THE FIRM AND ITS PACIFIC RIM PRACTICE

PROJECT TEAM

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Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu
SOME KEY CLIENT CONCEPTS

6 PROVINCES
TRANSPARENCY OF JUSTICE
VANUATU ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE
WELCOMING
CEREMONIAL SETTING
It is important that the architecture and interior design establish a symbolism and functionality appropriate to this significant building type.
Levels of court in Vanuatu:

- Court of Appeal
- Supreme Court
- Magistrates Court
- Village or Island Court
• Former British-French Condominium

• Vanuatu and Tonga not directly based on either:

“Stephen Code”
NZ foundations - Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau

“Griffiths Code”
Queensland foundations - Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu

FROM THE CONSTITUTION

• The Supreme Court has unlimited civil and criminal jurisdiction

• No juries

• Rules of Custom:
  - Knowledgeable person in custom can sit with judges in Supreme Court or Court of Appeal and take part in proceedings
  - Village Courts can include a role for chiefs
Judiciary is the third arm of Government

Administration of Justice is vested in the Judiciary

Judicial Service Commission is not subject to direction or control of any other person or bodies

President of the Republic on advice of the JSA appoints judges and associated judges

Office of Public Prosecutor and Office of Public Solicitor
PROJECT BRIEF

• One stop Court complex

• Chief Justice, 10 Justices, 3 Masters, Court of Appeal Office

• Ceremonial Grounds, Ceremonial/Appeal Courtroom

• 10 Courtrooms, 3 mediation suites: adaptable for use by family conferences / youth court / mediations / at times Magistrates and Island Courts

• Sheriff, Registrar and Registry, Library

• 3 Circulation Systems: Judicial / Custodial / Public

• Technology Savy

• Environmentally Responsible: Solar Energy, Natural Ventilation, Limited AC
JUSTICE IN VANUATU

DESIGN APPROACH

RESPECTING THE SETTING

ORGANISING A COURT HOUSE

A LIVING COURTHOUSE

VANUATU CULTURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS
Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu
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RESPECTING THE SETTING

Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

THE ORIGINAL COURT BUILDING
Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

main approach from town centre

people

views

vehicles

3 PLATEAUS
HISTORIC STEPS
VIEWS

main route from parliament house

police prosecution office

THE SITE

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panoramic of site from the west

potential bay views from site
“It is important that the architecture and interior design establish a symbolism and functionality appropriate to this significant building type”
3. CLOISTER MODEL

4. HEAD & TAIL

4 WAYS OF ORGANISING A COURTHOUSE

Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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The Great Hall and the Galleria organises the Supreme Court Hall of Justice symbolically and functionally.

HYBIRD ARRANGEMENT

Judges / Courts

Judges / Courts / Administration

Chief Justice / Court Floor / Library / Court of Appeal / The Great Hall / Cafe

Ceremonial Ground

Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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“The institution is expected to uphold the law; to demonstrate independence; ….to reflect the sovereignty of the people….while a sense of serious purpose and respect for the past is essential, so too is a realisation that the future is most important.”
Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

CONTINUING THE MEMORIES

3 SITE PLATEAUS BECOME 3 WINGS
SAME ENTRANCE POINT

Judges / Courts

Judges / Courts / Administration

Chief Justice / Court Floor / Library / Court of Appeal / The Great Hall / Cafe

Ceremonial Ground
JUSTICE IN VANUATU

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ceremonial ground/the great hall/the court of appeal/the galleria/the courts/the judges

VANUATU CULTURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS
Cultural respect

*Melanesians rely on markers in the landscape more than buildings to signify place:*

Existing heritage stairs from original courthouse

The six provincial carved poles

Significant trees on the boundary

Ceremonial Ground

Defined Entries
“The design should be reflective of a Vanuatu identity and strongly relate to its site and context of the Joint Court area of Port-Vila, with investigation into the possibility of substantial use of shade, verandahs, shutters and other devices.”
Symbolic Significance

*Reflect the Sovereignty of the People*

*Demonstrate Independence of the Justice System*

*Transparent and accountable*

The Great Hall symbolises and celebrates the Vanuatu people.

The views through the Verandah to the Ceremonial Grounds, create an openness to the local environment and lifestyle.

“The dignity of the building should speak of its importance, yet it must also have the ability to allow its users and occupants to undertake their business as calmly as possible.”
Cultural respect

The Verandah becomes a sheltered place where people can wait for their trial, hearing or appointment.

The Verandah also acts as a transition space between the Ceremonial Ground and the Great Hall.

The Verandah provides views back to the bay.
Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

ENTERING THE COURT OF APPEAL

Waiting area looking back towards the Great Hall
“Beyond this, the building must add to the physical expression of Vanuatu environment and culture - our beliefs in an optimistic future, the values of accessibility, respect, honesty, fairness and a hard days work”
CLUSTER DESIGN
FLEXIBILITY
MINIMISE FUTURE INTERRUPTION

COURT CLUSTERS

Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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“So too it is important that the public feel welcome without intimidation. The optimum use of these qualities contributes to the effect of transparency and clarity, offering a sense of calm, and providing an atmosphere which enables long periods of concentration without tension.”
“The architecture and functional layout and design must facilitate collegiality and good working relationships and the building should provide for the needs of litigants in addition to other users.”
“offering a sense of calm, and providing an atmosphere which enables long periods of concentration without tension.”

SHARED STAFF AMENITIES
SHARED INTERVIEW
BALCONIES
PLACE FOR REFLECTION AND JUDGMENT WRITING
CATHEDRAL CEILINGS TO CHAMBERS

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JUSTICE IN VANUATU

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VANUATU CULTURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS
PLACES TO DISPLAY DIVERSITY

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF VANUATU CULTURE

Supreme Court Hall of Justice, Port Vila, Vanuatu

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“The material used should be Vanuatu material wherever practicable and all other things being equal, there is a preference for distinctively Vanuatu timbers and other finishes of Vanuatu origin.”

decorated ceilings and panels

timbers for structure

timbers for decoration

local building techniques

local skilled labour

locally available materials
“Opportunities for natural light and external views of the beautiful bay of Port Vila should be shared by all.”
"The optimum use of these qualities contributes to the effect of transparency and clarity, offering a sense of calm........"
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VANUATU CULTURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

efficiency/vertical infrastructure/flexibility-administration/community/phasing/growth and change

HUMAN RIGHTS
“The building must also be flexible, efficient and functional, providing a safe and refreshing environment for all occupants, users and visitors.”
“The architecture and functional layout and design must facilitate collegiality and good working relationships.”

FLEXIBILITY - ADMINISTRATION

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

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“The Supreme Court Hall of Justice will be the first building purposely built to accommodate a modern Court since the Condominium period. It will capture the cultural and functional objectives of a modern Court for 50-100 years to come.”
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VANUATU CULTURE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

HUMAN RIGHTS
SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- related to security management
- flexible public security
- controlled access to staff areas
- bailiff on each level
Beyond this, the building must add to the physical expression of Vanuatu environment and culture - our beliefs in an optimistic future, the values of accessibility, respect, honesty, fairness and a hard days work.
“The design should be reflective of a Vanuatu identity and strongly relate to its site and context of the Joint Court area of Port-Vila, with investigation into the possibility of substantial use of shade, verandahs, shutters and other devices.”