

*Clare Design: Works 1980–2015* edited by Jackie Cooper and Haig Beck (Oro Editions with UME Publications, 2015).

## Clare Design: Works 1980–2015

**A new monograph explores the most important projects by Lindsay and Kerry Clare, and highlights the significance of their work beyond Queensland.**

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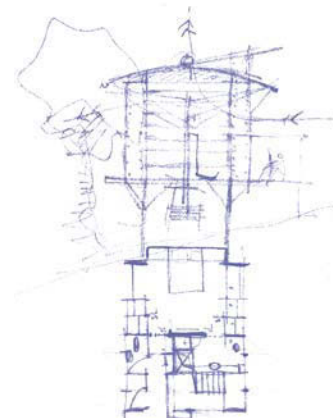
Architecture exudes from the pages of the *UME* monograph *Clare Design: Works 1980–2015*, offering insights into the lineage and legacy of Queensland modernism. In this latest *UME* publication from Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper on the practice of Lindsay and Kerry Clare, what resonates most are plans, sections, sketches, details and glossy images of selected built and unbuilt projects, generously proffered alongside essays from Beck and Cooper and explanations by the Clares of each individual work selected for inclusion.

Surprisingly, projects are presented alphabetically, not chronologically, such that the Goetz House, designed in 1985 when Lindsay and Kerry Clare were practising as Lindsay Clare Villari Architects, is followed immediately by the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA), completed in 2006 when both Clares were design directors at Architectus. It also means that the earliest house selected for inclusion, the White Residence (1980–81), is the very last project presented.

A consequence is that the reader is

presented with a succession of projects of varying scales, typologies, methods of procurement and contexts that share a sensibility, some might say an aesthetic. Beck and Cooper call attention to the freshness of each work regardless of its position in the chronology of practice, a resistance to the vagaries of style and fashion and the sustained commitment to a set of key principles. At the Brisbane book launch Lindsay Clare self-deprecatingly expressed a concern that such consistency might suggest a lack of development. A quick flick through the pages of this monograph might suggest an evenness, but to dismiss the work on such simplistic grounds would be to misrepresent its significance, a significance that extends beyond Queensland, which nevertheless is where it all started.

It was a contribution from Gabriel Poole at the Brisbane launch that reminded those present of the vigorous strand of Queensland's architectural culture that has given rise to practices such as the Clares', a lineage which is sustained through the work of other Queensland architects who were in turn mentored by the Clares, such as Richard Kirk and Annabel Lahz. The reclusive but still active Poole teased the audience with stories about the two young students who began their careers in his practice in the early 1970s while studying architecture part-time. The young couple would, in time, come to realize how influential the steel-framed



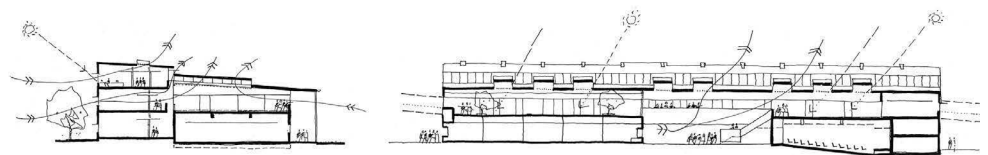
Clare Residence (1991) on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Photography: Richard Stringer

Dobie House (1972), with its nod to the Case Study Houses of California, and the timber-framed Schubert House (1972) would be to their own practice, but were eager to test their wings in practice.

Poole in turn is clear about the debt of gratitude he owes to Robin Gibson and John Dalton, who convinced Poole, the bushy, that he should study architecture rather than medicine and who facilitated his employment at Theo Thynne and Associates. When Gibson left Thynne's practice to set up his own, Poole joined him. Poole describes Dalton and Gibson as "tough men," men of conviction, assiduous with respect to detail, structural and constructional integrity and compositional clarity. They nurtured Poole's rebellious streak and inculcated in him the set of principles that underpinned his climatically and environmentally responsive modernist practice. These principles were then fostered in his young employees along with a conviction of their invincibility.

There are some obvious associations. The influence of Poole's light and airy houses and of his work with prefabricated and industrial components is evident in the Clare (1990–91) and Hammond (1993–94) Residences and in the University of the Sunshine Coast Recreation Club (1997). Similarly Poole's masonry houses are echoed in the Clares' Goetz (1984–85) and Thrupp and Summers (1986–87) Houses. Poole's capacity to weave architecture out of whatever the situation demands is apparent in the Clares' response to the tricky circumstances surrounding the Library at the Dock project in Melbourne's Docklands (2011–14). But a closer scrutiny, especially of later works, reveals a much deeper engagement. It also reveals how the lessons gained through a lifetime of practice and deepened through exposure to the architecture of masters such as Alvar Aalto have resulted in an effortlessness that conceals an increasing intentionality and sophistication.

Gibson and Dalton might not recognize the ideology invoked by "topos, typos and tectonics," by which means Beck and Cooper frame the Clares' practice, but they would certainly identify with its sensibility. In naming Lindsay Clare as an emergent



The University of the Sunshine Coast Chancellery (2006), designed by Lindsay Clare and Kerry Clare as design directors at Architectus. Photography: John Gollings

architect in 1994, Graham Jahn identified Poole and Dalton as precursors, describing them – together with Colin and Irene Still, Max May, Terry and Heather Dorrough and Ken Woolley – as "regionally inspired, modernist-sympathisers who relied on detail and invention ... anti-art, anti-style and anti-establishment; squarely aimed at issues of life-quality, justifiable use of land materials and energy resources. It was a quiet, low maintenance ideology of social responsibility."<sup>1</sup> These are the attributes of timelessness. It is this legacy that is sustained in the Clares' work. Paradoxically these attributes may also be why their work has been undervalued by some.

A survey of scholarship on modern Queensland architects and architecture reveals Haig Beck (who incidentally worked briefly for John Dalton) and Jackie Cooper as consistent contributors over many years to what, apart from the contributions of the late Jennifer Taylor and the recent foray by the University of Queensland's Centre for Architecture Theory Criticism History team, is otherwise a patchy recording of mid-century modernism. From their vantage of working across international and local contexts, Beck and Cooper are well placed to identify significance. In the case of the Clares an acknowledgement of their

significance has been a long time coming. It is this that, apart from its delightful presentation, makes this recording of the most significant projects from Lindsay and Kerry Clare such an important publication. *oroeditions.com*

1. Graham Jahn, *Contemporary Australian Architecture* (Basel, Switzerland: G+B Arts International; East Roseville, NSW: Distributed by Craftsman House, 1994), 7.

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