

Qld

Australia

Sunday. 4 June 2000

Architects Inquiry
Productivity Commission
L132 Collins Street East
Melbourne VIC 8003

Att: Commissioner for the Inquiry

Dear Sir,

Re: Protection of the title ARCHITECT

I have read the draft report and the information and argument is nearly all accurate. Two of the points I would like to make at this time, are:

1. Titles do imply a certain public perception.
2. The word & derivatives of 'Architect'

The title Architect has always carried with it "they charge more than a draftsman". I suspect research would show this to be true. So, if someone wants 'some plans drawn up', as opposed to having something architecturally/Architect designed', they go to a draftsman. *[I have, many times, suggested to 'potential' clients that they go to a draftsman because it was obvious to me that they did not require the service of an Architect. I believe that I appropriately serviced those people by not getting involved]*

If the Commission recommends that the title Architect is open to use by 'others', then I would suggest that the 'others' who take up the title would increase their service fees. The market will suffer, as the understanding of what/who is an Architect will become less distinct [even with new titles such as Chartered Architect or Certified Practising Architect – for those who are 'registered' as Architects].

2. I would like the Commission to consider and answer for themselves the question, "What does an Architect do?" The commission is not to be confused with, " What does an Architect produce?" [which seems to be a paradigm of Commission's draft report] In coming to an understanding of the answer, you will understand why the title Architect is *unique* and needs retaining so that a distinction can be made between those who are 'in the profession of the advancement of architecture' and those who are in the business *of* drawing up building plans'. The latter is also what Architects 'produce' but it is only a means to an end. *I attach a fellow Architect's explanation of how he explains what an Architect does.* Let me explain why I think the title Architect and its derivatives need retaining because of their uniqueness. Architects used to be the 'master builders' in society. They were the 'jack of all trades'. Specialization has crept in due to the greater complexity of our society's needs [as compared with. say, Ancient Greece]. Architects are generally trained to have a 'big picture' understanding of built environment. This training sets the 'young graduate' on a professional path of growing understanding *of* most elements [specialist interests develop] in the 'big picture'. You see, Architects generally have the ability to reasonably solve social, psychological, functional, environmental, and political building issues as well as have interpretive aesthetic skills. The word Architect and its derivatives **MUST** remain unique due to the profession's path of building knowledge. Page 82 & 83 of your Draft, makes a 'quoted' point from a Building Designer. You see, he/she does not need to use the word 'architectural' to explain their service. They only require a prefix, of 'building' or 'construction' in front of their title of 'draftsperson/technician', to be clear. What I am broadly saying is that you cannot put construction industry participants in the same basket of mixed fruit and want to call it, for example, a collection of apples and applorange and peachappl and banapple. The correct and clear way to describe the basket of fruit is a collection of apples, oranges, peaches and bananas. Each 'title' carries a particular uniqueness that illustrates distinctions.

You cannot call a draftsman an 'architectural draftsman' because they have not received training in 'architecture'. They have only focused on and limited to, the 'technical' in their training as drawing producers.

Derivatives such as 'architectural' could easily be allowed [in legislation] for the use of any business other than a service provider. That means product businesses could use 'architectural' to market place a product.

I trust that my submission is clear, it is difficult to succinctly put into words the essence of an Architect.

Respectfully yours,

(signature)

Geoff Grimes
Architect

Encl.

HOW MUCH FOR THE PLANS?

This is often the first question that I am asked. An attempt to explain why I cannot give an answer follows;

When I think about plans, which in this sense are the drawings that illustrate a design, an analogy comes to mind of an author and a novel. In this analogy the published novel represents the plans. The novel is a complete package, self contained, with a fixed purchase price, but will it be a good read? How can you tell? The dust jacket, the binding, the paper and the typeface all look much the same as other novels. We all know, however, that these things have nothing to do with the purpose of the novel, which is to transport the reader's imagination on an adventure. The possibility of suspending our disbelief to experience the promised adventure derives from the skill of the author and the *quality* of the manuscript. The published novel is merely a record of these things. Plans similarly are merely a record of the skill of the architect and the *quality* of the design.

The plans are actually only part of the record. It is often easy to forget that the plans are not an end in themselves, rather they are a means of describing the physical extent of a building. The materials and construction quality are defined in a *Specification*. The process of achieving the built outcome is established by the *Conditions of Contract*. A building project is only completely described by the *Plans, Specification and Conditions of Contract*. Like a novel, the superficial appearance of these components is often similar to others, but it is *not* any guide to their quality. A better understanding of the quality comes from knowing about the author.

Drawings are made up of lines and symbols using a fairly standardised graphic format that merely constitutes an alternative form of notation to the written word. Specifications and Contracts should be written in clear, concise language. Architects are skilled in the task of preparing these documents. I liken this preparation to the typesetting and printing phase in the novel analogy -technically demanding but quite dull. The exciting parts of the process are really the beginning and the end. Writing the manuscript and reading the novel! Designing the building and moving in!

So rather than ask me "How much for *the plans?*" I would rather you asked "*Can I come and discuss my ideas with you to find out how you can help and what you will change?*" The answer to that question will always be "Yes".

I realise that some people prefer Mills and Boon to James Michener, or may only have the resources for a Reader's Digest. Your needs and budget will influence the scope of my services and so the fees. I will not take you on as my client unless I can see a way of fulfilling your requirements. If you are interested in a quality outcome, have a realistic budget, and are prepared to be advised, we can work together.

I can offer you the opportunity to explore a range of possible approaches to realise your building needs, working in a methodical, structured way so that nothing is left out. You will have control of the quality of finishes within your budget range. We will keep environmental and emotional considerations uppermost. I can handle the paperwork and the bureaucracy. During construction I can be your representative with the builder. You will always be kept informed. Oh, almost forgot, I will also draw the plans!