Eminent architect Robin Gibson, designer of the Queensland Cultural Centre, has died

by: Dot Whittington From: The Courier-Mail March 29, 2014 1:00AM

The architect who broke new ground and turned Brisbane into a world-class city when he came up with the concept for a cultural precinct, has died aged 84.

Hailed as one of the most significant contributors to architectural excellence in Queensland in recent history, Robin Gibson was the mastermind behind converting Queen St into a pedestrian mall as well as creation of the Queensland Cultural Centre.

He first had to convince government of the value of a Queensland cultural precinct before designing buildings that were different to, and yet complementary of, each other.

"Robin won a competition to design the new Queensland art gallery in 1971. It took another three years for him to convince the government to do the whole project," director of the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust and architect Russell Kerrison, a close associate of Mr Gibson, said.

"At the time, there was no theatre in Brisbane, no opera facility, the state library was inadequate and there was a separate project for a new museum on the drawing board.

"Robin recognised this as an opportunity to combine all those facilities in one location and persuaded the government that an integrated cultural centre would be better than individual institutions dotted around town."

Mr Kerrison said there was no similar combination of integrated cultural facilities anywhere else in the world at the time and possibly since.

"The Lincoln Centre in New York is wonderful but it is only performing arts, whereas Brisbane has the performing arts complex plus a science and natural history museum, a library and a fine art gallery all in the one place," Mr Kerrison said.

"Robin was one of the few architects who stood above the crowd and fought for what he believed in. The job was also to persuade the authorities to do things out of the ordinary and Robin could do that."
Mr Gibson graduated from the University of Queensland in 1954 and moved to London, where he worked with a number of leading architectural firms for three years before returning to Brisbane to establish his own architectural practice.

While he worked on a number of projects that changed the face of Brisbane, including Wintergarden, Anzac Square, St Stephen’s Cathedral restoration and extension, Brisbane Arcade and various university buildings, the Queensland Cultural Centre was his crowning achievement.

“It was very innovative for its time as no other combination of cultural facilities had been designed and built in such an integrated manner,” Mr Kerrison said.

“Most architects would consider designing the state art gallery or an opera house or a science museum as a great achievement, but Robin did them all.

“Each of them is a complex building design and he got across the lot.”

His philosophy was that a good building respected its users and accommodated the needs of those outside its walls.

Robin Gibson won the Sir Zelman Cowen Award for public buildings in 1982 for the Queensland art gallery design, the same year he was named Queenslander of the Year.

He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1983 and the Advance Australia Award in 1988.

Funeral arrangements are yet to be announced.
First glimpse at Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Village, designed by Arkhefield, ARM Architecture and Archipelago

27 March, 2014 By: Nathan Johnson

The first designs for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Village were unveiled this week, the Queensland government releasing details of the master plan, flythrough video and artists’ impressions of the buildings.

Late last year it was announced that Arkhefield, ARM Architecture & Archipelago would be the architects for the Games Village and will work with Grocon to develop the site.

The transformation of 29-hectare site will begin in 2015 with the construction of the Commonwealth Games Village to deliver essential accommodation and services in time for the 6,500 athletes and officials in Games-mode.

The Games Village will occupy seven hectares of the Parklands site and will include 1,200 permanent apartments and townhouses and a neighbourhood retail centre.

After the games, the infrastructure will be transformed into a new mixed-use community.

This will include a new residential community and a business hub for health and knowledge, commercial and retail development. This will be integrated with the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct which is already open for business.

The Commonwealth Games Village has been architecturally designed and captures the essence of the sub-tropical environment of Queensland’s south coast with special attention being paid to sunlight, shading, natural air flows and water.

Minister for Tourism, Small Business, Events and the Commonwealth Games, Jann Stuckey said the Games Village will be an iconic hub during, and long after, the Games have finished.

“After the Games, Parklands will provide significant infrastructure as it becomes home to people and new businesses as part of a modern, mixed-used community which will include residential and a new business hub for health and knowledge, commercial and retail development.”

Queensland Premier Campbell Newman lauded the “quality of the architecture”, telling the Brisbane Times it will be a sought-after place to live after the Games.

“It’s very high quality, great urban planning and great public open space, with seven hectares of the 29-hectare site being open space,” he said.
Site for the 2018 Commonwealth Games Village. Image: QLD GOV.

Artist impression of the Commonwealth Games Village. Image: QLD GOV.
Artist impression of the Commonwealth Games Village. Image: QLD GOV

Master plan of games village. Image: QLD GOV.
Gathering of tribes

Peppermint Bay by Terroir, on the Derwent River south of Hobart, was the venue for the 2014 AAA Awards presentation. Image: Peter Hyatt

UTAS lecturer Helen Norrie reflects on the recent AAA Awards night, and the value of hosting big national events out of town, in the regions.

It’s a tribal game, architecture, and we are all as keen as each other to see our state/city/practice represented in a kind of Building Best and Fairest roll call. In the March/April 2014 edition of Architecture Australia, editorial director Cameron Bruhn made reference to the surreptitious State of Origin-like rivalry that surrounds each edition of the Australian Institute of Architects’ national journal of record. Although one might be accused of merely ‘filling the quota’, balancing the coverage of projects and events around the country allows us to understand the broad field of issues and concerns that form the context for contemporary practice.

Similarly, those of us who live beyond the metropolitan boundaries of Sydney or Melbourne have welcomed the recent decision to host key events in other centres, including: the National Conference and National Awards; the National Speaker Series which brings national and international guests to centres across the country; as well as other events like the North Queensland Regional Conference in Cairns last year. The commitment to these events signals an engagement with life in the ‘regions’ in varying ways.
So, imagine the delight in Tasmania when the Australian Achievement in Architecture Awards (AAA Awards) were held in the south this year. This was amplified by the celebration of so many of the locals in the honours list. Two of the five Dulux Study Award recipients are UTAS graduates: Jenna Rowe from the Masters of Architecture programme, and Ben Milbourne from Bachelor of Environmental Design. National President, Paul Berkemeier honoured the memory and work of the very short life of another UTAS graduate (and Milbourne’s business partner), Ross Langdon, who represented his practice Regional Associates on the ground in Africa.

Phil Harris and Adrian Welke generously acknowledged that Troppo’s Gold Medal was shared by all the partners, including Geoff Clark, who manages to be both the director of Troppo Townsville and a senior lecturer at the School of Architecture and Design at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). In the state-by-state medal tally, I think Tassie clearly came out on top!

It was an intimate evening, with just over 100 guests, and a location that gave all the chance to be completely immersed in a stunning local environment. The 40-minute cruise down the Derwent River on a spectacular autumn evening was a perfect prelude to dinner at Peppermint Bay, a restaurant designed by Hobart and Sydney-based practice Terroir, that looks out to Bruny Island. We were joined by celebrated Finnish architect and theorist, Juhani Pallasmaa, who had become an honorary Tasmanian during his two week stay hosted by UTAS and the Utzon Workshop on Bruny Island.

It was a great homecoming for the expats, who were able to celebrate their awards with family and friends, and an inspiration for other local practitioners to put their work forward for awards at a national level.

The night also revealed the talents of the AIA Tasmania Chapter President, Andrew Williamson, whose comic timing and laconic charm were a perfect match for the event. The continuing efforts of the Institute to engage with the regions is to be congratulated and encouraged, so a huge thanks to Paul Berkemeier, David Parken, Kahlea McGeechan and the Institute Events team, and Jen Nichols and the Tasmanian Chapter for bringing the AAA Awards south.

Words Helen Norrie Images Peter Hyatt Posted 26 Mar 2014 Tags 2014 Australian Achievement in Architecture Awards
Strong Australian contingent in running for International Property Awards 2014

27 March, 2014 Nathan Johnson 0 comments

BPM, Grimshaw Architects, JUO and Kavellaris Urban Design have all been named as winners of honours in the Architecture category at the 2014 International Property Awards Asia Pacific region.

Open to residential and commercial property professionals from around the globe, the International Property Awards celebrate high levels of achievement by companies operating in all sectors of the property and real estate industry.

Every year a select number of winners are placed under further examination and just one from each category goes forward to represent the Asia Pacific region in the International Property Awards. They then compete against all the other regional winners to determine the overall ‘World’s Best’ in each category.

Australia’s BPM (10 St. Andrews Street), Grimshaw Architect (Highpoint Shopping Centre), JUO (Breust Residence) and Kavellaris Urban Design (Spectrum) have all been nominated for consideration in the Architecture category at the regional competition.

Australian interior designers, Archertec Interiors (Katz Residence), Geyer (BHP Billiton Global Head Office) and Lexis Design (Stewart Apartment, Point Piper) were also nominated in the Interior Design category, one of which will join the successful architect at the international award ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on May 8-9.
The teams will learn whether they have won major awards or high commendation on the presentation evening and awards dinner to be held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on May 9.

Stuart Shield, President of the International Property Awards says, “The Asia Pacific region has the best track record for companies that go on to receive an International Property Award. This sets the bar so high; other regions have a hard task ahead if they hope to outshine Asia Pacific in the finals.”

Judging is carried out through a meticulous process involving a panel of over 70 experts covering every aspect of the property industry.
Other Australian entries shortlisted, from the Real Estate and Property Development categories, were: BPM, Brookfield, CBRE, Central Equity, Charter Hall and Cbus Property, Crown Group, Jones Lang LaSalle, Meriton Group, Pace Development Group, Psaros Property Group, Savills Australia, The GPT Group, Unique Estates Australia.