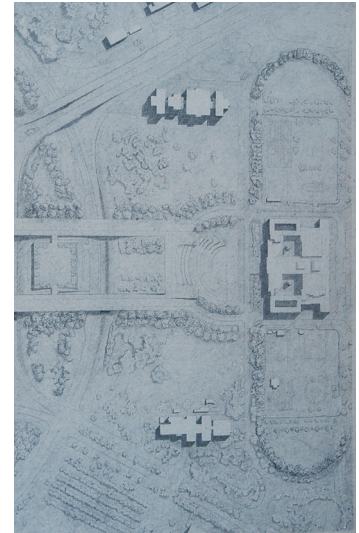


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# UNBUILT AUSTRALIA NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The architectural avant-garde of the 70s. Andrew Hutson recalls Swetik Korzeniewski's New Parliament House competition entry.

The 1979 competition for the design of the New Parliament House in Canberra attracted 329 entries from Australia and overseas. The winning scheme by architects Mitchell/Giurgola and Thorp was ultimately built and opened amid much fanfare in 1988. The other 328 schemes received little publicity and remain in relative obscurity. Architects invested large amounts of time and money on the submissions and in today's terms the combined effort required to submit these entries would be over ten million dollars.

A number of the schemes reflect the architectural avant-garde of the late 70s, the submission by Swetik Korzeniewski being a case in point. Inspired by the work of Louis Kahn, it offered an antipodean interpretation of Kahn's formal concerns that we see embodied in his National Assembly Building at Dhaka in Bangladesh (1962–1974). Korzeniewski's project reflected Kahn's planning strategies at Dhaka, where the main assembly chamber was enclosed within a circular ambulatory

passage, on the outside of which were arranged monumental forms. The Korzeniewski scheme established a separate circulation element to which monumental abstracted forms were both embraced and connected. The baroque-inspired forecourt enclosed by this colonnade was open to the public and contained the two houses of parliament and public galleries. The real and symbolic transparency of this arrangement reflected the democratic entreaties of the competition brief in aligning public access with government accountability through the scheme's primary urban gesture. The project demonstrated a clarity of expression and powerful response to the egalitarian mood of the 70s (we mourn its passing) without compromising the status of the seat of government.

Andrew Hutson is a senior lecturer in architecture at the University of Melbourne.

Nº 1, 2 Model and drawing from Swetik Korzeniewski's competition entry, "a powerful response to the egalitarian mood of the 70s". National Archives of Australia.

The AA Prize for Unbuilt Work – an opportunity to recognize the unbuilt gems of today. Entry details available soon.