editorial / JULIA GATLEY AND ELIZABETH AITKEN ROSE

Urban historical

Interstices last published an issue dedicated to things urban in 2015. Titled "The Urban Thing," it foregrounded cities as sites of both misery and wellbeing; of both anxiety and emancipation.[1] This issue revisits the urban, but through historical lenses. It explores matters of interest across the fields of architectural history, planning history, urban design history, and heritage conservation, including historical moments of cross-disciplinary exchange that engage specifically with the urban.

Architecture, planning, and urban design have similar DNA. In the shadowy and culturally partial world of historical interpretation, Aristotle credits the Greek "architect" Hippodamus of Miletus (fifth century BCE) for inventing "the art of planning cities" and as "the first person not a statesman who made inquiries about the best form of government"[2] in the rational arrangement of city form towards the harmonious integration of competing uses, circulation efficiencies, and socio-political engagement.

As in any family, DNA diffuses and mutates over time. Architecture's distinct identity took shape in the Renaissance, although it was only formalised through professional associations and educational programmes in the nineteenth century.[3] Modern planning originated in the nineteenth century in response to industrialisation, the rapid growth of cities, and the associated social and environmental disintegration. Industrialisation and urbanisation also prompted increased envisioning of towns, cities, and urban areas, in the form of factory towns, giant new parks and boulevards replacing the finer grain of the old, garden cities and suburbs, whole areas dotted with modernist high-rises, and postwar new towns. Professional bodies and specialised academic programmes in planning often emerged at the impetus of architects sympathetic to urban concerns—in Australasia, from the mid-twentieth century, but earlier elsewhere.[4]

The close relationship between architects and planners finally frayed in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Despite shared concerns with people and place, their directives diverged according to emphasis, scale, timeframes, and realpolitik. Architecture benefits from a defined focus—the design and execution of physical structures for clients. The urban planning mandate is more diffuse, with intergenerational plans, strategies, and policies entwining factors such as land use,
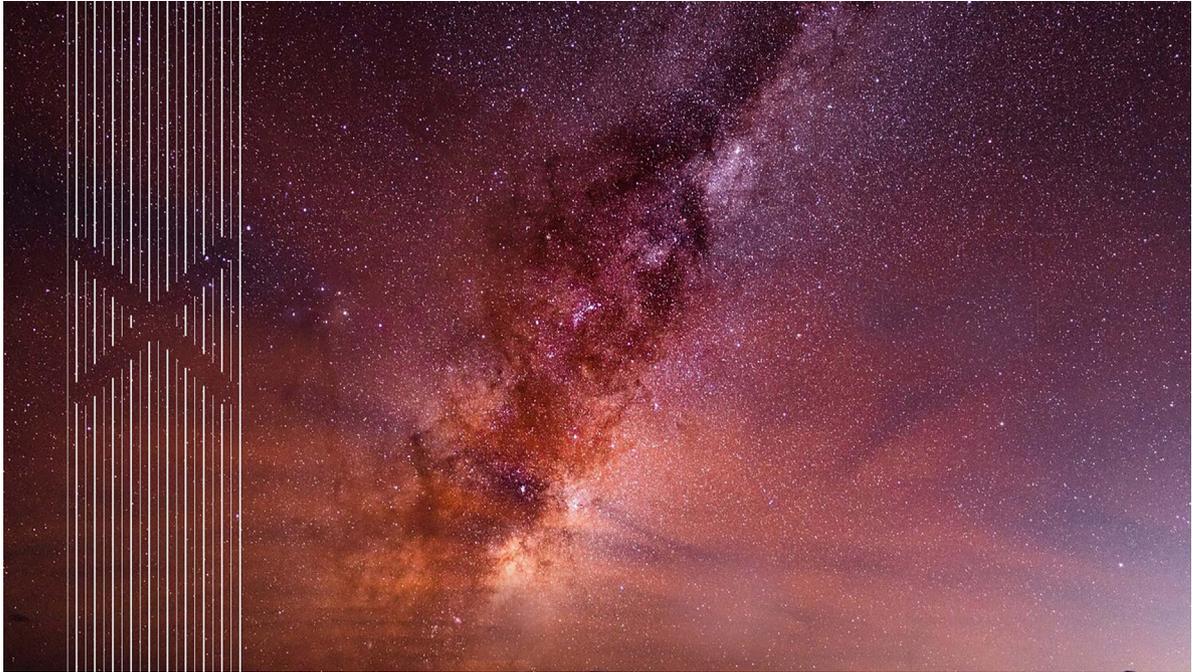
Fig. 1 Amber Anahera Ruckes (2022). Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings conference graphic. [Digital image]

infrastructure, economic productivity, property rights, and, significantly, equity. To some architects, urban planners seem besotted with statutes and processes, providing regulatory impediments, and with a tendency for functional and bureaucratic bias. Conversely, to some urban planners, architects seem mesmerised by style and oblivious to holism and risk. Both disciplines have engaged in "turf wars" over claims to urban design—around how ideas are best represented, communicated, and actively turned into beneficial policies and projects; captivating images versus dense text.

The reviewed papers for this issue were selected from the 73 presented at the Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings conference held at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau in November 2022.[5] The conference crossed boundaries as the first combined meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand / Ngā Pou Whare / Wangkalangkalarna Wardlirnaitya (SAHANZ) and the Australasian Urban History Planning History Group (AUHPH). The intent is captured in Amber Anahera Ruckes' conference graphic, a stylised purapura whetū,[6] against Te-Ika-o-te-Rangi, the celestial Milky Way, and Māhutonga, the Southern Cross constellation critical to south seas navigators (or anyone lost in the wilderness today) and a national icon for both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings provided an opportunity to explore scholarly interests common to SAHANZ and the AUHPH: the examination of individuals, movements, and events of significance in our disciplinary histories and the crossroads between them; the analysis of visions and policies, and the processes underpinning them; and, crucially, the contemplation of singular and comparative outcomes. Indigenous and marginalised histories, infrastructure, and community activism were all particularly welcomed. The extended family joined the event: landscape architects, heritage experts, and other disciplines. Independent public historian Dr Ben Schrader delivered the invited keynote address, on the history of heritage preservation in Aotearoa New Zealand.[7] Academics and practitioners connected—in person and virtually—from Australia,

New Zealand, and wider regions. The walls cracked to let in the light.

While the conference was multi-disciplinary, this related issue of *Interstices* consistently attracted papers from authors with architecture backgrounds—although one now lectures in a planning programme—rather than from the range of disciplines. The walls have remained more intact than we had imagined they would. All the papers utilise archival research and include the analysis of archival documents. However, most of the history discussed herein is comparatively recent: all the topics are post-war, two are from the 1970s, and two are twenty-first century. Indeed, several of the papers are concerned quite explicitly with current debates, where history (and heritage) are pivotal to an understanding of the contemporary situation and to potential policy changes. History matters, not just for the careful and interpretive documentation of the past, but towards awakenings in the present, and a platform for speculating on the future.[8]

This issue's reviewed papers

The issue opens with Athanasios Tsakonas and Anoma Pieris' paper, "Eucalypts of Hodogaya: Organic Cultural Diplomacy at Yokohama War Cemetery." War graves honour those who died in conflict. They mark the human cost of battles. The Yokohama War Cemetery is the primary Japanese site commemorating Allied casualties of the Second World War. Tsakonas and Pieris explore the Australian contribution to its design and construction. It was a place of ambivalence for Australians initially, given its distance and the painful memories of the wartime cruelty Japan inflicted, along with the anonymity of the cemetery's creators. Tsakonas and Pieris argue that it differs from conventional war cemeteries, involving a process described as "organic cultural diplomacy" and the "mutual acclimatisation" of co-creators "to the place-making practices of a former foe"—a foe then burdened with its maintenance and the imprint of military defeat. The reconciliation of troubled memories is tempered through landscaping and planting (a hybrid of the Japanese garden and Australian eucalypts), and vernacular materials. The paper is part of a wider project examining the architectural contribution of the Commonwealth War Grave's Commission across Asia.

From Japan, the issue moves to Italy, with Hamish Lonergan's "Participation and/or/against Tacit Knowledge: ILAUD, 1976–1981." Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo founded the International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD) in Urbino, southeast of Bologna. Each year from 1976 to 1981, it held summer workshops that brought together architects and planners as well as students and academics from both disciplines, with discussion and activities focused on user participation and how designers of the built environment should engage with those who use it. Lonergan explains that the emphasis on user participation was intentionally in opposition to what De Carlo called formalism, later subsumed under the umbrella of postmodernism. Utilising period sources such as ILAUD's annual reports, Lonergan exposes disagreement among the workshop delegates on both geographical and disciplinary lines, even as they were united in their commitment to including user participation in the design process.

Concurrently in Australia, the federal government was running its competition for the design of Parliament House in Canberra. In "Diagrams in the field: Three conceptual approaches in the entries for the 1979 Australian Parliament House design competition," Luke Tipene's primary concern is the ways in

which the competition entries did or did not respond to Canberra's isolation and Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin's 1912 plan for the city. He finds three conceptual approaches within the lesser-known competition entries—Autonomous, Symbolic, and Representational—and illustrates each with examples. He also teases out the ways in which they interpret democracy, and the risks and potential gains involved in attempting to represent such forms of governance in architecture and urban planning/design.

Susan Holden and Olivia Daw's paper is also concerned with Australian government initiatives. Titled "Watershed or Whimper? The Australian Year of the Built Environment, 2004," it explores a single calendar year designated for understanding, appreciating, and addressing issues relating to the built environment. Stemming from intense lobbying by the architectural profession, it was held in a period when sustainability, design quality, and the import of collaborative effort gained political traction. Nearly two decades on, it is opportune to evaluate whether this action was merely an empty political flourish or an initiative leading to positive change. Holden and Daw show that the Year of the Built Environment (YBE) elevated the imperatives for "sustainability" and "design" in political and popular discourse, and that there were incremental shifts in appointments (state architecture positions) and processes but, ultimately, only modest progress in overcoming perennial professional silos and fragmented policymaking, and the precedence given to the "built" ignored the criticality of the "natural" in the urban ecosystem—an oversight keenly highlighted in the climate crisis today.

While Holden and Daw's focus is Australia, many of their observations resonate in Aotearoa New Zealand, which had its own Year of the Built Environment in 2005, when the Urban Design Protocol was launched. It was an opportunity to highlight the importance of the urban, so often disregarded in a country where the natural environment is fundamental to national identity. However, the policies attending to ecological sustainability are partial, and government appointments explicitly championing design are few and fleeting. Indeed, the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 and Resource Management (Enabling Housing Supply and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2021 effectively trumped much of the progress made in quality design aspiration.

The 2020 policy and the 2021 amendment inform the final reviewed paper, Carolyn Hill's "The 'Soft Edge': Heritage, Special Character, and New Planning Directives in Aotearoa Cities." Her focus is on Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's highly contested special character areas. She provides a historical overview of preservation and conservation in Aotearoa from an initial concern with scenic landscapes, expanding across the twentieth century to include buildings, objects, and neighbourhoods, along with respect for Māori ontologies and a broader conception of significance values. She argues that special character areas reinforce gentrification, with the aura benefits captured by affluent elites. Historic "character" is undoubtedly subjective and inherently political. Hill's provocative paper doesn't dismiss "character," but opens the possibility for architects, planners, and heritage practitioners to redefine, remake, and expand the concept towards "reinvigorating" and "fortifying" urban life equitably.

Postgraduate creative design research projects

The issue includes two postgraduate design research papers, drawing from thesis projects completed in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture (Professional) at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau and Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka respectively.

Tom Collins' work, "Spectral Urbanism," was supervised by Andrew Douglas and responds to the clearance of some 15,000 houses from the inner-Auckland suburbs of Grafton and Newton in the late 1960s and the 1970s to make way for a major motorway junction known colloquially as "Spaghetti Junction." Collins' project includes the design of an archive facility to house a collection of historic wallpapers and a pedestrian walkway bridging to a replication of a previous colonial villa on a traffic island in the motorway junction, a locale itself undergoing regenerative natural growth. The multi-media design work aims to reveal history through narrative and storytelling.

Ella Jones's project, "Drawing Ground," was supervised by Simon Twose and takes inspiration from the legal personhood given to date to three Aotearoa natural landscapes and geographical features. Jones gives personhood to the whenua (land), calling it Ground rather than ground, and thinks through her relationship to Ground through drawing. Thus we see Ground's mapping, Ground's surface, and Ground's thickness, culminating in Ground's architecture, the redesign of Gummer and Ford's Dominion Museum in Wellington's Buckle Street (1930–36).

Reviews and interviews

Completing the issue are two book reviews, one exhibition review, and one interview. The first of the book reviews, by Samer Wanan, considers Nikolina Bobic and Farzaneh Haghighi's edited collection, *The Routledge Handbook of Architecture, Urban Space and Politics, Volume 1: Violence, Spectacle and Data*, published by Routledge in 2022. The second, by Andrew Douglas, reviews and responds to Mark Jackson and Mark Hanlen's *Securing Urbanism: Contagion, Power and Risk*, published by Springer in 2020. Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine and ʻŌkusitino Māhina offer a Tāvāist response to the exhibition, *Oceanic Architectural Routes: The Photographic Archive of Mike Austin*, curated by Albert Refiti and shown in late 2022–early 2023 at Objectspace. The interview with Ian Athfield (1940–2015; in 2015, Sir Ath) and Sir Miles Warren (1929–2022) was conducted in the Adam Auditorium, City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi in 2012. In the wake of Sir Miles' death in 2022, it is published here as a tribute to both architects.

The Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings conference, the collaboration between SAHANZ and the AUHPH, and this issue of *Interstices* were all premised on inter-disciplinary dialogue. But trans-disciplinarity is now the catch-cry; the walls are set to continue coming down.

NOTES

1. Hannah Hopewell and Andrew Douglas, "Introduction: The City without Qualities," *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, no. 16 (2015): 1–6.

2. Aristotle, in Roger Paden, "The Two Professions of Hippodamus of Miletus," *Philosophy & Geography* 4, no. 1 (2001): 25–26.

3. Spiro Kostof, *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

4. Robert Freestone, *Urban Nation: Australia's Planning Heritage* (Collingwood, VIC: CSIRO Publishing in association with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and the Australian Heritage Council, 2010); Julia Gatley and Lucy Treep (eds), *The Auckland School: 100 Years of Architecture and Planning* (Auckland: University of Auckland, School of Architecture and Planning, 2017); Peter Hall and Mark Tewdwr-Jones, *Urban and Regional Planning* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019).

5. Te pūtahitanga, te waihanga, te whakamahere me ngā tāone expresses confluence and convergence (pūtahitanga); to make, build, generate (waihanga); and to plan, chart, or map (whakamahere).

6. The latticed tukutuku pattern found in wharenui (Māori meeting houses). See Julia Gatley and

Elizabeth Aitken Rose (eds), *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand: 39, Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings* (Auckland: SAHANZ, 2023).

7. Ben Schrader, "Fabricating Identities: A Short History of Historic Preservation in Aotearoa New Zealand, 1890–1990," presented at Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings on 25 November 2022. Schrader is an independent public historian based in Wellington. In 2022, he was the J. D. Stout Fellow at Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka. For the followship, and in 2023, he is writing, with Michael Kelly, a history of historic preservation in Aotearoa New Zealand. In addition, his conference address is being published in John H. Stubbs, William Chapman, Julia Gatley, and Ross King, *Architectural Conservation in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: National Experiences and Practice* (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

8. This is exemplified by Critical Heritage Studies, which situates heritage (and history) firmly in the production of the present, as "future-making" practices. See: Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Rodney Harrison et al., *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices* (London: UCL Press, 2020).