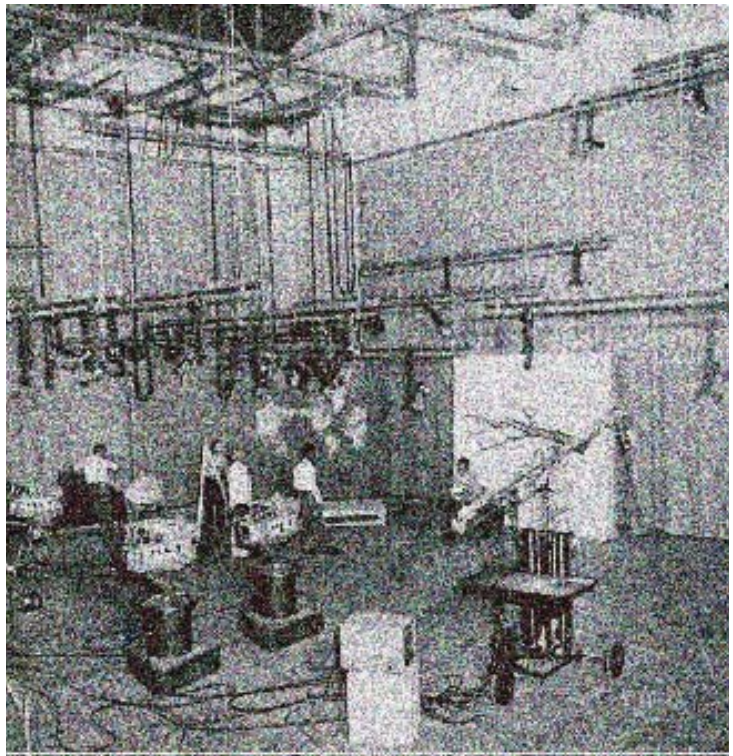


Sydney Broadcast Property Pty Ltd



Channel 7 Site, Mobbs Lane, Epping

Epping Park
Preliminary Interpretation Strategy



December 2008

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Introduction

1.0

1.1 Context

This Preliminary Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy has been prepared for the Channel 7 property on Mobbs Lane, Epping, in the context of the eventual disposal and development of the site for residential and community purposes (“Epping Park”). Closure of the Epping studio has arisen from the relocation of Channel 7 facilities to the Redfern Australian Technology Park.¹

1.2 Objectives

Interpretation of sites is an important component in appreciating cultural heritage values held by society. Guidelines provided by the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* advice that:

*The cultural significance of many places is not readily apparent, and should be explained by interpretation. Interpretation should enhance understanding and enjoyment, and be culturally appropriate.*²

The Strategy is framed as a preliminary concept prepared in conjunction within the context of Epping Park’s landscape and ongoing conceptual development. Consideration of cultural heritage and interpretation, when incorporated into initial stages of planning, serves as a way to work with the future design of buildings and landscaping to ensure the appreciation of the site without the need to focus on specific details and devices.

The objective of this Preliminary Interpretation Strategy is not to lock in a final interpretation concept, but rather to suggest ways in which to present the cultural values of the place. These serve as a springboard from which a cohesive site interpretation can be detailed and implemented, pending concept planning and design resolution.

1.3 Methodology

This Preliminary Strategy has been framed in accordance with the principles of the ICOMOS *Burra Charter*, the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning and the Heritage Council of NSW. General interpretation strategies that can be readily used within the context of the landscape have been outlined, and illustrated using examples of these forms of interpretative styles and devices. These are to serve as a stimulus for the future preparation and design of site-specific devices.

¹ Australian TV Archive: <http://austv.hostforweb.com>

² Article 25, *Burra Charter*, 1999.



Figure 1.1: Aerial view of subject site on Mobbs Lane, Epping (Dept of Lands)

1.4 Site Identification

The Channel 7 property is located on the northern side of Mobbs Lane, off Midson Road, Epping. On its western boundary is the Mobbs Lane Reserve; to the north it is partially bounded by First Avenue. It has a real property description of: Lot 4 DP219907, Lots 1 and 2 DP732070, Lots 1 and 2 DP570891, and Lot 2 DP582172.

1.5 Sources

The historical information provided in this Strategy is a summary of that outlined in the Heritage Assessment prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates in December 2005. Unless otherwise specified, images used in this Strategy are by Graham Brooks and Associates.

1.6 Authorship

This Preliminary Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy has been prepared by Dr Christina Amiet, senior consultant, of Graham Brooks and Associates, and reviewed by Graham Brooks, Director.

1.7 Limitations

This Strategy does not provide a comprehensive Interpretation Plan or Strategy for implementation for the site, nor does it address archaeological or Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Historical Summary

2.0

2.1 Early Uses of the Site

The property was originally part of the land parcel of 427 acres granted to Scots-born James Dunlop (1793-1848) on 30th June 1823. At the time of the crown grant's issue, Dunlop was serving as astronomer at the Parramatta Observatory; upon his decision to visit Scotland in the late 1820s Dunlop sold much of his New South Wales land holdings. Given his duties, it is unlikely that Dunlop was in a position to have a significant impact on clearing or development of the property during his years of ownership.

The property was purchased by William Mobbs, senior, who was a central figure in the colony's agricultural circles for both his orchards and livestock. His particular talents lay in the production of wheat, apples, oranges and the first peaches in Sydney. Mobbs was the head of an orcharding enterprise; his children evidently inherited his skill as farmers, gardeners and fruiterers, and continued the family business following their father's death in 1839.

The Mobbs family first leased and then sold the property to Joseph Eyles in the mid-1860s. The Eyles family was similarly inclined to fruit production and farming, and the property remained within family ownership until 1896, when it was transferred to Winifred Margaret Dodd, wife of a mining agent, "for her private use." It was sold to successive owners in 1912, 1914 and 1924.



Figure 2.1 1943 aerial photograph of the site (Dept of Lands)

2.2 Site Development

Amalgamated Television Services purchased the Mobbs Lane property in 1955. Land clearing and site development commenced, with the (still unfinished) facility first broadcasting in December 1956 using equipment supplied by the Marconi Company of London. Sporadic construction was carried out in the following years, so that by 1961 the station had all essential services and amenities on-site.

By the early 1970s the station had undergone another stage of expansion, with a six studio facility and conversion of equipment to PAL colour in 1975. A series of alterations and additions were carried out to the existing buildings, and supplementary new buildings constructed as required.

Following numerous stages of refurbishment and expansion, further work on the site in 1983 upgraded the helipad, hangar and re-fuelling facilities, and installed twin satellite dishes. This was joined in 1986 by a Vertex “Ku-band” dish for ATN programme distribution via the new Aussat satellite, and from 2001 the station broadcast in digital DVB-T.

In 2004 the corporate offices and sales departments were relocated to Pirrama Road, Pyrmont, while the news departments were rehoused in Martin Place. In June 2006 the Seven network announced the closure of the Epping studio site following relocation of facilities to the Australian Technology Park at Redfern, expected to be carried out by early 2010.



Figure 2.2
1961 aerial photograph of the ATN7 studio (Dept
of Lands)

Interpretation Strategy Options

3.0

3.1 Interpretation of the Site

Effective interpretation of the cultural heritage values of the Epping Park site entails the recognition and appreciation of its layers of significance. The Epping Park landscape has associations with three distinct phases:

- Dunlop's crown grant and ownership;
- Nineteenth century pastoral/orcharding activities, and
- ATN7 broadcasting station.

An overlay of available historical photographs shows that the eastern portion of the property, comprising the flatter terrain, has historically been subject to more natural and built elements than the sloping land running down to the western boundary of the property. Consequently, the use of interpretation across the site may be more relevant to the eastern part of the property, rather than an even distribution across the whole although interpretation can be spread out across the site on an as-needs basis. A greater concentration of interpretation in the vicinity of the main residential or community spaces opens greater potential for activities to take place.



Figure 3.1

Overlay of 1943 aerial photograph over the present-day Epping Park site shows the concentration of natural and built elements on the eastern part of the site. (Dept of Lands)

Interpretation of Epping Park entails the transmission of largely intangible and ephemeral values. The nature of the site means that there will be little or no physical fabric or elements with which individuals can identify.

Therefore, for the ATN 7 phase the emphasis of interpretation lies in the studio output, not in the buildings. While individuals will readily recognise shows and identities broadcast from the studio site, there is no actual physical connection with the land, nor do the buildings have any particular meaning. As a result, interpretation must represent and recapture significance without recourse to the site structures.

For the pastoral/orcharding phase, meaning and significance will arise from connecting with the social/historical associations, with those whose families or communities engaged in such activities, or within such landscapes. This historical use has been effectively severed since the 1890s, but should be interpreted as an earlier layer of activity. In a similar vein, the Dunlop association is more peripheral given the absence of known site use or development, but this early nineteenth century stage should be recognised.

3.2 Core Strategies

This Preliminary Cultural Heritage Interpretation Strategy suggests a number of possible interpretive concepts that address a range of audiences in various ways. Options presented in this Preliminary Strategy demonstrate the kinds of devices that could be used in and around the Epping Park site, but are not intended to be compulsorily implemented. All are considered to be appropriate to the site, whilst being shaped around available resources. Interpretive methods that require the use of high maintenance or technology have not been considered at this early stage of the site development; while film and sound options can be extremely effective, these are not ideal within a generalised landscape context.

Interpretive devices would ultimately be influenced by the eventual use of the place, as specific uses would open or restrict possibilities for understanding the site. A more comprehensive list of suitable interpretive devices could be expected to emerge following the decision as to site planning, building design and uses, as there are specific methods of interpretation that are best suited to internal installation and would admirably complement and enhance interpretation installed within the landscape.

This Preliminary Interpretation Strategy relates principally to the use of the site by ATN7, given the strong social and emotional links that this entity has within popular culture and memory, and given that this is the most dominant and significant part of the site. The pastoral uses of the site, together with the initial crown grant, are links that have been long severed but need to be recognised and interpreted as part of a bigger whole, linking with the broader area rather than being limited to a site specific context.

Working within the context of the Epping Park site, the Interpretation Strategy could include any combination of the following methods and media:

1) Naming Strategy

Naming strategies are a direct form of interpretation that requires little by way of maintenance or repair. On the ATN7 “studio” or village green site, pathways, lanes, and/or buildings, open spaces etc may be assigned a name that has historical, cultural or social connections with the place through programmes or activities forming part of the television experience.

On the part of the site that was effectively unused by ATN7 excepting for ancillary purposes, the nineteenth century historical activities and associations may be interpreted along avenues sloping down to the lower terrain.

2) Planting Strategy

- On the sloping/terraced pathways graduating down to the western boundary, a small number of low maintenance fruit trees could be planted, either directly in the soil or in movable pots. These would be representative of the kinds of fruits grown by the Mobbs and Eyles families during the nineteenth century

Selection of an appropriate plant should consider a hardy species that requires little attention, lacks thorns, and is not poisonous. These may be planted in line along a pathway or avenue, or as a grouping by themselves.

- In appropriate locations across the site, suitable species of low-level native grasses and plantings may be incorporated. Landscaping and selection of these plant species should not be conjectural, but rather derived from known facts.

3) Public Art Installation

A key, publicly accessible, space could be enhanced using a public art installation, possibly re-using remnant or redundant equipment, either working or fixed. High traffic areas such as the Village Green or other open space areas would be appropriate locations for an art installation.

The installation should be thematically derived from either or both phases of historical use. Art installations could include incorporation/adaptation/associations of farm equipment and pastoral/semi-rural activities, or television technology, imagery or activities.

4) Interpretive Text

Methods of interpretation that incorporate text (with/out imagery) is an effective and straightforward device to present information, particularly in the public realm and open spaces. Text can both inform and entertain. Site landscaping for Epping Park could include interpretive elements etched or inserted into paving, driveways, courtyards, steps, and terracing, for example:

- Historical information identifying the links between Dunlop and the Parramatta Observatory could be provided on a plaque, mounted in a suitable location. This will provide complexity with regard to the history and significance of the site.
- Steps and/or terrace levels could incorporate interpretive text that represents, commemorates or explains some aspect/ activities connected with Channel 7 and/or broadcasting technologies, or quotes relating to tv design, architecture, or other association with the medium.
- Production and installation of panels (sited in either interior or exterior locations) to highlight the history and significance of the place. Text could be supplemented with graphic material, comprising photographs, or displays of ephemera (costumes, flyers, memorabilia) as a further option depending on availability of such items.
- Paving stones in courtyards, or pavers inserted into driveways could be etched with 'snapshots' and/or graphic designs of broadcasting history.

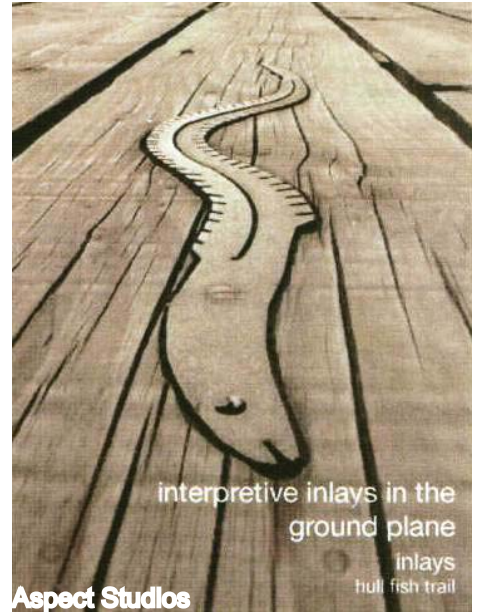
3.3 Sample Images of Interpretive Devices

The following comprise images of the kinds of interpretive devices that could potentially be incorporated within the landscape of Epping Park. These images illustrate how the above broad concepts have been implemented on a range of sites and contexts to convey information specific to, or associated with, each particular site.





Image of site element applied onto glass
Ibis Hotel, Wollongong



interpretive inlays in the
ground plane
inlays
hull fish trail

Aspect Studios



'Water' theme mosaic in pavement
Circular Quay, Sydney



Glass and steel graphic paving insert
George Street, Sydney



Interpretive text in seating elements
sam fitzmaurice park, ben buckler point, sydney
by ceccis design

Supplied by Aspect Studios



Medallions outlining the former shoreline
Circular Quay, Sydney



Pavers etched with interpretive text
Ibis Hotel, Wollongong

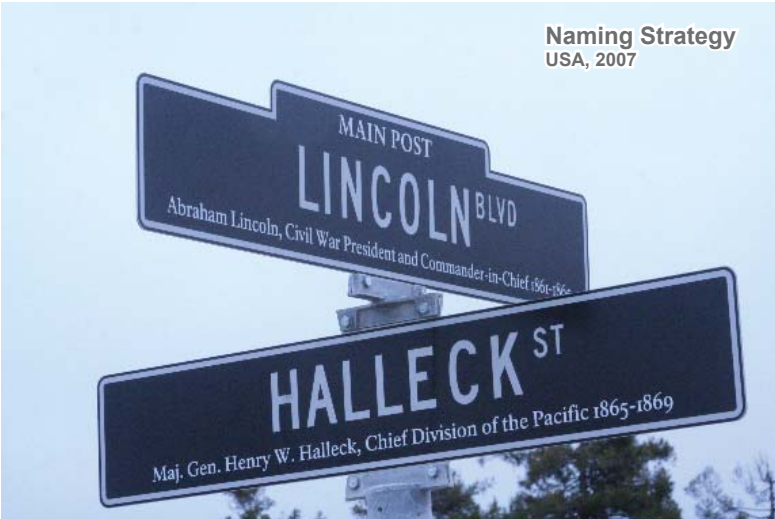


Interpretive panels
St Michael's Cathedral, Wollongong



Naming Strategy
St Michael's Cathedral, Wollongong

Naming Strategy
USA, 2007



Interpretive text and plaque
Germany, 2007



3.4 Samples of Images

The following comprise ATN7 studio/station publicity photographs, and images depicting the role of television in Australian households, that may be useful for incorporation into the graphic design of interpretive devices. They are not intended as a proscriptive selection of items, but rather as a representative sample of the kinds of imagery likely to engage the market audience: television characters or programmes; images of items that could be used in interpretation, such as cameras or other studio equipment; or the changing shape of television design and its influence on its immediate environment, i.e. lounge furniture and room layout. Other avenues associated with television broadcasting may be equally applicable in showing additional aspects of the medium's influence in Sydney, and may be explored as an option in a more comprehensive Interpretation Plan once the overall design for the site has been resolved.

Reproduction and use of such material would be dependant on permission to be obtained from ATN7 or relevant agencies/authorities.



ATN 7 publicity photograph, 1975

Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*



Home Beautiful, November 1956: the arrival of television in Australia and the early timber television cabinet

Oliver, *The Australian Home Beautiful: From Hills Hoist to High Rise*



1950s TV settee, with 'flippable' chairs positioned to either indulge in 'televieing' or faced away from the screen for reading and crosswords

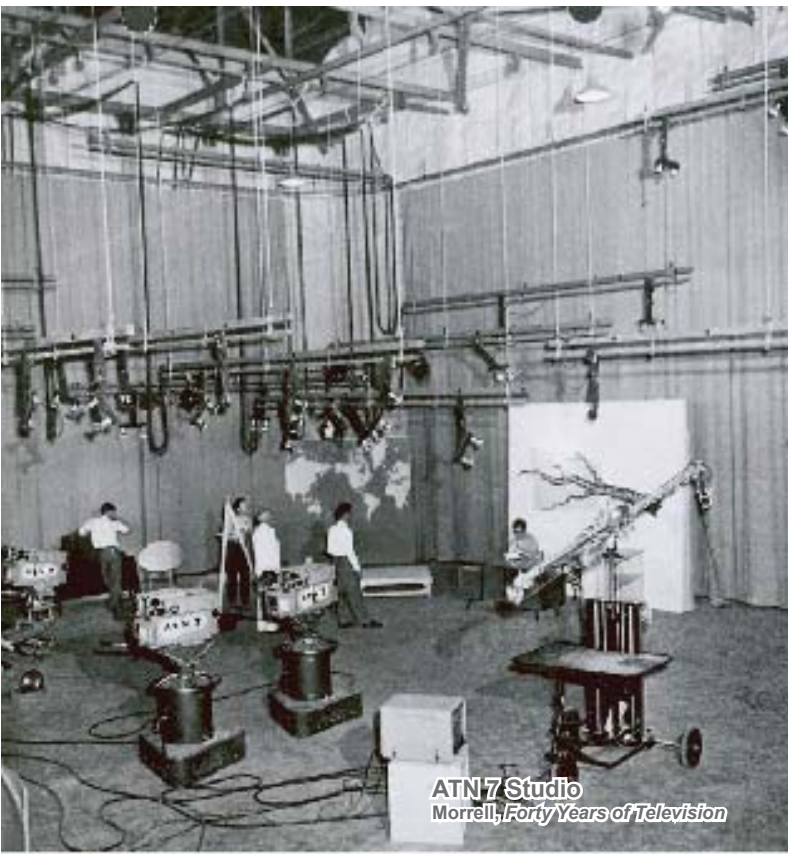
Oliver, *The Australian Home Beautiful: From Hills Hoist to High Rise*



Romper Room publicity still
 Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*



Videotape recorder, 1959
 Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*

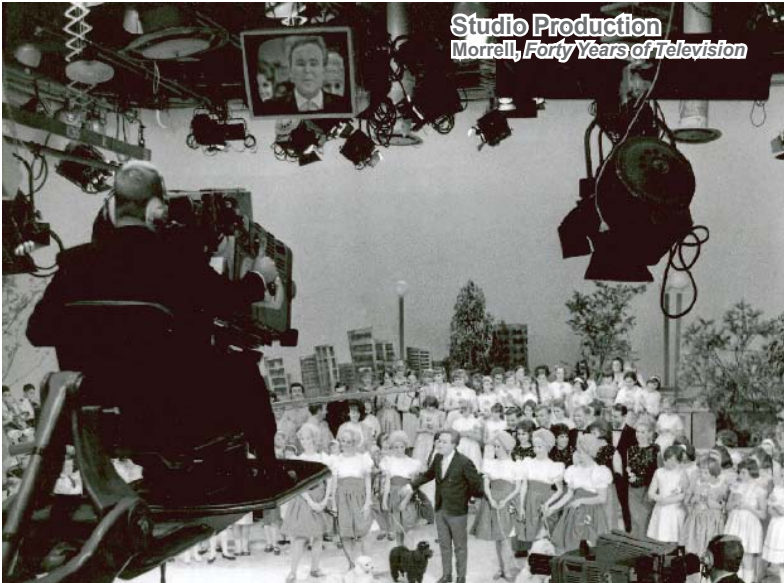


ATN 7 Studio
 Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*

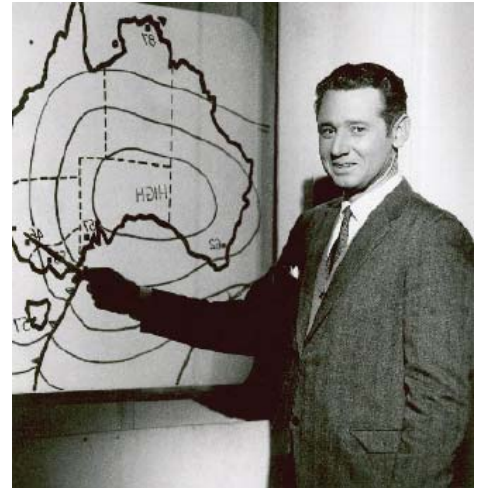


A Country Practice production photo
 Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*

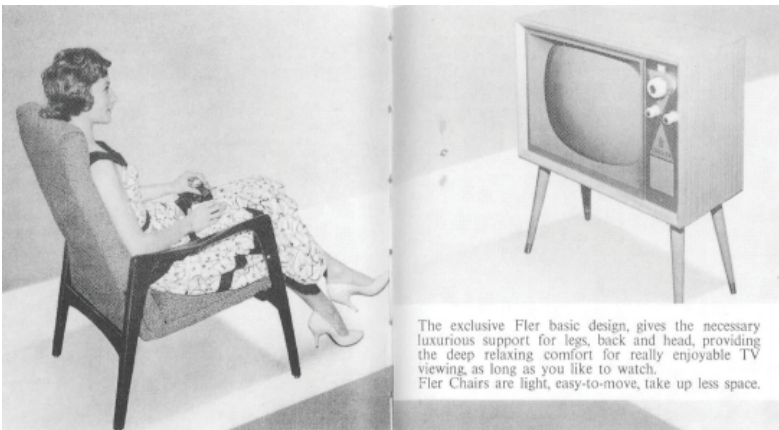




Studio Production
Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*

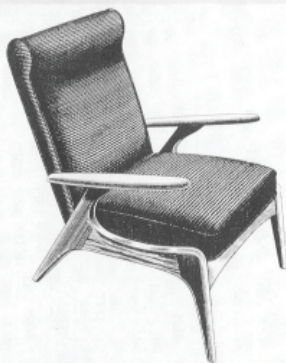


Alan Wilkie with weather graphic, 1968
Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*



The exclusive Fler basic design, gives the necessary luxurious support for legs, back and head, providing the deep relaxing comfort for really enjoyable TV viewing as long as you like to watch. Fler Chairs are light, easy-to-move, take up less space.

FLER *The Perfect Chair for TV Viewing*



SC 55

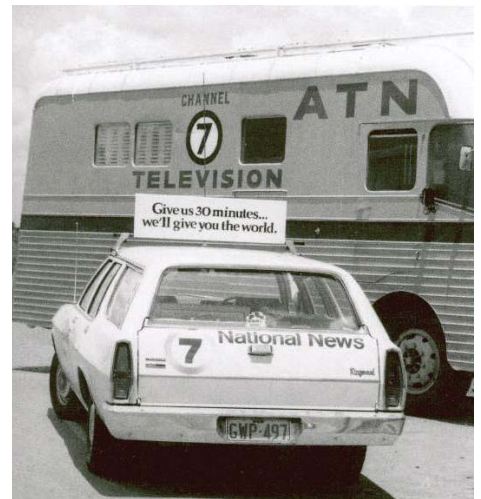
Built-in comfort, concealed life-long strength, with an attractively different arm rest design. Deep foam Dunlopillo cushions, of course, and complete zipp-off covers take only 2 1/4 yards. Available in maple, mahogany and other popular finishes.



SC 58

Finely sculptured lines emphasise the natural timber grain, giving a feeling of warmth, with deep comfort of Dunlopillo seat and back. This design has universal appeal. 2 1/4 yards of material for zipp-off covers. Available in maple, mahogany and other popular finishes.

Flex brochure c.1958, with comfort, convenience and portability associated with providing the optimum tv viewing experience
O'Callaghan, *The Australian Dream*



Channel 7's station wagon..."Give us 30 minutes... we'll give you the world"
(1972)
Morrell, *Forty Years of Television*