

RMIT DESIGN HUB

PROJECT ROOM 3 » 1 APRIL - 2 MAY 2014

JOHN GOLLINGS

Learning from Surfers Paradise



- 01 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south from The Shore, Surfers Paradise
- 02 Every Building on Surfers Paradise Boulevard East Digital composite from film negatives 1973-2013
- 03 Every Building on Surfers Paradise Boulevard East Digital composite from digital files 2011-2013
- 04 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south from The Shore at night, Surfers Paradise
- 05 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south from The Shore, Surfers Paradise
- 06 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south from The Shore at night, Surfers Paradise
- 07 Panorama Tower on Watson Esplanade / Apartments on Palm Ave and Riverview Parade, Chevron Island seen looking south west from The Shore, Surfers Paradise
- 08 Budds Beach and Paradise Waters looking west from The Shore, Surfers Paradise
- 09 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking north from Paradise Towers / with The Islander and Hotel Grand Chancellor looking north from Paradise Towers, Surfers Paradise
- 10 Pacific Ocean and Surfers Paradise Beach Latitude S27°59' 51.15" Longitude E153 degree 26'15.258" Altitude 303m
- 11 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking South from Paradise Towers / with Mantra, Legends, Q1 and The Watermark, Surfers Paradise
- 12 Surfers Paradise Beach and Garfield Terrace / with Berkley on The Beach and Shangri-La Apartments looking south from the President, Surfers Paradise
- 13 Surfers Paradise Blvd looking south west from the balcony of the Centre Arcade, Surfers Paradise
- 14 Northcliff Terrace looking north to Allowah / Jade and Break Free Peninsular on Clifford St from The President, Surfers Paradise
- 15 Cavill Ave looking south between Surfers Paradise Boulevard and The Esplanade
- 16 Paradise Theatre / The Hilton Arcade view east from Surfers Paradise Boulevard
- 17 Travel Lodge / The Islands Resort looking west from the corner of Beach Road, Surfers Paradise

- 18 The Esplanade looking north from the beachfront at Hanlan Street, Surfers Paradise
- 19 Cavill Avenue looking north between Surfers Paradise Boulevard and The Esplanade, Surfers Paradise
- 20 Demolition site and Jemma Apartments / Drive way and gardens Q1 Resort and spa, Hamilton Street, Surfers Paradise
- 21 Laurie Wall Real Estate / JTP Travel 36 Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- 22 Paradise Island Surfers Paradise
- 23 17 Laycock Street / Cupania Surfers Paradise
- 24 Flamingo Motel / Beachcomber Resort 22 Hanlan Street, Surfers Paradise
- 25 Paradise Towers Surfers Paradise Boulevard and Trickett Street Surfers Paradise
- 26 Paradise Palms Flats / Agean Apartments Laycock Street, Surfers Paradise
- 27 ...anyhow* have a Winfield, Ski, The Pink Elephant Bar and Bistro, Chevron Paradise Hotel, Icecream Parlour / Uchouten Japanese Restaurant Surfers Paradise Boulevard between Cavill Avenue and Elkorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- 28 Surfers Paradise Returned Services Club north side Beach Road between Ferny Ave and Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- 29 Cocktail Bar (Photo opportunity viewing platform) / Kidzcherch Here Salerno Street, Isle of Capri
- 30 Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking north east east between Cavill Avenue and Elkorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- 31 BP Service Station / Adidas Store view north west from the corner of Cavill Avenue and Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- 32 Surfers Paradise Surf Lifesaving Club / Surfers Centro The Esplanade, Surfers Paradise
- 33 Collection of Signs
- 34 Guesthouse / Centrepoint Arcade view west from Surfers Paradise Boulevard near Elkorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- 35 Revolving Aquarium Restaurant / Hall Entrance (Holy Spirit Anglican Church) Salerno St, Isle of Capri



- ③⑥ The Australian Company-Ampol Costless Car Rental Za'ba Bottle Shop Corner Beach Road and Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ③⑦ Pilsner Drive In Bottle Shop / Hotel Grand Chancellor Corner Hanlon Street and Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ③⑧ Big NG Investments Real Estate / Seven Eleven Surfers Paradise Boulevard between Elkorn and Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ③⑨ Bank of New South Wales Drive-in Teller Entry / Westpac Corner Orchid and Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ④① Stardust Hotel / Seven Eleven Gold Coast Highway Labrador, Captpar
- ④② Billabong Bar-B-Q / Car Parking Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ④③ There's More to see at Sea World / Village Lifestyle from \$375,000 Emerald Lakes Nerang Broadbeach Road, Emerald Lakes
- ④④ Bernie Elsey's Beachcomber Tiki Village Licensed Motel Restaurant Vacancy / Tiki Village International Corner Cavil Avenue and Ferny Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ④⑤ El Rancho Hotel / Vacant Land for Sale Gold Coast Highway, Miami
- ④⑥ Opal Court / Tennis court of The Aegean Clifford Street, Surfers Paradise
- ④⑦ Golden Sun Motel (State of Queensland as Facade) / Suntower, Olympus Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ④⑧ Relax at Siesta Motel Full Self Contained Flats, Vacancy, Shangri-La Cruises / Backpackers Resort Parking Gold Coast Highway, Surfers Paradise
- ④⑨ El Rancho Bar-B-Q / Circle on Cavill Fashion Dining Corner Ferny Ave and Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ④⑩ Silver Sands, Silver Sands Motel Luxury Suites Drive-In Car Park Vacancy / Silver Sands Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ⑤① The Buckingham Motel Vacancy Luxury Self Contained Suites / The Tandoori Place Indian Restaurant Laycock Street, Surfers Paradise
- ⑤② Budget Rent A Car Drives Your Dollar Further Budget Rent A Car / Beer Wine Meals Snacks 24 Hours Beer Wine Meals Snacks 24 Hours south on Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ⑤③ Surfers Paradise Boulevard looking south between Cavill Avenue and Elkorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ⑤④ The Esplanade driving north from Trickett Street, Surfers Paradise
- ⑤⑤ Miami Village driving north Gold Coast Highway at Oak Avenue, Miami
- ⑤⑥ Every Building on Surfers Paradise Boulevard West Digital composite from film negatives 1973-2013
- ⑤⑦ Every Building on Surfers Paradise Boulevard West Digital composite from digital files 2011-2013
- ⑤⑧ Rio Vista Blvd Broadbeach Waters Latitude S 28°1'49.626" Longitude E153° 25'28.344" Altitude 353m
- ⑤⑨ Bel Air Holiday Flats / 50 Cavill Ave Office Accomodation Cavill Avenue, Surfers Paradise
- ⑥① 20 Sunshine Boulevard Miami Keys
- ⑥② Surfers Paradise North Chevron Island Paradise Waters Latitude S27°59'37.26" Longitude E153°26'15.138" Altitude 356m
- ⑥③ Narrowneck, Paradise Waters Latitude S27°58' 55.452" Longitude E153 degree 26'17.634"
- ⑥④ Beach at Surfers Paradise with Iluka Foreshore Park, The Esplanade
- ⑥⑤ Bal Harbor Miami Keys
- ⑥⑥ Paradise Waters Main Beach
- ⑥⑦ Golden Mile Flats / Entry Crowne Plaza Gold Towers Gold Coast Highway, Surfers Paradise
- ⑥⑧ Southport Olympic Pool Kiosk / Gold Coast Aquatic Centre Kiosk Marine Parade, Southpark
- ⑥⑨ Grenada Motel / DBI 14 Hanlan Street, Surfers Paradise
- ⑦① Iluka, Allowah / Soul, One The Esplande (Allowah), Jade view north from Northcliffe Terrace, Surfers Paradise
- ⑦② Biscayne / 15 Laycock Street Surfers Paradise
- ⑦③ Surfers Paradise Hotel / Centro Surfers Shopping Arcade, Hard Rock Cafe Surfers Paradise Boulevard, Surfers Paradise
- ⑦④ Cuba Flats / Car park entry Peninsular Apartments Clifford Street, Surfers Paradise

The Surfers Paradise re-photography project undertaken by John Gollings makes an important contribution to understanding the intense sequence of change in one individual city but it can also be read as a major contribution to urban studies and architectural research.

The forty years of dramatic change, witnessed through this project, has rendered the experience of living in the city as akin to being part of a fluid state, where the conventional markers of human presence that have borne witness to life and history have altered so much as to dissolve memory and with it, for many, a connection to place.

At a time when a new generation of global cities are evolving rapidly in Asia and the Middle East, this work, like the study that originally inspired it by Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, has new and urgent relevance.

There are two separate projects presented here. The first are the images conceived in 1973 and shot in January 1974 as a direct response to the provocation of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Browns' seminal publication *Learning From Las Vegas*. The second is an exacting re-photography project undertaken over a three-year period from 2010 as the Gold Coast languished at a low point in the development cycle and just before the construction of a new light rail system – the imminent opening of which now renders these latest Gollings images instantly 'historic'.

Although *Learning from Las Vegas* is now more likely to be read in the small paperback version that appeared as the second edition in 1977, Gollings and his collaborators, architect Tony Styant-Browne, planner Mal Horner and graphic designer, Julie Jame were looking at the large hardbound first edition Tony had obtained shortly after its publication in late 1972. Although such texts were not part of the curriculum at the University of Melbourne School of Architecture where they had all met, Tony had been avidly following the writings of Scott Brown and later Venturi through the late 1960s and it was with eager anticipation that he placed an order for this book from Jervis Manton booksellers in Collins Street Melbourne.

For these young Australians the allure of the book was both medium and message with the added factor of timing — it struck at a particular moment of major social change in this country's history, unfolding with the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 with the slogan It's Time. With it came a robust skepticism for the retention of 'old world' values, and this was translated across all aspects of society; in architecture through a reconsideration of the relationship between built form and popular culture and in the visual arts, a new generation explored conceptual practices, particularly through the medium of photography.

Their decision to make an Australian response to the treatise and choose Surfers Paradise as their own laboratory, was based on long associations with the town; Styant-Browne having grown up there and Gollings holidaying regularly as a boy from the 1950s. Prior to their arrival, they corresponded with the Mayor of the city and local architectural firms and obtained historical maps and aerial survey photographs.

They arrived in early January at a time of severe storm weather and left just before tropical cyclone Wanda hit at the end of the month. They needed to work quickly and purposefully, carefully documenting and mapping the language of signs on the strip and with a kit of three cameras and multiple lenses, Gollings had the cheeky confidence to sit on the bonnet of the car as it was driven down Surfers Paradise Boulevard shooting a sequence of images with a widelux camera to replicate the driver's view and experience captured in *Learning from Las Vegas*.

They went up to the roof tops of three of the apartment towers at the southern, northern and central points of the Surfers Paradise precinct and in order to express the strip city form, covered the Gold Coast Highway from Burleigh Heads to Labrador, a distance of approximately 20 kms. Just like the Yale students researching Las Vegas, and with limited financial resources, they hired a plane and took to the air and Gollings had his first experience of aerial photography – something which has become an essential part of his practice.

The book that was originally conceived to come from all this work did not eventuate, as professions and new opportunities called and the collaborators took on new jobs and directions. In bringing together these images by John Gollings now, in the new form of the re-photography project, *Learning from Surfers Paradise*, the legacy of the original work is only now being fully revealed.

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