



***On the design of spaces, and the Borland buildings:***

*Margaret Lyttle in conversation with Gina Levenspiel, 15 June 2012*

*TRANSCRIPT...*

ML: Kevin Borland's work ... was wonderful. People didn't realize how very gifted he was.

GL: Well he was awarded an [architectural] award for this building.

ML: He what?

GL: He was given an award for this building.

ML: I know. I know.

GL: What did you like about it?

ML: Oh. [laughs] I can't remember now. I can't tell you now. I'm not a gifted person. I'm just a teacher. But I loved his work. And Kevin had seven children and I taught the whole lot of them.

GL: Yes the seven children, I think they all went to Preshil.

ML: They all went to Preshil.

ML: Kevin. Kevin was very gifted. He worked quite differently to anybody else.

GL: Yes.

ML: He did all that work.

GL: Yes. But it was also the children that he worked with. The children and Kevin, they worked together.

ML: Yes the children and Kevin worked together all the time.

GL: Yes. So do you have any examples of this? I've got ...

ML: He didn't have any trouble.

GL: Because I've got pictures of the children's drawings where ...

ML: I can hardly see that.

GL: But what did he do? Did he sit down and play with them? How did he ...

ML: No he just sort of was there all the time ... Sometimes he played, sometimes he did things, sometimes he'd pull bits of the house down. [laughter] He was a spontaneous person.

GL: Yes. Do you remember the treehouse?

ML: The who?

GL: The treehouse, or the tutorial rooms?

ML: Oh yes that's right.

GL: Do you remember this building, with the tree coming up through the middle?

ML: Yes, I'll never forget. I think that Kevin's buildings were just amazing.

GL: Incredible.

ML: And I wouldn't forget. Never.

ML: He lived in North Melbourne. Kevin was quite a surprise to me and I didn't know him prior to this. And I came out one Sunday and he said 'Well Mug, we're going to ...' - they called me Mug - 'where going to do this, that and the other now'... And then, he did an awful lot of that.

GL: Right. Was he there quite often then, each week he'd be at the school?

ML: And he was big. Over 6 feet. Kevin Borland, the one who designed the hall.

GL: ... The hall is now named after him. It's called Kevin Borland Hall.

ML: They called it Kevin Borland Hall later but we called it the hall.

GL: You called it the hall. OK. I'm so glad that you can remember Bill Irwin as well.

ML: Who?

GL: Bill Irwin, the engineer.

ML: Oh Bill was his best friend. Bill was a very middle class person.

GL: Bill Irwin was?

ML: Yes. They got to know each other at the university in Melbourne. They both worked together.

GL: Do you remember they won that competition for the Melbourne Olympic Games for the swimming centre? Bill Irwin with Kevin Borland, they designed a very big swimming pool for the Melbourne Olympic Games.

ML: Oh did they?

GL: And that, I think, was the beginning ...

ML: I didn't know that.

GL: But see, Bill Irwin did most of the engineering for the buildings at Preshil, which not very many people know.

ML: No I didn't know that.

GL: And Bill Irwin, he had children at the school too. Can you remember?  
Yes.

ML: But not as many as Kevin's children [laughter]. .. But they all loved Kevin. Everybody loved Kevin.

GL: Did they?

ML: Everybody loved him, Kevin and Bill Irwin.

GL: Did they?

ML: They loved them both.

GL: When you say 'everybody' you mean literally that anybody who met them were charmed by them?

ML: Yes. All the people around Preshil. It was a very vague feeling of people coming together all the time.

GL: I wonder what qualities he had. ... Why did he attract you?

ML: I don't know why it was like this. I just liked him. I would think he was a typical slum child.

GL: And that was attractive?

ML: And that was the way he had to work.

GL: Right.

ML: You know, bring people together. 'We'll do this and we'll do that and we'll do the other.'

GL: Right.

ML: And he had lots of personality.