Collective Memory...a palimpsest tracing layers of history and change over time

The proposal acts as a critique of Australia’s history of terra nullius, recognizing that the Attunga Point site is well used public land and that there is value in what is currently there. The significance of The Lodge as a symbol of Australia’s Democracy and evolution as a Nation is embodied through a conceptual exploration of a Palimpsest.

The idea of an Architectural and Landscape Palimpsest acts in recording traces of time through historical, present and future projections. The engraving of additions and erasures over time imbed layers of memory and physical transformations into the environment. The layering of Australia’s past and emerging narratives are embodied within the design, acting as a archeological trace of the Nation’s continuously evolving identity.

Through human interaction and a series of natural processes the site is constantly in a state of change. Hence the proposal acts as an active palimpsest through a layering of the site’s historical days as a quarry and its aboriginal ceremonial rituals, tracing existing public circulation, access points and on-site nodes, whilst also adding new layers of interventions to continue the palimpsest narrative.

The existing vegetation suggests that the site is a place of regeneration. Through a geological, climatic and site analysis of Attunga Point there is currently evidence of physical traces on the landscape. The imprints of grassland paths on the landscape begin to define a circulation hierarchy with major nodal intersections of activity. The existing land mass and vegetation also form natural barriers which further define circulation and regenerate native vegetation patterns.

The existing nodal intensities of crossing paths form the programmatic organization on site with the distribution of the three major programs. The hierarchical placement of the programs on the site have been organized with regards to the land contours heights. Democratically prioritizing the public with the clearing’s highest ground symbolizes their control and enables maximum visibility. The residential node is placed at the north of the site on the steepest slope for added privacy, whilst the official programs node sits on a medium slope with proximity to the road access and official entrance. The third event space node is at the base of the hill on a slight slope with access to the lake.

The landscape is used to define circulation throughout the site, acting as the green corridor and unifying symbol amongst the building forms, inscribing traces of human interaction and natural processes over time. The landscape defined circulation paths, both existing and proposed additions, define movement and allow a sense of unity and shared connection through a reduced hierarchy. The new connections paths between programs and buildings begin to form new traces on the environment.

The buildings forms are organized around the circulation, assisting in navigating movement through the site. The dispersal of buildings and the fragmented walls allow for flexbility and future paths and additions to be formed.

The form and materiality are designed to leave physical traces on the built environment. Through a climatic analysis of the site conditions, materials have been designed based on their properties contributing to increased weathering and changes with time through interaction with the climate and external pressures. The form of the buildings along with the climatic conditions begins to create new traces and regeneration of ecological processes expanding from current land conservation areas. New inscriptions are formed through the study of geological and ecological processes of evolution, erasure and growth over time.

The composition of surface treatments juxtapose contrasting material-aging layers to enhance visual subtleties of physical inscription. This highlights and reveals time relationships between layers of palimpsest.

Internally through spatial and material human interaction, traces of usage patterns and cultural changes will be revealed. The juxtaposition of interior/exterior material finishes creating a comparison of external climatic pressures vs. internal pressures thereby creating moments where subtleties are amplified. Recording physical traces of time through interaction with the landscape, climate, occupational use and natural processes produces a rich layering of history and symbolizes The Lodge as a living entity that evolves with the Nation.