This four storey pedestrian bridge over Post Office Place links the Myer Emporium (Melb) Bourke and Lonsdale Street Stores. Construction is steel, r. conc. encased; with floor panels of precast conc, and a curtain wall which is literally a curtain in that it is suspended from the roof. Tomkins, Shaw & Evans, archts; H.F. Yuncen Pty. Ltd., bldrs. This is the first structure over a public thoroughfare to be approved by the Melb City Council. Myer's will pay a yearly fee for a "stratum licence." The separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic that this bridge achieves should of course be a commonplace necessity in the transport jungle of our cities. Cost is the usual argument put forward against such proposals. It is good to have it proved in at least one example, for at least one store, that the free travel of walkers above street level is commercially expedient.

Aptly summing up the ambivalent state of architectural thought that has crept into the "modern movement", Alan Colquhoun in an article entitled "Symbolic and literal aspects of technology" in Architectural Design, November 1962, writes: "One of the remarkable facts about the architecture of the mid-twentieth century is that so many of its buildings exploit heavy and traditional methods of construction. From the point of view of building technique this would seem to be a regression from the ideals of the early period of the modern movement, which aimed at an expression of the lightness inherent in tensile structure and synthetic materials." "It is as if the urge to create the world anew by means of structures which had the lightness and tenuousness of pure thought had given way to the desire to create solid hide-outs of the human spirit in a world of uncertainty and change, each one in itself a microcosm of the ideal world."
Seven of the submissions from Melbourne architects for the design of the State Public Offices were described last month in C-S No. 125. The remaining seven appear in this issue.

Amongst all the submissions, this design from the office of Stephenson & Turner was, for purely sculptural interest, outstanding. Hefty, horizontally sliced and battered sandwiches of windows and spandrels are stacked to form four towers of office accommodation distributed Kahn-wise about two service core stacks. Assessed even in terms of abstract sculpture the total group has faults of formal organisation that are downright ugly e.g. the many gloomy re-entrant angles to the central stacks and the connections within the cluster, which look too complicated, both visually and functionally.

By contrast, Stephenson and Turner's other submission is timid and reticent to the point of vapidity. In a firm as large and widespread as S & T's it is perhaps inevitable that their different design teams would produce buildings founded on what would appear to be irreconcilable attitudes towards architecture. For architects working in other firms such freedom of expression may seem enviable. To encourage innovation within the office team, and to resist establishing an "image" for sake of commercialism, these are admirable qualities; but when the results are so disparate in apparent intention and effect as the two designs above, a dubious note is suggested — can this be due not to tolerance, but to unconcern?

Each of the remaining entries kept very closely in plan form and volume to those drawn in the Conditions. Consequently in each case the vista looking eastwards up Collins Street towards the Old Treasury would have been closed by the extensive facade of the prescribed 10-storey block, looming above and beyond the Treasury roof-line. No matter how well-organised or attractive in itself this facade was made the effect of a massive backdrop could only have been unsatisfactory. For the architects who accepted these basic elements i.e. the location of each block and its number of floors — the design process became primarily a formal exercise in fenestration, roof outline, base and corner detailing, hardly to be called a really architectural competition.

This submission from Buchan Laird & Buchan Pty. Ltd. shows a good grasp of robust and sympathetic detailing — deeply splayed window openings, firm structural expression, particularly in the ground floors, and clear roof lines uninterrupted by the casually neglected bulges of lift and plant stacks that disfigured so many of the other designs. The wedge-tailed ends of the block facing MacArthur Street make a decisive transition round the corner to the connecting link with the 10 storey block — which again in most of the other designs was left in a rather carelessly squalid manner to look after itself.

The top photo shows the Forbes Golf Club, N.S.W. at the stage in which architects were called in to produce a complete design and supervise further construction. Lower photo shows the complete interior, with box-plywood trusses at 12 ft. centres, spanning 73 ft. with a cantilever each end of 10 ft. 6 in. For this skilful and imaginative use of plywood construction the architects, Clarke Gazzard and Yeomans, were awarded the James F. Brett Plywood Prize last year. Completed bldg cost £68,000. Walmac Construction Pty. Ltd, bldrs.
From the office of Best Overend, a pretentiously aspiring effort, which when carefully studied in the associated drawings shows some ingenious planning and sun-control devices, but the whole concept is marred by an ingenuous monumentalism.

Leslie M. Perrott & Partners, whose submission is shown above, preferred that C-S did not write about their entry unless they could read a copy prior to publication. Proclaiming the freedom of the press to express some or no comment, from C-S, no comment.

From Bernard Evans Pty. Ltd., an unpretentious but uninspired design, an almost literal three-dimensional projection of the plan shown in the Conditions.

This submission from Meldrum and Partners adopts a strict rectangular relationship between high and low blocks, so that the MacArthur Street frontage becomes a public square, and many of the formal problems of joining curved and rectangular plans are eliminated. This simple site arrangement is enjoyably clear. Less clear is the motive for the window motif.

To celebrate Canberra's 50th anniversary a stamp is to be issued commemorating architect Walter Burley Griffin. He also received tribute in the lead article, by Neil Clerehan, F.R.A.I.A., in the Literary Supplement of the Melb. "Age". Hard on these tributes came news of a battle that seemed like a repetition in a minor key, of the intervention of public authorities that plagued Burley Griffin during his Canberra sojourn. A 300 acre sub-division (the Milleara Estate, at Avondale Heights, 7½ miles from Melbourne) was designed by Walter Burley Griffin in 1927, and due to a lack of water supply never developed beyond a half-dozen houses built years ago. Keilor Council (none too popular with its citizens at the moment due to enormous rate increases recently proclaimed) wants to re-divide the area, and has sought assistance from the M & MBW. Defects of the subdivision are claimed by Keilor Council to be an uneconomical and "considerable number of small open spaces . . . inaccessible except by narrow access ways, and consequently, ineffective." Also "Many of the original spaces, because of their location behind house lots, would, in fact, be worse than useless and could become rubbish dumps and fire hazards". Yet the area of parks and playgrounds in Burley Griffin's sub-division is 43.5 acres, and in the council's proposed plan 3.5 acres. Naturally the earlier plan would require more careful maintenance and produce less revenue from rates. The Avondale Heights Progress Association which wants the original sub-division maintained has stated through their secretary, Mrs. Grace Donner, "We prefer Burley Griffin's idea of gracious living to Keilor Council's." In the meantime, Keilor Council refuses to issue building permits anywhere on the estate. Plan of the original sub-division is shown below.
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