



Christ College Student Residence

Address Baintree Avenue Sandy Bay Tasmania

Practice Hartley Wilson and Bolt, Architect

Designed 1959 Completed 1960

History & Description

Christ College was the first of four residential colleges planned for the hill at the top western edge of the newly established campus for the University of Tasmania. Built for the Anglican Church, the initial buildings accommodated 50 students & incorporated a chapel, library, games room, common rooms, infirmary, offices and housing for eight members of staff. The partner in charge was Dirk Bolt & the design of Stage 1 incorporated four distinct buildings that are grouped to form a central elevated courtyard, approached from the northern lower slope up angled steps. From the top of the steps is a framed vista taking in the city of Hobart & the Derwent estuary beyond. The courtyard also functions as a primary circulation space. Stage two, 1963, provided additional dormitory buildings extending the college in a 'Z' plan further up the site with circulation via semi-enclosed gardens at intersections between buildings & to the west.

The college is constructed of load-bearing face concrete blockwork, both externally & internally, with insitu concrete structural elements, notably adjacent to the entry steps. Block on edge 'breezeways' in the east façade provides screening to the library & chapel room in the east wing. The flush non-masonry façades have a structural frame clad in copper & were planned using the Golden Mean to determine the proportions of the openings & fixed white painted fibre-sheet infill-panels. The clear finished Huon Pine window frames, now painted white, are set flush with the outer face of the blockwork. Flashings & roof plumbing is in copper. The integration of landscape & building through carefully articulated non-orthogonal planning is exemplary & recalls the Säynätsalo Town Hall, 1952, by Alvar Aalto. Bolt built in unadorned concrete blockwork, both internally & externally, as it was a low-cost basic material that was accepted for what it was, & used higher-cost materials & items confined to things that people operated & touched such as doors, windows & furniture. This design language was analogous to that of Max Bill & his design for the Hochschule fur Gestaltung, Ulm, 1955, & became strongly associated with a distinctive Tasmanian Architecture during the 1960's.

Dirk Bolt immigrated to Australia from The Netherlands in 1950 as an undergraduate. He is considered to be one of Tasmania's notable architects having designed a number of exemplary buildings in Hobart during the decade he was in practice with Hartley Wilson. He later designed important work in Canberra in the 2nd half of the 1960s, & then major urban projects internationally with the United Nations. His architecture in Tasmania has been described as both 'rationalist' and 'romantic'.

Statement of Significance

Christ College Student Residence is a significant example of a building that demonstrates a theme of modern architecture with planning of cubic shapes of plain smooth wall areas, contrasting textures, & large areas of glass. The open hill-side setting is distinctive of the planning intentions of the university at the time. The setting & the architecture combine to produce a building of integrity, illustrative of modern architecture. This approach was innovative at that time in Australia.

Criteria Applicable

- N2. Significant heritage value in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics
- N3. Important heritage value in establishing a high degree of creative achievement.



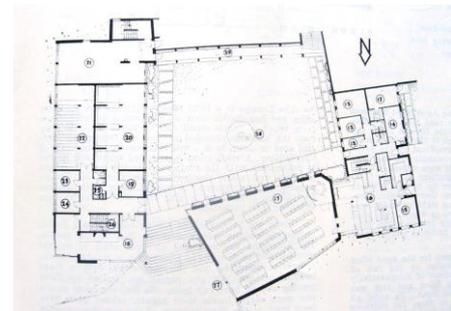
North view with central steps & dining hall to right



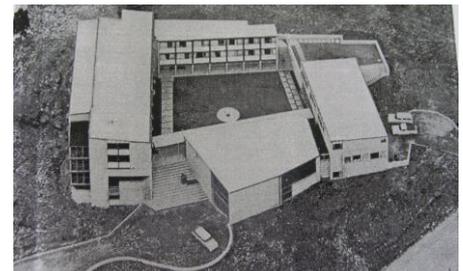
Courtyard view, note southern walkway now enclosed.



West view of college



Plan of 1st stage



Model of 1st stage
Source: Leigh Woolley & Paul Johnston