in this research are available for scrutiny if so required. In any case, they were used in this paper with the consent of the owners of that data.

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