



Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

Saniga, A;Wilson, A

Title:

Barbara van den Broek. Contributions to the Disciplines of Landscape Architecture, Town Planning and Architecture

Date:

2022

Citation:

Saniga, A. & Wilson, A. (2022). Barbara van den Broek. Contributions to the Disciplines of Landscape Architecture, Town Planning and Architecture. Kroll, D (Ed.) Curry, J (Ed.) Nolan, M (Ed.) Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand., 38, SAHANZ. <https://doi.org/10.55939/a4024pu9ad>.

Persistent Link:

<https://hdl.handle.net/11343/339374>

Barbara van den Broek. Contributions to the Disciplines of Landscape Architecture, Town Planning and Architecture

Andrew Saniga

University of Melbourne

Andrew Wilson

University of Queensland

Keywords

Landscape Architecture,
Modern Architecture
Town Planning
Architectural Education

Abstract

Barbara van den Broek (1932-2001) trained as an architect in Auckland, New Zealand before moving to Brisbane with her husband and fellow architect Joop, where they established an architectural practice. van den Broek went on to run an office as a sole practitioner and took on architecture and landscape architecture projects. Over the course of her career she completed post-graduate diplomas in Town and Country Planning, Landscape Architecture and Education, and a Master of Science – Environmental Studies, and collaborated on a number of key projects in Queensland and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Our paper will build an account of her career. In assessing the significance of her contribution to landscape architecture, planning and architecture in Australasia, it will bring a number of other spheres into the frame: conservation and Australia's environment movement; landscape design and the bush garden; and van den Broek's personal development that included artistic expression, single parenthood, teaching, and the navigation of male-dominated professional environments to develop a practice that contributed to town planning projects in cities across Australia, and made significant contributions to landscape projects in Queensland and PNG.

Introduction

1. Julia Gatley, "Back to the South": Cyril Knight and the Modernisation of the Auckland School of Architecture', in *The Journal of Architecture*, 25: 4, 2001, 396-418, DOI 10.1080/13602365.2020.1766541.

2. Julia Gatley and Lucy Treep, eds., *The Auckland School, 100 years of Architecture and Planning*. Cambridge, Auckland: School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland, 2017, 55.

Barbara van den Broek nee Whitman (1932-2001) was awarded the Diploma in Architecture from Auckland University College in 1956. The Diploma was a four-year qualification and Barbara met her husband Joop van den Broek, who graduated one year earlier in 1955 during the course of her studies. They completed their diplomas while Professor Cyril Knight (1893-1972) was undertaking a modernisation of the School as first Chair and Dean of Architecture, prior to his retirement in 1958.¹ At this time there would have only been three or four other women in her classes.²

Sketch Plans for a House on a steep site on Upland Road in Auckland completed in July 1952 – when Barbara was nineteen years old – were chosen for publication in the Auckland School of Architecture Prospectus of 1953 (Figure 1). The sketch plan proposal was preceded by a research report compiled for a specific family that included measured drawings, presumably of the family's existing house, illustrating the School's move to research and the adoption of realistic briefs. Whitman proposed a simple two-storey low-pitch extruded gable form, with living areas above and dormitory space below, and provision for a nuclear family with three children – emblematic of a commitment to affordable post-war houses – that was supplemented by a linear pavilion on the street, and a tennis court at the bottom of the site, presumably reflecting the aspirations of the family in question. Also noteworthy was her terracing of the sloping terrain and addition of a double carport next to the entrance, outdoor terrace for the upper level, and outdoor patio at ground level. The steepest part of the site above the tennis court was given over to gardens, including a "farmer's garden". The whole landscape was precisely managed, in a portent of things to come.

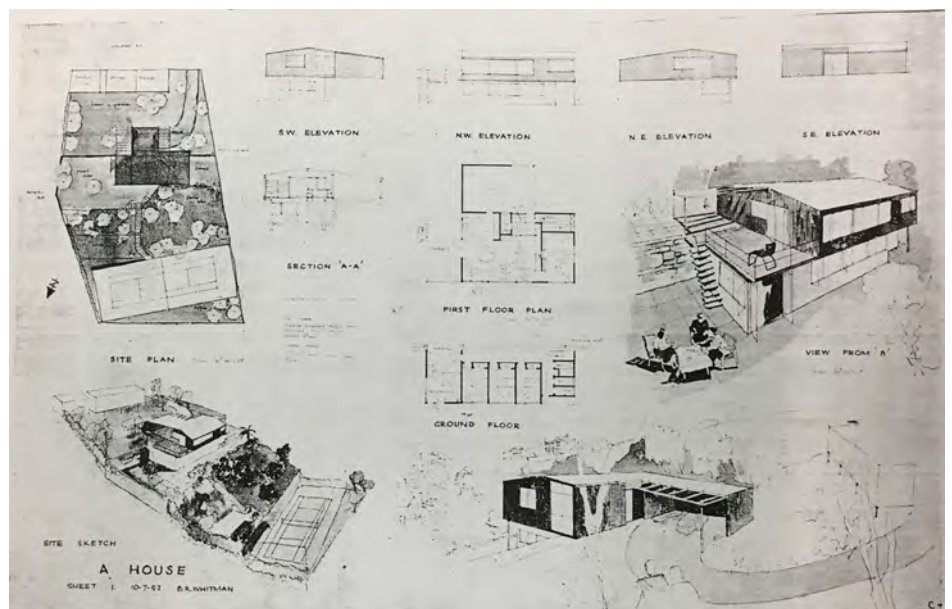


Figure 1: Sketch Plan for a House by Miss BR Whitman (1952). Source: Auckland School of Architecture Prospectus, 1953.

Queensland Landscape Architectural Culture

3. Marion Pennicuik, 'Obituary, Barbara Ruth van den Broek', in *Landscape Australia*, No. 4, 2001, 57.

After graduation Barbara moved with her husband to Brisbane, established an architectural practice, and eventually moved to architectural and landscape practice as a sole practitioner and single parent.³ van den Broek was a founder of the profession of landscape architecture in Queensland and a key contributor to the formation of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA). In the 1960s in Australia the profession was still in its infancy. Moves to institutionalise the profession had begun around 1963 in Melbourne but there were state-based enclaves of landscape-interested people emerging in connected if idiosyncratic ways. Notable was the array of different kinds of practitioners, their different disciplinary backgrounds leading to an uneven way in which landscape architecture began to define itself. This had implications for how practitioners developed their practices, along with the redefinition of the roles of architect/planners, engineers, horticulturalists, foresters and others who had previously engaged in landscape work.

4. Malcolm Bunzli, "Malcolm Bunzli", in Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Queensland Group, *An Evening with Harry Oakman Malcolm Bunzli George Trapnell George Williams*, Occasional Paper No. 1 (Brisbane: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Queensland Group), 16 October 1979, 11.

Unlike some of her more parochial Queensland peers, over time van den Broek developed a national practice, with consultancies in Darwin, Alice Springs, Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra (new towns), Perth, and Papua New Guinea (PNG), only a fraction of which are presented here. She also made formidable contributions to designed landscapes in South-east Queensland and to the establishment of the AILA's Queensland Chapter, the Queensland Association of Landscape Architects (QALA). The first five members of QALA were Arne Fink (1930-1993), Karl Langer (1903-1969), Bernard Ryan (1930-2015), Barbara van den Broek and John Wheeler (dob. 1926).⁴ The QALA endured into the 1970s with van den Broek as Secretary and President between 1973 and 1975. It co-existed with the AILA at the national level and its contribution to the AILA included the drafting of national codes of professional conduct and scales of fees, making Queensland's landscape architects leaders for the nation.

5. George Williams, *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT, Stories from the first 50 years*, ed. George Williams. Unpublished manuscript (Queensland University of Technology Digital Collections. <https://digitalcollections.qut.edu.au/4513/>), 5.

Landscape architectural education in Queensland commenced with a three-year part-time postgraduate Diploma of Landscape Architecture at the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT, later QUT) with first enrolments in the 1967 academic year. Malcolm Bunzli became Course Coordinator and a member of QIT's part-time staff with Karl Langer one of three part-time lecturers, teaching 'History of Landscape Design'⁵ and inspiring students with engaging exercises in interpreting principles of Japanese garden design.⁶ Bunzli was one of a small group of Australians who travelled to England in the 1950s and 60s to take up studies in landscape design at King's College in Newcastle upon Tyne (then a college of Durham University). This course was overseen by UK landscape architect Brian Hackett (1911-1998), whose practice and teaching centred on an ecological approach, so it followed that Bunzli sought to establish a similar approach for the QIT course.⁷ The first intake included fourteen students, predominantly architects, including two of the 'Langer Five' – Bernard Ryan and Barbara van den Broek, who both graduated in 1969.⁸ Lindsay Andrado (formerly a Surveyor) and Beth Wilson (1933-2019) (Consultant Botanist)⁹ were other early graduates. Wilson went on to develop a notable career in landscape architecture in Queensland. Elina Mottram (1903-1996),

6. David Hanger, "Untitled Notes," in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 26.

7. Malcolm Bunzli, "An Article in Two Parts," in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 15.

8. Malcolm Bunzli, "The Environment that Fostered the Impetus and Setting for Formal Introduction of Studies in Landscape Architecture in Queensland," in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 10-11.

9. Williams, *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 7.

10. Williams, *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 7.

11. Malcolm Bunzli, 'The Contribution of Inaugural Graduates', in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 312; Rena Archer, 'Talking with Barbara van den Broek', in *Constructive Times Newsletter of Constructive Women*, The Association of Women Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners and Women of the Building Industry, No. 26, December 1988, 14.

12. Catherine Brouwer, 'Stimulating and Demanding', in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 52; Catherine Brouwer, personal communication, 21 July 2021; Catherine Brouwer, 'Work Resume Schedule of Projects in the office of Barbara van den Broek, Landscape Architects', courtesy of Catherine Brouwer.

13. Lawrie Smith, 'QIT Memories', in *Landscape Architecture Education at QIT/QUT*, 41.

14. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, *The Landscape Architect and the Australian Environment*, AILA, Canberra, 1970.

15. Roelof J Bentham, 'Foreward', in AILA, *Proceedings of the conference: The Landscape Architect and the Australian Environment conducted by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects at the Prince Philip Theatre, the University of Melbourne, 30th August, 1969*, AILA, Canberra, v.

reputedly Queensland's first female registered architect, was another in the inaugural group.¹⁰ George Williams (1940-), who had also studied under Brian Hackett, took over Bunzli's role in 1969 when Bunzli was transferred to Rockhampton to take a position as District Architect.

The solid ecological underpinning delivered to van den Broek via the QIT course permeated her consultancies, particularly the large-scale commissions that involved landscape design, planning and management. Her subsequent qualifications, a Master of Science (Environmental Studies) Griffith University (Griffith) in 1982 and a Graduate Diploma in Education (University of Sydney) in 1988 augmented her architecture, landscape architecture, and planning training and enabled her to translate practice experience into theoretical and educational settings when in the 1980s she taught at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and full time at Sydney's horticulture school at Ryde TAFE in the 1980s and 1990s.¹¹ Through the 1970s she delivered lectures into the QIT course from which she had graduated. Queensland landscape architects such as Catherine Brouwer (graduated 1976) and Lawrence (Lawrie) Smith (graduated 1972) were inspired by van den Broek. Brouwer subsequently worked for van den Broek between 1975-77 when she managed landscape architecture in the office of DJ Dwyer and Associates, and also between 1977-79 in van den Broek's own practice working on landscapes for schools, tertiary institutions, private gardens and projects such as the Parliament House gardens and the museum in PNG.¹² Smith recounted:

Barbara van den Broek was a practical inspiration as she demonstrated and encouraged the detailed aspects of landscape planning and design in her lectures. One memory that has stayed with me is the absolute need to take detailed site information and photographs at the first visit for any project. She recounted how she did a less than adequate survey for a project in New Guinea and had to fly back at personal cost to fill in the blanks – some good cost planning advice not forgotten!¹³

The AILA's inaugural national conference in 1969 was titled: 'The Landscape Architect and the Australian Environment'.¹⁴ The conference raised key issues over the quality of the Australian environment, its conservation and management and was opened by Dutch landscape planner, Roelof J. Bentham (1911-2003), Chairman of the Landscape Planning Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The tenor of Bentham's opening address, which made an impassioned plea for the newly defined Australian professional landscape architect to take up key roles in environmental planning was an aim wholeheartedly supported by AILA initiatives. Bentham outlined the pathway to achieve proficiency in environmental planning, advocating:

The first step to be taken should be, in my opinion, the establishment without delay of a complete training of the highest professional standard in landscape architecture based on ecology. A second one could be the promotion of research in the broad field of the environmental sciences. A third one, the extension of the available legislative and financial equipment and planning machinery.¹⁵

van den Broek developed her professional practice in alignment with the directives laid out by Bentham. Although numbers were generally low in the landscape architecture profession at that time, it is significant that the profession enabled women practitioners such as Beryl Vivienne Mann (1914-1982) in Victoria and van den Broek to take up key roles in education, professionalisation and as sole practitioners. Their commissions included institutional landscapes, landscape reclamation, landscape planning, and conservation and heritage landscapes. All these fields were informed by the disciplines of ecology and conservation.

From Institutional Landscapes to Landscapes Reclaimed: Ecological Underpinnings

The post-World War Two development boom was a catalyst for expansion in higher education. It saw the emergence of powerful new government initiatives under the Australian Universities Commission in the late 1950s and a corresponding push to expand university and college infrastructure to meet increasing demands. In catering for the push for new or redeveloped campuses, all built environment professions stood to gain, including the pioneers of the emerging profession of landscape architecture. Beyond the default position of employing horticulturalists and landscape managers within the Grounds Staff of individual campuses, architects often took the lead with new campus landscape designs. Whether employed directly as staff architects (architects Geoffrey Harrison and Walter Abrahams being cases in point) or external consultants, architect/planners often sought sub-consultants for advice on landscape. In Barbara van den Broek's capacity as a sub-consultant to DJ Dwyer and Associates, as well as in her own practice, she made contributions to the University of Queensland (UQ); Griffith Nathan Campus, Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education (KGCAE); North Brisbane College of Advanced Education (NBCAE); and Ipswich College of Technical and Further Education (ICOTAFE).

16. 'Trees will Beautify University' *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), December 31, 1940, 3.

17. Christopher McVinish and Susan Pechey, *Impressions of the University of Queensland, St Lucia*: University of Queensland Press, 1982, 19.

In 1963, prior to commencing with DJ Dwyer and Associates, van den Broek won a competition to landscape an area around the lagoon, between the Staff House and the Student's Union – formed by the damming of Carmody Creek on the flood plain of the Brisbane River (Meeanjin) – within the grounds of the St Lucia Campus of the UQ now known as UQ Lakes, that was implemented, while James Birrell was the UQ Staff Architect.¹⁶ (Figure 2) The landscape proposal utilised Mt Cootha blue-stone retaining walls, paths, terraces and planting, and featured a curved retaining wall with timber seats adjacent a "stage area for impromptu games" next to the lagoon that referenced the circular figures of Birrell's Staff House (1966) adjacent. Blue-stone was used by Birrell for the landscape retaining walls at Union College (1963-1972). Much of the required planting was done on the weekends by James Birrell and his then nine-year-old daughter.¹⁷

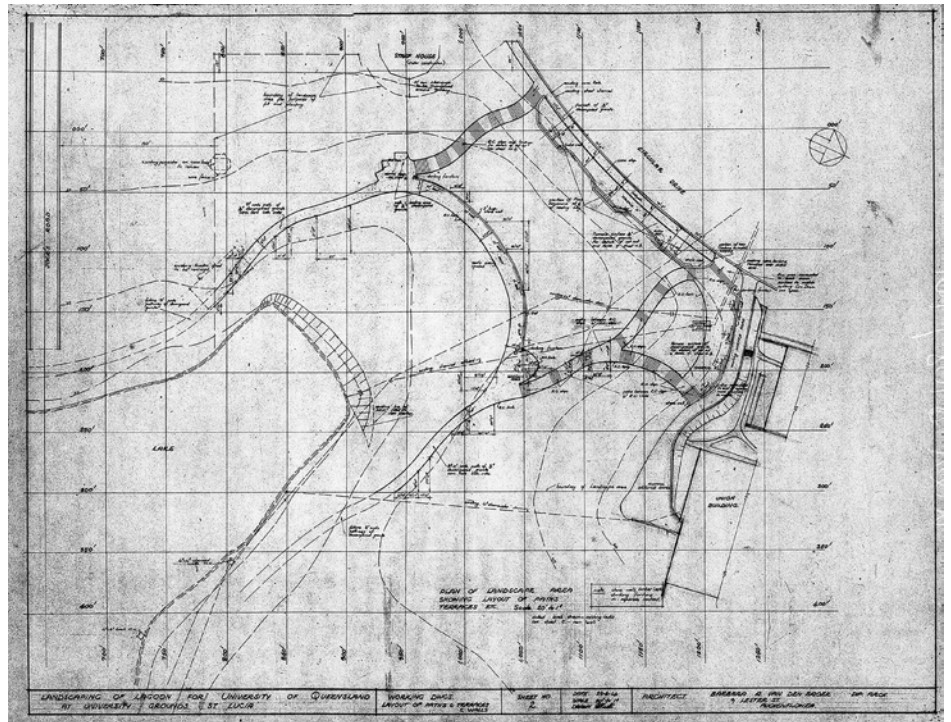


Figure 2: Landscaping of Lagoon for University of Queensland. Working Drawings, Layout of Paths and Terraces and Walls. Source: The University of Queensland, Properties and Facilities.

18. Unpublished findings stemming from research by Andrew Saniga and Susan Holden into the history of Griffith University's landscape, and specifically, the people, events and processes that contextualise the qualities of Griffith's landscape in the relationship to other Australian campuses inspired by endemic qualities of their sites.

19. D.J Dwyer and Associates Landscape Architects, *Griffith University Landscape Report*, Bowen Hills: QLD, 7.

20. *Griffith University Landscape Report*, 6-7.

Notwithstanding the significant in-house contributions at Griffith made by Roger Johnson and Neil Thyer and their well-organised team of grounds staff who worked under Griffith's Site and Buildings Division, the early landscape planning and design by van den Broek has contributed to Griffith's landscape becoming nationally recognised as a significant post-war landscape in the "bush campus" genre¹⁸ (Figure 3). In all van den Broek's institutional commissions she sought to conserve and to promote Australian indigenous landscapes within campuses and their urban contexts. In the Griffith University Landscape Report by DJ Dwyer and Associates Landscape Architects the campus core was kept relatively compact rather than sprawling across the site, an approach that was thought to differ from Griffith's closest comparable post-war campus, that of the University of Newcastle, where the concept for the buildings involved, the report suggested, "losing the buildings in the bush".¹⁹ The approach at Griffith was intended to achieve a stark contrast between the architecture and the indigenous bushland whilst also preserving untouched large portions of the site and restoring the landscape following construction.²⁰ The ultimate goal concerned the ecological, aesthetic and educational value of the site:

21. *Griffith University Landscape Report*, 4.

The presence of a large area of relatively untouched vegetation, particularly when it contains rare species is a valuable asset to the University and also to the city. Apart from its ecological significance the natural vegetation provides a living laboratory and study area for students of Botany and Biology.²¹



Figure 3: Griffith University Nathan Campus, Queensland showing the immediacy of Indigenous landscapes and institutional buildings. Source: Andrew Saniga, 2019.

22. Griffith University Landscape Report, 8.

23. Griffith University Landscape Report, 18.

24. See Griffith University, 'Family Groups' accessed 10 June 2021 at: <https://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/first-peoples>.

In qualifying the ecological approach sought for Griffith it is also important to clarify how the ideas within the Griffith report were of their time in terms of the state-of-the-art in constructed ecologies. In recognising the special qualities of the Indigenous landscape and its ecology, the report proposed modification of landscape ecologies while deferring to the pragmatics of managing a functioning campus within the realm of landscape planning and design even if that meant altering, perhaps permanently, natural systems. It proposed that: "The exclusion of fire from the natural areas, if this proves possible, may have a long term effect on the vegetation which could usefully be studied on the site."²² In a section of the report dedicated to "Bushfire Control" concern about the damage that fire can have on timbered sites was discussed along with the desirability of the establishment of fire breaks either by clearing or mowing or "in the last resort by 'control burning'".²³ These ideas reflect the belief that landscape is a resource for human use or scientific examination, rather than something to be wholly valued in its unmodified state or indeed more significantly, as a cultural landscape managed by the Nathan site's traditional owners, the Yugarabul, Yuggera, Jagera and Turrbal peoples.²⁴

25. See: Ross Wissing, Andrew Saniga, and Robert Freestone, 'Australia's universities are on unceded land. Here's how they must reconcile with First Nations people', *The Conversation*, 29 June 2021, see: <https://theconversation.com/australias-universities-are-on-unceded-land-heres-how-they-must-reconcile-with-first-nations-people-155966>; Also, unpublished findings stemming from research by Andrew Saniga and Susan Holden into landscapes of modern Australian universities.

This is not to suggest that van den Broek was unaware of the significance of Australian Indigenous cultures' ownership of the land. Rather, that Australia in the 1970s and early 1980s had begun to emerge from colonial amnesia with respect to the alienation of Australia's Indigenous people from their own land. A settler mind-set nonetheless prevailed even in relatively enlightened designers such as van den Broek. The current upheaval in our understanding of campus landscapes as occupying Indigenous peoples' lands is one of the most significant shifts in planning and design to have occurred in the last two decades.²⁵

26. Barbara van den Broek, 'North Brisbane College of Advanced Education' in Centre for Environmental Studies, Landscape Australia: *An Exhibition*, The University of Melbourne Archives, Parkville, 1982 [exhibition panel].

The tenor of van den Broek's proposals for Griffith were repeated in other campus work with the completion of pragmatic design and detailing that tended to reflect an efficiency that was linked to van den Broek's skills in architectural detailing and construction. For the NBCAE, completed 1979, she prepared a Landscape Master Plan in response to site planning by Heathwood, Cardillo and Wilson, and emphasised the preservation of valued qualities of the indigenous landscape along with the way the landscape could support institutional activities: "amphitheatre, outdoor teaching areas, shelter sheds, paths and outdoor seating."²⁶ In addition to the masterplan she designed and documented

27. Barbara van den Broek, 'North Brisbane College of Advanced Education'.

28. Barbara van den Broek and John Andrews International Pty Ltd, 'Landscape Works Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education' in Centre for Environmental Studies, *Landscape Australia: An Exhibition*, The University of Melbourne Archives, Parkville, 1982 [exhibition panel].

29. Barbara van den Broek and John Andrews International Pty Ltd, 'Landscape Works Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education'.

30. Catherine Brouwer, Interview with Andrew Saniga, 16 July 2021.

a number of parts of the campus including the Community Building, Specific Learning Spaces Building, General Spaces Building along with car parks and sports fields.²⁷

At KGCAE, completed 1979, that van den Broek designed in association with architects John Andrews International, again she emphasised the natural resources of the site "for teaching and recreation purposes, in particular...appropriate sites for field study purposes, i.e. areas of biological and geological interest."²⁸ Among a number of functional and intermediate spaces she designed a courtyard associated with the Educational Resource Centre (Figure 4) which formed a focus for the site, providing seating, planting, ground form and aspect responsive to the microclimate in a solution that involved "a change of level, stepping down and opening out to the North-East breezes and the view of the city, with walls and planting creating opportunities for large gatherings or secluded seating."²⁹ The resultant robust landscape detailing was characteristic of van den Broek's approach across a range of her projects albeit with different configurations and materials palettes. Low-backed timber seats were angular to facilitate conversation and combined with red brick free-standing walls "to give structure and definition and to anchor different parts [of the site]", carefully interlaced with plant material for shade and comfort, all prioritising human use.³⁰

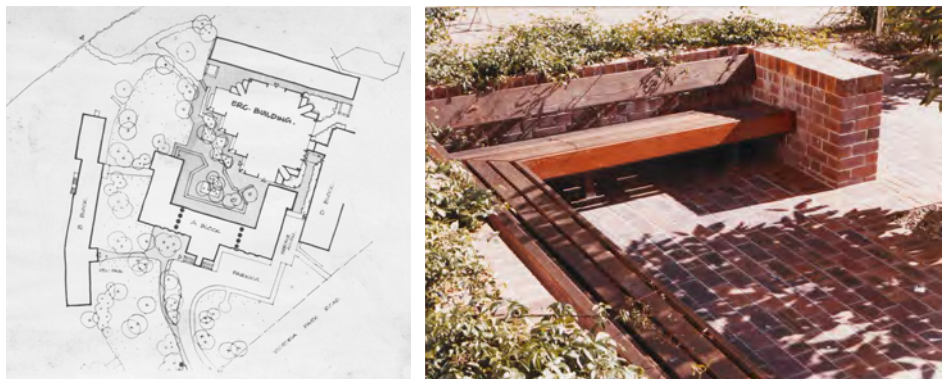


Figure 4: Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education, Queensland, by Barbara van den Broek and John Andrews International drawn by Catherine Brouwer. Source: Centre for Environmental Studies, *Landscape Australia: An Exhibition*, 1982.

31. Loder and Bayly, Barbara van den Broek, 'Narangba Quarry' in Centre for Environmental Studies, *Landscape Australia: An Exhibition*, The University of Melbourne Archives, Parkville, 1982 [exhibition panel].

Two further projects, Narangba Quarry and the Ironbark Gully Picnic Area, help cast her practice as one closely aligned with reclaiming Australian indigenous landscapes and responsiveness to place. Landscape remediation at the time tended to accept the inevitability of infrastructure and that the role for landscape architecture was to soften the scars of progress rather than to oppose development outright. For Narangba Quarry, a project for which a rezoning application had been rejected by the Caboolture Shire Council partly on the basis of visual impact, van den Broek worked in association with planning, engineering and landscape consultants Loder and Bayly to complete a visual analysis aimed at identifying ways to reduce the visibility of the proposed quarry from key viewpoints along roads in the surrounding landscape. Her method for Narangba involved manual analysis techniques. Evidently the findings of their report were met with success as the Boral quarry operates on the site today albeit at the loss of a local prominent feature, "the central portion and approximately 40 metres from the top of Franz Mountain."³¹

32. Catherine Brouwer, Interview with Andrew Saniga, 16 July 2021.

The Ironbark Picnic Area which van den Broek completed in association with Environment Science & Services for the Brisbane Forest Park Authority in 1981 provided both site planning and detailed designs for the layout of picnic areas and car parks. The design detailing for the picnic area shelter was robust and open with diagonal slatted screen walls and a timber pergola. It is evident that van den Broek had a solid knowledge of plants and used plants creatively yet pragmatically in her designs – the shelter was designed to include indigenous climbing plants at each of its corners, probably the endemic *Pandorea jasminoides* or Bower of Beauty (Figure 5), that in time would partially cover the structure and envelop the visitor. Brouwer noted van den Broek's concern for facilitating congregation in sensitive ways, hence the screens as a form of partitioning for privacy when needed, that avoided awkward circulation if for example two independent families were picnicking at the same time, whilst also ensuring a sense of openness that connected visitors to the landscape setting.³²



Figure 5: Ironbark Gully Picnic Area, Queensland, by Barbara van den Broek and Environment Science & Services for the Brisbane Forest Park Authority in 1981. Source: Centre for Environmental Studies, *Landscape Australia: An Exhibition*, 1982.

Landscape Assessment, Planning and Conservation

33. For a detailed discussion of the impacts of USA-based VMS on the Australian professions see: Andrew Saniga, *Making Landscape Architecture in Australia*, UNSW Press: Sydney, 2012, 223-230.

34. "Waigani "Prejudice" by 13 Architects *Papua New Guinea Post-Courier* (Port Moresby), January 9, 1976, 3.

35. Rena Archer, "Talking with Barbara van den Broek", in *Constructive Times Newsletter of Constructive Women*, The Association of Women Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners and Women of the Building Industry, No. 26, December 1988, 14.

There is evidence to suggest that van den Broek was in-step with the emerging field of landscape assessment and land use planning utilising GIS-based applications that were being advanced via various public service bodies and academic research centres. van den Broek would have been aware of the emerging field of digitally-aided viewshed analysis from the US including Visual Management Systems (VMS) and later Geographic Information Systems (GIS), taken up in academies and public services across Australia, including in Queensland.³³ Her appreciation of landscape assessment principles is revealed by her research project for the Waigani City Centre (WCC) in PNG – based on the Waigani Town Centre Plan commissioned in 1971 designed by James Birrell (1928-2019), with whom she had collaborated at UQ, and who had established an office in PNG – which she submitted in May 1980.³⁴ Her work on Waigani led to a major commission for the gardens of the new Parliament House in Port Moresby a project she considered to be one of her most important works, despite some shortcomings due to her not supervising the project's construction.³⁵ She made site visits to PNG in November 1977, August 1978 and May 1979, that culminated in the research report *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre*, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea prepared at the School of

36. Barbara van den Broek, *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, School of Australian Environmental Studies, Griffith University, 1980, 2.

37. van den Broek, *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, 103-104.

38. van den Broek, *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, 37.

39. R.G. Burton-Bradley, 'The Psychological Dimension' in P Sack (Ed) *The Problem of Choice*, Australian National University Press, 1973.

40. van den Broek, *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, 37.

41. Barbara van den Broek quoted by Rena Archer, 'Talking with Barbara van den Broek', in *Constructive Times Newsletter of Constructive Women*, The Association of Women Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners and Women of the Building Industry, No. 26, December 1988, 14.

42. van den Broek, *Developing a Land Use Plan for Waigani City Centre, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*, 92.

43. Pennicuiik, 'Obituary. Barbara Ruth van den Broek'.

Australian Environmental Studies at Griffith.³⁶ Her research project gave her the opportunity to be considered by WM Philips Architects for the Parliament House commission.

The main focus of van den Broek's proposals for WCC was the landscape and environment. She made fifteen recommendations that were highly specific and spanned ecological, aesthetic, functional and management aspects.³⁷ However, the WCC project also reveals van den Broek's emerging appreciation of the role that Indigenous cultures within PNG might play in establishing a landscape architectural response. This emerged throughout her analysis and when referring to state-of-the-art landscape assessment techniques noted:

Parametric tests have been devised to determine the validity of the ratings, and to remove, as far as possible, the element of subjectivity. Whether subjectivity can or should be removed is open to question. (Author's comment)

These problems, while significant in the Australian context, are much more difficult when considered in conjunction with a different culture, with different attitudes to land, to vegetation, and, presumably to aesthetics.

Attitudes to land have been considered in Section F.07-1 Land Tenure; attitudes to vegetation is Section H.02-3; aesthetics have not been considered from the viewpoint of the indigenous [sic] culture, all comments on aesthetics are the author's subjective judgements...³⁸

In her report, van den Broek quoted R.G. Burton-Bradley who contributed a chapter entitled "The Psychological Dimension" in Peter Sack's (ed.) *The Problem of Choice* (1973)³⁹ and who gives an account of PNG cultures' artistic, recreational and traditional characteristics. She concluded her own study by declaring: "The discussion on aesthetics of the site: Landscape character and views in and out, is from a European viewpoint."⁴⁰ This cognisance of the designer's cultural values, which she subsequently brought to her practice was enlightened for the times. Later when interviewed she reflected: "I am aware that I cannot avoid impressing a personal value system while working and so I am sure that it must be coming through my teaching and design work."⁴¹ Her report reviews aspects of PNG's Indigenous and migrant population and society in the context of the pragmatics of the consultant responding to the needs and demands for a new city centre. In her conclusions she states presciently:

The difficulties facing Europeans attempting to make plans for other cultures have been pointed out, with the additional difficulty of lack of information. However, development is taking place and decisions need to be made, based on the widest discussion possible, with the best information available.⁴²

In these ways Barbara van den Broek contributed to a groundswell of change. This is expressed in the shift in her practice toward conservation activities from the late 1980s indicating a deep concern for ethics and sustainability.⁴³ In 1988 she became involved in a group called 'Constructive Women' at the invitation of landscape architect and academic Catherin Bull. When asked to reflect on her own professional

44. Archer, 'Talking with Barbara van den Broek', 14.

or personal 'credo' she stated: "CONSERVATION. [sic] Not only natural but also historic conservation. This is certainly my main interest."⁴⁴ When asked in 1988 what she wanted to get out of being in such a group she responded:

45. Archer, 'Talking with Barbara van den Broek', 15.

I would like to be more active and outspoken on environmental and public issues. This is because the Institute of Architects is not particularly active. But being not very active myself I accept that people have their time committed...[sic] An organisation can be only as active as its members are.⁴⁵

van den Broek served on the National Trust Parks Committee and in response to Rena Archer recounting a story of taking the initiative to plant a tree in a public park (Watt Park, Lavender Bay, North Sydney) she observed:

46. Archer, 'Talking with Barbara van den Broek', 15.

The idea of planting trees is excellent. Getting kids, perhaps kindergartens or schools to plant and then to take care of them. It happens already but not to the extent it could. Coming back to the empowerment question I think that the clue is in listening to what people – clients – want.⁴⁶

Conclusion

Thoughtfulness, robustness, and forthrightness underscore the career and design expression of Barbara van den Broek. At the cusp of widespread change, she was a progenitor for a new landscape architectural culture with antecedents that span Indigenous landscapes, Indigenous cultures, conservation and heritage practice. van den Broek's contributions, only briefly touched on here, were sometimes tentative steps, but they build a picture of a pioneering landscape architect, a reflective practitioner who was not content to accept the status quo in a profession that in the 1960s and 70s was often 'needy' in terms of self-gratification and self-promotion. Her engagement with academia reflects her capacity to question and innovate in an emerging landscape architecture field. In the competitive world of professions within which Barbara van den Broek certainly weighed-in, but also in terms of the survival of her family, for which she was wholly dedicated, she managed to establish an independent practice built on respect for Indigenous cultures and the environment, qualities we aspire to today.